

ewmpas

For economic and social change



Impact Report 2023-2024

Our key performance indicators



Social businesses receiving support:

544



New social businesses incorporated:

74



New employee-owned businesses supported by Cwmpas:

10



Jobs safeguarded through employee ownership:

139



People supported to get online through Digital Communities Wales:

30,812



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

3,225



Amount raised through community share schemes:

£1,791,799



Additional match funding secured:

£2,006,276



Groups and organisations assisted to develop community share schemes:

11

Our Perthyn project saw 27 groups awarded around

£268k

supporting Welsh-speaking communities to fast-track their social enterprise, co-op and housing ideas



Groups and organisations assisted to develop community-led housing:

30

with an additional 265 homes in the pipeline



Turnover generated through contracted and grant income:

£6.9m



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

91%



Staff who said they were proud to work here:

93%



A woman with dark hair in a braid, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt and blue jeans, is crouching in a garden. She is smiling and looking down at a plant. The background shows a wooden trellis structure and other plants. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

ewmpas

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

It's been a year that continued to be unpredictable and uncertain, as we saw increasing financial pressure, political changes, more global conflicts and difficult environmental events. Despite this, we can be proud of what we've achieved as we continued to work towards a fairer, greener economy.

We saw many changes internally, with a change of leadership at CEO and board level, as our longstanding trustee David Jenkins retired and Richard Hughes was appointed Chair in his place. We saw the end of European funding and a continued journey of transformation, adapting to new structures, systems and ways of working, whilst reviewing and evolving our services as we look to an increasingly complex and uncertain external environment.



Externally, the increasing pace of the tech revolution, intensifying climate crisis and volatile funding environment is particularly testing for the third sector. The ecosystem around us has shifted in response to a different funding environment, and out of this we saw some positive advancements and increasing complexity and competition.

Our eyes were fully opened to the extremely challenging financial pressures when we took a direct hit in the draft budget in December 2023, with our Digital Communities Wales budget unexpectedly cut by 50% for its final 15 months of delivery. Ultimately, the decision was reversed – but not without cost, as we took the team through a difficult restructure and redesign process. However, some positives came from it as we identified new ideas and avenues for our digital inclusion work, and we were overwhelmed by the supportive response from so many – demonstrating how valued and needed the programme is.

We have continued to adapt and respond, and we can be proud of the impact we have had throughout a difficult year. Across our programmes, demand for support has never been higher – with communities across Wales continuing to face multiple complex challenges and our services enabling them to build their own responses. Whilst facing personal challenges in a difficult period, our staff have continued to offer support of the highest standard, working incredibly hard to make a difference through their support of local people, community groups, organisations and businesses. Collectively, they have made a significant difference to the lives of many.

Despite this, there is still a long way to go to transform the economy to one with more wellbeing at the centre, through greater democratic control of local economies, assets and services, and more redistributive and regenerative approaches that put people and planet first. There remain many unknowns, but we look ahead with optimism for the future and a focus on how we can build on this impact – to make the more fundamental shift that's needed in our economy and services, to enable people and communities to thrive.



Programmes delivered by Cwmpas

Social Business Wales

Social businesses are businesses that put people and planet first – they deliver good jobs and services, closer to home, where communities need them and often where there are gaps in provision. They are often at the forefront of a local response to the most pressing challenges facing their community, and there is a higher concentration of social businesses within communities that have more economic challenges. These businesses, anchored within their communities, also provide important volunteer opportunities, to give people the confidence to get into the workplace.

The sector has faced unprecedented challenges over the last few years, with the pandemic, cost of living and energy crisis. With the end of large-scale investment into the sector from European structural funds, Cwmpas has worked hard over the last 12 months to maintain investment into the sector.

Cwmpas, along with our partners Social Firms Wales, Development Trust Association (Wales), WCVA and UnLtd, secured £1.5m from Welsh Government to develop the social business sector within Wales this year. The funding has allowed us to deliver Social Business Wales, as part of the Business Wales family.

