

ewmpas

For economic and social change

Impact Report 2022-2023



Our key performance indicators



Businesses receiving support from *Social Business Wales*

631



Jobs created by the *Social Business Wales* teams

187



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

63



New employee-owned businesses

11



Jobs safeguarded

285



People supported to get online through *Digital Communities Wales*

40,201



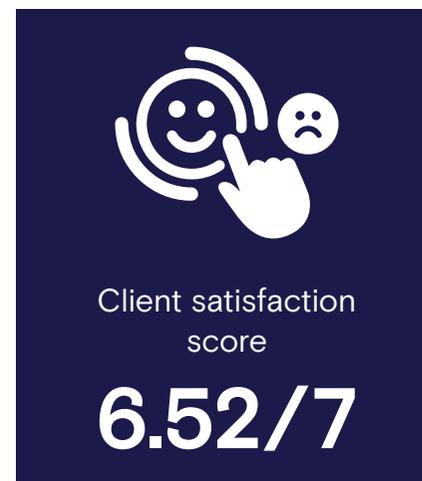
Staff or volunteers trained by *Digital Communities Wales* to gain digital skills

2,741



Groups and organisations assisted to develop community share schemes

24



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.



Our highlights

Bethan Webber, our Chief Executive, talks about the organisation's key achievements in the last twelve months

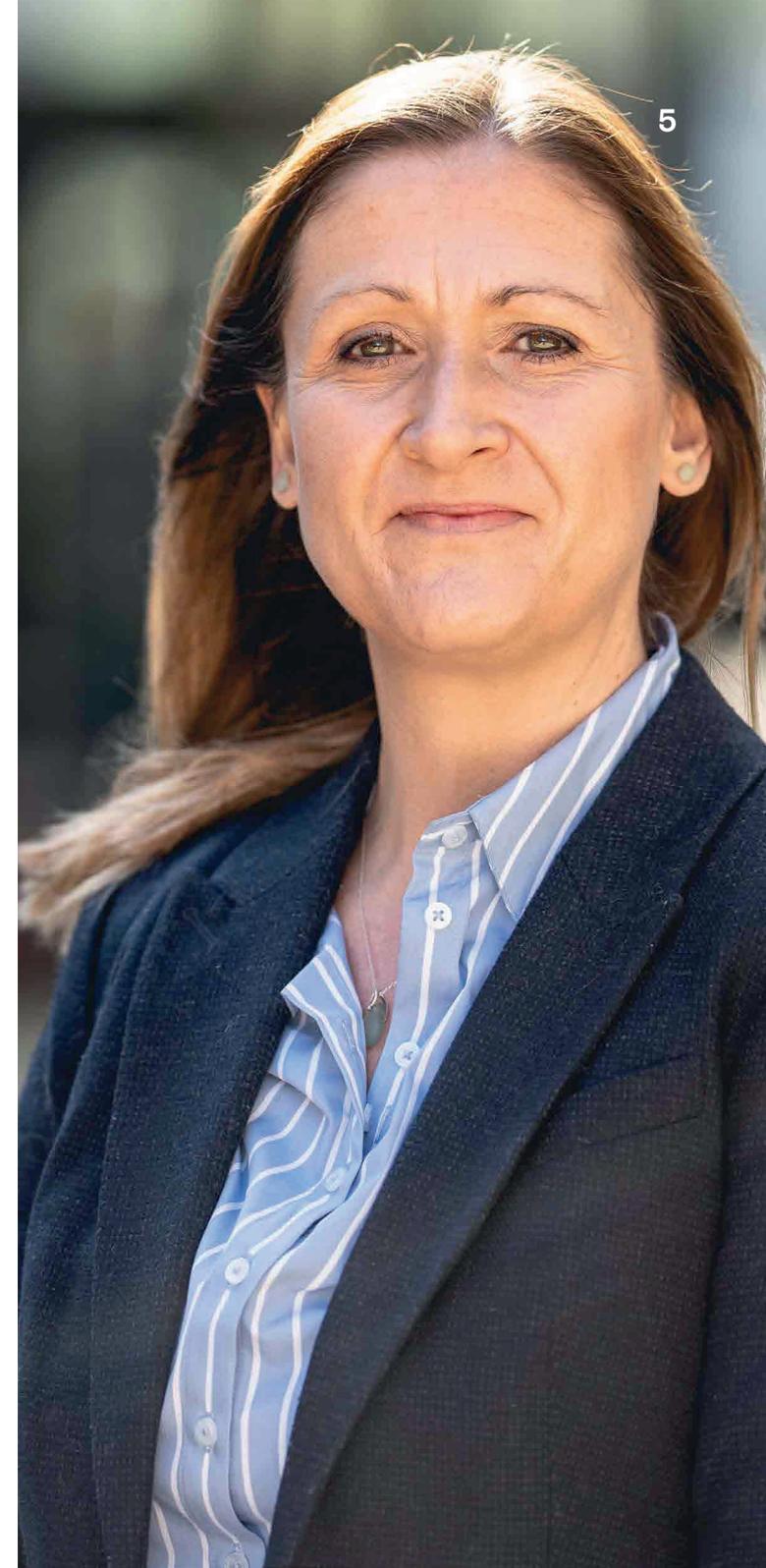
As the new CEO of Cwmpas, I'm delighted to introduce my first Impact Report. Having only been with the organisation for a short time, I'm already impressed by the dedication and passion of our staff to create a better Wales for everyone. Cwmpas, as one of the largest development agencies in Wales, has tremendous potential to drive change and make a positive impact on the economy.

