

CULTURAL WELL-BEING

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1. Introduction

This part of the assessment tells us about culture in Gwent - the types of leisure, sport and play that people enjoy, the arts and heritage offer and the role of Welsh language. It also looks at how the diversity that exists in our communities has an influence on culture in Gwent, where people go to experience culture, and how volunteering and community assets impact on well-being.

School can be the first time some young people experience new cultural activities from playing sport, to learning about other cultures and celebrations. It is also the place where many develop their Welsh language skills.

Covid-19 has seen many cultural and sports events and cultural venues closed during lockdown periods resulting in the re-imaging of community spaces and outdoor areas and some moving online.

Gwent has a rich and diverse cultural heritage incorporating highlights such as the Blaenavon World Heritage Site, Abergavenny Food Festival and a section of Wales' famous coastal path. It is home to Roman forts, castles and stately homes and a Ryder Cup golf course.

Supporting diverse groups of people, including those of different cultures and ethnicity, to get on well together and feel safe in their communities is important for well-being and will help promote global responsibility. Feeling part of a community can allow people to get involved in cultural activities, sharing ideas and values.

Ensuring our communities have equitable access to green space that can be used for recreation and physical activity can support healthy lifestyles.

Many jobs are linked to our tourism and leisure industries, much of which is based around our local heritage and environmental assets. The creative economy has also been identified by Cardiff Capital Region as a priority sector with the potential to create prosperity in the region over the next 10 – 20 years ¹.

People of different ages can enjoy different cultural activities, but equally cultural interests can bring people of different ages together. We know that we have an aging population in Gwent, and this may mean that there are more people able to support their communities through volunteering.

We also know that the inequalities that exist in some of our communities can make it hard for people to get involved in cultural activities with affordability and access particular problems. How we tackle these challenges in the future may allow everyone to get more involved, and enable new, and diverse, cultural activities to establish.

Whilst the information used in this chapter give a picture of cultural well-being there are some areas where additional data would help to refine the assessment. This includes measures related to leisure and recreation activities that are not captured via data related to participation in sporting activities or through measures relating to heritage and the arts.

2. Faith & ethnicity

How people from difference backgrounds and cultures get on together has a direct impact on how cohesive a community is. Inclusive communities, where people feel accepted, safe and able to be involved in activities and things that interest them, benefit everyone, helping people feel supported and valued.

In similar way to people of different ages, people of different backgrounds may also enjoy different activities. Larger numbers of different ethnic groups in communities means that there are more diverse cultures mixing and opportunities to learn about other traditions and values.

Addressing the barriers that prevent people from different backgrounds getting involved in cultural activities, such as feeling safe, can support more cohesive communities. More information about crime and community safety and how it impacts on wider well-being can found in the Social Chapter.

2.1 Faith & religion

The latest available data shows a higher percentage of people in Newport stated that their religion was Muslim than the rest of Gwent and the Wales average. Further variations across Gwent exist for those people who stated their religion as Christian and as no religion. These numbers may look significantly different when information from the 2021 Census is available.

	Caerphilly	Blaenau Gwent	Torfaen	Monmouthshire	Newport	Wales
Christian	50.7	49.9	55.4	62.5	56.9	57.6
Buddhist	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3
Hindu	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3
Jewish	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Muslim	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	4.7	1.5
Sikh	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other religions	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4
No religion	40.9	41.1	35.8	28.5	29.7	32.1
Religion not stated	7.5	8.1	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.6

Figure C1: Table showing the different religions across Gwent ²

2. 2 Place of birth and ethnicity

The majority of people living in Gwent during July 2019 and June 2020 were estimated as being born in the UK, with only 5.8% of people born abroad.³

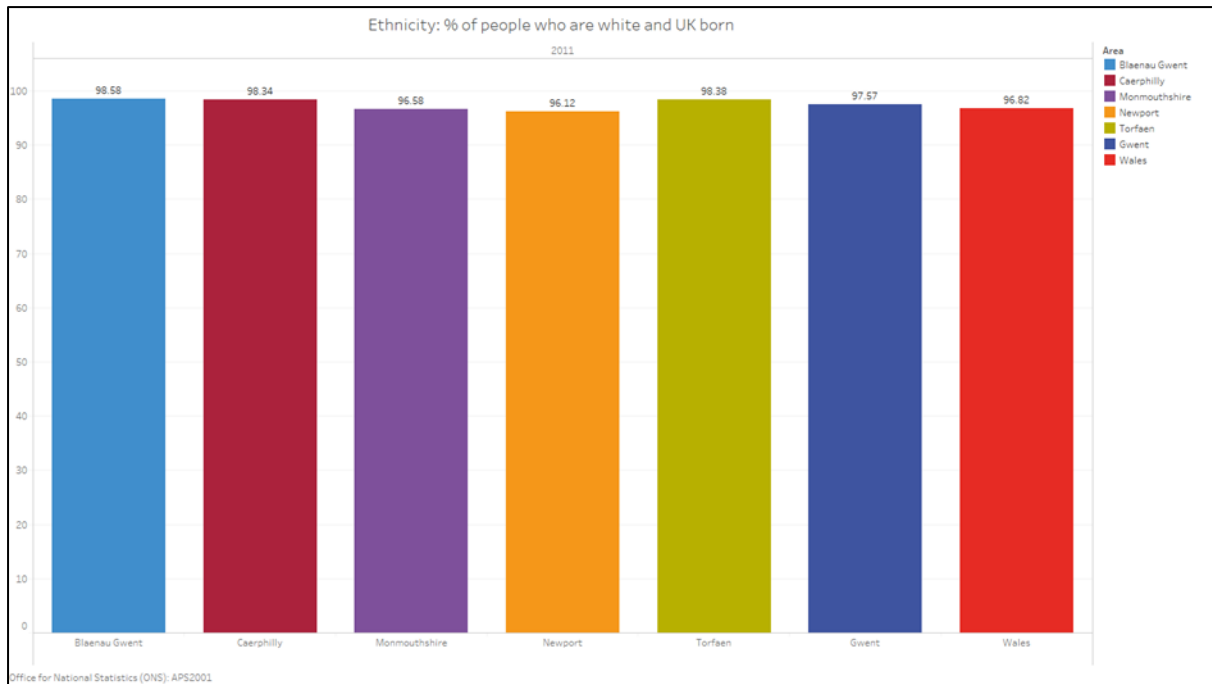


Figure C2 – Graph showing the percentage of people who are white and UK born across Gwent ⁴

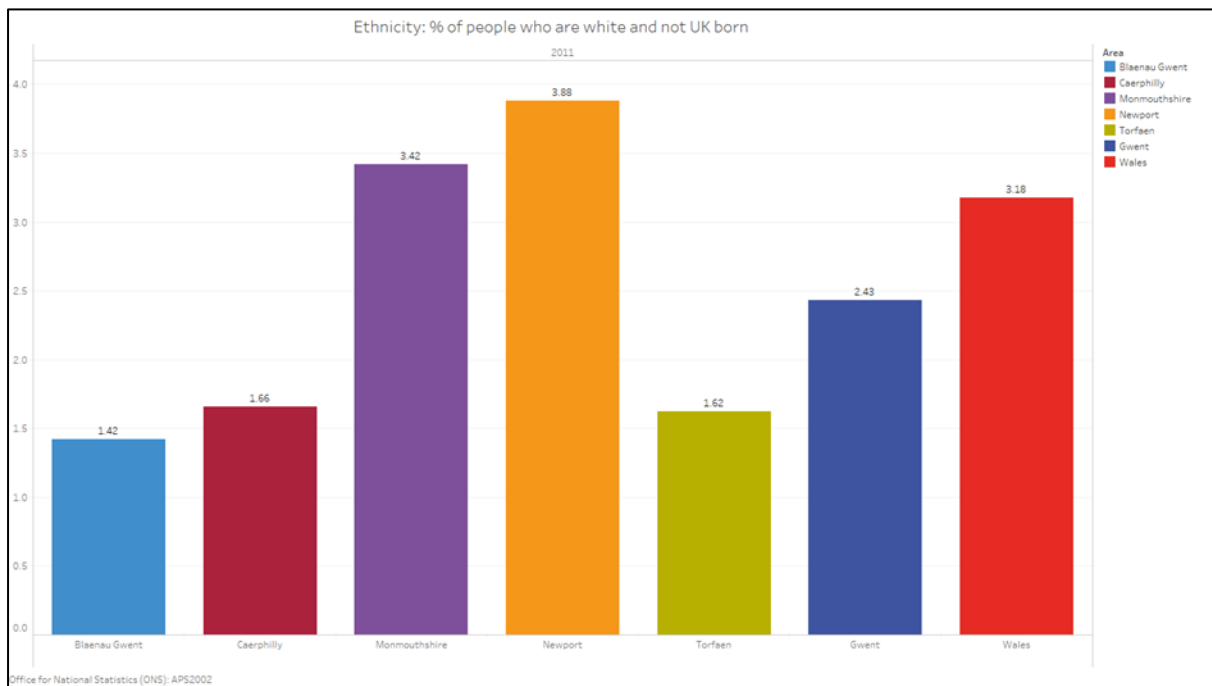


Figure C3 – Graph showing the percentage of people who are white and not UK born across Gwent ⁵

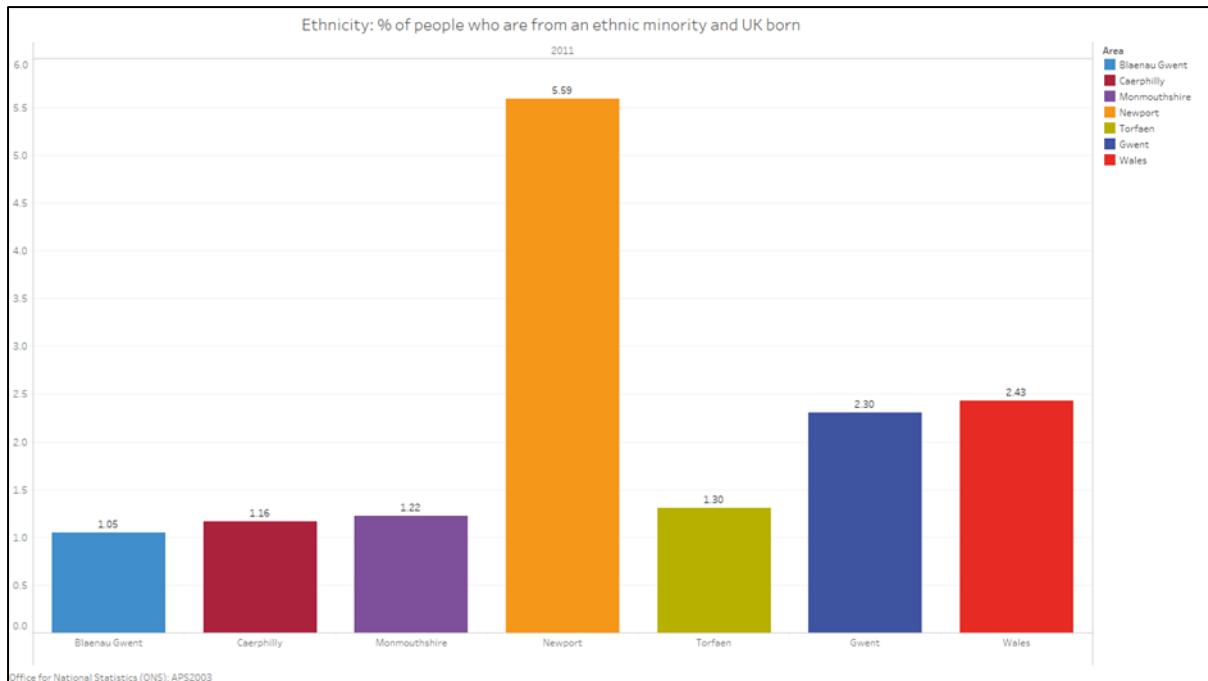


Figure C4 – Graph showing the percentage of people who are from an ethnic minority and UK born across Gwent ⁶

Most people living in Gwent are of a white ethnicity, with 3.88% of people from a non-white background, with Newport containing the highest proportion (10.09%).

The below table highlights the limited ethnic diversity across the region.

