



For economic and social change

Impact Report 2021-2022



Our key performance indicators



Businesses receiving support from *Social Business Wales*

335



Jobs created by the *Social Business Wales* teams

190



New social businesses incorporated by the *Social Business Wales* New Start team

114



New employee-owned businesses

5



Jobs safeguarded

103



People supported to get online through *Digital Communities Wales*

40,610



Staff or volunteers trained by *Digital Communities Wales* to gain digital skills

2,152



Groups and organisations assisted to develop community share schemes

13



Amount raised
through community
share schemes

£854,411



Groups and organisations
assisted to develop
community-led housing

64



Turnover generated
through contracted and
grant income

£6.5m



Staff who said they'd
recommend Cwmpas as
a great place to work

89%



Staff who said they were
proud to work here

93%



Client satisfaction
score

6.83/7



Our work

Creating a fairer, greener economy

We are working to increase the proportion of the economy made up by social enterprises, co-operatives and employee-owned businesses.

Building a more equal society

We are working to advance social justice by increasing access, equity, diversity and participation.

Making positive change happen

We are working in co-operation with people and organisations to take action for social good.



Introduction

Derek Walker, our Chief Executive, introduces this year's report

This is the first Impact Report that we are publishing under our new name, Cwmpas. After 40 successful years as the Wales Co-operative Centre, we decided the time was right to pursue a new name and brand for our organisation that has expanded and evolved so much. We believe Cwmpas does that perfectly, while staying true to our Welsh, co-operative roots.

Alongside our new name, we launched a new five-year strategy 2022-27. We believe our economy and society should work differently, putting people and planet first. Our new strategy sets out how we will help to achieve that much needed change. The strategy was co-produced with our clients, partners and colleagues, with expert advice from the New Economics Foundation. As a result I believe it is a more ambitious strategy

than we have ever committed to previously. These difficult times mean it is more important than ever we are bold about the difference we want to make.

As always, I want to thank our members, clients, partners and funders for working with us. Without these relationships, we would not achieve our goals. Above all, I want to thank the board and employees of Cwmpas, who work tirelessly to deliver for the people and communities we seek to support.

We are ambitious about our plans for the future and are delighted with the impact our projects have already made.

I hope you enjoy reading our Impact Report for 2021-22.



Programmes delivered by Cwmpas

Social Business Wales

Our *Social Business Wales* team has been supporting new, innovating and growing social enterprises in every region of the country, across many different sectors. With a renewed political focus on building prosperous, sustainable and resilient places, it is more clear than ever that social enterprise and community empowerment are essential components of achieving that vision. Funded by the European Regional Development Fund through Welsh Government, this year we helped 114 social business start-ups, supported 335 others to grow, and created 190 FTE jobs.

The SBW programme also provides fully-funded support for business owners looking to transfer their business to their employees through employee ownership. In the last five years there has been a dramatic rise in the number of employee-owned businesses in Wales and with support from Welsh Government the sector is set to become a more prominent feature of the Welsh economy.

Community Shares Wales Resilience Project

We help communities raise investment to protect and strengthen the things that matter to them. Our work in this area is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund Wales. This year 13 communities received our support to prepare a share scheme. 3 that launched during the year raised £854,411 and were successful in purchasing a local asset.

Digital Communities Wales

Our Digital Communities Wales team has continued to help people across Wales to get online, and digital inclusion has been made a key part of the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy for Wales. We were delighted that the funding for this crucial project was extended until 2025, and we will take forward key pieces of work with new partners to support individuals that are still digitally excluded.

This year we supported 40,610 people to get online and trained 2,152 staff or volunteers to gain digital skills.

Communities Creating Homes

Co-operative and community-led housing means bringing people together to decide what kind of homes and communities they want to live in. People with a shared vision can come together and have an influential voice. They play an essential role alongside councils, developers and investors to create affordable homes which meet local community needs. Thanks to funding from Welsh Government and the Nationwide Foundation, in 2021/22 we worked with 10 existing housing co-ops managing 143 homes and supported 54 groups with potential to develop 730 new co-operative homes.

