



## Welcome to our Impact Report 2016-17

Since we were founded 35 years ago, the Wales Co-operative Centre has | been right at the heart of Wales's vibrant social economy, bringing funders and partners together to make our communities more confident, more co-operative, more capable and more ambitious.

Our work is more important now than ever, as the people, communities and businesses of Wales face increasing social and economic pressures.

We are working for a fairer economy. We help to create and retain wealth within our communities through the growth of co-operatives and social businesses. We provide people with the skills to take more control of their own lives and strengthen their communities. You can read all about our work over the last twelve months in the following report.

The Wales Co-operative Centre is a not-for-profit co-operative organisation that supports people in Wales to improve their lives and livelihoods. Everything we do is shaped by our own commitment to co-operative values and our close collaboration with funders and delivery partners to achieve both social and economic goals.

As a co-operative, we're guided by an active community of members who shape our strategic direction, scrutinise our activities, increase our influence and ensure we're a voice for the social economy in Wales. We thank them for their support.

We always welcome new members. If you would like to work with us or support the Wales Co-operative Centre as a member, please visit [wales.coop/membership](http://wales.coop/membership).

Together we can build a better future for everyone in Wales.

Best wishes

Derek Walker, Chief Executive

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# Wales Co-operative Centre 2016/17

A not-for-profit co-operative organisation that supports people in Wales to improve their lives and livelihoods.

Our corporate objectives reflect how we are working co-operatively to achieve our mission to develop sustainable businesses and strong inclusive communities.

## Broad range of work in three main areas:



### Supporting social businesses

We provide expert support to social businesses so they can deliver vital services, provide quality jobs and training, and strengthen local economies



### Tackling poverty & promoting inclusion

We use co-operative approaches to reduce poverty and unemployment by creating resilient, cohesive and prosperous communities



### Forward thinking policy & research

Our influential research and policy work sets out why co-operative solutions are both effective and relevant in tackling some of society's big challenges

## Our goals put us at the heart of the nation's vibrant social economy:

- + Champions for an inclusive economy and co-operative working – leading the public debate, shaping policy-making, piloting innovative new projects and sharing successful ways of working
- + Leading the growth of co-operatives, mutuals, social enterprises and employee-owned businesses in Wales
- + Empowering people and communities to improve their lives and livelihoods, tackle poverty and help build an inclusive society
- + Harnessing the power of digital technology for social good, maximising the potential of digital technology to achieve our social purpose
- + A strong, independent co-operative organisation, ensuring our values underpin everything we do

## A well-run organisation serving the whole of Wales:

1982

Established in 1982

64

64 members of staff

£3.7m

£3.7 million turnover

4

4 offices across Wales –  
Bangor, Carmarthen,  
Swansea and Caerphilly

## A year of successful project delivery across Wales:

### Helping social businesses grow – Social Business Wales

**114**  
social businesses helped to expand

**86**  
new jobs created

**80**  
organisations implemented new equality or sustainability measures

- + National conference provided delegates with valuable skills and knowledge
- + Regional networks, meet the social investor events and charity seminars helped social businesses make new contacts and win business
- + Our client Dulas won the prestigious UK Social Enterprise of the Year Award

### Supporting self-help social co-operatives – Care to Co-operate

**18**  
groups provided with intensive, hands-on support

**70**  
people worked together to set up care co-operatives

**4**  
workshops gave delegates essential information and practical skills

- + Successfully launched in June 2016 – over 100 people came to hear more about care co-operatives
- + 7 co-operatives now emerging to deliver care, support and well-being services in a pioneering way
- + Supported Cartrefi Cymru, which employs 1,248 people, to become a co-operative

### Raising social investment – Community Shares Wales

**31**  
community businesses given specialist investment support

**5**  
training sessions increased awareness of community shares

**62**  
people benefitted from training

- + Launched in October 2016 by actor and activist Michael Sheen, with huge media interest
- + Study visit to the Bell Inn in Bath demonstrated the massive potential of community share investment
- + Online toolkit in development to ensure guidance and information is available 24/7

### Developing co-operative homes – Co-operative Housing

**4**  
co-op housing schemes completed

**75**  
people now living in affordable co-operative homes

**129**  
people trained to become active and engaged co-op members

- + Intensive support provided to 5 other co-op housing schemes
- + Widespread engagement with the local authority, housing and community sectors to encourage more co-operative housing development
- + Online resources published to help more emerging co-op housing schemes than ever

### Getting people online – Digital Communities Wales

**63,611**  
people assisted to get online

**365**  
organisations supported to help their staff and clients do more with IT

**754**  
frontline staff trained in digital inclusion

- + Digital Inclusion Charter launched to galvanise digital inclusion activity. 180 organisations pledged to act
- + Sponsored the Third Sector Awards Cymru digital inclusion award, to highlight fantastic digital inclusion work across Wales
- + Digital Heroes scheme recruited 447 scouts, guides, police cadets and students who are now helping people get online

### Improving financial capability – Your Money, Your Home

**475**  
private rented sector tenants improved their money management skills

**676**  
people made more aware of financial inclusion through hands-on training

- + One of the few organisations working with private rented sector tenants who need support
- + Legacy report highlighted key project achievements and valuable lessons
- + Money Advice Service funding has secured this vital work for another year

### Increasing financial inclusion – Financial Inclusion Champions

**105**  
frontline staff trained to help people with money worries

**73%**  
said training had helped them manage their own money better

- + Money Made Clear Wales website provided essential money management advice and tools to people in financial need
- + Pilot project with three credit unions sought to increase take up of payroll deduction savings schemes

### Shaping the political agenda – Policy and Research

**7**  
Gave crucial feedback to 7 consultations on behalf of the sector

**9**  
Assembly Members shown the impact of social enterprise through visits

- + Organised well-attended events for the Cross Party Group on Co-operatives & Mutuals, which increased political awareness of the sector
- + Published thought-provoking research which generated political support for new initiatives
- + Brought together leading co-operative organisations to create the Mutuals Alliance, a dynamic new partnership driving the sector forward

## Testimonials from our clients:

• Social Business Wales are such a crucial font of knowledge and they are such a valuable champion of businesses like ours, businesses that seek to address the challenges that affect us all.

Alastair Marsden, Dulas  
UK Social Enterprise of the Year

• Marc and Steve have gone out of their way to work with myself and the health board to get our local communities access to digital health care.

Sarah Hicks, Hywel Dda University Health Board  
Digital Communities Wales client

• Excellent depth of knowledge and experience to draw on that would have been too costly for a small organisation to afford. Great support and promoting of our project to other organisations and statutory bodies.

Fiona Davies, West Rhyl Community Land Trust  
Co-operative Housing client

• Social Business Wales were an invaluable source of help and support at the beginning of our journey to becoming Wales' first co-operatively owned dental practice, and throughout the process so far.

Hannah Hutchison, Gateway Dental Practice  
Social Business Wales client

## A great place to work:



95%

of employees understand the Centre's values

90%

say managers practice and promote equality of opportunity and are committed to diversity

86%

would recommend the Centre as a good place to work

•••••  
PQASSO Level 2 accredited – prioritising effective governance, quality control and management

•••••  
Green Dragon Award – taking action to control our impact on the environment

•••••  
Investors in People bronze level – leading, supporting and managing our people for sustained success

## Support from a range of funders:



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