To supplement the delivery of Social Business Wales, Cwmpas accessed additional funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Funding to provide additional support in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Caerphilly, Anglesey and Gwynedd. With the investment from UK and Welsh Government, Cwmpas has supported 544 social businesses to develop and grow, and helped 74 new social businesses to set up.

Community Shares Wales Resilience Project

Many communities throughout Wales have faced economic challenges and social changes, leading to the loss of control over vital local assets. By reclaiming these assets through Community Shares schemes, communities can regain autonomy over their local resources, enabling them to address needs and priorities specific to their community. Our Community Shares Wales Resilience Project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund Wales, came to an end in January this year. Over the three years of the project, Cwmpas supported 18 communities to raise £4,959,840. In the last 12 months alone, £1,791,799 was raised, with an additional £2,006,276 secured in match funding.

Digital Communities Wales and Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales

Cwmpas has been delivering digital inclusion programmes for over 17 years. When we started in 2007, 39% of people aged 16+ in Wales were digitally excluded – this now stands at 7%. Digital inclusion is important because it helps ensure everyone has access to the opportunities and benefits the digital world provides. It can improve access to education, employment, healthcare and government services, while helping to reduce social isolation. By addressing the digital divide and providing training and support to organisations who are the trusted faces to those facing digital exclusion, Digital Communities Wales (DCW) is creating a more equitable and connected society. Thanks to continued funding from Welsh Government, this year DCW and our programme partner The Good Things Foundation have assisted 30,812 people to get online and trained 3,225 staff and volunteers in digital skills. But there is still more to do. As the pace of technological and digital transformation accelerates, we risk new generations and pockets of society becoming digitally excluded. To prevent this, we must ensure investment for digital inclusion is scaled up, not reduced.

The Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales (DIAW) was established as part of DCW in 2019, with the primary purpose of bringing together organisations of all sizes and sectors to build a collective movement behind tackling digital exclusion. This year has seen the number of member organisations grow from 100 to 126. 18 have signed the Digital Inclusion charter, with 3 going on to achieve accreditation for their commitment to embedding digital inclusion. Other key highlights include:

- We submitted Supplementary Advice and Recommendations to the House of Lords, following the oral evidence session at the House of Lords Inquiry into Digital Exclusion and the Cost of Living by Chair of DIAW, Hamish Laing.
- We presented to 3 cohorts of public sector leaders on the University of South Wales MSC Leading Digital Transformation on the importance of embedding digital inclusion into digital transformation.
- We shared our learning on establishing an Alliance with Northern Ireland, Scotland, Liverpool and Manchester.

Digital Confidence Denbighshire

Digital Confidence Denbighshire is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and has provided direct

training and support to people in Denbighshire, with the aim of increasing digital inclusion in the county – the project has supported over 350 residents to date. We have supported local organisations including Denbighshire Libraries; the employment service Working Denbighshire; housing associations Grwp Cynefin, Clwyd Alyn and Wales and West Housing; and third sector organisations such as Blossom and Bloom, NEWCIS and Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council.

Feedback has been positive, with 96% of users stating they now feel more confident about using digital technology, users rating the support on average 4.89 out of 5 stars and over 99% saying they would recommend it to friends and family. The project has also provided digital devices to those who would benefit the most and who are most at risk of digital exclusion – such as an individual with a long-term health condition facing significant social isolation, and an older gentleman with mobility impairment who found that an iPad rekindled his passion for music and allowed him to reconnect with old friends.

Communities Creating Homes

Wales is in the midst of a housing crisis. We do not have enough affordable and social homes for people, market value housing is increasingly seen as a commodity rather than a home for life and one-time family homes are now part of the private rental market

or being used as holiday lets/Airbnbs. When demand outstrips supply, market values and private rents increase, leaving local people unable to purchase a property – young and old alike. As a nation, we are still feeling the impact of the pandemic: increased cost of living, shortage in skilled labour, increased prices for building materials, delays in the planning system and inward migration – all of which are contributing to the crisis.