Our work across Wales

North Wales

Our work in North Wales over the last 12 months has improved skills, inclusive economic opportunities, and connectivity. We've helped people gain digital skills and have supported new and existing social businesses to create better quality employment opportunities, to develop a skilled workforce and more connected communities within the region.





Caban Cyf – Social Business Wales client

Caban Cyf is a co-operative social enterprise which runs a sustainable cafe-restaurant and provides a home for local enterprises to thrive. There are 12 local enterprises located at Caban, representing a fantastic mix of artists, programmers, photographers, environmental charities, sound engineers and osteopaths. The Covid-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the organisation which sought support from *Social Business Wales* to aid its recovery. Chris Wright, an Executive Director of Caban Cyf, Gwynedd commented: "The support Caban Cyf received from *Social Business Wales* came at a time when the business was under a great deal of pressure as we prepared to reopen following the 2021 mandated shut down. To be able to access business support of this type and at a speed and quality that it was delivered, was hugely supportive and will continue to be of benefit into the future."



Eryri Co-op – Social Business Wales and Digital Communities Wales client

Eryri Co-op is a person-centred not-for-profit organisation providing health and wellness services across North Wales. With support from *Social Business Wales*, the co-op began developing and growing a network of volunteers to support vulnerable and isolated members of their communities. Following a conversation with DCW early in 2021, it developed its E-Chat platform, which launched on 1st March (St David's Day) last year. The service helps support digitally excluded people of all ages through loneliness and isolation by connecting them with others.

To develop their digital offer even further, Eryri Co-op worked with DCW's Pathfinder project to access mobile tablet devices to loan out in the community. It also launched its Caffi Cysylltu drop-in sessions. Bringing together both training and befriending in its support, Eryri Co-op helps to give people not only the confidence to get online and use technology, but also the chance to meet new friends.

Mid Wales

Traditionally dependent on agriculture, and with a widely dispersed population, our work in Mid Wales during 2021/22 focussed on developing the foundational economy through social businesses and employee-owned firms anchored in the area and providing quality employment opportunities. Through our community-led housing work, we brought people together to decide what kind of homes and communities they want to live in and create affordable homes which meet local community needs.



 **25**
social businesses
received support

 **Key sectors:** Energy and
environment, health and
social care, tourism, and
agriculture

18 
people supported
to start a social
enterprise

Registered
7 
new social businesses

Worked with
8 
organisations to
embed digital inclusion
in delivery

Supported
3,671 
people to become
digitally confident

Supported 13 groups with
the potential to create
109 
community-led homes

Supported
2 
existing community-led housing
groups with 8 homes in total
to grow, change and develop

Helped 4 communities to purchase
community assets and supported
1 to raise
£382,576 
through a community share scheme



Tafarn Y Vale – Community Shares Wales client

A bid to open a Ceredigion pub once frequented by Dylan Thomas was successful in December 2021 thanks to a community share offer. People living in Ystrad Aeron sought to acquire and reopen the Vale of Aeron Inn (with the new name Tafarn Y Vale) with support from the *Community Shares Wales* Resilience Project. The share offer attained the Community Shares Unit Standard Mark. They raised £382,576 with a total of 659 members. They had a very successful marketing campaign both locally as well as via social media with Hollywood actors Matthew Rhys and Rhys Ifans being their 2 most famous investors! They were also helped by other famous people such as rugby referee Nigel Owens sharing his visits and love for the pub via social media.



West Wales

In 2021/22, we worked to improve people's lives in all parts of West Wales – both urban and rural – by boosting digital skills, creating secure, affordable homes, and supporting social business to provide quality employment opportunities. Our community-led housing work was particularly important, helping local people to take a leading and lasting role in creating secure, affordable homes and strengthening their communities.





Melin Tregwynt – Social Business Wales employee ownership client

Melin Tregwynt, the iconic woollen mill and shop, established in Pembrokeshire in 1912, transitioned to an Employee Ownership after its current owners Eifion and Amanda Griffiths handed over the reins to 42 employees of the company.