Our current economic system is focused on monetary value and disproportionately benefits a few, while many are left behind. This has become ever more apparent in the aftermath of the pandemic with those already facing the greatest disadvantage disproportionately impacted. Cwmpas promotes a different value system in the economy by supporting social businesses, co-operatives and the wider social sector through our various programmes. Our role in creating a fairer and greener economy has become even more important in light of the cost-of-living crisis and the climate emergency. We can help generate greater

community ownership of businesses and wealth, and empower communities to have a say in decision-making. We can support other sectors to build understanding and capacity to better engage communities in the decisions that affect them, and to ensure services are inclusive and regenerative.

In 2022-23, Cwmpas underwent significant changes, including a rebranding from the Wales Co-operative Centre to Cwmpas. This new brand identity allows us to better communicate our focus on social and economic change and offer a broader range of programmes in areas such as social entrepreneurship, business development, housing, digital inclusion, digital transformation, social care, and social value.

During this year, we saw a significant increase in the number of businesses transitioning to employee ownership. Wales now has 57 employee-owned businesses, almost double the number from three years ago.



We have also been working hard to transition away from EU structural funding and develop new programmes and priorities that will allow us to thrive in the new funding environment.

One of our flagship programmes, Social Business Wales, secured funding from the Welsh Government to continue to support social businesses, alongside consortium partners Social Firms Wales, DTA Wales, UnLtd and WCVA. We partnered with Liverpool and Loughborough Universities to undertake research into developing a Minimum Digital Living Standards for Wales, aligned with the national Well-being Goals and future Welsh Government priorities.

Our Business Growth and Consultancy work also thrived in a year of rapid growth which saw us working with 38 commercial clients around innovation, digital exploitation and social value, expanding into England, and launch new training and social leadership programmes and increase staff capacity.

Looking ahead, my vision is to build on the strong foundations already in place to continue to grow our positive impact in Wales and beyond. I am excited to work with our board of Directors, staff team and partners to promote a fairer, greener, and more community-driven economy.



Programmes delivered by Cwmpas

Social Business Wales

This year our *Social Business Wales* team supported 63 start-ups and helped 631 social businesses grow, creating 187 jobs and safeguarding 285 others. Social enterprise and community empowerment are essential components to build prosperous, sustainable and resilient places, and the support on offer through Social Business Wales, funded by Welsh Government and the European Regional Development Fund, is critical in growing the sector. SBW also provided fully-funded support to transfer businesses to employees through employee ownership. We helped set up 11 new employee-owned businesses in Wales this year. With Welsh Government backing, the sector is becoming more prominent in the Welsh economy.

Community Shares Wales Resilience Project

Community ownership of assets allows local communities to have greater control over their own resources and assets, which in turn can lead to

increased economic, social and environmental benefits. It also helps to promote a sense of community ownership and pride, leading to stronger and more resilient communities. Our community investment program, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund Wales, helps communities protect, purchase and strengthen their assets. This year, we supported 24 communities to prepare a share scheme. Six launched during the year and successfully raised £ 1,181,205 to purchase a local asset.