Our CCH programme is one part of the solution. We bring communities together with local landowners, councils, investors and developers to address the specific housing needs and types of homes required by the community. This year, we supported 30 groups across Wales with the potential to develop up to 265 new co-operative homes. Thanks to funding from the Nationwide Foundation and Welsh Government, we provided essential support to these groups and promoted more inclusive, community-led housing solutions. We also secured a £664,000 grant from Oak Foundation to expand our work supporting underrepresented communities to explore community-led housing options. Other key achievements include:

- Securing over £800k capital grant funding from the Welsh Government for Gŵyr Community Land Trust.
- Inclusion of 'CLH as a vehicle for delivering affordable housing' in the update of Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales.

- Over 400 people attended CLH events across Wales.
- CLH groups secured £100k of seed funding via Perthyn small grants.
- Establishment of the Community Ownership Commission, with Cwmpas being represented as members.

Developing homes takes time. The average time from site identification to people moving in is 7 years – we need long-term investment to ensure communities can deliver the current pipeline of homes, inspire more communities to tackle their local housing shortages and build a thriving community-led housing movement that challenges the status quo and meets the needs of future generations.

Perthyn – It Belongs to our Communities

Welsh language communities in North and West Wales are feeling the effects of second home ownership, holiday lets and Airbnbs. While summer may paint a picture of a thriving economy, the reality for many people is local shops and assets closing, and no affordable homes for rent or purchase, pushing people out of their local communities – as well as school closures and less use of the Welsh language.

Perthyn is funded by the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 and delivered by Cwmpas, the Dolan Partnership and Planed. Perthyn provides support to Welsh-language communities where there is a high density of second homes – we work with communities to inspire and empower people to tackle the challenges they face by creating new co-operatives, social enterprises and community-led homes with Welsh language at their heart.

Cwmpas administers the Perthyn small grant schemes, allowing communities to bid for up to £12,500 to fast-track their ideas and build the capacity to drive them forward. In the last year, Perthyn has supported 27 groups and awarded over £260k in grants – many community groups have confirmed they would not have progressed to the stage they are at now without this. The funding has been invaluable and enabled groups to obtain further, larger funding from other sources.

These community groups want to protect local assets at risk of being lost, regenerate lost assets to community ownership and ensure local people have access to affordable housing, to stay in the communities where they were raised. Most importantly, they want to protect, encourage and increase the use of the Welsh language. Perthyn is making a real impact in the communities it supports and there is an opportunity to learn from its success. With increased and sustained investment, it could support even more communities across Wales.

Employee Ownership

Employee ownership is a transformative business model that places employees at the heart of corporate decision-making and wealth creation. We have seen a large growth from the early days of supporting the coal industry – Cwmpas supported Tower Colliery to become the largest employee-owned company in Wales.

Employee-owned businesses tend to be more resilient in the face of economic downturns – they often have lower turnover rates and higher levels of job satisfaction, contributing to a more stable workforce and economy, with greater wealth redistribution locally.

Welsh Government committed to doubling the number of employee-owned businesses in Wales by the end of this Senedd term. Through the hard work of our small Cwmpas employee ownership team, we're proud that the target has been achieved two years ahead of schedule. This highlights the demand for the ownership model, with its benefits to longer term sustainability and succession planning – during the last 12 months, we have supported 10 businesses to transfer ownership to their employees, helping to safeguard 139 local jobs.

We supported Welsh Government with their aim of removing profit from the children's care sector, by providing advice on the models currently available, as well as how the EOT model could be adapted to

meet the policy intention – while enabling private businesses to transition safely and fairly. We worked with a small number of providers to understand the challenges specific to their businesses and how each model could be applied, making recommendations to officials on where the constraints and barriers lie – with a view to minimising risk of providers leaving the market.