	BG	CA	MO	NE	TO	Gwent
Number of people from a non-white background	1,064.0	2,961.0	1,797.0	14,711.0	1,844.0	22377
Number of people from a white background	68,750	175,845	89,526	131,025	89,231	554,377
% of people from a non-white background	1.52	1.66	1.97	10.09	2.02	3.88
% White	98.5	98.3	98.0	89.9	98.0	96.5
% Mixed/multiple ethnic group	0.6	0.7	0.7	1.9	0.7	0.9
% Asian/Asian British	0.7	0.8	1	5.5	1.1	1.82
% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.7	0.2	0.46
% Other ethnic group	0.1	0.1	0.1	1	0.1	0.28

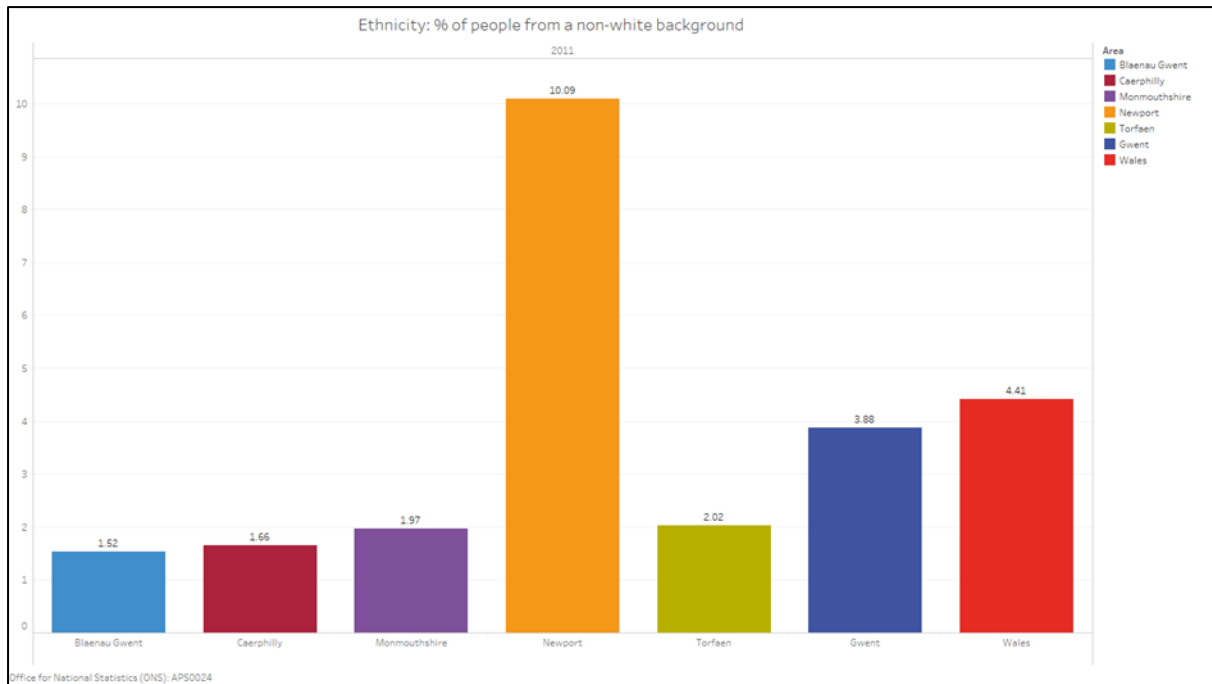


Figure C5 – Graph showing the percentage of people from a non-white background across Gwent ⁷

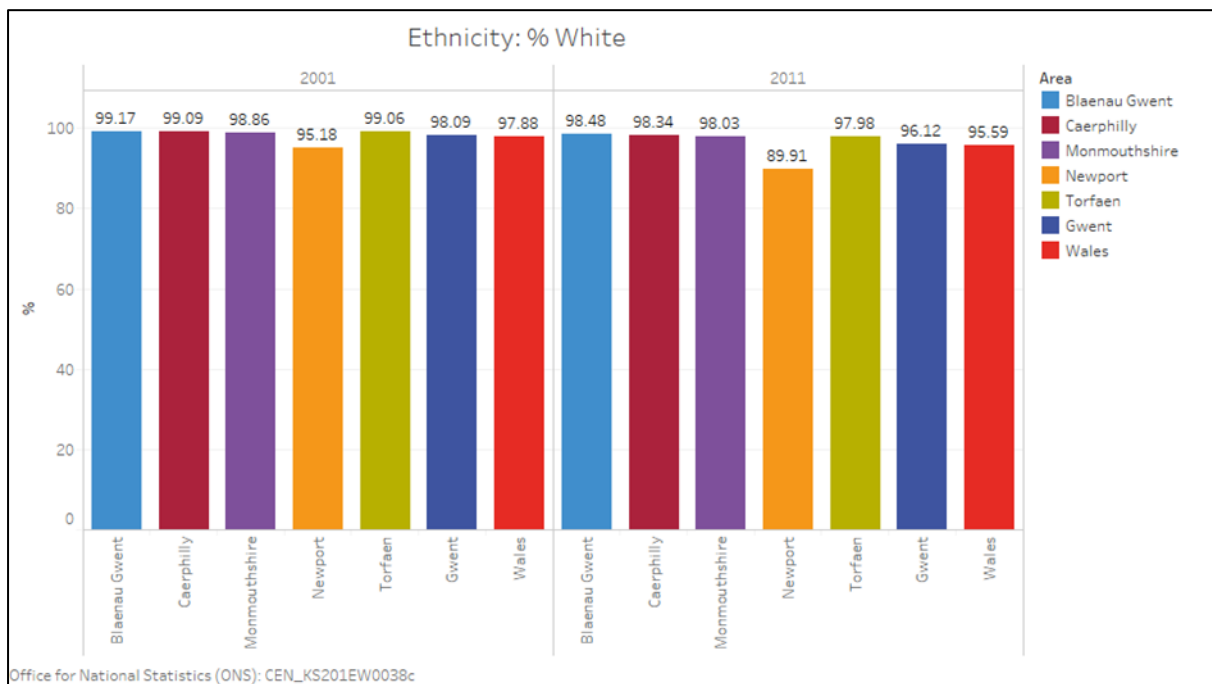


Figure C6 – Graph showing the percentage of White people across Gwent ⁸

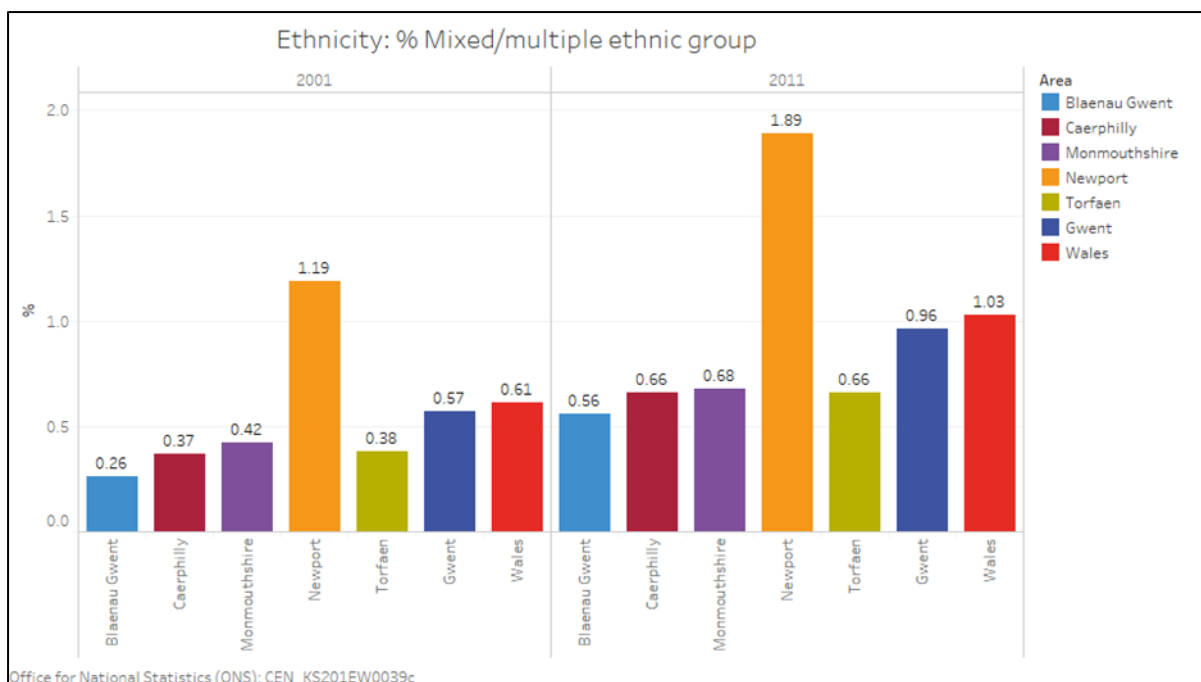


Figure C7 – Graph showing the percentage of Mixed / multiple ethnic groups across Gwent ⁹

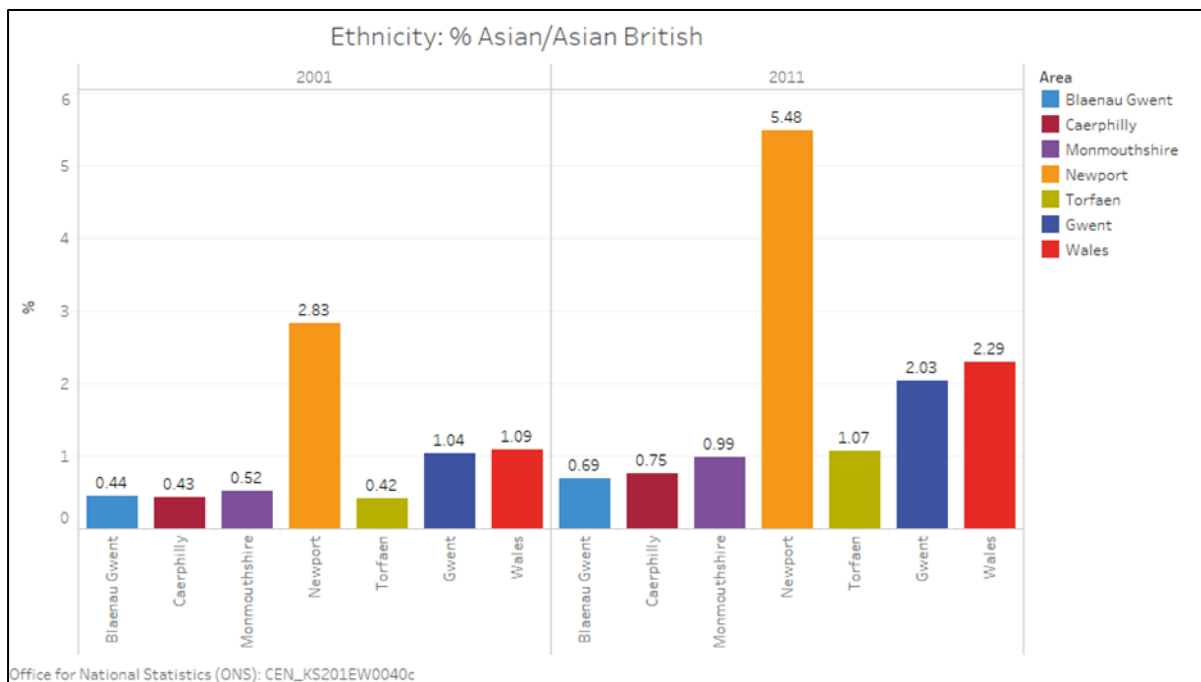


Figure C8 – Graph showing the percentage of Asian / Asian British across Gwent ¹⁰

