

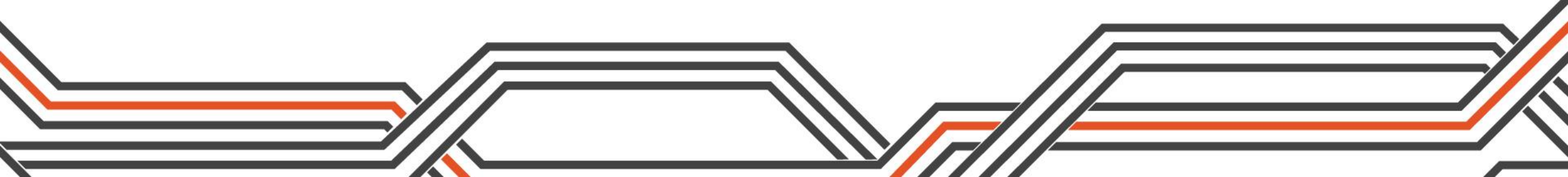
Reshaping accountability for future generations: Sharing the learning from our pilot work



The top corners of the slide feature decorative geometric patterns composed of multiple parallel lines in black and grey, forming a stepped, zig-zag shape.

Our challenge...

...How do we assess the extent to which public bodies are applying the sustainable development principle?

The bottom of the slide features a decorative border consisting of multiple parallel lines in black, grey, and orange, forming a complex, stepped geometric pattern.

...and what's so difficult about that?!

- We have to assess 'ways of working'
- We need to develop something that can be used across 44 bodies (that are very different!)
- We need to consider how it fits with our other work and keep fees down as much as possible
- We need to make sure the way we undertake our work complements the Commissioner's work
- This is new- we're all learning...

To help find the solution we...

- Ran a consultation in 2016
- Ran engagement sessions with staff and stakeholders
- Worked closely with the Future Generations Commissioner and her team
- Engaged with national networks across different sectors
- Ran a programme of pilots to help us develop and test audit methods

The pilots

Who we worked with

- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- Vale of Glamorgan Council
- The National Parks
- Welsh Government
- Natural Resources Wales
- Sport Wales
- Torfaen Public Services Board

Our approach

- Used the pilots to learn and test new ways of working, rather than road-testing a predetermined approach
- Scoped the projects with the pilot bodies
- Involved the pilot bodies in developing the methodology
- Emphasised developing and testing audit methods, rather than conducting an audit
- Sought to help pilot bodies reflect on how they are applying the sustainable development principle
- Involved the Commissioner's office as critical friends

What you told us...

You need to look beyond strategic planning and corporate arrangements and include a focus on more operational issues.

Your work should add value and help us learn

You should engage with a range of people- including partners and citizens

You need to focus on ways of working and take account of behaviours, rather than focusing on processes and arrangements

You should work alongside us

You need to work with the Commissioner so that you set consistent expectations and coordinate your activity.

You need to avoid a focus on compliance and consistency

So, we've developed an approach that...

- Uses the five ways of working as the starting point
- Focuses on the how, as well as the what
- Help bodies reflect on where they are and what they could do differently
- Captures narrative and seeks the views of a cross-section of staff and stakeholders
- Enables us to give early feedback
- Encourages public bodies to develop their own actions in response to our findings

Using the five ways of working and focusing on the how, as well as the what...

- Pilot bodies have helped us come up with key things to look for under each of the five ways of working
- They include more of a focus on behaviours
- For example, under **integration** we would look for:

Has the public body identified how a particular activity will impact on its well-being objectives and those of its partners?

Do staff understand what different parts of the organisation do and proactively seek opportunities to work across organisational boundaries. Is this replicated in their work with other public bodies?

Capturing narrative and seeking the views of a cross-section of staff and stakeholders

We have used '**Sensemaker**', a survey tool that:

- Combines quantitative data with explanatory narrative
- Encourages participants to balance different considerations, rather than giving a rating.
- Is able to capture a large number of responses, ideal for involving people across large organisations, partners and communities.
- It provided graphical outputs that are easy to interpret and link quantitative data with the supporting narrative.