Digital Communities Wales

Digital inclusion is important in Wales because it helps to ensure that everyone has access to the opportunities and benefits that the digital world provides. It can improve access to education, employment, healthcare, and government services, and can also help to reduce social isolation. By addressing the digital divide and providing training and support to those who are digitally excluded, Digital Communities Wales is creating a more equitable and connected society.

Thanks to continued funding from Welsh Government, this year our DCW team assisted 40,201 people in getting online and trained 2,741 staff and volunteers in digital skills.

Communities Creating Homes

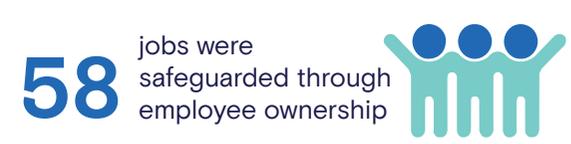
Co-operative and community-led housing offers an opportunity for people to come together and determine the type of homes and communities they wish to live in. Collaborating with councils, investors, and developers, these groups are vital in creating affordable housing options that address the specific needs of local communities. This year, we were able to support 3 existing housing co-ops that were responsible for managing 26 homes, as well as work with 36 groups that had the potential to develop up to 269 new co-operative homes. Thanks to funding from the Nationwide Foundation and Welsh Government, we were able to provide essential support to these groups and promote more inclusive, community-led housing solutions.

Our work across Wales

North Wales

Over the past year, our efforts in North Wales have focused on enhancing skills, promoting inclusive economic opportunities, and improving digital confidence amongst older people. Our initiatives

have enabled people to acquire digital skills and have facilitated the establishment and expansion of social enterprises in key sectors such as tourism and the creative industries, resulting in improved employment opportunities, skilled workforce development, and more cohesive communities in the region.





Creating Enterprise – *Digital Communities Wales* client

Creating Enterprise, a subsidiary of Cartrefi Conwy, has a team of digital champions providing training and support to tenants and the community. These volunteers, trained by Digital Communities Wales, offer personalized assistance on various topics. The team includes COVID-19 well-being workers, Creative Enterprise Employment Academy members, Cartrefi Conwy tenants, and previous training attendees. Tenants can also access the Loan-IT scheme, borrowing data-enabled tablets for three months. This allows people to access technology they may be otherwise be excluded from. The champions adapt their approach to individual needs, gently encouraging skill development. The training sessions have been highly effective, boosting confidence, technology skills, and fostering social connections among participants.

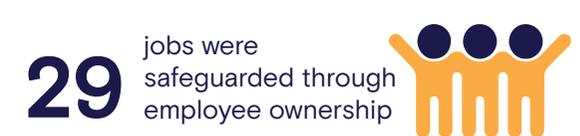


Menter Ty'n Llan – *Social Business Wales and Communities Shares Wales* client

Winning the One to Watch at the Social Business Wales Awards in 2022 for its work transforming the village's only pub, Ty'n Llan, into a multi-purpose community venue. The historic Grade II listed building was constructed in the 1860s as part of the Glynllifon estate and has hosted poets, singers, and celebrities over the years. The pub closed in 2017, leaving the village without a meeting place. In February 2021, over 100 villagers purchased the building to safeguard its future, and Menter Ty'n Llan was established with a committee of 14 experienced members. Ty'n Llan's doors reopened in December 2021, and fundraising efforts continue to create a vibrant community hub with a contemporary bar, restaurant, luxury bedrooms, community room, beer garden, and ample parking with an electric car charging point.

Mid Wales

In 2022/23, our work in Mid Wales aimed to support the region's diverse economy. We focused on social businesses in sectors like social care, health, renewable energy, food production, and retail. These businesses play a vital role in promoting sustainability and driving economic growth. Additionally, we worked on community-led housing projects and community asset transfers, bringing people together to shape the homes and communities they desire and meet the specific needs of the local population.





Tŷ Pren – Social Business Wales employee ownership client

Tŷ Pren, a roundwood timber frame eco building business near Lampeter, transitioned into a workers' co-operative with the support of Social Business Wales. The new structure prioritises community and worker benefits, with former owner Jamie Miller and the entire team now running the business equally.