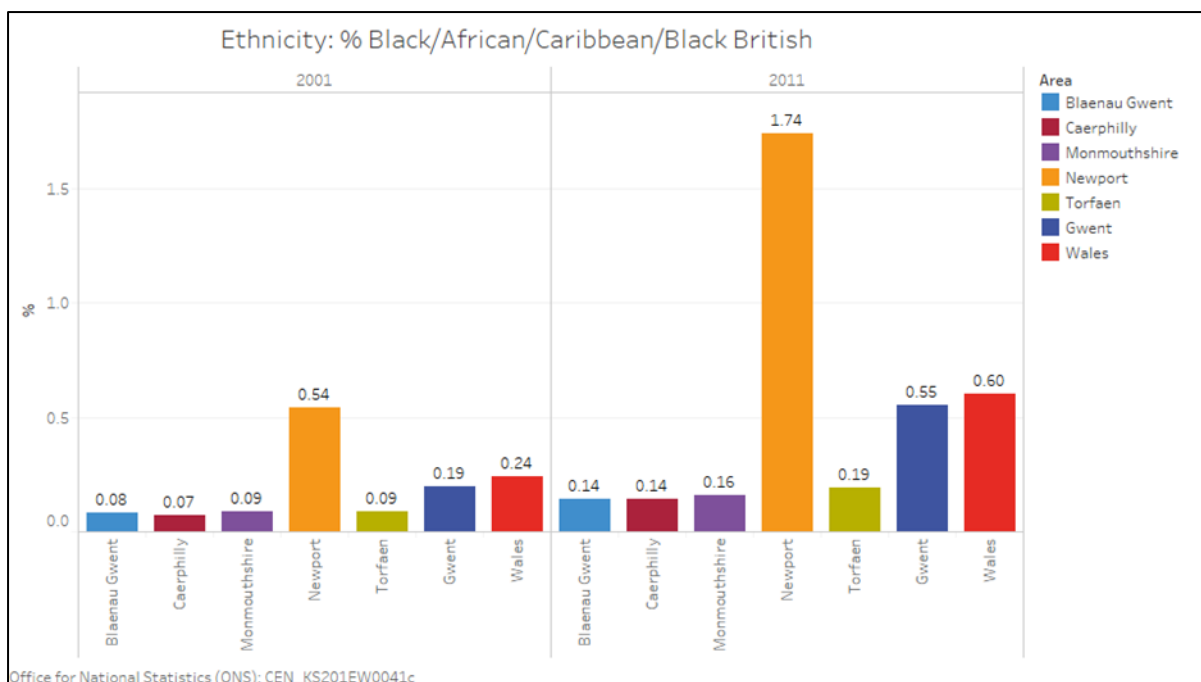


Figure C9 – Graph showing the percentage of Black / African / Caribbean / Black British across Gwent ¹¹

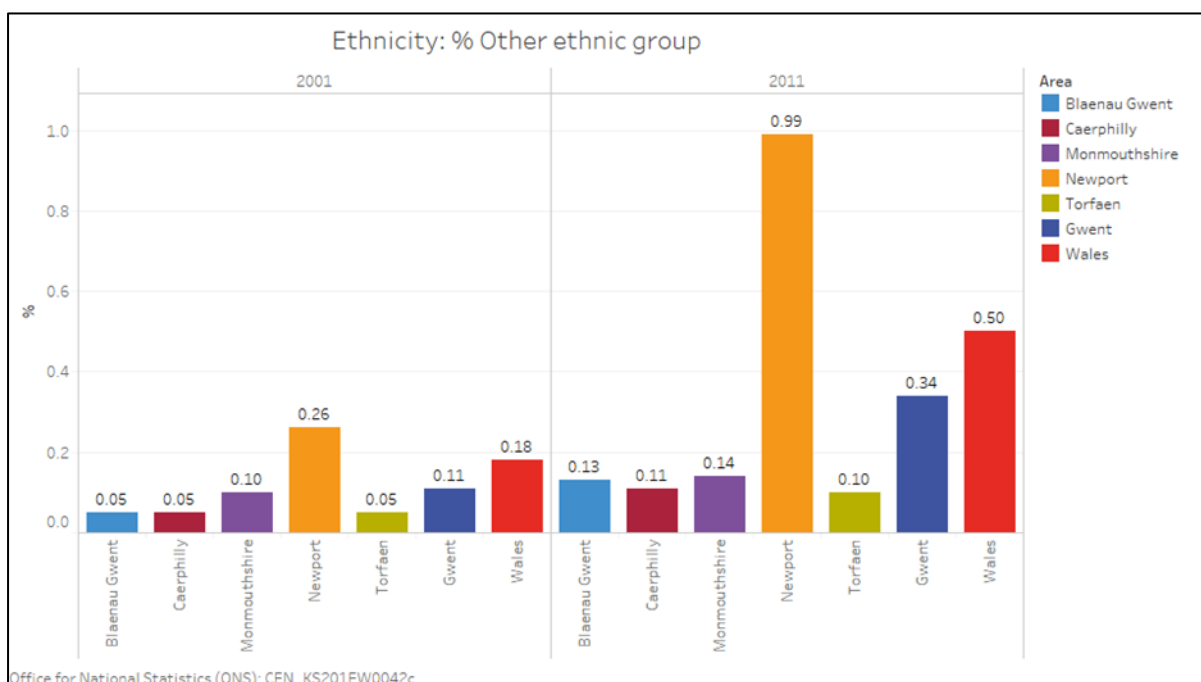


Figure C10 – Graph showing the percentage of Other ethnic group across Gwent ¹²

Apart from Newport, which is the most multi-cultural of the local authority areas the region has little ethnic diversity. This lack of ethnic diversity could make it more difficult for people to understand each other's cultures and beliefs, as there are far fewer opportunities to interact with people from diverse backgrounds. This, in turn, could have an impact upon instances of hate crime or racism.

The full effect of Brexit is not yet understood; it may result in a reduction of people from other European countries settling in Wales, or it may increase the numbers making Wales their home from countries outside the European Union.

In recent months we have seen the introduction of refugee schemes which Gwent is taking part in. With the recent Afghanistan crisis, we may see an increase of refugees settling in the region. It will be interesting to see whether individuals settle in Gwent in the long term, or choose to move to areas with more diversity.

- **Refugees**

Refugees are people who have been recognised by the Home Secretary as in need of protection in line with the Refugee Convention on Human Rights, or for other specific reasons. By law, a person is a refugee until their application for British Citizenship has been approved. Refugees who choose not to apply for British Citizenship, and apply for *Indefinite Leave to Remain* instead, are referred to as *settled*. While there is a clear, legal definition of when someone finishes being a refugee, they may still ‘feel’ like a refugee for an undefined time, and may self-identify as a refugee.

Information from the Home Office¹³ on the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) and Vulnerable Children’s Relocation Scheme (VCRS) shows that at the end of March 2020, 123 *settlement* refugees were living in Newport; 37 in Monmouthshire; 32 in Caerphilly; 33 in Torfaen; and 20 in Blaenau Gwent.

It’s impossible to provide reliable figures for refugees across Gwent who have come through the *asylum route*. Once people have been granted Refugee status, they can choose where to live; they may move away from Gwent, while others may move into Gwent. However, any data about this is inconsistent and unreliable.

- **Asylum Seekers**

Asylum Seekers and *People Seeking Sanctuary* both describe people who have arrived in the UK and applied to be recognised as a refugee in accordance with the Refugee Convention. In Wales, the term *People Seeking Sanctuary* is preferred; this is also reflected in the Welsh Government Nation of Sanctuary plan.

The number of *People Seeking Sanctuary* fluctuates over time; but data isn’t available across Gwent. In Wales, up to March 2021, 2,734 people were seeking sanctuary. Data isn’t available for Gwent.¹⁴

- **Migrants**

At the international level, there is no universally accepted definition for *migrant*. The United Nations describes migrants as follows¹⁵.

“.....an international migrant is someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status.”

There are many categories of migrants, such as students, migrant workers and EU migrants.

The latest Home Office¹⁶ EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) statistics, to June 2021, show approximately 6 million applications from people wanting to continue living in the UK, including 98,600 from Wales. There is no clear data source for the number of EU citizens living in the UK as the EUSS only measures those applying for settled status. Those who have applied may no longer live in the UK, or may not have decided yet on where they want to live long term. Data about migration is also available in the Annual Population Survey (APS) although this does not include EU citizens living in care homes, hostels or other communal establishments.

3. Welsh language

Welsh language is an important part of cultural identity and heritage and is used by many people each day in their homes, their communities and where they work.

Activities such as Welsh language music are bringing the language to a whole new audience including outside of Wales, and Eisteddfods and festivals can be a good place to meet people and learn new things. Other Welsh language activities provide opportunities to communicate at work and engage with services in your language of choice or bilingually.

Improving Welsh language provision in Gwent will help sustain Welsh culture and identity for future generations and support local place making. We need to ensure that future services are digitally inclusive for all, including Welsh speakers.

3.1 Community

The Census 2011 shows that for the percentage of people aged 3+ who can speak Welsh that all areas across Gwent are below the Wales average (19.01%) ranging from 11.19% in Caerphilly to 7.85% in Blaenau Gwent. These figures may be significantly different at the next Census.

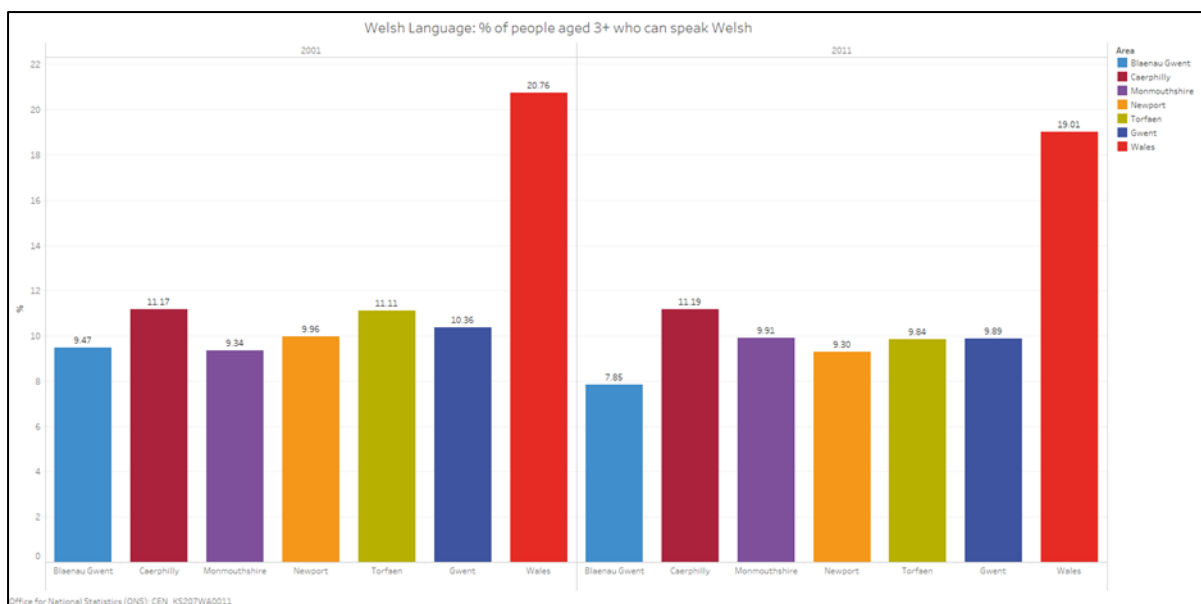


Figure C11 – Graph showing the percentage of people aged 3+ who can speak Welsh across Gwent ¹⁷

The table below shows the percent of people aged 3+ who can speak Welsh across the Gwent region. All areas fall below the Welsh average.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Blaenau Gwent	18.0	17.8	17.8	17.5	19.7	17.1	16.1
Caerphilly	23.4	24.8	21.8	22.0	23.7	23.6	24.6
Torfaen	15.5	16.0	18.3	19.0	17.7	18.0	18.5
Monmouthshire	17.1	16.7	16.8	16.7	17.6	17.5	16.5
Newport	23.3	19.6	19.8	20.6	20.9	17.8	20.5
Wales	27.8	27.3	28.8	29.0	29.8	28.4	29.1

Figure C12 – Table showing the percentage of people aged 3+ who speak Welsh across Gwent ¹⁸

The long-term aspiration of the public sector is to increase the number of Welsh speakers, raise awareness, increase the visibility and promote the economic benefits of the Welsh language across its population. Increasing opportunities for those with all levels of Welsh to practice and speak Welsh in a safe, friendly, and supportive environment, and to engage with those who might have no awareness of the language.