Cwmpas Social Care

Social businesses deliver real benefits in the social care sector for people and communities through co-production, prevention and early intervention. This year, our amendments to the Code of Practice for Part 2 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act have strengthened the legal duty placed on local authorities to promote social enterprises, co-operatives, user/citizen-led services and the third sector. This supports the implementation of Welsh Government policy to “rebalance care and support”. We have worked with the Regional Partnership bodies to refresh and refocus the local and regional Section 16 Forums, so commissioners and social businesses can work together to transform care and support services, while focusing on wellbeing outcomes and increased social value.

Newid

From our work with organisations across Wales, it was clear that the third sector was at risk of being

left behind on the digital transformation journey, as the majority of investment and support was primarily focused on the public sector. Recognising the important contribution the third sector makes to the Welsh economy and delivery of community based services, Cwmpas teamed up with partners to create Newid – a digital support programme for Welsh third sector organisations funded by Welsh Government, delivered by Cwmpas, WCVA and ProMo-Cymru. Cwmpas is the main delivery partner, working directly with organisations across Wales – over the last year, we have worked with around 34 different organisations to deliver digital support, including:

- Mentoring, troubleshooting and offering coaching support.
- Improving organisation resilience by focusing on priority areas of technology adoption or improvements.
- Developing bespoke reports and support plans, tailored to the needs and capabilities of individual organisations.
- Delivering one-off advice and support to a broader range of organisations that are not yet ready to commit to the wider support programme.

Demonstrating the project’s impact, the organisations we have supported now:

- Understand the wider requirement of embedding a digital culture across the whole organisation, for transformation to be successful.

- Feel inspired to take advantage of digital approaches, to maximise their social impact and efficiencies.
- Are able to navigate the world of digital, working securely and with confidence.
- Recruit and support volunteers digitally.
- Generate income online.

Social Leaders Cymru

Social Leaders Cymru was launched in February 2024 and offers fully funded leadership training to support voluntary, community and social enterprise leaders in Wales, at all stages of their leadership journey. The programme is a partnership between Cwmpas, Clore Social Leadership and WCVA and is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. It aims to:

- Develop leaders across Wales who will inspire the next generation and enable the third sector to thrive.
- Engage with leaders from diverse backgrounds.
- Encourage community cohesion and collaboration.

We will be working with partners to closely monitor the ongoing impact of the project.


Our work across Wales

North Wales

Over the last year, our efforts in North Wales have focused on promoting the employee ownership model and improving digital confidence. Through UK Shared Prosperity Funding, we have worked with Gwynedd County Council to promote employee ownership to the business community and help Gwynedd become an Employee Ownership County. As a result of DCW's good work within the region, we were invited to develop a digital support programme for Denbighshire.






 **Employee Ownership case study: BIC Innovation**

BIC Innovation Ltd is a private consultancy firm specialising in facilitating innovation, building effective strategies, enhancing performance, marketing and scaling up. Innovation is at the heart of everything they do. As they looked at long-term succession planning, thoughts turned to ensuring the business remained in Wales, close to its roots, so it could continue supporting the employees and communities within which it operated. Cwmpas' specialist Employee Ownership team supported their transition to a Hybrid Employee-Owned Business (EOB) and the business has grown its client base and the value of the projects it works on – productivity is up, as is client satisfaction. BIC Innovation Ltd has more than quadrupled its workforce and currently employs 45 people across the whole of Wales. Huw Watkins, Founding Director, is very enthusiastic about the firm's transition to Employee Ownership: "Becoming employee owned, and the sense of ownership it brings with it, has seen our team really pull together. Each and every employee is invested in the future of the company and is working so hard to ensure we do our best to navigate our way through huge economic changes."



 **Social Business Wales case study: Young and Mindful**

Young and Mindful in Denbighshire is a social enterprise teaching young people in schools the benefits of mindfulness – Cwmpas has worked with YAM to provide business support and advice, to help them become a sustainable venture. SBW supported Director Shilpa Vyas with a range of essential assets, from translating terminology into ordinary language, to creating HR policies and business planning. This helped Shilpa gain access to the right services and develop a clear understanding of how a social enterprise operates. Shilpa said: "These services have helped us to create a strong foundation, something that is going to allow us to grow. The reality of Cwmpas and Social Business Wales is that they offer so much." Feedback from pupils at Ysgol Trelawnyd Va in Flintshire included: "I've learnt...not to let worry take away the day and be present" and "It makes me make better decisions."