This shift was crucial for Tŷ Pren's future as it aims to revolutionise UK construction by promoting roundwood timber building techniques as a sustainable and eco-friendly alternative. The company collaborates with local woodland owners, managing their woodlands and sourcing timber for designing and constructing low-carbon homes. Their goal is to train a workforce that works sustainably with natural resources, providing meaningful jobs that have a positive impact on individuals and communities.

For Tŷ Pren, sustainability goes beyond construction. It strives to create affordable, carbon-neutral homes that contribute to an environmentally progressive culture. Becoming a workers' co-operative aligns with the company ethos and vision.



Bird Farm CIC – Social Business Wales client

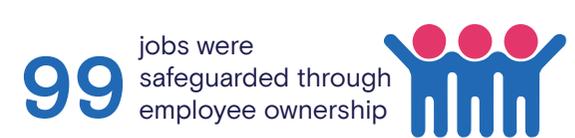
Bird Farm is a community interest company based on a 10-acre smallholding near Lampeter. It is dedicated to fostering connections and improving the well-being of individuals through nature, rural skills and craft-related activities. Its work with the community focuses on creating a sustainable and inclusive environment where people can engage with nature and the outdoors.

Through its workshops and volunteering initiatives, Bird Farm CIC also promotes the therapeutic benefits of nature, recognising its positive impact on mental health and overall well-being. It provides opportunities for individuals, including those with disabilities or limited access to nature, to connect with the natural world and experience its calming and rejuvenating effects.

The work of Bird Farm CIC serves to strengthen community bonds, inspire environmental stewardship, and create a shared sense of responsibility towards the protection of local habitats.

West Wales

In 2022/23, 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.





Pembrokeshire Digital Connections – *Digital Communities Wales* client

Pembrokeshire Digital Connections is a joint project between the Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS), Hywel Dda Health Board, Pembrokeshire County Council, Digital Communities Wales and the West Wales Care Partnership. After recognising the pandemic was causing older and vulnerable people to become isolated, they linked people to digital activities and services that would normally be delivered face-to-face, as well as supported a range of health and well-being initiatives.

Gwyneth Jones, Connected Communities Project Manager at PAVS, said: “Seeing people getting on with digital and hearing the stories and feedback from participants has been incredible. The joy it’s given people has been really pleasing, especially if that person was lonely or isolated. Something small can make such a difference.”



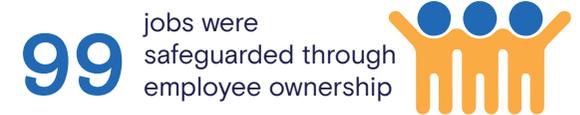
Sunflower Lounge – *Social Business* *Wales* client

The Sunflower Lounge helps young people transitioning out of the care system, who often feel invisible in society and face homelessness and abuse due to a lack of support. During their time in foster care, they have limited opportunities to learn essential life skills and make decisions. Upon leaving care, they face difficulties in areas such as cooking, budgeting, relationships, and employment, leaving them feeling overwhelmed and isolated.

Led by Helen Davies, the Sunflower Lounge provides vital support to care-experienced young people during these transitions. It focuses on life skills, employability, and overall well-being. One supported young person supported by Sunflower Lounge expressed gratitude for the opportunities and understanding they gained. They emphasised the unique impact of the Sunflower Lounge’s support compared to past experiences and interventions.

South East Wales

Throughout this year, we remained dedicated to strengthening the local economy in our South Wales communities. Embracing our co-operative values, we focused on empowering social businesses, fostering community resilience, addressing poverty, and championing inclusivity. Our efforts aimed to cultivate an economy that embraces everyone, where prosperity is shared equitably across the region, leaving no one behind.





Archway Veterinary Centre – Social Business Wales employee ownership client

Archway Veterinary Centre, which has branches in Chepstow and Caldicot, transitioned into an employee-owned business in February 2023, the first veterinary practice to do so in Wales. The practice is now owned by 26 of its staff and is governed by an Employee Ownership Trust. Andrea Reynolds, who has been one of the directors of the business since 2011 – taking over sole interest in the small animal practice in 2014 – sold her interest in the business to an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT).

Newly appointed Director at Archway Veterinary Centre, Eleanor Gough, said: “Our team are unreservedly dedicated to promoting animal health and welfare. Becoming an EOT has meant we are able to stay true to ourselves and to protect the core ethos of our practice for years to come.”