The Welsh Language Standards require local authorities, to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language increasing its visibility in the community. Each council has to prepare a 5-year strategy in consultation with local stakeholders and the wider population, to support the Welsh Government’s aim in Cymraeg 2050 of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

. The Strategy should contain:

- A target for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area
- An Action Plan that explains how it is intended to achieve the strategy

Members of the Welsh Language Forum and the Welsh in Education Forum and other stakeholders will help Council’s to deliver a Welsh language vision

In areas with low numbers of Welsh speakers, education has an important role to play in increasing language skills as set out in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (see section 3.2).

Current Strategies (new ones will be ready after March 2022) can be viewed here: [Blaenau Gwent Council](#); [Caerphilly County Borough Council](#); [Monmouthshire County Council](#); [Newport City Council](#); and [Torfaen County Borough Council](#).

Mentrau Iaith and Welsh Language Forums

Mentrau iaith are community-based organisations which work to raise the profile of the Welsh language in a specific area. Each local Menter iaith receives a basic grant from the Welsh Government, as well as financial support from a number of other sources, to work with individuals, organisations, and local business to promote the use of Welsh in its area.

The local Menter iaith is responsible for the coordination of the Welsh Language Forum for the local area. Membership is drawn from a range of key stakeholders from across the public and voluntary sectors. The forums are generally used as a focus group, to share good practice and partnership working. There are three Fforwm iaith across Gwent. Support is provided from the local authority to assist with this work although each is managed and administered differently due to variations in funding arrangements, membership, and stakeholder relationships. This makes direct comparison difficult in terms of objectives, targets and activities.

Menter iaith Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen a Mynwy

Covering the areas of Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire, Menter iaith BGTM aims to promote and increase the use of the Welsh language. They arrange a variety of Welsh medium events and social activities for people of all ages, background and linguistic abilities, including new Welsh speakers.

Taking part in events is a great way of making friends and getting to know other Welsh speakers in the area.

Menter iaith Caerffili – Covering Caerphilly county borough, Menter iaith Caerffili aims to promote and increase the use of the Welsh language, by ensuring it becomes a central part of life within the county and that communities share the responsibility for its future and development.

Menter iaith Casnewydd - Covering Newport, Menter iaith Casnewydd's aim is to increase the use of Welsh by children and adults and make it a language that is part of the city's social fabric by enabling people to live and work in Welsh. They organise lots of events for children (nursery, primary, youth), young adults, families, learners and the elderly.

3.2 Education

Cymraeg 2050¹⁹ introduces a long-term vision for a Wales where the Welsh language thrives including having 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 and increasing the number of people using Welsh on a daily basis.

For the education system, the proportion of all school year groups that receive their education through the medium of Welsh needs to be increased.

As well as increasing the proportion of learners being taught through the medium of Welsh, Cymraeg 2050 aims to transform how Welsh is taught so more learners can speak Welsh by the time they leave school; and

- Increase the number of primary and secondary teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh;
- Increase the number of secondary teachers who can teach Welsh as a language,

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires a local authority to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan containing proposals on improving the provision of education, standards and teaching through the medium of Welsh, with targets and annual progress reports.

Current Strategies (new ones will be ready after March 2022) can be viewed here: [Blaenau Gwent Council](#); [Caerphilly County Borough Council](#); [Monmouthshire County Council](#); [Newport City Council](#); and [Torfaen County Borough Council](#).

3.3 Workforce

As more people across Gwent start to use Welsh on a daily basis, public services need to be able to provide services in Welsh. Public services (Local Authorities, Gwent Police & Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) across Gwent report the Welsh language skills for staff in different ways so it is difficult to provide a cumulative figure.

Blaenau Gwent	No ability	A little	Quite Well	Moderately	Fluently	No Response
Speak Welsh	1503 (51%)	353 (12%)	20 (1%)	143 (5%)	41 (1%)	909 (30%)
Understand Welsh	1467 (49%)	396 (13%)	27 (1%)	167 (6%)	42 (2%)	871 (29%)
Write Welsh	1536 (52%)	291 (10%)	22 (1%)	118 (4%)	37 (1%)	964 (32%)
Read Welsh	1521 (51%)	305 (10%)	29 (1%)	138 (5%)	41 (1%)	934 (32%)

Figure C13 – Table showing Welsh Language Skills of Employees from Blaenau Gwent Council in 2020-21²⁰

Caerphilly	Council Total
Total Staff	8296
Welsh Speakers	1825
Percentage	21.99%

Figure C13 – Table showing Welsh Language Skills of Employees from Caerphilly County Borough Council in 2020-21²¹

Monmouthshire	Beginner	Advanced beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Fluent
Welsh Language Skills (not incl. school-based staff)	173	32	18	6	35

Figure C14 – Table showing Welsh Language Skills of Employees from Monmouthshire County Council in 2020-21 ²²

Newport	None	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	No Record
Reading	2692	1253	234	240	1446
Spoken	2489	1449	236	235	1456
Understanding	2506	1421	240	248	1450
Written	2752	1197	213	222	1481
Percentage of headcount	42.73%	24.23%	4.09%	4.23%	24.72%

Figure C16 – Table showing Welsh Language Skills of Employees from Newport City Council in 2020-21 ²³

Torfaen	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Welsh Language Skills	1496	183	26	10	12	20
Percentage	86%	10%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Figure C17 – Table showing Welsh Language Skills of Employees from Torfaen County Borough Council in 2020-21 ²⁴

Welsh Language Skills of Employees (Gwent Police)			
Level	Number of Employees		
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1	1598	1765	1912
2	39	38	41
3	24	20	22
4	34	34	37
5	22	21	27
Total	1717	1878	2039
Total number of employees	2138	2262	2447

Figure C15 – Table of Welsh Language Skills of Employees from Gwent Police ²⁵

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board			
Level	Listening / Speaking Welsh	Reading Welsh	Writing Welsh
0 - No Skills / Dim Sgiliau	3790	3753	3867
1 - Entry/ Mynediad	676	590	462
2 - Foundation / Sylfaen	136	118	131
3 - Intermediate / Canolradd	80	76	58
4 - Higher / Uwch	82	71	61
5 - Proficiency / Hyfedredd	91	95	78
Total Completed Compliance	4855	4703	4657
Total Not Completed Compliance	9809	9961	10007

Figure C16 – Table of Welsh Language Skills of Employees from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board in 2020-21 ²⁶

Each local authority has its own processes for recruiting staff.

Public Sector Body	Number of Posts	Welsh Language Essential	Welsh Language Desirable	Welsh Needs to be learnt in post	No Welsh Skills Required
Blaenau Gwent Council	161	2	159	0	0
Caerphilly CBC	690	4	684	42	7*
Monmouthshire County Council	166	1	165	0	0
Newport City Council	291	6	17	0	268
Torfaen CBC	334	12	3	0	319
ABUHB	2415	14	2258	18	125

Figure C17 – Table showing the Welsh Language requirements for posts advertised across the 5 Gwent LA's and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board during 2020-21 ²⁷

*These posts were assessed as no Welsh language skills necessary due to the Welsh language skills of the other team members. All vacancies however are advertised as Welsh desirable as a minimum requirement.

Each local authority has its own ways of recording the number of employees taking part in training. The numbers of staff taking part in Welsh language training has also been affected by Covid-19.

Public sector Body	Courses Attended
Blaenau Gwent Council	6 (Welsh in Workplace)
Caerphilly CBC	246
Monmouthshire County Council	25
Newport City Council	9 (plus 30 - Say Something in Welsh App)
Torfaen CBC	14
ABUHB	1,653 (across multiple courses)

Figure C18 – Table showing the Welsh language courses attended by staff across the 5 Gwent LA's and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board during 2020-21 ²⁸

4. Community cohesion

Participating in cultural activities can be a good way to build cohesive communities, where people from different backgrounds and ages come together, feel safe and respected and that they belong, including the socially isolated, the lonely and those with health issues.

The Covid 19 pandemic has seen communities come together to support each other, setting up support groups, foodbanks and other initiatives at a very local level. Many people now know their neighbours more than they did before. Technology has also played its part in supporting communities during the pandemic, allowing people to keep in touch remotely during lockdowns. It has allowed people to work from home, meaning they are spending more time in the places they live. However digital literacy, access and affordability of technology has been a barrier to some of our communities.

As well as being an opportunity to learn new skills, volunteering can enable people to meet, gain confidence and improve the places they live.

4.1 Community & social action

When considering community and social action voting turn out can show us how much our communities want, and feel able, to get involved in having a say within our political systems.

Across Gwent voter turnout decreased between 2016 and 2021, apart from in Monmouthshire which experienced a 4% rise in 2021.

This information can be perceived in several ways but could potentially show that local communities are not taking an interest in politics, or even feel that their voices are not heard and so choose not to take part.

Voting Turn Out (based on Senedd Elections)						
	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen	Gwent
% of voters 2016	42.1	43.4	48.6	40.8	38.3	42.6
% of voters 2021	29.0	43.0	52.5	40.5	37.0	40.4

Figure C19 – Table showing voting turn out for Senedd Elections for Local Authority areas across Gwent for 2016 and 2021
29

The National Survey for Wales shows a similar picture to voter turnout, with people across the region generally feeling less able to influence local decision making since 2013. It will be interesting to see if the response, both locally and nationally, to the Covid 19 pandemic impacts on people's views.

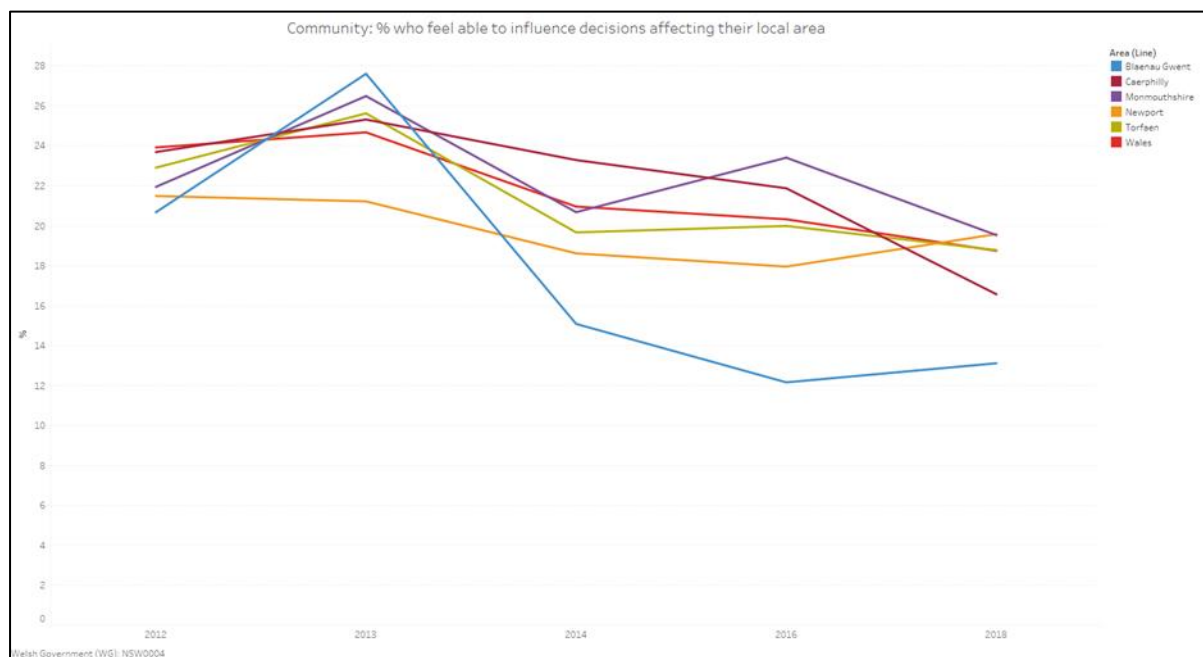


Figure C20 – Graph showing the percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area across Gwent³⁰

4.2 Volunteering

Available data shows that between 2016 and 2019 there was a decrease in volunteering across the Gwent region.

