



Impact Report for 2017-18



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 year of successful project delivery across Wales

Social Business Wales: Helping social businesses to diversify, collaborate, expand and transform

Care to Co-operate: Supporting the development of social care co-operatives

Community Shares Wales: Raising social investment for community assets and facilities

Co-operative Housing: Developing co-operative homes in local communities

Digital Communities Wales: Supporting people to acquire basic digital skills and get on line

Your Money, Your Home: Improving the financial capability of vulnerable people in the private rented sector

My Digital Life: Helping vulnerable young people gain digital skills

Agile Mentoring: Building a digital service to assist third sector volunteering

Policy and Research: Shaping the political agenda



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI
LOTTERY FUNDED



Ewrop & Chymru: Buddsoddi yn eich dyfodol
Cronfa Datblygu Rhanbarthol Ewrop
Europe & Wales: Investing in your future
European Regional Development Fund



Making change happen with
nominettrust



Welcome to our Impact Report for 2017-18

We are a not-for-profit co-operative organisation that supports people in Wales to improve their lives and livelihoods. This is our purpose. We work for a fairer economy today, whilst protecting the interests of future generations for tomorrow.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act has given Wales an ambitious legislative framework on which to improve our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. The work of the Wales Co-operative Centre fits squarely within the provisions of the Act and our Impact Report this year shows how we do that.

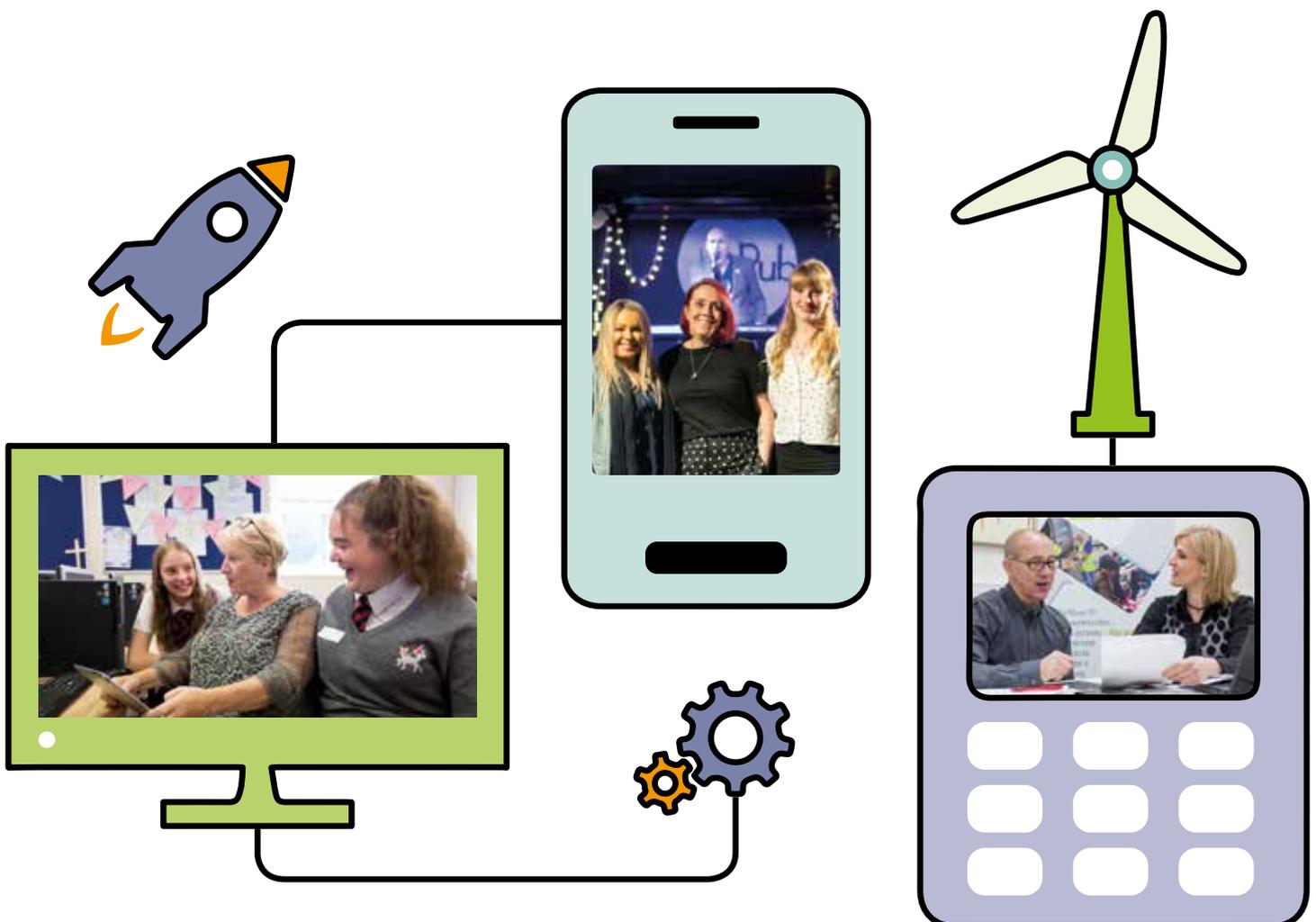
Over the past twelve months we have helped create a more prosperous Wales through the expert support we give to social businesses - businesses that consider their social and environmental impact, not just their economic one. Wales is more equal as a result of our pioneering work to end digital and financial exclusion.

