

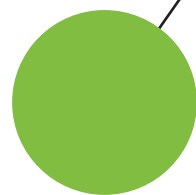
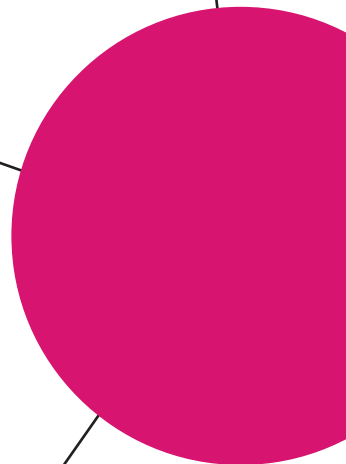
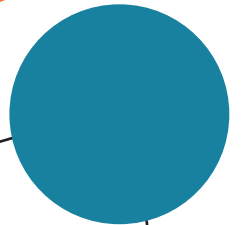


Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector
Support **Wales**

Impact report
2019-20

Third Sector Support Wales



Foreword



Edward Watts, Chair of the Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) Consortium

Welcome to the 2019-20 impact report by Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) partners; this is the second year of this document that we have produced and builds upon the work undertaken to improve the impact measurement of the work that we undertake.

As the Chair of Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO), a Board member of Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and Chair of the TSSW Consortium, which is comprised of the Chairs and Chief Officers of the 19 county voluntary councils (CVCs) and WCVA I see first-hand the work that goes on across the partnership to support the voluntary sector in Wales and I am proud to present this Impact Report for 2019-20.

2019-20 sets out to be a year where we built on the work undertaken in 2018-19 to change and improve TSSW. We have developed and continued to improve what we do through better use of our digital systems to better support the individuals and organisations we work with including:

- **Volunteering Wales** – www.volunteering-wales.net
- **Funding Wales** – www.funding.cymru
- **Infoengine** – www.infoengine.wales

With a new Knowledge Hub (<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/>) due for launch during 2020-21 that will provide a range of useful resources and online learning for the voluntary sector in Wales.



2019-20 sets out to be a year where we built on the work undertaken in 2018-19 to change and improve TSSW.



We also listened and took on board the feedback from the sector to change and improve our services that we deliver through the following four pillars of activity that binds the voluntary sector together:

- Volunteering
- Good governance
- Strategic engagement and influencing
- Sustainable resources

Even though this report covers 2019-20 it would be remis of me not to mention the major events that were only just beginning at the end of March 2020, namely COVID-19.

COVID-19 has and continues to impact our lives and although we will not know for many months or years yet the full impact on Wales, we do know one thing, the damage caused would have been far greater if it was not for the response of the voluntary sector in Wales.

During this time, we have seen greater collaboration and communication across the CVCs of Wales, and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Ruth Marks, Chief Executive of WCVA and colleagues for facilitating a monthly virtual call for the Chairs of the CVCs, which has helped us to solidify the relationships between the 19 organisations.

From my own experience I have seen the dedication and efforts of TSSW partners across Wales during this time, and that really brings home the benefits to having an effective partnership, such as TSSW, that can respond during a crisis to ensure our communities are supported when needed.

The Black Lives Matter movement has also swept across the globe, shining a brighter light on the inequalities that exist for BAME people including here in Wales. The voluntary sector is alive with BAME organisations delivering real support, benefit and impact to their communities and we as TSSW need to continue to challenge ourselves with the questions, 'Are we doing enough?' and 'Are we doing it in the right way?' to make sure the support, funding and advocacy that we offer is reaching all parts of our society.

Our thanks are noted for the continued investment, support and collaboration with Welsh Government to enable TSSW partners to deliver real impact that makes a difference every day to communities across Wales through the voluntary sector; and to the organisations, voluntary and community groups and volunteers themselves.

Edward Watts MBE DL

About us

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales. It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).