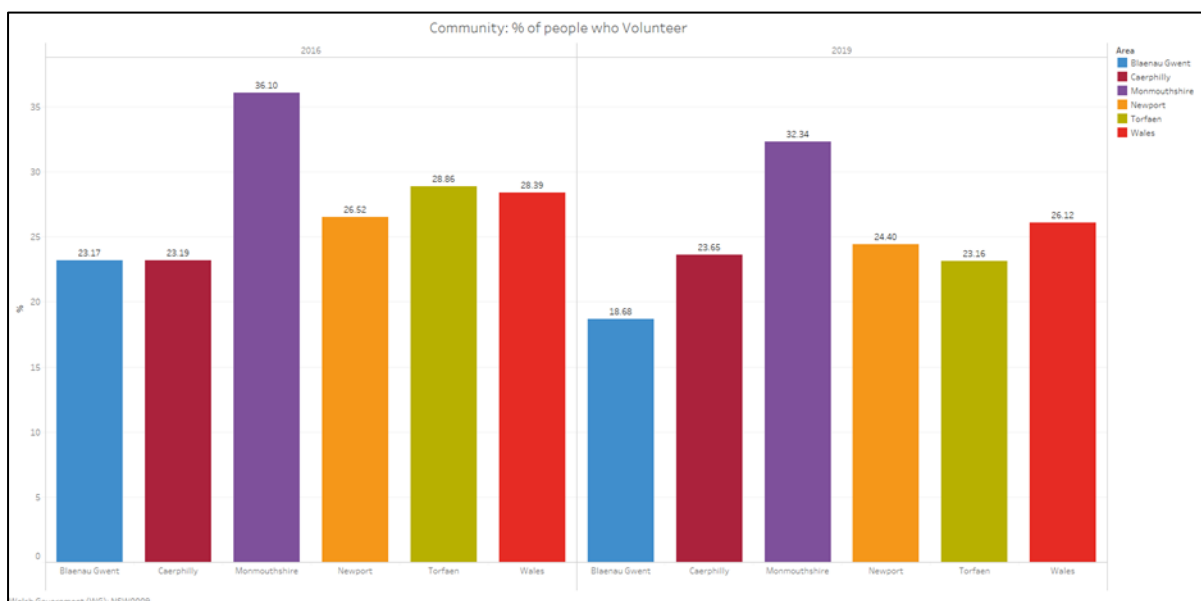


Figure C21 – Graph showing the percentage of people who volunteer across Gwent ³¹

The highest level of volunteering in Gwent can be seen in Monmouthshire and lowest in Blaenau Gwent. This is likely to be due to the differences in deprivation across the two areas. Lower levels of deprivation in Monmouthshire are likely to result in residents having more time and financial freedom to volunteer. In turn, this means that the residents of Monmouthshire are more likely to experience the rewards of volunteering than the rest of Gwent. This can be a direct result of the work the volunteer does as well as the positive impact on their well-being of having made a difference.

Data is not currently available for 2020 and 2021 and it is unknown how the pandemic will have affected the numbers of people who have taken part in volunteering. There is a potential that due to social distancing and shielding there could be a further decrease. It is also possible that people who were furloughed were able to use their time to support their communities. We are also aware of instances where communities have pulled together to volunteer during the pandemic which are highlighted in our “community strengths” section.

The Wales Centre for Public Policy has stated that “Understanding how volunteering has changed during the pandemic is complex. Some volunteers have seen little or no change to their role; many are volunteering for the first time; some have shifted to digital roles; and others have been forced to stop, either owing to services ceasing, or because they needed to shield or care for others.”

They continue to explain that “A range of studies suggest that overall rates of formal volunteering have remained broadly similar to the pre-pandemic period, but that this hides a significant shift in terms of who has and has not volunteered during this period” ³²

4.3 Community cohesion & belonging

How welcome people feel in their community or neighbourhood can have an impact on their sense of belonging. Gwent has relatively low levels of diversity in its communities which could mean those from other cultures, sexualities or belief systems feel less included or become the victims of hate crimes.

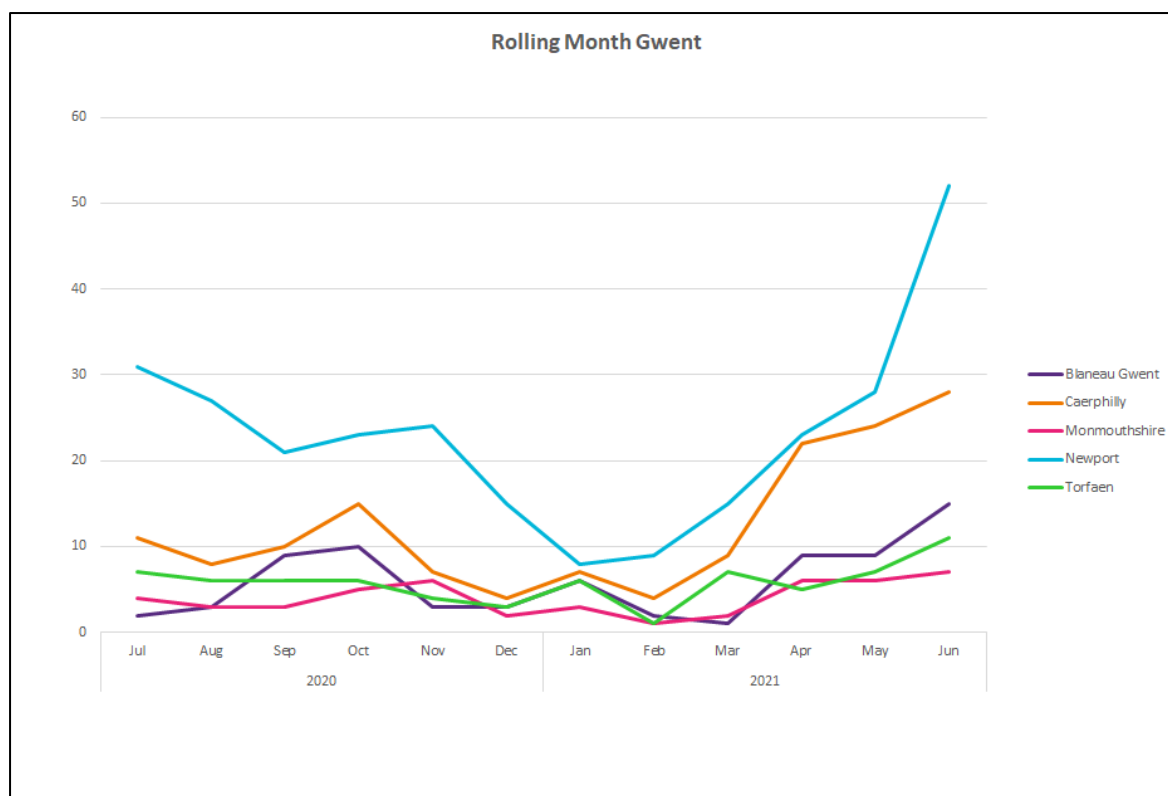


Figure C22 – Graph showing Reported Hate Crimes from Victim Support figures

Feelings of belonging have fluctuated in recent years across Gwent. Data shows that Monmouthshire has the highest numbers of individuals feeling like they belong to their community, with Torfaen showing the lowest. Areas of deprivation may result in individuals not having the disposable income to get as involved with community activities or due to working hours/job type not having the time to get involved. This in turn could result in higher levels of loneliness, isolation, or a feeling of not being part of their community. Again the pandemic may have impacted on a person's feelings of belonging to their community, either due to being more isolated or because they have interacted with the neighbours more.

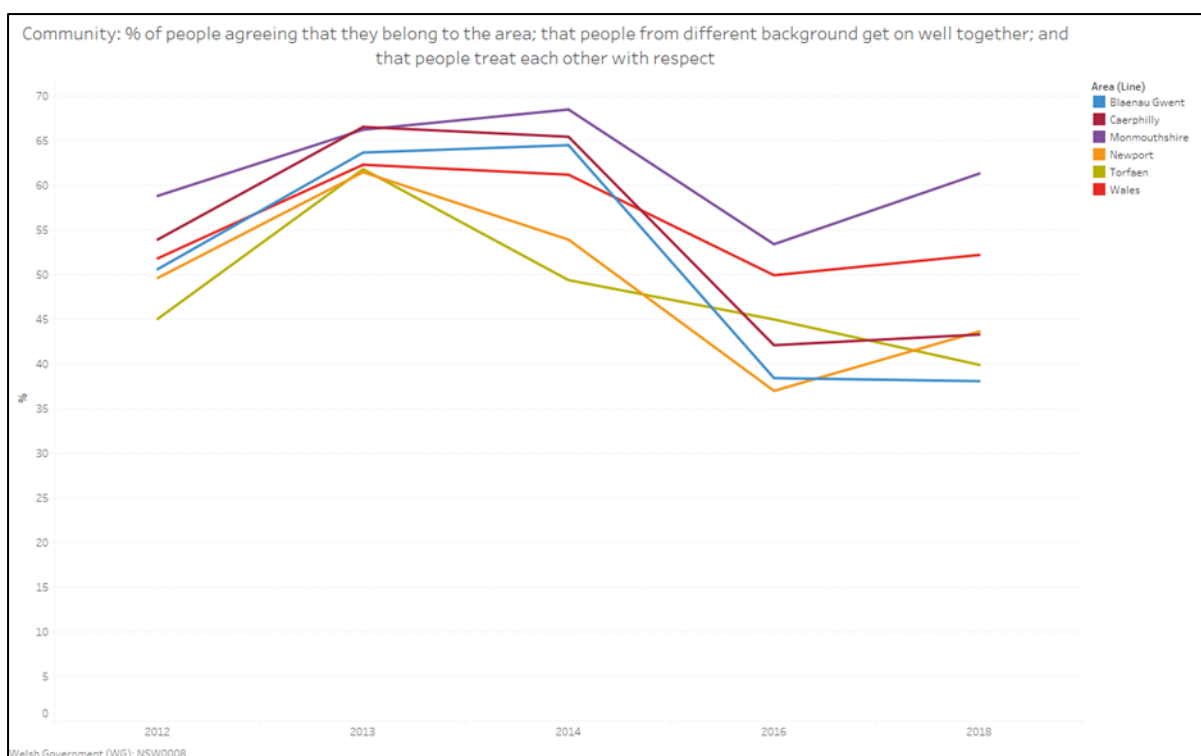


Figure C23 – Graph showing the percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect across Gwent ³³

5. Arts & heritage

Arts and heritage can bring people together, connect them with the places they live, link them to the past and broaden their outlook. They contribute to the local economy providing jobs and revenue. Participation can also have a positive impact on physical and mental health.

Data shows that across Gwent, between 2017 and 2019, there was a drop in the number of people attending or participating in arts, culture, or heritage at least 3 times a year, except for Caerphilly where there was a slight increase. ³⁴ The pandemic, and the resulting lockdowns, will have significantly impacted on people's ability to attend or take part in events and activities. While physical attendances will have reduced, virtual events and participation may have increased, especially amongst those less able to get about.

Community intelligence tells us that during the pandemic there was an increase in interest in arts and crafts. Many people, due to social distancing restrictions, had more leisure time and therefore took up new hobbies in this area.

Gwent can expect more extreme weather events in the future because of the changing climate. This could impact on the local landscape and on heritage assets and their ability to contribute to wider culture and the economy.

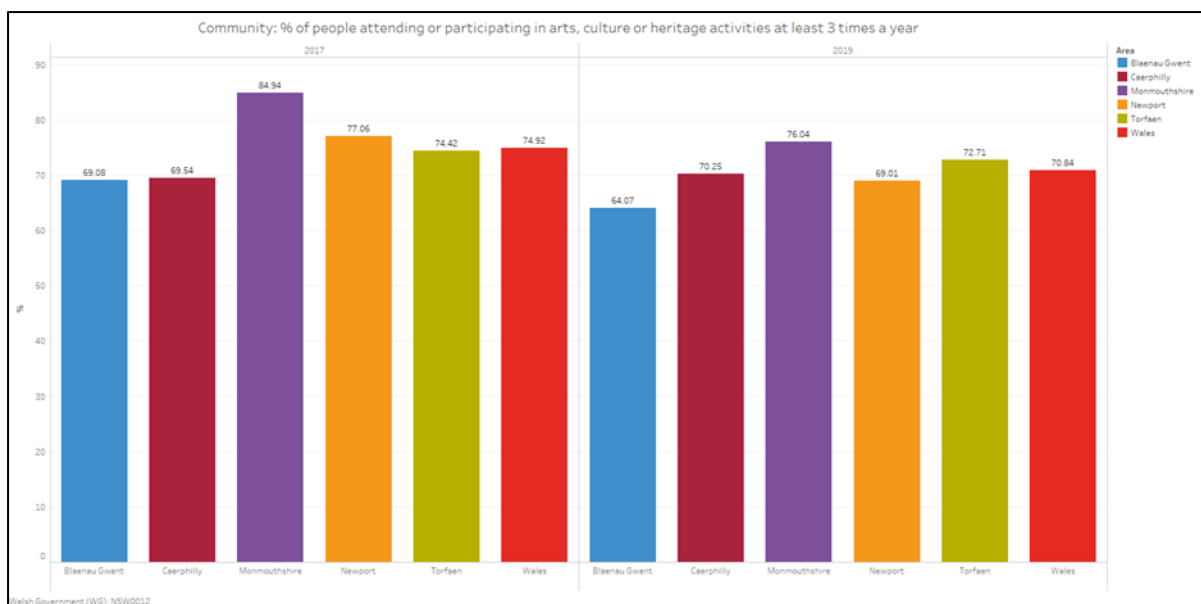


Figure C24 – Graph showing the percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year across Gwent

Again, this difference may be due to levels of deprivation and the amount of money people have available to access arts and culture. It may also be due to fewer places to engage with arts and culture.