Our communities are more cohesive because we bring people together to tackle the issues that matter to them, from building new housing to keeping open their local pub, shop or leisure centre.

We know we need to work with others to meet the goals of the Act. If we can work with you, please get in touch.

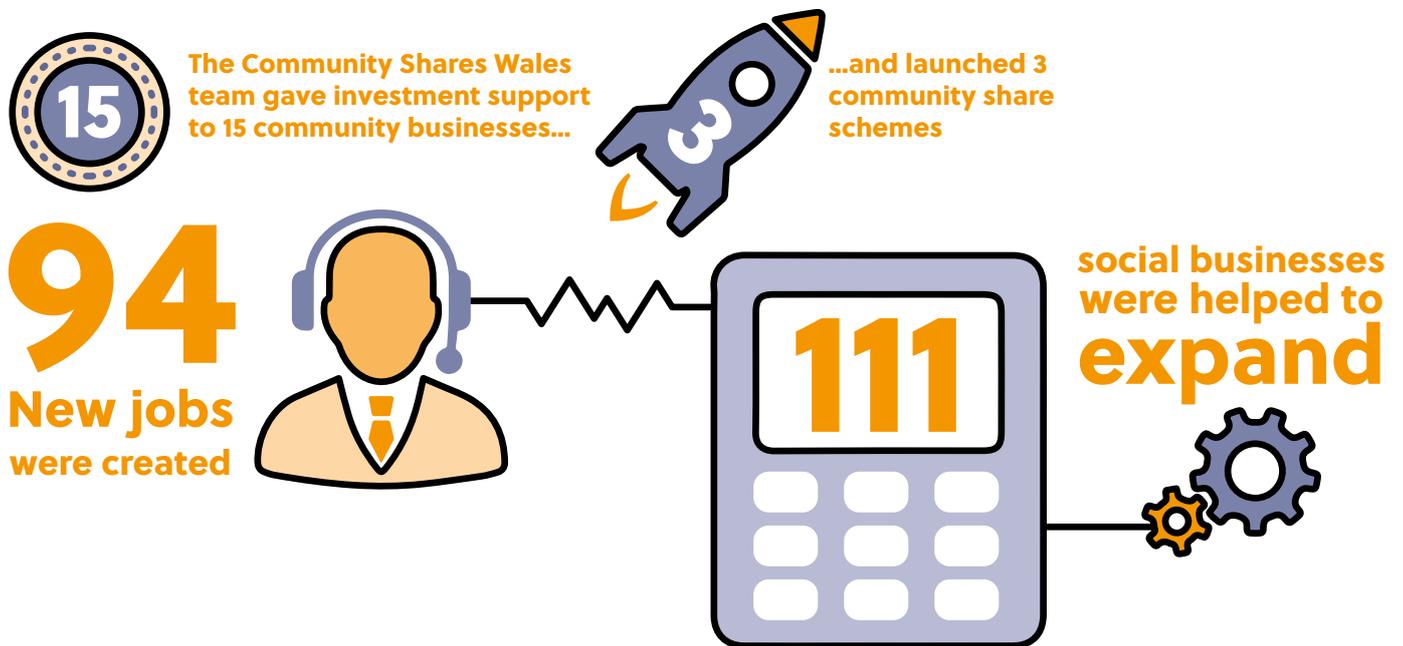


Derek Walker, Chief Executive



Creating a better, fairer more co-operative Wales

The Wales Co-operative Centre is playing a significant role in delivering the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.