Mid Wales

In Mid Wales, we have supported communities to take ownership of assets and investigate raising finance through community shares. We have also worked with Ceredigion and Powys councils to access UK Shared Prosperity Funding for additional resources, to support the growth of the social business sector within the region.





Housing case study: Ysgol Cribyn Community Benefits Society

Ysgol Cribyn Community Benefits Society in Ceredigion aims to collaboratively buy and develop the village's former community school into a vibrant and inclusive community centre. Cwmpas' Communities Creating Homes team has been integral, supporting with the initial legal structure to become a Community Benefits Society and, alongside the Perthyn project, helping them source £12K of seed funding. Cwmpas' Community Shares Wales team supported the group with their share offer to raise £70k and our CCH team will support them to source the rest of the purchase price. Cwmpas also supported the group with a strong Community Ownership Fund application. A core part of the project is to convert a classroom into an affordable home, providing a local family with a comfortable home and generating sustainable income for the centre's upkeep. They have said they are "very grateful" for Cwmpas' continued support, including help with a community needs survey.



Community Shares Wales Resilience Project and SBW case study: Radnor Arms Ltd

The Radnor Arms Hotel Limited Community Benefit Society was set up by the New Radnor community following the closure of its historic local pub, the Radnor Arms. Since closing, the pub had fallen into disrepair, leaving the locals without a community hub. Through creating a Community Shares Offer with support from Cwmpas, local people are working to reopen the Radnor Arms as a thriving public house, for locals and visitors. The society's initial share offer raised an incredible £147,755, allowing them to purchase the pub, pay for expenses such as asbestos removal, make the building safe, renovate it, and stock and open the two bars. Following matched funding and a grant from the Community Ownership Fund and the Architectural Heritage Fund, the society has now raised £440,000 to complete the first three phases of the pub's redevelopment.

West Wales

We have strengthened our partnerships within the region over the last 12 months, such as working with Carmarthenshire County Council to grow and develop the social business sector. We are also promoting the community shares model in the region, thanks to a partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council and Planed, with both projects receiving support from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. In Swansea, we have been supporting the Gŵyr Community Land Trust to develop the first ever self-built housing community in Wales.





SPF Carmarthenshire case study: **People Speak Up**

People Speak Up is a social, mental health, arts, health and wellbeing charity in Llanelli. They approached our Carmarthenshire SPF project for business support, as they needed tendering advice and support for a contract bid to continue running Street Play for Carmarthenshire County Council. Street Play encourages families and children to reconnect with play and was originally developed by PSU as a pilot. Our SPF Business Consultant contacted Business Wales Tendering to source advice and feedback for the client, resulting in them winning the contract bid – this safeguarded 6 local jobs that were at risk without our support, while ensuring £120k+ of funding over 2 years. This enabled them to continue supporting local families while contributing around £10k to the local economy. Feedback from young participants includes: “What we like about Street Play is...it’s an opportunity to make new friends... to be outside more.” Cwmpas continues to support them.



DCW case study: **Swansea Council for Voluntary Service**

Digital Communities Wales has been working closely with Swansea Council for Voluntary Service to promote digital inclusion through the Our Neighbourhood project. As part of the programme, DCW has trained SCVS volunteers as Digital Champions who are proactive in offering digital inclusion support in the local community. One initiative is a collaboration with Swansea Central Library, where Digital Champions are hosting weekly free drop-in sessions to help digitally excluded visitors get more from being online. Karen Davies, Principal Librarian at Swansea Council Libraries, said: “What’s really helped with the involvement of Digital Communities Wales and SCVS is that it’s given us that extra capacity and capability to help people... In terms of the development of digital skills, we can support people to do that, but more importantly we can support them to be confident and independent and do that themselves.”