Get the Vale Online – Digital Communities Wales client

Get the Vale Online (GTVO) is a partnership of local organizations focused on digital inclusion. Partners include Digital Communities Wales, Newydd Housing Association, Vale Homes, Vale Libraries, Adult Community Learning, and the Local Authority. Together, they support the digital skills, confidence, and access of people in the Vale. Collaboration is the key to their success, as they bring like-minded organizations together to champion the digital inclusion agenda. Scott Tandy, Digital Lead at Newydd Housing Association and GTVO member, emphasizes the importance of collective problem-solving and support. No single entity has all the answers, but by working as a community of digital leaders, they can better serve those in need. The partnership’s impact relies on the support of each organization involved.

Our policy work

Dan Roberts, Policy and Research Officer, 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.

Following the publication of our “Community ownership of local assets: Enabling the delivery of community-led housing in Wales” report, we have continued to make the case for the implementation of its recommendations. We were invited to give evidence to the Senedd Inquiry on community empowerment, which led to the Committee supporting many of our positions. The Welsh Government has announced a formal Commission to explore this area, which we look forward to engaging with.

We have completed phase one of our research into the Minimum Digital Living Standard in Wales alongside Liverpool and Loughborough Universities. The report highlighted the support for the establishment of this baseline measure among key stakeholders, and explored what the definition of such a measure would be following focus groups with young families with children. We are now starting phase two of this research into what could be a crucial step forward to ensuring digital inclusion and resilience in Wales.

We have continued to facilitate the Senedd’s Cross Party Group for Co-operatives and Mutuals. In October, the group discussed co-operative solutions to the cost of living crisis, with over 200 people registering to attend – the highest ever attendance at a Cross Party Group meeting – reflecting the extent of the emergency situation and demand for new approaches and solutions. The group also discussed other key issues such as



social partnership, the challenges facing the self-employed, and the social care crisis. A key part of our work throughout this year has been building stronger local economies through building community wealth. Following the publication of Audit Wales' report which called for local authorities to do more to support social enterprise in their regions, we have continued to promote our key policy calls on specialist support, procurement and pro-active engagement with the sector with local authorities. We also attended Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru party conferences promoting our ambition for developing co-operative local economies.

Alongside this work, we have been responding to Welsh Government consultations on key issues such as the innovation strategy, social prescribing framework, social care reform and decarbonisation to promote the vital role that social enterprise and co-operative models can play in these agendas.



Our consultancy work

Sarah Evans, Business Growth and Consultancy Director, summarises the impact of our consultancy work

Consultants for Positive Change

The Cwmpas Business Growth and Consultancy team is in its third year and provides a business consultancy service to organisations in the public, private and third sector.

We are consultants for positive change and we are driven by the need to build stronger, wealthier communities. It is our business to look for ways to do things better, by promoting innovation, engagement and efficiencies. This year we have supported over 40 clients to transform their services and to work differently.

Working with people, communities and business and helping them get to where they want to be is firmly at the heart of our ethos. Our business consultancy services focus upon keeping employment, procurement and opportunities local, so we can give those around us a leg-up.

Collaborating with our clients

Our team works with local authorities, housing associations, universities, charities, social enterprises, and businesses in the private sector, helping them to think creatively and act smartly so they can embed the kind of positive values within their operations that bring sound and lasting social and economic benefits to the communities they serve.

Social value, digital transformation, learning and development, business strategy, engagement, evaluation, and research are some of the tools we use to deliver this positive change. Our growing team of consultants have strong links to our overall policy agenda and values, as well as crucial policy agendas in Wales.



The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act is one of our key touchstones for the work we do, and, at its heart, the Act is about helping our valued communities in Wales thrive.

Start Something Good®

Cwmpas launched our Start Something Good® brand which offers innovative and collaborative Hackathons to help solve business and social issues. The Hack of Kindness™ is designed to have a positive impact on stakeholder engagement, creativity, ideation offering solution based outcomes.

<https://cwmpas.coop/start-something-good/>

Areas of work in 2022/23

Service 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.

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

Nadia Alomar

CEO, Clore Leadership

“Working with Cwmpas has been an absolute pleasure. We could not have asked for a more knowledgeable or generous partner to co-deliver Social Leaders Cymru, our year-long leadership programme across Wales. I greatly look forward to our future work together.”