Goal 1 A prosperous Wales

Aims

An end to poverty, with decent education, training and jobs for everyone in an economy that does not rely on using natural resources faster than the earth can replenish them.

How our work supports this goal:

- We help to create and retain wealth within our communities through the growth of co-operatives and social businesses.
- We are champions for an inclusive economy which places greater emphasis on building local economies, where wealth is being created and recycled within an area where people feel they belong. This helps to address the current situation where economic growth has become unbalanced and income inequality is increasing.
- Our work supports social businesses and co-operatives which exist to deliver social, environmental and economic aims. Social businesses are often found in areas of social deprivation, supporting communities, offering jobs and training and often providing services that others cannot or do not want to provide.

In 2017/18:

1. Our Social Business Wales team supported businesses to grow in areas that have suffered economic decline. This year, 111 social businesses were helped to expand and 94 new jobs were created.
2. The Community Shares Wales team gave investment support to 15 community businesses and launched 3 community share schemes.
3. We seconded a member of our team to the Future Generations Commissioner's Art of the Possible programme. Collaborating with a range of partners, she'll provide guidance and shine a light on the great work that is improving prosperity in communities across Wales.

In 2017/18, Social Business Wales supported *Choose2Reuse*, a social business which recycles and upcycles items to sell to the public or donate to charities helping homeless people. It currently employs 10 people, 5 of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds or were furthest from the labour market.



Goal 2

A resilient Wales

Aims

Limiting the demands that we place on the natural environment, and repairing damage to habitats and species, so that it can adapt to change (like climate change) and still provide future generations with clean air, water, food and resources.

How our work supports this goal:

- The social businesses and community projects that we support often have environmental aims at their heart.
- We are a strong, independent, co-operative organisation, ensuring our values underpin everything we do. This is reflected in our commitment to manage and reduce our environmental impact.

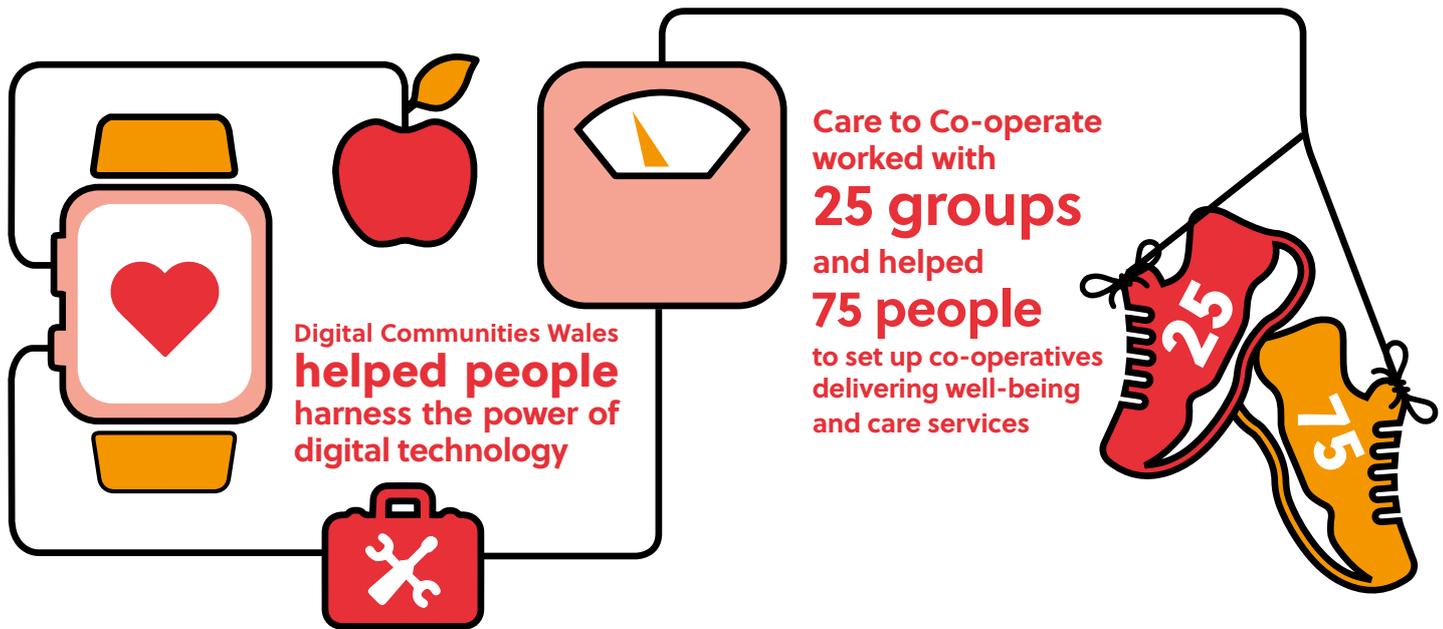
In 2017/18:

1. Over the past year, our Co-operative Housing team worked with one planet developments including *Lammas*, *Brithdir Mawr* and *Agroecology*. One planet developments are housing developments that focus on low impact living and sustainable land use that encourage households to reduce their ecological footprint.

2. Social Business Wales helped **132** organisations implement new equality or sustainability measures and we were finalists in the WEFO Cross Cutting Themes Awards.
3. We successfully gained re-accreditation for Green Dragon Level Two. Green Dragon is an environmental standard that is awarded to organisations that are taking action to understand, monitor and control their impacts on the environment. Level Two certification reflects our commitment to improving environmental performance.

Social Business Wales supported clients like *Going Green for a Living*. This business aims to establish Newtown as a stop and stay-over destination in Mid Wales. It plans to provide food production, sports facilities, and open spaces for events, along with wildlife and heritage attractions.





Goal 3

A healthier Wales

Aims

People in Wales enjoy better health for longer, linked to more public awareness about how to avoid illness and more people choosing healthier lifestyles.

How our work supports this goal:

- Digital Communities Wales supports people to maximise their physical and mental well-being by helping them use digital technology at home, in hospital or in care homes. We help to ensure that people have access to health information online.
- We encourage health boards and public sector organisations to use digital inclusion as a form of social prescribing
- Care to Co-operate helps bring people together to set up or run well-being services in a more collaborative, co-operative and inclusive way.

In 2017/18:

1. Digital Communities Wales helped people harness the power of digital technology to maximise their physical and mental well-being and develop behaviours that benefit future health.
2. During 2017-18, we loaned Fitbits to organisations and community groups to help improve people's health, while increasing confidence around

- digital technology. Participants reported health benefits including increased activity and weight loss.
3. Care to Co-operate worked with **25** groups and helped **75** people to set up co-operatives delivering well-being and care services. The team launched an online toolkit to support emerging care co-ops and pioneered a micro-co-op approach to delivering care.

We helped the *Me, Myself and I Club*. The Club formed in 2013 to provide emotional support and activities for people, and their families, who are living with memory loss. It provides services in a social and relaxed setting in addition to training for people who care for and support their dependents and relatives.

Digital Communities Wales worked with the *Rhondda Cynon Taff Over 50s Walking Group* on a project to improve people's health, while increasing confidence around digital technology at the same time. The group used Fitbit devices to measure their activity levels and see whether they'd reached health goals, while understanding how digital technology could help them achieve this.

Goal 4

A more equal Wales

Aims

Equal chances for everyone and an end to discrimination.

How our work supports this goal:

- We aim to enable people and communities to improve their lives and livelihoods, tackle poverty and help build an inclusive society through working co-operatively.
- Your Money, Your Home works to help tackle poverty and reduce economic inequalities through targeted one to one interventions. It aims to create longer term, sustained, positive change where tenants feel less anxious and more able to deal with financial difficulties, increase their financial resilience and are confident in preparing for and managing life events.
- Digital Communities Wales helps people to fulfil their potential no matter their background or circumstance through helping them gain fundamental digital skills so that they can access information, services and jobs.