South East Wales

During the last 12 months, we have bid for and won commercial contracts to support local authorities to engage with social businesses in their areas. We have supported RCT, Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan – this includes mapping data on social businesses, social value supply chains and how to fill supplier voids using local social businesses, to retain more procurement spend locally.





DCW case study: **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities**

In March, Welsh Government announced funding for DCW aimed at enhancing digital skills and confidence within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Wales. DCW has been working with partners such as Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GT Wales) to promote digital inclusion, including delivering Essential Digital Skills and Digital Champions training and supporting a tablet loan scheme. DCW also co-developed a video with GT Wales engagement officers and community members, to raise awareness of digital barriers and establish a benchmark for future progress. Feedback from beneficiaries of the device loan scheme includes: "Access to an iPad has made things so much better. I can now go on the driving theory app when GT Wales isn't with me. My digital skills are getting better all the time" and "From this support, I am hoping to be accepted into college and leave with qualifications to get a job."



Housing case study: **Rhisom Housing Co-op**

Rhisom Housing Co-op was established in 2023 as a housing co-operative in Cardiff, to deliver new affordable housing for the LGBTQ+ community – aiming to address the housing needs of a marginalised community experiencing housing and homelessness issues. Housing insecurity within the LGBTQ+ community is significant, with people facing material deprivation, loneliness and isolation, particularly younger people. There is often evidence of discrimination when seeking accommodation in the private rented sector, over and above affordability issues. Cwmpas worked with Rhisom to create a community-led housing project response that will provide a blueprint for the housing co-op model in Cardiff and enable Rhisom to support other marginalised communities to create their own housing co-ops. We are awaiting the outcome of a Welsh Government funding application to allow the purchase of a vacant office in the city, to be converted into a 7-bedroom common house with affordable rents and a community space.

Our policy work

Dan Roberts, Policy and Engagement 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 last year, our Policy and Communications team has been proactively seeking to influence the policy agenda, working across Cwmpas to identify barriers to the growth of the sectors we work in and offer innovative solutions.

Four years since the publication of the influential social enterprise Ten Year Vision and Action Plan, the Social Enterprise Stakeholder Group has come together and worked strategically to raise the profile of social enterprise as the business model of choice in Wales, influence policy and support social enterprises on their journey.



This autumn, they will publish a report that takes stock of the progress made, celebrates the achievements to date and outlines the steps that need to be taken to achieve our ambition of making social enterprise the business model of choice in Wales by 2030.

2024 has been a significant year in Wales with the changes of the First Minister. Cwmpas took a proactive role in influencing the shape of the leadership election manifestos and were successful in ensuring policy commitments on procurement to social enterprise, employee ownership, community-led and co-operative models of care and more were included. We look forward to continuing working with the Welsh Government to achieve our ambition of a more co-operative Welsh economy. Alongside this work, we have been responding to Welsh Government and Senedd consultations and inquiries, to ensure policy development positively impacts the models and sectors we support. We have promoted social enterprise and co-operative models and how to support them within inquiries on the green economy, the Development Bank of Wales and research and innovation, and within consultations on the Welsh Government's Just Transition Framework, Net Zero Skills Work and the Dormant Assets Fund.

We continue to facilitate the Senedd's Cross Party Group for Co-operatives and Mutuals, holding meetings on the opportunities for our sector arising from the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act and its key role in filling the implementation gap within Welsh policy. In January, the group hosted Co-operatives UK for the Senedd launch of its prospectus: The Purpose of Mutual and Co-operative Business in Society.

We continue to lead campaigning groups and networks, promoting policy development that will support our sector. In particular, we have led the way on campaigning for community empowerment and community ownership rights in Wales, and alongside the Community Ownership Group will play a key role in influencing the upcoming Commission that we hope will lead to new rights in legislation in Wales. We are also working as part of the Third Sector Research Partnership and the Resourceful Communities Partnership to develop links between the sector and academia.

We regularly attend political party conferences and influence key stakeholders to develop their understanding of the models we support and how they can support a stronger, fairer economy.



cwmpas

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 fourth year and provides business consultancy services to organisations in the public, private and third sector. We consider ourselves consultants for positive change and our services 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.