Eifion explained the reasons for the transition: “Amanda and I inherited the business and have grown it substantially over the last 35 years but now we want to take a step back. It was important for us that Melin Tregwynt remained a viable business and part of its local community, and employee ownership provided the perfect solution for us.

“We are still very much a family business – just not in blood, but in ethos, belief and tradition. Many employees have worked here for decades, and we even had three generations of one family as part of our team. I am proud to be passing on the company to the new employee board who I know will take the business to new levels of growth.”



Siop Havards – Community Shares Wales client

Havards store is a traditional Ironmongers shop dating back to 1840. It is a vital asset for the community of Trefdraeth in Pembrokeshire, and the many visitors. But the current owner has been unable to find someone to take the shop over and is likely to shut it down if a way cannot be found to keep it open. With the help of Community Shares Wales Resilience Project, the community set up a Community Benefit Society to purchase and to run Havards as a Community Shop. Local activists are now campaigning hard to reach their investment target of £475,000.

South East Wales

This year we continued to play a key role in building up the everyday economy in our South Wales communities. We applied our co-operative values to supporting social businesses, strengthening communities, tackling poverty, and promoting inclusion. Our work helped nurture an inclusive economy where prosperity is shared across the region, and no one is left behind.





BIC Innovation Ltd – *Social Business Wales* employee ownership client

Since working with Cwmpas to become employee owned three years ago, BIC Innovation Ltd has increased their workforce from 13 to 51 employees. In the words of Huw Watkins, Founding Director of BIC Innovation Ltd:

“Employee ownership has helped us create a culture of collaboration and contribution. It has helped us recruit and retain top talent... in the marketplace, being employee owned is a meaningful point of difference.”

I believe that our ownership model has made us much more resilient to the pandemic and is helping us adapt and evolve as we move forward post-Covid.”



Get RCT Online – *Digital Communities Wales* client

Digital Communities Wales (DCW) set up Get RCT Online in Rhondda Cynon Taf to bring together local partners and groups interested in championing digital inclusion, with each partner bringing unique insights and know-how to the partnership. Get RCT Online is supported by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council who have brought their Digital Strategy to the partnership and provided opportunities for the partnership to feed in going forward to support implementation. The Get RCT Online Digital Champions – volunteer experts in different types of digital and tech – are vital to the project, supporting the local community with their skills and know-how. DCW also continues to work on the development of a webpage detailing the kit loans, training, and volunteer support available within RCT to ensure a joined-up community approach to digital inclusion in the area.

Our policy work

Catherine Evans, Policy and Communications Manager, provides an overview of our policy and public affairs work

One of our cross-cutting goals at Cwmpas is to be an influential organisation that uses our experience and insight to change the way the economy and society works. For the past year, our Policy and Communications team has been proactively seeking to influence the policy agenda. We do this by working with the whole staff team to identify barriers to the growth of the sectors we work in and offering innovative solutions. As well as this, we have responded to consultations and public debates to ensure that our knowledge can contribute to the development of successful policy.

In April we published our 'Guide to building stronger local economies', which bridges the gap between policymakers and those delivering services on the ground. With the ultimate goal of rebalancing our economy and building community wealth, the guide explains and expands on key terms and ideas and provides tangible examples of how they can be applied to Wales and its communities. This guide has been sent to MPs and MSs in Wales and we are continuing to meet with them to work together on our shared ambition of strengthening the Welsh economy. Following this year's local elections, we have also sent the Guide to every Local Authority in Wales and will work with these key partners to change our economy and society for the better.



In March we published 'Community ownership of local assets: Enabling the delivery of community-led housing in Wales'. This paper has significantly impacted the policy debate in this area in Wales, with politicians from across the party divides signalling their support for the recommendations outlined in the report, including for the need for legislation to underline community rights in this area. This has led to the Welsh Government seeking to develop a new communities policy, and the Senedd Housing and Local Government committee opening an inquiry on the details of this question, which we were invited to give evidence to.