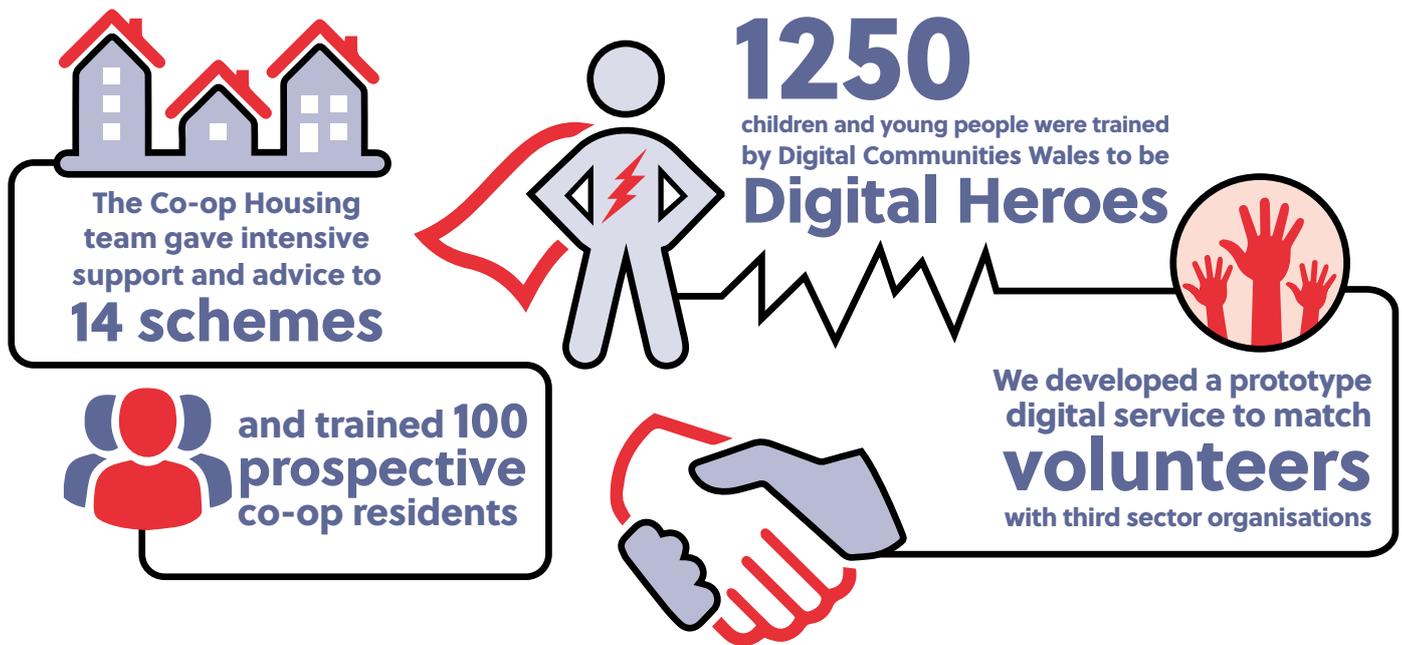
3. Digital Communities Wales received an award from *Swansea City of Sanctuary* for its work developing a toolkit to support the digital needs of people seeking sanctuary. We delivered training to senior mentors, covering basic digital skills and specific apps and tools that could help newly arrived people.
4. We ran My Digital Life, a project which helped vulnerable and disadvantaged young people gain basic digital skills to help them manage their money, seek work and use social media safely and effectively.
5. We were awarded Living Wage accreditation and recognised as a Disability Confident employer.

Miss G is a young single mother from Blaenau Gwent who suffers from depression, Crohn's disease and arthritis. She met with our Your Money, Your Home team following concerns over paying her rent. The team provided support including help to understand and prioritise debts, support with a Discretionary Housing Payment application and to register to move to a more affordable property. Miss G reported that she had taken better control of her debts by cutting back on expenditure and by the end of our support had moved into a more suitable property.

In 2017/18:

1. Your Money, Your Home helped **351** vulnerable tenants in the private rented sector to improve their money management.
2. Digital Communities Wales helped **30,948** people to get online, supported **313** organisations and trained **1850** frontline staff.