Launched in October 2018, our shared Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system gathered performance information from all our Third Sector Support Wales partners for the period 1 October 2018 – 31 March 2019:

Who we worked with:

3,713

organisations were supported with direct information and advice

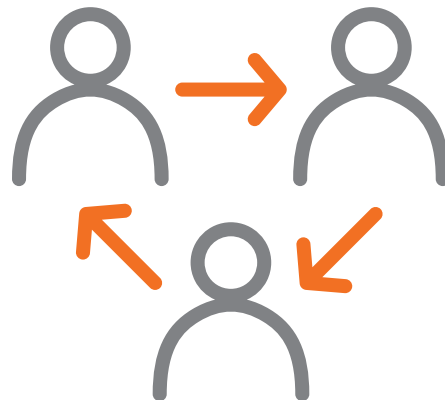
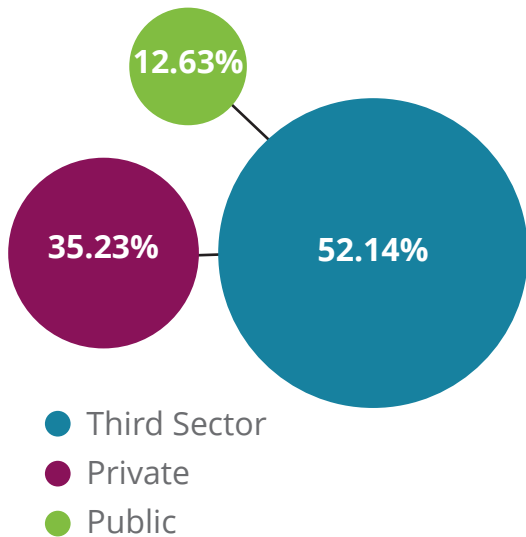
39,571

recorded interactions with the third, public and private sectors

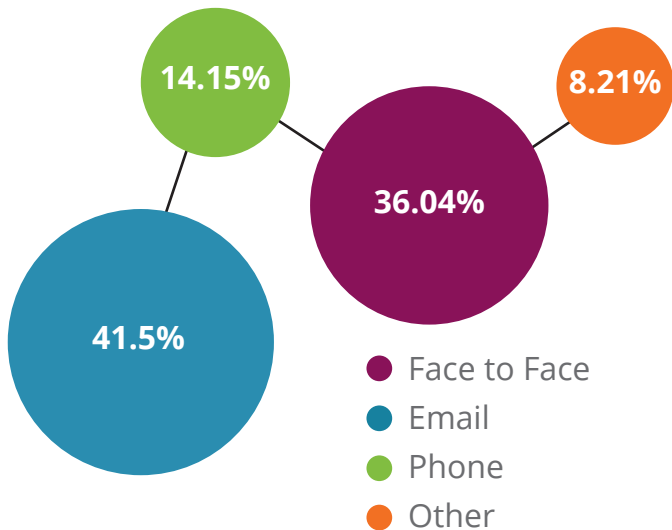
30,582

hours, spent supporting the sector with the four pillar themes, with an average of 61 minutes per interaction

Interactions by sector:

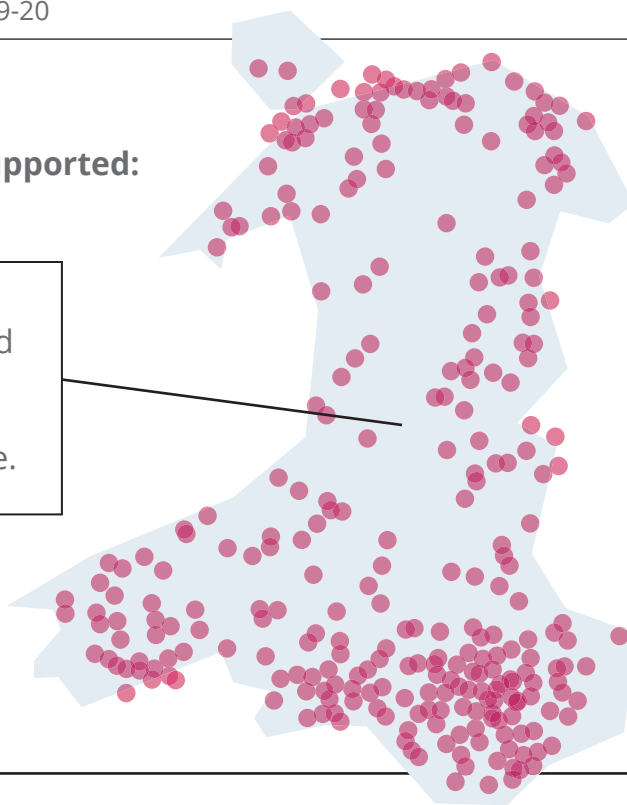


Source of interactions recorded:



Registered address of organisations supported:

NB. This is the address of the organisation supported (often the HQ) and is not reflective of where the support actually took place.