Capturing narrative and seeking the views of a cross-section of staff and stakeholders

We used '**Sensemaker**' with:

- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to help us understand how decision makers and stakeholders thought the five ways of working had been applied in the design and development of a capital project.
- The Vale of Glamorgan Council to understand how staff felt the Act was being applied and to understand their experience and perspective on 'ways of working' across the organisation.

Capturing narrative and seeking the views of a cross-section of staff and stakeholders

Using **Sensemaker** in the pilots showed that:

- Combining narrative and quantitative data can provide a richer understanding of views and experiences
- Sensemaker can help us reach a broad cross-section of staff
- It is vital that we invest time in scoping and developing and refining the questions
- There are opportunities to work collaboratively to develop and test the questions and interpret the information.
- Sensemaker is likely to be most valuable at the early stages of the audit process, enabling u to gather a broad cross-section of views to improve understanding and inform how we gather further evidence.

Capturing narrative and seeking the views of a cross-section of staff and stakeholders

We ran '**fieldwork scoping workshops**', which aimed to:

Understand why key people involved in designing and delivering the activity did it in the way they did, what they felt they had achieved and what they had learned. Specifically, how had they applied the five ways of working.

Capturing narrative and seeking the views of a cross-section of staff and stakeholders

The **fieldwork scoping workshops**:

- Involved a select group of people who had been most directly involved.
- Was undertaken at the beginning of fieldwork.
- Resulted in their written account of what they had done and why, how they had applied the five ways or working, what they had learned and what they would do differently.
- Much of the text was developed during the workshop. It was then cleared and owned by those involved.
- Was followed by more extensive fieldwork, seeking the views of a wider cross-section of people, including partners.

Capturing narrative and seeking the views of a cross-section of staff and stakeholders

Trialling the **fieldwork scoping workshops** showed us that:

- The workshop was an efficient and productive means of gathering insightful reflections from key people
- The written account provided a rich source of information which, in combination with our document review evidence, helped us refine lines of enquiry for further fieldwork
- The workshop was an opportunity for staff to reflect on how they had applied the five ways of working and what they might do differently in a structured way.
- The workshop enabled the key people to tell their story and improved our overall understanding of the activity in question.

Helping public bodies reflect on where they are and what they could do differently...

We ran '**feedback and response workshops**', which aimed to:

Share our findings in order to promote discussion and encourage bodies to reflect on what we had found and develop their own improvement actions in response.

Helping public bodies reflect on where they are and what they could do differently...

The **feedback and response workshops**:

- Were undertaken at the end of fieldwork and once we had sought comments on balance and factual accuracy.
- Included a similar group to the fieldwork scoping workshop, though often involved others who could contribute or could draw from the learning
- Resulted in a set of actions developed by the body.

Helping public bodies reflect on where they are and what they could do differently...

Trialling the **feedback and response workshops** showed us that:

- The bodies welcomed the opportunity to have an open discussion about the findings
- The bodies welcomed the early feedback and insight
- The bodies felt the process would increase ownership of the actions (as separate from recommendations)
- The workshop continued the process of self-reflection and learning

The approach we have developed...

- Gives us a consistent framework, with tools that can be applied flexibly. It will allow us to take account of context, rather than expecting/ driving organisations to respond in the same way.
- Promotes self-reflection and encourages a structured consideration of how bodies are applying the five ways of working.
- Gathers narrative and seeks to engage a broad cross-section of people seeks to understand ways of working and behaviours.
- Helps bodies to learn and develop their own improvement actions.
- Provides opportunity for early feedback.

We will also...

- Focus on 'steps' to meet their well-being objectives in 2018-19 and 2019-20
- Maintain our emphasis on promoting learning in the early years
- Continue to recognise that public bodies need to take well-managed risks and value the learning they apply from both success and failure.
- Continue to identify good practice and support shared learning across the 44 bodies and wider stakeholders through our reports and Good Practice Exchange.
- Ensure our work is proportionate and risk-based, taking opportunities to integrate and align our WFG examinations with existing audit work where possible.
- Over the long term, seek to undertake more cross-sector and locality-based assessments and studies.
- Continue to review and refine our approach; it will need to develop as public bodies progress and as we collectively improve our understanding and application of the Act.

Discussion...

1. We'd like your views on the following:
 - How should we report back?
 - How should we follow up?
 - How do we make sure we're sharing the learning across public bodies?
2. What is the one message you'd like WAO to take away?