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

This year, we have again grown the reach of our consultancy services and supported over 30 clients to transform their services and work differently. Many of these have been new clients including Natural Resources Wales, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Arts Council Wales and FOR Cardiff.

Collaborating with our clients

Our Consultancy 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 positive values within their operations that bring sound, 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 has strong links to our overall policy agenda and values, as well as crucial policy agendas in Wales.

Start Something Good®

Our Start Something Good hackathon and learning programme brings people together to develop fresh ideas for positive social change. We broke new ground working with public bodies across Wales, bringing together communities and public services to co-create innovative ideas to address challenges.

Our hackathon clients and events included:

- Natural Resources Wales, to tackle water quality in the Teifi catchment area.
- Gwynedd and Mon Public Service Board, to address transport and access in Newborough, Ynys Mon.
- Cardiff Metropolitan University, with refugees and asylum seekers to find sustainable livelihoods.
- The Welsh Rugby Union, to explore the rugby clubs of the future.
- Transport for Wales, to create community tourism projects.
- Atlantic College, to create local and global social impact projects.
- GAVO, to develop a food strategy for Newport with stakeholders across the county.

This year, our hackathons have reached new audiences to tackle pressing social and environmental issues. Examples include:

In January 2024, we hosted the first-ever event bringing together businesses, the third sector and public bodies to explore how businesses can align themselves with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The event was a partnership with Google, Cardiff University and Ogi, with pitches presented to Derek Walker, the Future Generations Commissioner.

In March 2024, we hosted a two-day hackathon at Aberystwyth University bringing together 40 scientists, academics, land managers, farmers, water regulators and charities to address the challenge of improving water quality in the Teifi Catchment area. Julie James MS was present for the pitches and the project ideas were presented at the Senedd's All Wales Rivers Summit.

During the year:

- We facilitated 20 Hackathon events across Wales, with 691 attendees.
- 12 community tourism pilot projects were launched after hackathons.
- Participants from our hackathons in Caerphilly were able to access £300,000+ of grant funding to develop and facilitate their project ideas.

Areas of work in 2023/4

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 deliver additional benefits to communities 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 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.



Case study: Bridgend Social Economy Project

This project will co-produce a leadership declaration to support the future of social leadership development in Wales, through a series of engagement activities over the next year.

In November 2023, our Consultancy team started delivering the Social Enterprise Support Project for Bridgend County Borough Council. The project is funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and continues until December 2024.

Between November 2023 and March 2024, we undertook a series of events and workshops, attended by 74 local social businesses and 105 individuals.

We provided support to both new and existing social enterprises. One recipient explained:



“Attending the hackathon and other events led by Cwmpas has allowed us the space and skills to step away from our trusted funding model of grant applications. We’ve been able to consider new ways of working and identified new partners to work with. It has been a very enriching experience, where we have been able to share ideas, concerns and barriers – all whilst feeling like we may be able to be part of the solution.”

Case study: Mission Gallery Evaluation

Over the last 12 months, Cwmpas has worked with Mission Gallery, a Swansea-based art gallery, and homelessness charity Crisis, to evaluate their collaborative project tackling health inequalities amongst unhoused individuals – and how art can act as a vehicle to counteract loneliness in those impacted by homelessness.

We used our unique approach to evaluation, emphasising that our evaluation service is not a one-size-fits-all process and that our evaluators are not auditors. We tailored our audit approach and integrated ourselves as part of the project team.

Through the evaluation process, we attended workshops and developed a Theory of Change, to draw out the aims and goals of the project. Initially, Mission Gallery and the team wanted to measure the data qualitatively; however, we suggested that telling the workshop attendees' stories would be the best result. Mission Gallery's Outreach Manager Megan Leigh reflected:

"Jenny Phillips' (Cwmpas Consultant) suggestion of telling stories was a real game changer for the project, as it quickly became apparent that the way we were gathering data through questionnaires wasn't going

to work. Jenny was a natural with the members – they really wanted to talk to her and that made the whole process seamless."