Learning, development, networks and events

540

face to face training
courses delivered to

3,183

participants

29

online courses
provided
training to

413

participants

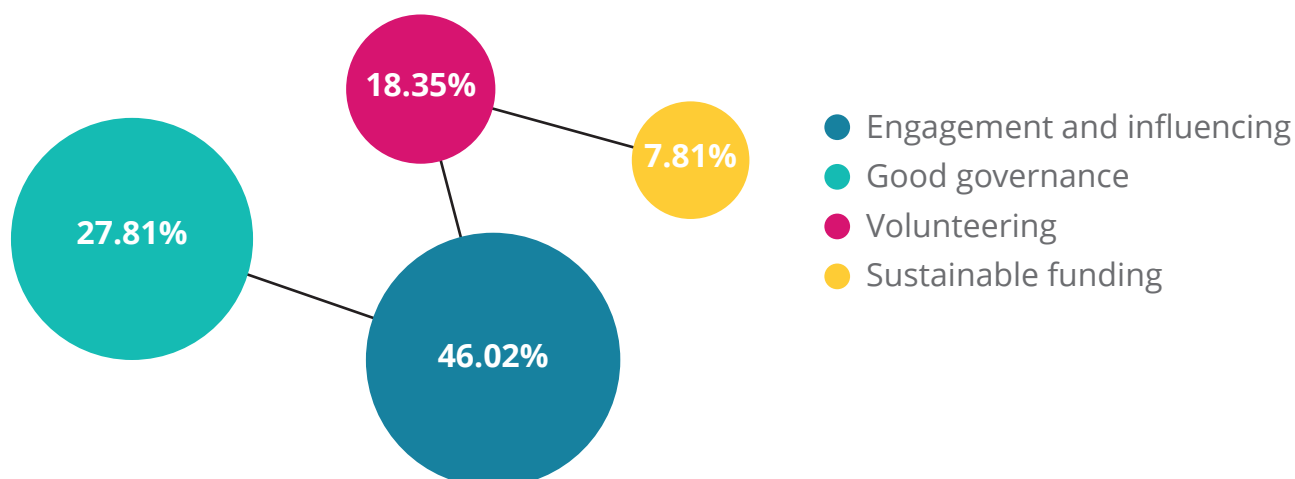
888

partnerships/forums/
networks/events were
facilitated, involving

8,105

participants

Number of training participants by pillar:



Volunteering Wales

is the digital platform that supports volunteer recruitment and placement for those wanting to volunteer and organisations that want to find volunteers. The website also provides additional functions such as logging volunteer hours and allows email updates to be sent to volunteers to promote relevant opportunities.

14,685

Volunteers registered on the platform this year

467

Organisations registered

1,918

New opportunities advertised



Gwirfoddoli Cymru
Volunteering Wales

Map of available
volunteering
opportunities:



Infoengine

is a free online Welsh directory of voluntary sector community services.

25,500

New visitors

2,812

Return visitors

2,741

Registered organisations

infoengine

Funding.Cymru

is the digital portal that enables volunteers, trustees and staff to search for funding opportunities for their organisations.