Goal 5

A Wales of cohesive communities

Aims

People live happily together and feel that they have a stake in their community. Local areas provide access to decent housing, transport, public services, recreation and jobs.

How our work supports this goal:

- Our Co-operative Housing Project supports community-led housing schemes which work with local people to develop affordable housing which meets their needs, in their local area. These schemes create communities where people feel secure, satisfied and empowered.

In 2017/18:

1. The Co-op Housing team gave intensive support and advice to **14** schemes and trained **100** prospective co-op residents.
2. **1250** children and young people were trained by Digital Communities Wales to be Digital Heroes, so they could help people in their community gain basic digital skills. This helped bridge the generational divide and tackle loneliness as well as improving people's skills.

3. Through our Agile Mentoring project, we developed a prototype digital service to match volunteers with third sector organisations in their community and ensure successful volunteer placements.

We worked with *United Welsh Housing Association* to develop a community-led housing scheme in Caerphilly. Tenants of the new development are working together to co-design and maintain their communal green space. Tenants were chosen based not only on need and local connection, but on their enthusiasm and desire to co-operate, contribute and co-produce the green space. This opportunity to design, develop, share and enjoy the communal green space will strengthen ties between community members.

Goal 6

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Aims

Sports, arts, culture and the Welsh language are a regular part of everyday life for everyone.

How our work supports this goal:

- Community shares can save local shops and pubs, transform community facilities, support local food growing, fund new football clubs, restore heritage buildings, and build stronger, more vibrant and independent communities. Our Communities Shares Wales project works with communities to help them keep arts, sports and other cultural facilities available and accessible.
- Social Business Wales supports local communities to take over community assets that are in danger of closure. This has included leisure facilities, arts centres and visitor attractions.

2. Our Community Shares Wales team worked with Caerau FC and St Johns House in Bridgend – a fifteenth century house restoration project – to help them launch share offers.
3. We are a bilingual organisation. During the year we developed a new Welsh language policy and carried out a range of activities to ensure that the Welsh language is central to everything we do.

When established live music venue Le Pub in Newport was faced with closure, its manager approached our Community Shares Wales team for support. The team worked with the founder members of Le Public Space and advised on the co-operative society model and the option of saving the pub through a community share offer. The team assisted Le Public Space to incorporate as a Community Benefit Society, and assisted the Directors to develop all aspects of the share offer. As a result of our support, Le Public Space now provides a community owned arts space and venue for the people of Newport.

In 2017/18:

1. Social Business Wales supported 52 sporting, arts and cultural organisations during the year such as Torfaen Leisure Trust, Llandudno FC in the Community, Valleys Gymnastics Academy Ltd, Ffin Dance, Organised Kaos Youth Circus Ltd and Theatr Brycheiniog.





Goal 7

A globally responsible Wales

Aims

Ensuring that we use only our fair share of the earth's resources and choose actions that avoid exploitation of others and do not worsen global challenges like climate change.

How our work supports this goal:

- As a co-operative organisation, we believe in promoting co-operation amongst co-operatives and strengthening the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures. Our international work has focused on making a positive contribution to global well-being and contributing to global knowledge on sustainability and good practice.

In 2017/18:

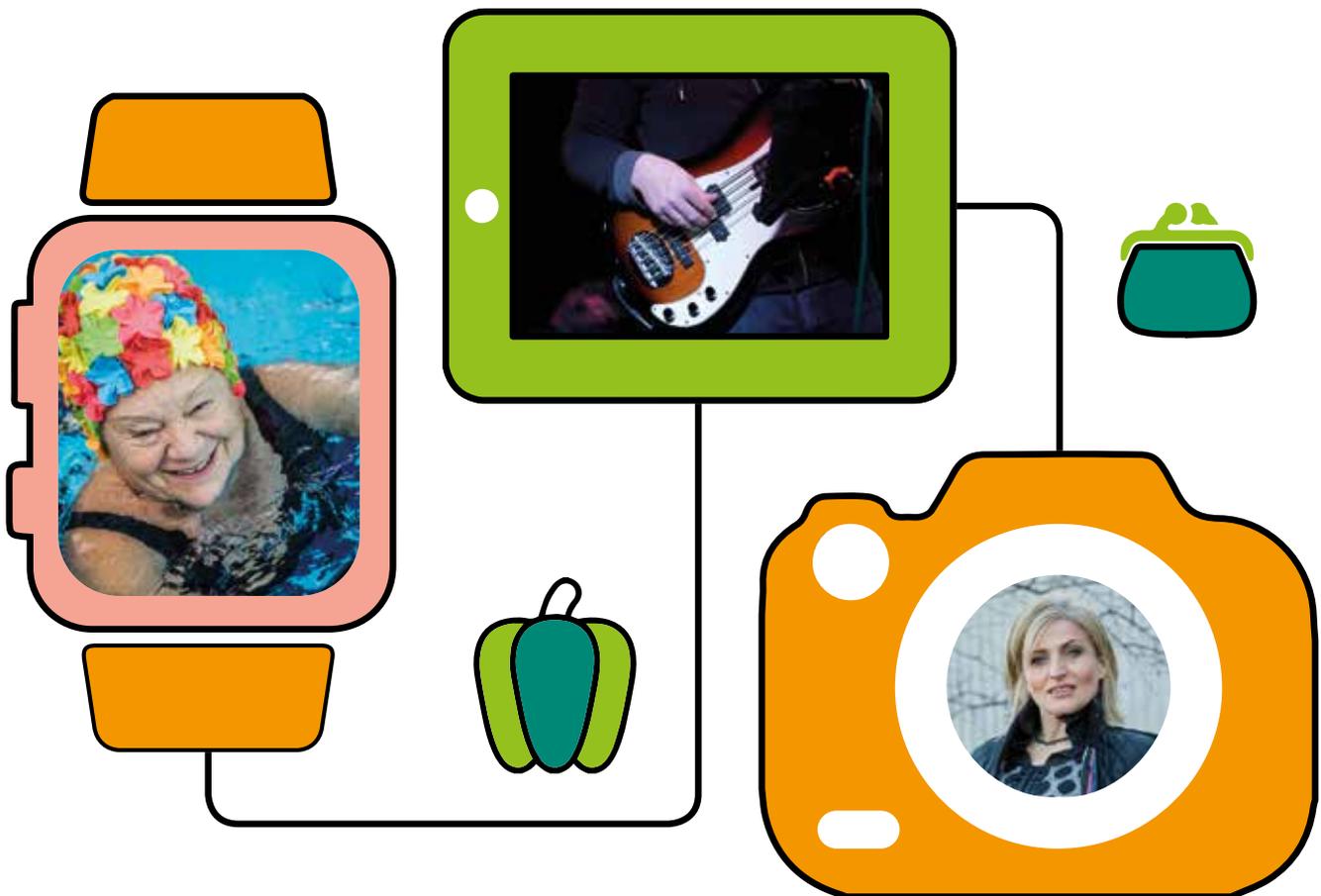
- In 2017/18, we continued to work with the Co-operative College to help the Lesotho Youth Co-operative Alliance develop and support co-operatives led by young people in Lesotho.

We worked with *Gower Regeneration* which raised £940,000 through investment from the local community to build Wales' first community owned solar farm. The solar farm is now generating enough renewable energy to power 300 households, and is providing educational opportunities for local primary school children to learn about energy and the environment.

Looking forward to 2018/19

In the next year, we will:

- Grow our services and continue to successfully deliver projects which support social businesses and empower people and communities across Wales
- Help develop an ambitious new social enterprise strategy for Wales
- Update our research on the state of the social business sector in Wales
- Commission new research on the impact of digital inclusion on health
- Launch new commercial services to diversify our income and increase our sustainability
- Renew our PQASSO Level 2 accreditation
- Expand our policy and influencing work as champions of an inclusive economy



Wales Co-operative Centre Ltd, Y Borth, 13 Beddau Way, Caerphilly, CF83 2AX

Tel: 0300 111 5050 Email: info@wales.coop Web: www.wales.coop

The Wales Co-operative Development and Training Centre Limited (trading as the Wales Co-operative Centre) is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, number 24287 R. We welcome correspondence in English or Welsh and aim to provide an equal standard of service in both languages.