Following our campaign for the Welsh Government to aim to double the number of employee-owned businesses in Wales, this was included in the Programme for Government published after the 2021 Senedd elections. Working with Cwmpas, the Welsh Government has recently approved £70,000 of additional support for promoting the benefits and development of employee ownership in Wales to ensure business based in Wales are aware of the opportunities and benefits it offers. Our Employee Ownership Wales team continues to offer fully-funded and bespoke services to help businesses to explore the potential of this model.

Last year, the Digital Inclusion Alliance for Wales published its Agenda for digital inclusion, setting out 5 key outcomes it wanted to achieve. One of these was for Wales to set a Minimum Digital Living Standard, which the Welsh Government then consulted with the wider sector on. We are now working with Liverpool and Loughborough University to explore and develop the specifics of this proposal, and to understand how this mechanism can be most useful for the people of Wales.

As part of the wider Social Enterprise Stakeholder Group, we have successfully made the case for the crucial specialist support service for social enterprises in Wales to be maintained. We are working with our partner support organisations to represent the interests of the sector and explore how it can achieve the ambitions outlined in the Social Enterprise Vision and Action Plan.

Cwmpas has continued to provide the Secretariat for the Senedd's Cross Party Group for Co-operatives and Mutuals, which has members from the three main political parties and is chaired by Vikki Howells MS. The group met several times this year to discuss several topics, including the state of the co-operative sector, community energy, community-led housing, community wealth building and the social care sector.



Our consultancy work

Sarah Evans, our Commercial Director, summarises the impact of our consultancy work

The Cwmpas Consultancy team is in its second year and provides a business consultancy service to organisations in the public, private and third sector. During 2021/22 we extended our consultancy to support organisations and champion positive change in areas including social value, digital transformation, learning and development, business strategy, engagement, evaluation, and research.

In the last financial year, we supported over 40 organisations including local authorities, housing associations, universities, charities, social enterprises and the private sector.

Positive change

The focus is on encouraging businesses to be innovative, create change, to do things differently and to find a way to positively impact their local community by buying local and social. Our growing team of consultants have strong links to our overall policy agenda and values, as well as crucial policy agendas in Wales such as the Well-being of Future Generations.

At the heart of our consultancy service is the desire to drive community wealth building. The work we do with our clients focuses on the impact they can have on their stakeholders, by keeping employment and procurement locally, and improving opportunities and wealth in the local economy and community.



Areas of our consultancy work in 2021/22

Digital transformation – we supported organisations and the third sector to evaluate, improve and implement digital change and to future proof their service delivery.

Learning and development – working with social leaders and positive change makers, we delivered programmes, workshops, and Hackathons specifically to encourage engagement, innovation and solution orientated outcomes.

Social value – we helped organisations to deliver additional benefits to a community outside of a primary purpose, such as a contract. We identified social value within a business, connected the supply chain with social and local enterprises and assisted with social value strategy implementation.

Social care – we supported care commissioners and procurers to promote social value models of delivery.

Evaluation – our team delivered post-funding/grant evaluation and provided an analysis of the outputs and outcomes against the objectives.

Feasibility studies – we advised organisations to develop strong business ideas and plans, through ideation sessions, research, evaluation, and due diligence to generate an income.

Policy – our team of advisers worked closely on procurement research and development, to advise government on policies for the benefit of community wealth building.

Research and delivery – Cwmpas delivered contracts across Wales with the objective of impacting communities and making a difference to people's lives.

Testimonials

Kate Breeze Executive Director, Pen Y Cymoedd Fund:

“Cwmpas digital consultants helped us understand the opportunities and challenges of supporting the digital sector in the fund area. The digital team are professional and fully understood our objectives. We now have a document that is concise and tells the fund exactly what the landscape looks like, with evidenced recommendations for us to consider. We would highly recommend Cwmpas.”

Angharad Harding, Hub Manager, Business in Focus:

“Cwmpas has worked for us as a sub-contractor on numerous funded projects. They have organised and delivered several business workshops, conferences, and networking sessions. They were efficient in community engagement, value for money and understood the task in hand. I would recommend Cwmpas if you're looking for good quality customer service and excellent standard of work.”