Through Jenny, Megan and the team's ability to adapt quickly to the new evaluation process, the project developed several member stories that were rich in detail and personal development. This method, instead of the more traditional qualitative approach, meant Mission Gallery and Crisis had accessible results that could be easily shared.

Jenny's evaluation revealed more than just the fascinating stories of the members. Megan explains:

"Jenny's evaluation came up with some really practical learning that other organisations could utilise and we can take forward. Giving the members an outlet for their stories was really powerful. Although we've come to the end of the project, Jenny did a great job of identifying potential future funders and pinpointing these other pathways where we could take this project."



Our people

Nicole Leybourne, our Head of People and Culture, reports on some of the key initiatives we've undertaken during 2023/24

2023 and into 2024 has been a busy time for the People and Culture Team. The business has experienced a lot of change and our main focus has been ensuring our people felt informed, consulted and supported – to maintain our positive culture, wellbeing and a highly engaged and motivated workforce.

During our We Invest in People review in October 2023, Cwmpas was re-accredited with Gold status and has made excellent progress towards achieving Platinum. It was particularly noted that Cwmpas' values "shine through" in everything we do and that our people "are fully committed" to our values, "living and breathing them every day". Cwmpas was also highly praised for its inspirational leadership, with staff frequently mentioning how well supported they are.



Learning and Development has been a big focus – there have been 12 internal job changes, resulting in new development opportunities for existing staff, equating to 13.5% of our people. We provided learning opportunities by way of speakers at our bi-weekly meetings, giving information and advice on matters such as money and pensions, Welsh language and the Open University. Our people also continued to have access to, and to use, our e-learning platform to access other training opportunities.

Cwmpas has continued to deliver against its pledge to put people and planet first and is working towards initiatives that support tackling climate change. Staff worked co-operatively to plant 450 saplings on a staff member's farmland, which was also an event marking our 40th anniversary, and contributed to the National Forest for Wales. We introduced a cycle-to-work scheme and 5 employees have now purchased bikes, allowing them to commute to work in a more environmentally friendly way. Cwmpas has also been re-accredited by Green Dragon at Level 3, demonstrating that we are an organisation which undertakes environmental management and are taking action to understand, monitor and control our impact on the environment.

Cwmpas is striving towards implementing initiatives supporting equity, diversity and inclusion. We have drafted an EDI action plan, which we are working against and continually improving. We have once again had a successful internship within our Policy and Communications team, which gave 12 weeks' paid work experience – specifically aimed at encouraging applications from people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, who are traditionally underrepresented in the Welsh labour market.

We received positive feedback from our intern, who said: "I felt so happy that a company would create that space for interns from an ethnic minority to grow and be a part of policy development in Wales. Thank you so much for giving me a chance to grow."

We also committed to paying this at the Real Living Wage. The success of this internship programme has led to further internship opportunities in other parts of the business – we aim to roll this out over 2024.



Our financials

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

During the year, Cwmpas generated turnover totalling £6.9m. This is a decrease from £7.3 million in the previous year, reflecting the move away from European funding.

Despite a challenging financial period of transition, we worked hard to minimise the impact on our capacity and future sustainability. Cwmpas generated a surplus of £56K, which will be reinvested to further our purpose and objectives. The majority of Cwmpas' activities operate on a cost recovery basis.



Our financials

Thank you to all our funders for their support:

Welsh Government



Nationwide Foundation



National Lottery
Community Fund



SPF projects



Oak Foundation



Our accreditations

We Invest in People: Gold



Green Dragon: Level 3



Cyber Essentials and IASME



Cyber Essentials Plus



Living Wage Employer



Disability Confident Employer



White Ribbon Accredited



Cwmpas coop wme

Cwmpas, Spark, Maindy Road,
Cardiff, CF24 4HQ

Telephone: **0300 111 5050**

Email: **info@cwmpas.coop**

Web: **cwmpas.coop**

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.