5.1 Arts

Since 1993 (Adults) and 2007 (Children and Young People) the Arts Council of Wales³⁵ have conducted annual attendance and participation research surveys comparing the Wales average with a number of regions, including South East (Gwent).

Region	2017	2018	2019
Gwent	78.1%	↑ 84.4%	↑ 88.4%
Wales	80.7%	↑ 84.6%	↑ 86.8%

Figure C25 - Table showing the percentage of adults attending any artform once a year or more across Gwent and Wales during 2017-19

Other data sources shows that attendance levels for adults have consistently increased across Wales and for the Gwent region since 2017, with the average across Gwent in 2019 now above the Wales average.

Region	2017	2018	2019
Gwent	45.9%	↑ 48.3%	↑ 57.2%
Wales	45.8%	↓ 45.6%	↑ 49.3%

Figure C26 – Table showing the percentage of adults taking part in arts activities once a year or more across Gwent and Wales during 2017-19

Participation levels for adults across Gwent have increased each year since 2017 and has regularly been above the Wales average.

Region	2017	2018	2019
Gwent	79.5%	83.4%	80.5%
Wales	86.5%	89.3%	86.7%

Figure C27 – Table showing the percentage of children and young people attending any arts event once a year or more across Gwent and Wales during 2017-19

Attendance levels for children and young people reduced across Wales and the Gwent region in 2019, with Gwent being consistently below the Wales average.

Region	2017	2018	2019
Gwent	80.2%	82.2%	85.2%
Wales	87.4%	87.0%	86.1%

Figure C28 – Table showing the percentage of children and young people taking part in any artistic activity once a year or more across Gwent and Wales during 2017-19

Participation levels for children and young people have increased across Gwent since 2017, while decreasing across Wales. Even though this gap has reduced the average across Gwent in 2019 is still slightly below the Wales average.

It is important to note that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is not shown in these figures and the impact on visitor and participation numbers in this sector will be considerable. The following profiles provide an early indication of the impact of Covid-19 on the arts sector and some of the funding that has been directed to sustain the sector and to maintain the provision of cultural activity across the communities of Gwent.

[Arts Council of Wales – Blaenau-Gwent Profile](#)

[Arts Council of Wales – Caerphilly Profile](#)

[Arts Council of Wales – Monmouthshire Profile](#)

[Arts Council of Wales – Newport Profile](#)

[Arts Council of Wales – Torfaen Profile](#)

5.2 Cultural events

The cultural events that take place throughout the year across the Gwent region reflect the vibrancy and diversity of both the cultural heritage and the present-day strength of community-driven cultural activity.

Large-scale cultural events across the region bring economic benefits and raise the profile of specific sites, bringing in UK and international visitors. Small-scale community-generated events help to foster a feeling of community cohesion and belonging and can provide focal points for inter-generational cross-cultural activity.

Described below are just a few examples of cultural events taking place across the region.

- The Big Cheese festival will return as a live event in July 2022 following online versions in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Centred around a cheese market it includes cookery demonstrations and live music from local artists. Caerphilly Castle is transformed into a medieval encampment with displays and

battles. Organised by Caerphilly County Borough Council and supported by the Welsh Government, the festival attracts high numbers of visitors over the three-days (80,000 in 2012) and is the only dedicated cheese festival in Wales.

- Abergavenny Food Festival returns as a live event in September 2021. Enjoying an exceptional reputation as a place for chefs, food businesses, journalists, farmers and food producers to come together the festival includes product tastings, masterclasses, hands-on cookery lessons and topical debates. Engaging with influential chefs, commentators and journalists both nationally and internationally, the festival has grown to become one of the highest profile food events in Britain, attracting more than 30,000 visitors to Abergavenny and generating an estimated £4 million impact for the local economy within Monmouthshire.
- The Steelhouse Festival takes place at the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park, above Ebbw Vale in Blaenau Gwent and is officially the UK's highest music festival. With a capacity of 5000, over its 11-year history it has attracted many high-profile classic rock bands, attracting overseas visitors, raising awareness of the area and contributing to the local economy.
- The Usk Show has been taking place every September since 1844, creating an important focal point in the farming year for rural communities across Gwent. Organised by the Usk Farmers' Club and celebrating Monmouthshire farming and rural life, it is one of the biggest One-Day Agricultural Shows in the UK. Taking place at the 100-acre Usk Showground near the village of Gwernesney, over 300 traders attend each year.
- The third ABP Newport Wales Marathon & 10K takes place on Sunday 24 October 2021, having been deferred from 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A firm favourite on the Welsh running calendar, the route offers iconic landmarks, like the city's Transporter Bridge and the stunning scenery of the Gwent Levels – with its coastal wildlife and picturesque medieval villages. The supporting 10K race, which attracts some of the UK's top athletes, gives runners of all abilities the opportunity to get involved in the festival of running.
- Blaenavon World Heritage Day celebrates the town's World Heritage Site status. The heritage costume parade is an annual highlight for the town with a different theme every year. Other highlights include a Victorian fun fair, street entertainers, craft stalls, dancers, live music and special offers from local shops/businesses.
- In Blaenau Gwent, there is the ongoing development of The Bevan Festival in Tredegar that was suspended for 2 years but is likely to return in 2022. The county will also be hosting the UK Orienteering JK2022 that attracts elite and leisure athletes from around the world.
- Please see section 5.3 in the Economic Well-Being chapter for further details on the economic impact of tourism in Gwent. In addition, the Recreation, access and tourism section in the environmental chapter considers the role of ecosystem services in contributing to well-being in Gwent, in terms of providing a vital service for access, recreation and tourism.

5.3 Museums, heritage & landscapes

While landscape and heritage attractions play a vital role in the tourist economy, we also need to recognise how important they are to people's feeling of belonging and cultural identity.

The Natural Landscape

Gwent's natural landscape varies widely across the region from the upland valleys and hills of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen to the wooded farmland of the Wye Valley in Monmouthshire and the Gwent levels in Newport. The contribution that access to outdoor space, and particularly to a high quality natural environment, makes to well-being has become increasingly recognised. This has become even more apparent during the Covid 19 pandemic when national and regional lockdowns have meant that people have become more reliant on their local outdoor spaces for exercise and recreation. Activities such as walking, running, cycling, bird watching and wild water swimming all allow people to keep fit and active and to enjoy the natural world around them. Many residents of Gwent also take part in volunteering activities associated with the natural environment such as helping with path maintenance in areas popular with walkers, taking part in beach and river cleans and litter picks and maintaining or creating habitats that support local biodiversity.

Future risks to this valuable natural landscape include the effects of climate change that will cause habitat loss as well as flooding and erosion, potential development of natural areas for housing or commercial activity and, in some areas, over-use of the natural environment for recreation is becoming a problem.

The Historic Environment

People may feel pride in historically significant sites in their local area and enjoy protected historic landscapes. Heritage sites, museums and historic landscapes also offer many people the opportunity to get involved with volunteering and enjoy and connect with their environment.

Gwent has a rich array of historic sites, landscapes and museums. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that most of these sites experienced lengthy periods of closure in 2020-21. The full effects of this have yet to be fully understood and targeted funding may reduce some of the possible negative outcomes for the sector.

The Heritage Lottery Fund have announced refocused priorities for heritage projects for 2021-22 in response to issues and trends emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic. Their funding priorities will be for heritage projects that:

- boost the local economy
- encourage skills development and job creation
- support wellbeing
- create better places to live, work and visit
- improve the resilience of organisations working in heritage

Some examples of notable historic places and heritage attractions across Gwent include:

- The Transporter Bridge Newport
- Tredegar House Newport
- National Roman Legion Museum
Caerleon - Newport
- Big Pit National Coal Museum,
Torfaen
- Blaenavon World Heritage Site,
Torfaen
- Cefn Golau Cholera Cemetery,
Blaenau Gwent
- Nantyglo Roundhouse, Towers
Blaenau Gwent
- Sirhowy Ironworks, Blaenau Gwent
- Tintern Abbey, Monmouthshire
- Raglan Castle, Monmouthshire
- Abergavenny Castle,
Monmouthshire
- Caerphilly Castle, Caerphilly
- The Winding House, Caerphilly
- Bedwellty House and Park
- Cwm Memorial Garden
- The Guardian Monument
- Senghenydd Memorial Garden

The [RSA's Heritage Index](#) (see table in Section 11) ranks local authorities across Wales as an overall score, by heritage potential, assets and activities along with a range of domains.

Heritage Index Rank 2020: Total Scores									
Overall		Heritage Potential		Assets		Activities			
LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016		
2 Monmouthshire	→ 0	1 Torfaen	→ 0	2 Newport	→ 0	6 Monmouthshire	→ 0		
6 Newport	↑ 5	2 Blaenau Gwent	↓ -10	3 Torfaen	→ 0	10 Newport	↑ 5		
10 Torfaen	↑ 4	4 Newport	↑ 2	4 Monmouthshire	→ 0	19 Blaenau Gwent	↓ -7		
15 Blaenau Gwent	↑ 1	10 Caerphilly	↑ 1	6 Blaenau Gwent	↑ 6	20 Torfaen	→ 0		
22 Caerphilly	→ 0	11 Monmouthshire	↓ -4	19 Caerphilly	→ 0	22 Caerphilly	→ 0		

Heritage Index Ranks 2020: Domains									
Historic Built Environment		Museums, Archives & Artefacts		Industrial Heritage		Parks & open space			
LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016		
1 Torfaen	↑ 7	4 Newport	↑ 2	1 Newport	↑ 4	3 Monmouthshire	↑ 1		
2 Monmouthshire	↓ -1	5 Blaenau Gwent	↑ 5	2 Torfaen	↓ -1	4 Blaenau Gwent	↑ 3		
15 Newport	→ 0	8 Monmouthshire	→ 0	4 Monmouthshire	→ 0	13 Caerphilly	→ 0		
18 Blaenau Gwent	↑ 4	15 Torfaen	↓ -3	12 Blaenau Gwent	↑ 6	20 Newport	↑ 1		
21 Caerphilly	↓ -1	22 Caerphilly	→ 0	20 Caerphilly	↑ 2	21 Torfaen	↓ -3		

Landscape and natural heritage		Culture & Memories		General	
LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016	LA	Change from 2016
2 Newport	→ 0	3 Monmouthshire	↓ -1	9 Monmouthshire	→ 0
7 Torfaen	↑ 12	8 Newport	↓ -4	14 Torfaen	→ 0
12 Blaenau Gwent	↓ -11	15 Blaenau Gwent	→ 0	18 Caerphilly	↓ -2
15 Monmouthshire	↓ -6	20 Torfaen	↑ 1	19 Newport	→ 0
18 Caerphilly	↑ 3	22 Caerphilly	↓ -2	21 Blaenau Gwent	→ 0

Figure C29 – Table showing the Heritage Index Rank for 2020 across Gwent ³⁶

In 2020 there was a huge variation in the rankings for the Gwent local authority areas which positioned as follows: Monmouthshire (2nd), Newport (6th), Torfaen (10th), Blaenau Gwent (15th) and Caerphilly (22nd). Compared to 2016 most of the LAs in Gwent improved their ranking, with the only exception being Monmouthshire and Caerphilly who remained the same.