Our people

Angela Overment, our HR Manager, reports on some of the key initiatives we've undertaken during 2021/22

This year's staff survey told us 89% of employees would recommend Cwmpas as a great place to work and 93% were proud to work for us.

We want to continue to be a great place to work. We began a job evaluation exercise to ensure we pay our people fairly. We invested in learning and development to help our people deliver for our clients to the best of their ability.

We commissioned an equity audit to give us on advice on what more we could do improve our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. We recruited someone to work with us to help us reach more people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to help improve basic digital skills. In 2022-23 we will publish an EDI statement of our intent together with a detailed action plan.

In the Wales HR awards we won the 'Best Use of the Welsh Language' category for the development of our bilingual online recruitment portal, and we were also "highly commended" at the CIPD Wales awards for the 'Best Health and Wellbeing Initiative' for our approach to supporting staff throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in a remote working environment.

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Our financials

Joanne Jones, our Director of Finance and Resources, summarises our financial position

During the year, Cwmpas generated turnover totalling £6.5m. This is an increase from £6.1 million in the previous year.

Cwmpas generated a surplus of £61K, which will be reinvested to further the purpose and objects of the Society. The majority of Cwmpas's activities operate on a cost recovery basis.

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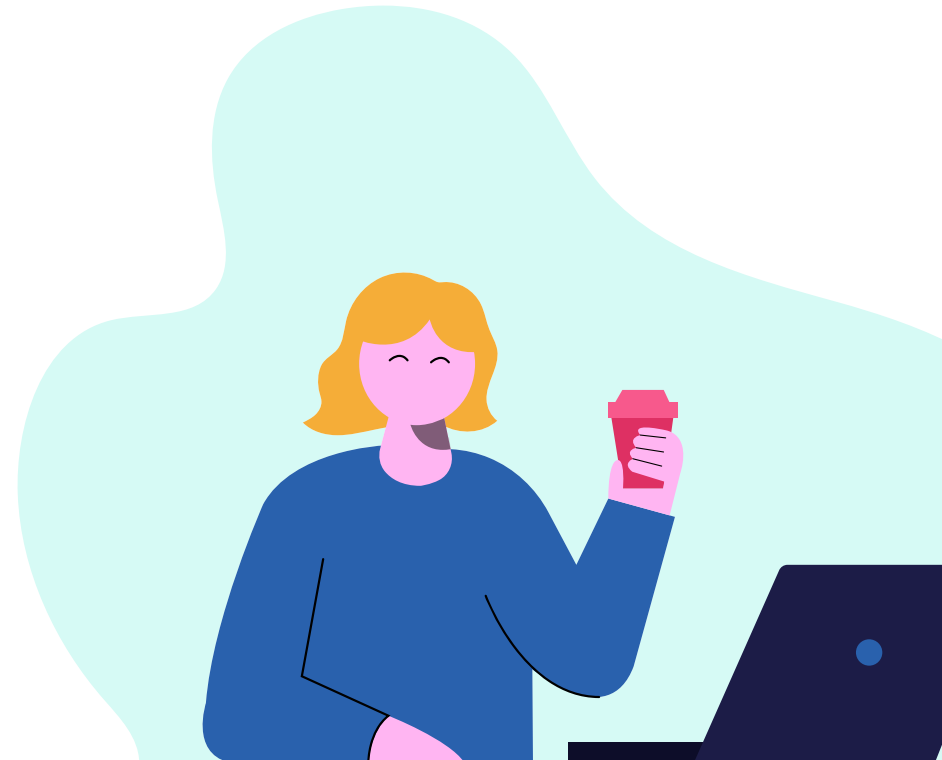


Our funders

Thanks to all our funders for their support



Our accreditations



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Formerly known as the Wales Co-operative Centre, Cwmpas is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, number 24287 R.

This publication is available in Welsh. Other formats, such as large print or braille, are available on request. We welcome correspondence in English or Welsh and aim to provide an equal standard of service in both languages.