Alice Kershaw (she/ her)

Head of Digital Transformation, The Wildlife Trusts

“Cwmpas has been working with the 5 Welsh Wildlife Trusts on how we can make the most of digital to deliver strategic goals to bring nature back. Marc Davies, lead consultant has prompted thoughts on how the Trusts work together better, increasing engagement in strategic digital transformation initiatives across the whole Wildlife Trust movement and has supported the beginning of horizon scanning around how new technology can help Trusts focus on what really matters”.

Our people

Angela Overment, our Head of People and Culture, reports on some of the key initiatives we've undertaken during 2022/23

According to this year's staff survey, 91% of employees would highly recommend Cwmpas as a fantastic place to work, while 93% expressed pride in working for our organisation.

Like many other organisations, Cwmpas transitioned to 100% remote working in March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recognising the benefits of this shift, we made the decision in 2022/23 to permanently close our offices and transform our operations accordingly. Within the People and Culture department, our main focus was on cultivating a positive work culture within this remote environment by promoting employee engagement, development, and well-being.

Throughout the year, we also placed a strong emphasis on initiatives promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. This included commissioning training for all staff, with specific focus on topics such as

anti-racism, disability, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and neurodiversity.

We invested in training related to user-centred service design and the Welsh language to empower our staff to deliver the best possible service to our clients. Additionally, our employees continued to utilise our e-learning platform to access various other training opportunities.

To ensure fairness, we conducted a comprehensive job evaluation exercise and pay review. Our recruitment and selection processes were refined to ensure that we identify the most suitable candidates. Most importantly, we involved staff in the recruitment of our new Chief Executive, which aligned with our organisational values, as well as fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture.



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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 £7.3m. This is an increase from £6.5 million in the previous year.

Cwmpas generated a surplus of £89K, 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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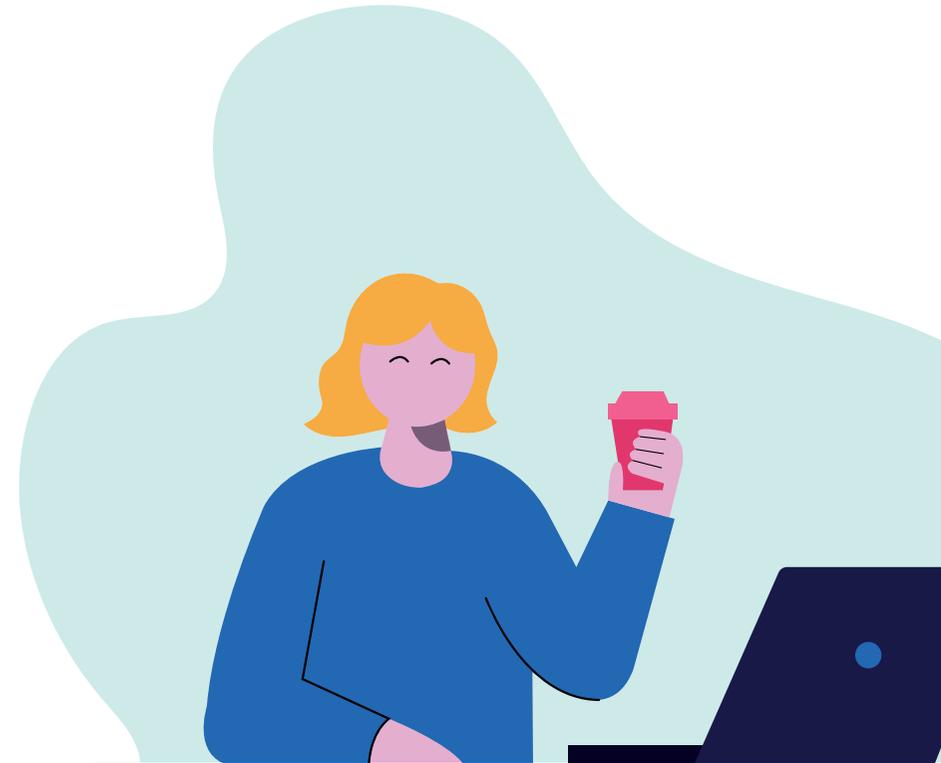


Our funders

Thanks to all our funders for their support



Our accreditations



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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.