For Heritage Potential (highest ranking has the greatest untapped potential from its heritage), the local authority in Gwent with the highest potential was Torfaen (1st) followed by Blaenau Gwent (2nd), Newport (4th), Caerphilly (10th) and Monmouthshire (11th). This illustrates that activity could take place in the first three local authorities in this list to fully realise the potential of their heritage assets. Future risk to such activity could be lack of resources or lack of specialist knowledge at a local level. However, if the potential of the heritage assets in question is not realised, the local economy will not be boosted by additional tourism and recreation activity and any physical heritage assets could degrade and be lost to future generations.

5.4 Tourism

Gwent is the gateway to Wales for many visitors travelling from other regions of the UK and beyond. The tourism sector generates economic, environmental, cultural and health benefits that enrich the lives of visitors and of local communities. Historic sites and landscapes, highlighted in the sections above, as well as visitor and leisure attractions, are often highly valued by their local communities, whilst also contributing to the economic health of the area. For more information about the economic impact of tourism see section 5.3 in the Economic

Well-Being chapter. Tourism was worth over £950million to Gwent prior to the Covid pandemic.

5.5 Creative Economy

The creative industries have become one of the fastest growing parts of the Welsh economy. The sector creates jobs and helps to promote Wales and its culture and talent on the international stage. In January 2020, the Welsh Government launched Creative Wales, as a Welsh Government agency, to champion the creative industries in Wales. The creative industries, particularly music and film have been badly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, local clusters of innovation, particularly around digital technology, continue to flourish and form part of the transition to an economy that is supported by new and emerging technologies, replacing some of the traditional drivers of the Welsh economy. These new and emerging sectors are providing valuable employment opportunities at the local level and local FE and HE providers across Gwent are supporting this transition by providing training and qualifications targeted at providing a highly skilled workforce for these new and emerging industries.

Footnote: [Cardiff Capital Region Industrial and Economic Plan](#)

6. Leisure & sporting activities

Sports and leisure activities play an important part in supporting people to live healthy lives, where they can achieve their potential. They also provide opportunities for people to meet socially, have fun in the outdoors or try something new.

The UK climate risk assessment identifies that Wales is likely to be warmer in the future.³⁷. This may provide more opportunities for increased outdoor sports and leisure activity in Gwent in the future.

Future Gwent could be healthier if people did more physical activity.

6.1 Leisure

In Wales, most forest sites and national nature reserves managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), saw a 90% reduction in visits during the first lockdown in March to June 2020, but a substantial rebound during the more open summer season from July to September, with visitor numbers at some sites almost doubling compared to previous years.

Tourism has also been heavily affected by the pandemic, with lockdown restrictions impacting on businesses and the extended economy during some of the peak holiday times of the year. Many people are now choosing to stay in the UK for day trips, short breaks and holidays instead of flying abroad, which is good for the economy, and the global environment, but is increasing pressure on some popular tourist sites.

6.2 Participation in sporting activities

The National Survey for Wales asked 12,300 people whether they took part in any type of sport or physical activity.

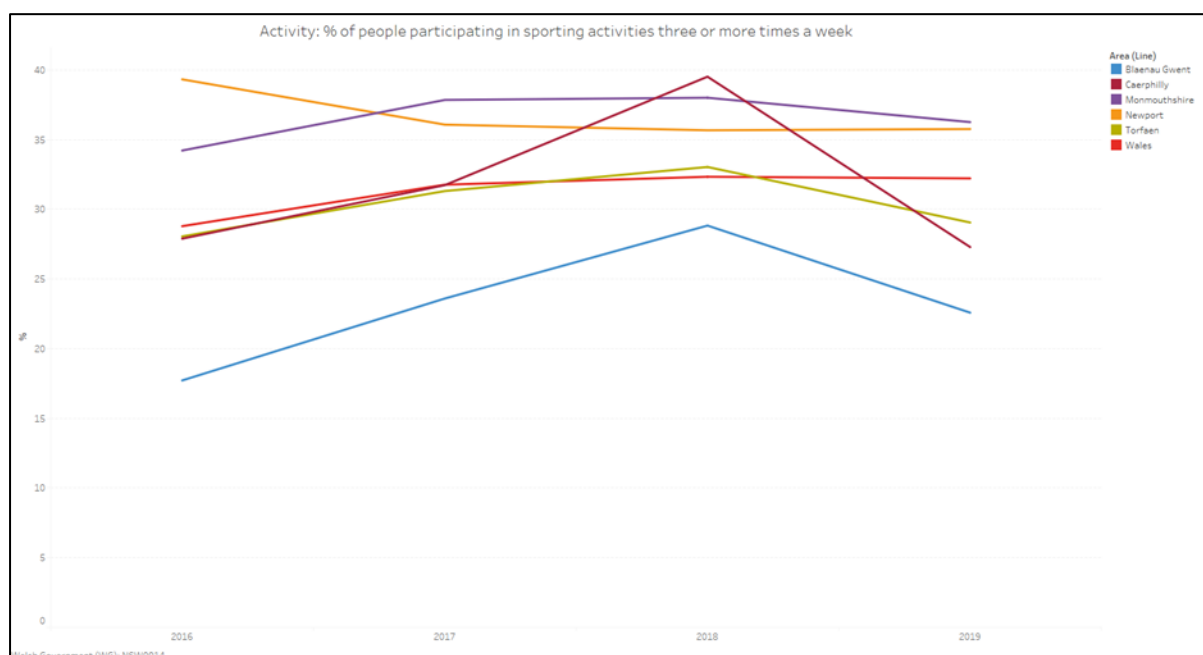


Figure C30 – Graph showing the percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week across Gwent³⁸

Out of the individuals who completed the survey in the Gwent area, the following results were found:

Taking part in any sort of physical activity				
% of individuals who said "yes"	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Blaenau Gwent	45	49	56	43
Caerphilly	56	56	67	56
Monmouthshire	70	70	64	62
Newport	69	67	65	63
Torfaen	61	59	65	59

Figure C34 – Table showing the percentage of people who took part in any sort of physical activity across the Gwent local authority areas³⁹

The survey showed that the area with the lowest numbers of people taking part in sport or physical activity was Blaenau Gwent, and the highest was Monmouthshire. However, the sample size is limited which makes it difficult to draw wider conclusions about overall physical activity in Gwent.

Access to green space and walking routes or leisure facilities within easy reach may make it easier for residents to be active. People's work or caring responsibilities may also have an impact.

Parkruns have become increasingly popular in recent years and there are numerous parkruns taking place on a weekly basis across the Gwent region. Newport has the most with three however, surprisingly, Monmouthshire has zero.

	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen	Gwent
No of Park Runs	2	2	0	3	2	9

Figure C35 – Table showing the number of Parkruns held across Gwent ⁴⁰

The Parkrun in Gwent with the highest number of attendees recorded was in Newport in 2016, however four park runs reached their peak popularity during 2020. Future analysis will be needed to show the effects of Covid-19 on numbers participating either as a volunteer or runner at parkruns.

Name of Parkrun	Local Authority Area	Highest Attendance	Year of Highest Attendance
Newport	Newport	711	2016
Riverfront	Newport	628	2019
Brynbach	Blaenau Gwent	481	2020
Penallta	Caerphilly	375	2020
Aberbeeg	Blaenau Gwent	364	2020
Cwmbran	Torfaen	284	2019
Coed Cefn-pwll-du	Caerphilly	237	2020
Pontypool	Torfaen	197	2019
Rogiet	Newport	138	2018

Figure C36 – Table showing attendances at Parkruns held across Gwent ⁴¹

Children and sport

Sports Wales' School Sports survey, undertaken in 2015 and 2018, shows us that there has been an overall decrease in activity in school children, with those doing no physical activity increasing and those being active three or more times a week decreasing. Factors including lack of parental resources to fund participation in organised activity and availability of local facilities, perceptions of child safety when undertaking activities away from home or school can also impact on physical activity in children. Future analysis may also show that Covid-19 has further reduced physical activity in children.

%	No frequent activity			Once a week			Twice a week			Three times a week or more		
	2015	2018		2015	2018		2015	2018		2015	2018	
Blaenau Gwent	32.7	34.9	↑	11.4	11.8	↑	12.9	15.6	↑	43.0	37.7	↓
Caerphilly	31.1	32.4	↑	9.8	10.2	↑	12.0	13.7	↑	47.1	43.7	↓
Monmouthshire	27.3	25.7	↓	11.0	13.1	↑	12.9	16.3	↑	48.8	45.0	↓
Newport	27.6	23.0	↓	9.3	7.8	↓	13.2	11.1	↓	49.9	58.1	↑
Torfaen	32.2	33.2	↑	10.4	11.1	↑	12.5	14.5	↑	45.0	41.1	↓

Figure C37 – Table showing activity in sport by school children across Gwent ⁴²

Play sufficient assessments tell us about play opportunities available in each local authority area across the region and if they meet the needs of young people living in Gwent.

The main issues for Gwent are

- securing and developing the play workforce,
- ensuring that play is integrated in all relevant policy and implementation agendas and
- ensuring that accessible and affordable transport options are in place to support equal access to play facilities.

However over-all across Gwent play sufficiency assessment shows that needs are being met well.

Each local authorities play assessments can be found here:

[Blaenau Gwent](#)⁴³

[Caerphilly](#)⁴⁴

[Monmouthshire](#)⁴⁵

[Newport](#)⁴⁶

[Torfaen](#)⁴⁷

7. Community strengths

The communities that make up Gwent are extremely diverse, some are urban, some rural but in every area of the region there are examples of community members working together to improve their local environment and the lives of those that live there.

There are many examples of community projects that are linked through the framework of the Integrated Wellbeing Networks as well as informal projects set up and managed by local people for their community. Below are some examples that illustrate the strength of positive community activity across Gwent.

8.1 Blaenau Gwent

Tredeggar Community Taskforce

The Tredeggar Community Task Force are a group brought together by Cymru Creations in the very early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak. Cymru Creations are a small community interest business specialising in film making. The Taskforce offered a range of support in response to the Covid-19 emergency within Blaenau Gwent. The council's Locality Response Teams worked closely with the Taskforce throughout the pandemic to source local support for shielding residents in need of prescriptions or shopping deliveries. The project quickly grew to a group of thirty volunteers, taking over 200 calls a day and delivering 250 bags of free food parcels per week.

8.2 Caerphilly

Centre of Sporting Excellence

The Centre of Sporting Excellence (CSE) provides football and rugby facilities to support a range of clubs and organisations across the county borough.

The CSE also supports sports education through collaborative partnerships with Coleg y Cymoedd and delivers the Disability Six Nations Event.

The CSE supports the vision of the Sport & Active Recreation Strategy 2019 - 2029 (SARS) of encouraging healthy lifestyles and supporting residents to be more active, more often.

8.3 Newport

Greening Maindee

Maindee Unlimited, a group of residents and partner organisations, are working to enhance and create new green spaces in the Maindee area of Newport. Over the past year, the Greening Maindee team have transformed the grounds of Eveswell Community Centre, creating food growing raised beds, planting an orchard and installing a rain garden. The space has been developed within the framework of a 'Food For Life' programme. The space provides access opportunities for groups with learning difficulties, schools, and residents.

Funding has also been secured to transform a former toilet block into a café and community space for all. Facilities include an outdoor performance area, a children's climbing wall and

a woodland themed planting area alongside the café. The café will be run with the aim of achieving zero waste and with low environmental impact behaviours.

8.4 Torfaen

Panteg House

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic there was huge community support in Torfaen, volunteers came together in a range of settings to support those who needed it most. Panteg House is just one example of the fantastic work undertaken by community volunteers.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic volunteers at Panteg House supported the provision of free school meals to local school children. This developed into the creation of a food bank to support the whole community. Volunteers also created partnerships with Women's Aid, Women's Refuge, Age Connect and the Community Connect Team. The service continues to run and has supported other foodbanks within the county. Close working links with local schools have also helped to identify families in need of further support via the free school meals programme.

8.5 Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire's A County That Serves (ACTS) volunteering programme is helping to highlight and support volunteering opportunities available within the county. A volunteering toolkit and network are in place and Leading Volunteering training is delivered to staff that support volunteers. A Volunteer Kinetic digital management system is in place and service area champions have also been introduced to ensure that all current and new volunteers are recruited through the appropriate channels. GAVO and the council delivered a 'Power of Community' event in March 2020, which brought together volunteers, community groups and organisations to focus on all aspects of the Active Citizenship well-being step. 130 people attended the event, which explored and challenged the principles of Active Citizenship in Monmouthshire.

Community areas

Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
Ebbw Fawr North Ebbw Fach South Ebbw Fach Sirhowy	Caerphilly Basin Lower Islwyn Upper Rhymney Valley Mid Valleys West	Abergavenny Chepstow & Lower Wye Monmouth Severnside Usk & Raglan	City Central East & South East North East North West South West	Blaenavon Cwmbran Pontypool

	Mid Valleys East			
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8. What are people telling us

Throughout the wellbeing questionnaire, residents across Gwent highlighted opportunities and suggested methods of improvement that helped us identify the quality of wellbeing across Gwent.

Cultural Wellbeing encompasses areas such as identity, shared beliefs and local behaviours. When analysing respondents' views regarding the quality of wellbeing within Gwent, it is important to understand that Cultural Wellbeing also includes measures such as tourism, diversity, language, and participation within cultural events.

The beauty of Gwent was a theme throughout the feedback in the survey. Across all areas in the region, people told us that the surrounding countryside and **green spaces** were special to them. Additionally, people across the region expressed the **quality of local surroundings**, highlighting the attractive nature of their local area and how this lends to **improving their mental health**. Whether this takes the form of canals, walking routes, cycling routes or parks and fields the community feel passionately about the impact that these have upon their wellbeing. It is clear that access to the countryside is very important for Gwent's residents as it was a consistent response within our engagement analysis (See figure 1: for the top 3 responses per question given by Gwent Residents)

Communities want **as much green space as possible** to be accessible to them and the areas that are already available to be properly maintained. Many communities asked for **more space, parks and play areas**.

When considering what we can do to help communities create the future that they want many residents asked for **more control** over green spaces and for communities to be given **the power to develop and take responsibility** for them. Some concerns were also raised regarding green space being used for housing developments.

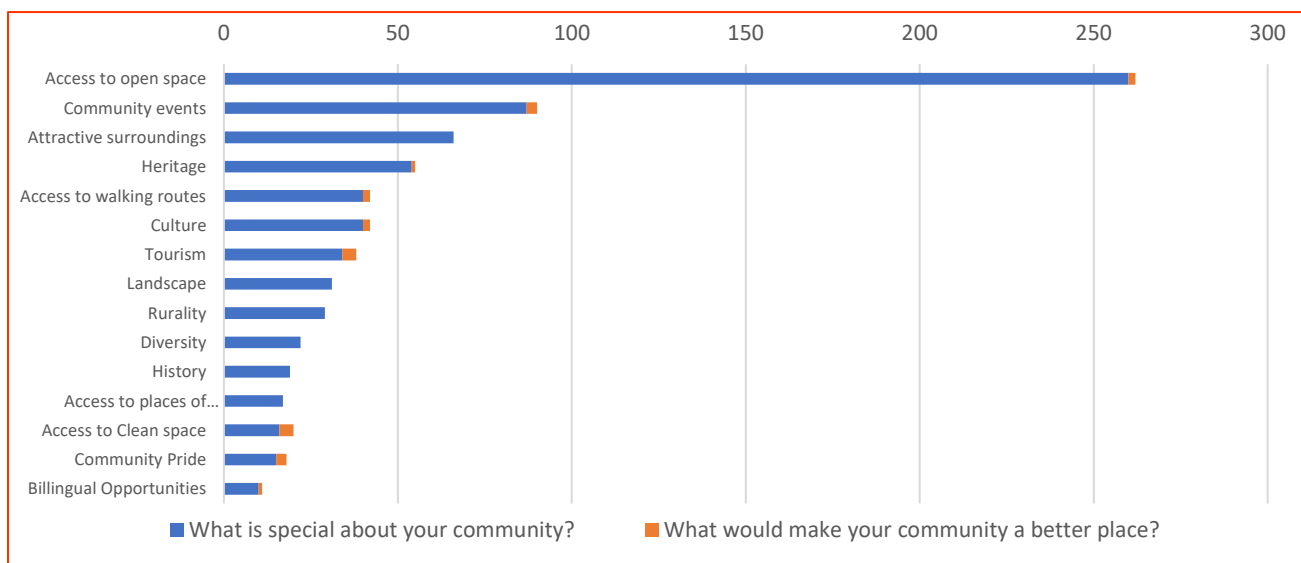
What is special about your community?	What would make it a better place?	What things are important to you and your family?	What would you like your community to look like in the future?	How can your community work with us to make that happen?
Access to open space (136)	Access to open space (24)	Access to open space (56)	Access to open space (42)	Culture (5)
Attractive Surroundings (56)	Tourism (10)	Access to walking routes (11)	Diversity (18)	Community Events (4)
Rurality (29)	Heritage (6)	Culture (10)	Access to clean space (13)	Access to open space (3)

According to residents, some of the most special aspects about living in Gwent related to outdoor space with over half of Cultural wellbeing responses coming from a quality and accessibility point of view.

(Figure: 1 - Top 3 responses per wellbeing survey question)

Communities across the region expressed their interest in more cultural activities, particularly around arts and music. There is a ***strong sense of community*** across Gwent and residents expressed the wish to have more events held for their communities. This would not only give people the chance to meet others and enjoy a social life within their local area but also encourage Tourism within Gwent through things such as diversity and giving people ***opportunities to express use of diverse language*** across Gwent.

Residents also mentioned interest in local history and opportunities to showcase local landmarks that will contribute to further tourism opportunities across Gwent, as well as ***learning more about heritage*** within Gwent



Over 250 responses from our engagement survey expressed how people living in Gwent think that access to open space and greenery is a special aspect within their community, telling us how it is easily accessible and helps towards improving wellbeing among residents.

They also told us that more cultural events would help bring residents together as a community. In line with this, residents told us how community events would help bring more Tourism opportunities across Gwent.

(Figure 2 - : What residents say is special and what would make their Community better?)

It is clear from our analysis that there are a lot of Cultural opportunities available for residents within Gwent and that being able to access open space and greenery is something that residents greatly appreciate. We recognise that this could be used to develop other areas of Cultural Wellbeing such as the ability to enjoy local surroundings and being able to access clean areas across the region without any restrictions.

However we also acknowledge that more work could be done to improve cultural wellbeing across Gwent in aspects such as Tourism and Community pride. Respondents told us that improving on these aspects through methods such as litter picking groups and better advertisement of the beauty of Gwent would contribute to making their communities a better place for all.

9. Future trends and challenges

Culture has an important role to play in supporting people's well-being both now and in the future, from bringing people together, helping to combat loneliness and providing opportunities to learn new skills, to supporting healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of the environment.

In terms of long-term economic well-being, the Creative economy, has been identified by Cardiff Capital Region, as having an role to play in the prosperity of the regional economy going forward⁴⁸ Gwent needs to make sure that it has the right skills and employment base to benefit from potential opportunities related to the creative economy sector, there may also be opportunities for business diversification or new start-ups.

There may also be future economic opportunities related to tourism and outdoor sports and leisure activity due to warmer temperatures associated with a changing climate. However, Gwent can also expect more extreme weather events in the future, which could impact on the viability of outdoor activities, festivals and events. The UK Climate Risk assessment identifies risks to the natural environment and heritage from extreme weather and wildfire events⁴⁹. This could impact on the distinct local landscape and heritage assets and their ability to contribute to our shared cultural history and to the cultural economy.

In terms of long-term social well-being, we know that some of our communities are experiencing social and economic inequalities, which can impact on their ability to take part in some cultural activities. How these develop in the future, particularly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and leaving the European Union, could affect people's ability to get involved in cultural activities with affordability and access both potential problems. How we tackle these challenges in the future should enable everyone to get more involved and new, and diverse cultural activities to emerge.

A potentially positive future development is that the trend towards an aging population is likely to result in more people able to support their communities through volunteering. However, this is also dependent on people continuing to enjoy reasonable levels of physical and mental health beyond what is currently considered as working age.

The information provided in Section 3 above shows a push towards improving Welsh language provision in Gwent. This will help sustain Welsh culture and identity for future generations and support local place making. This progress will need to be supported by ever greater levels of digital inclusion. Greater access to digital connectivity will also be more generally required in the future to ensure that there are no barriers to access to cultural provision and community activity that may be increasingly delivered and promoted across digital platforms. Future advances in technology, such as artificial intelligence and robotics, will also need to take account the Welsh language.

Future generations living in Gwent could be healthier if people did more physical activity. As outlined in Section 6 this will need to be supported by good access to local facilities as well as the means to access them. This includes balancing land-use pressures to ensure that future generations can enjoy Gwent's rich, landscapes and outdoor spaces.

The recent briefing by the Wales Centre for Public Policy (2021) highlighted the limitations of evidence around cultural activity, and how this will affect PSBs' ability to understand the cultural landscape and identify future trends and challenges. It recommends that any evaluation of future trends in this area references the current lack of evidence around the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the arts, culture and heritage sectors. Lockdown restrictions have meant that many venues have been closed for long periods of time and some cultural providers may have permanently ceased operation. However, as providers have, necessarily, changed the nature of their operations, there may also have been some improvements to accessibility as digital provision may have made previously physically remote content available. Conversely the move to more digital provision may have excluded those who are less enabled, sensory disabilities or less confident in using technology.

The briefing also warns that lack of robust evidence and data means that future trends, beyond the immediate impact of Covid-19, will continue to be difficult to predict. This will limit the extent to which future interventions can be targeted at the groups that might benefit most from support for cultural activities within a particular demographic category or a specific local community. More ongoing evaluation and assessment will also be needed to identify the contribution culture makes to well-being as other factors will also affect an individual's likelihood, and ability, to engage with cultural activity and their overall well-being relative to other members of their communities.

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- ¹ [Cardiff Capital Region Industrial and Economic Plan](#)
- ² Census 2011
- ³ Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS
- ⁴ Census 2011
- ⁵ Census 2011
- ⁶ Census 2011
- ⁷ Census 2011
- ⁸ Census 2001 & 2011
- ⁹ Census 2001 & 2011
- ¹⁰ Census 2001 & 2011
- ¹¹ Census 2001 & 2011
- ¹² Census 2001 & 2011
- ¹³ [Home Office](#)
- ¹⁴ [Home Office](#)
- ¹⁵ [United Nations](#)
- ¹⁶ [Home Office](#)
- ¹⁷ Census 2001 & 2011
- ¹⁸ [Annual Population Survey \(APS\), ONS](#)
- ¹⁹ Cymraeg 2050
- ²⁰ [Blaenau Gwent Council – Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21](#)
- ²¹ [Caerphilly County Borough Council – Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21](#)
- ²² [Monmouthshire County Council – Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21](#)
- ²³ [Newport City Council – Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21](#)
- ²⁴ [Torfaen County Borough Council – Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21](#)
- ²⁵ Annual monitoring report for Gwent Police
- ²⁶ Monitoring Report
- ²⁷ Monitoring Reports
- ²⁸ Monitoring Reports
- ²⁹ [Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament](#)
- ³⁰ National Survey for Wales
- ³¹ National Survey for Wales
- ³² Wan Mak & Fancourt, 2020; DCMS, 2020
- ³³ National Survey for Wales
- ³⁴ National Survey for Wales
- ³⁵ [Arts Council for Wales](#)
- ³⁶ [RSA's Heritage Index](#)
- ³⁷ UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017: Evidence Report. Summary for Wales.
- ³⁸ National Survey for Wales
- ³⁹ [National Survey for Wales](#)
- ⁴⁰ Parkrun website
- ⁴¹ [Parkrun website](#)
- ⁴² [Sport Wales School Sport Survey](#)
- ⁴³ Blaenau Gwent Sufficiency of Play Assessment
- ⁴⁴ Caerphilly Sufficiency of Play Assessment
- ⁴⁵ Monmouthshire Sufficiency of Play Assessment
- ⁴⁶ Newport Sufficiency of Play Assessment
- ⁴⁷ Torfaen Sufficiency of Play Assessment
- ⁴⁸ [Cardiff Capital Region Industrial and Economic Plan](#)
- ⁴⁹ UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017: Evidence Report. Summary for Wales.