16,455

Users of funding.cymru through 19-20



667

Funders listed with

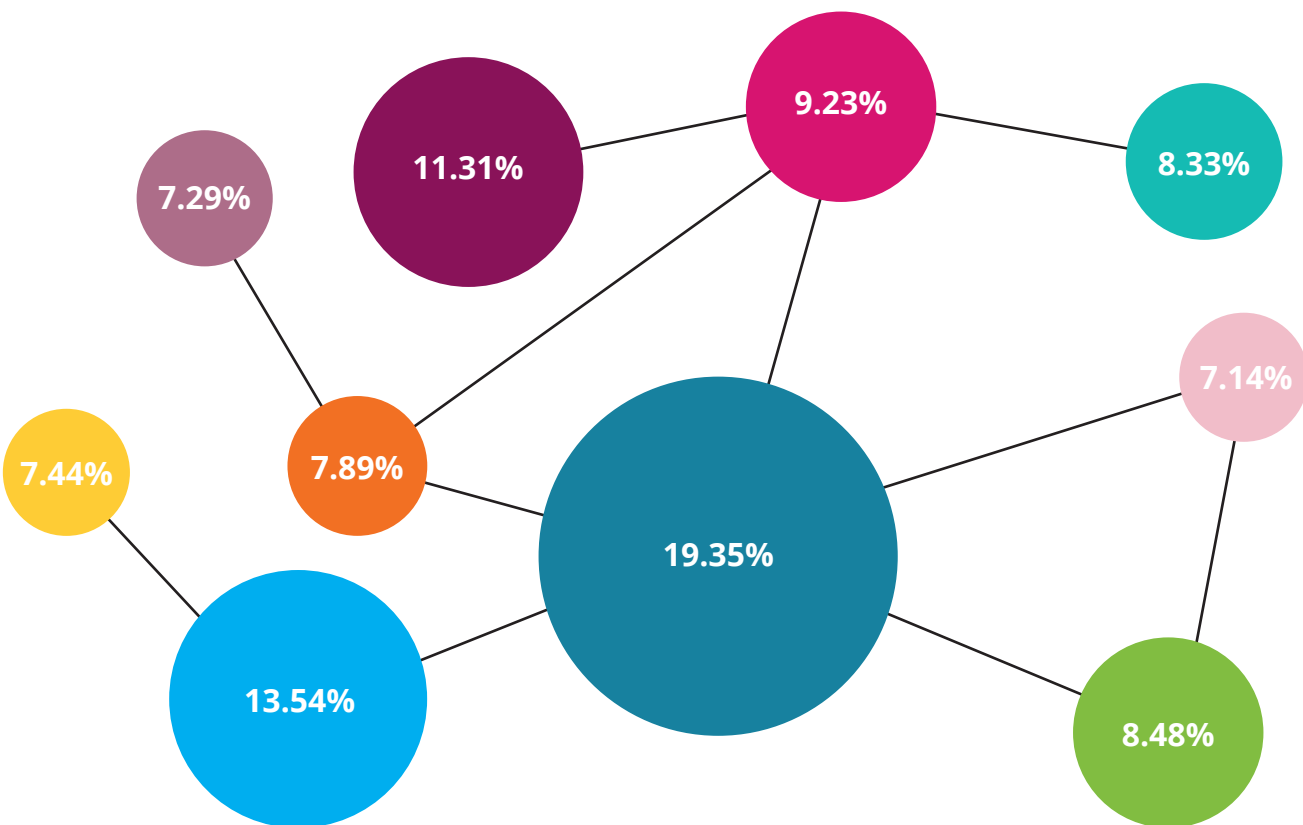
681

Funds advertised

5,292

Users registered

Top 10 funds clicked on www.funding.cymru:



- Community Foundation Wales
- The Ashley Family Foundation
- The Persimmon Charitable Foundation
- Innogy
- UK Community Foundations

- The Coalfield Regeneration Trust
- Community Resource Services
- The GC Gibson Charitable Trust
- MPU Mutual Charitable Trust
- The Asda Foundation



Good governance

Wellbeing Goals

This pillar of activity contributes the to the following Wellbeing Goals:

- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A resilient Wales
- A more equal Wales

Our goal

Those involved in running third sector organisations effectively lead their organisations and maintain high standards of governance.

How we helped

- Information, news and up-dates through our websites, e-bulletins, blogs, meetings, networks and learning opportunities, including events on charity law, good governance, safeguarding, GDPR and cyber security
- Bespoke information, guidance and learning for organisations and trustees on implementing good governance policies and practices
- Specialist safeguarding information, advice, training and events
- Awareness raising of positive board cultures, exploitation and safeguarding through Trustees' Week

What you said about our services

86% of individuals that accessed TSSW governance services said this support had helped to a great or some extent with confidence in leading their organisation.

93% said that TSSW support was useful to a great/some extent in increasing skills to run their organisation.

Key performance indicators

2,719

interactions with organisations on good governance, with an average of 84 minutes per interaction

1,010

organisations supported with direct information and advice

93

organisations supported to access specialist information and advice

222,928

information sheets downloaded

What people said about our governance support



"Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations have helped us at every step of this venture. When we initially wanted to set up as an organisation, they were able to provide information and advice about registering as a CIC.

GAVO gave us the confidence to go ahead with our venture and have been there for us every step of the way. No matter what the query I know they will be there to advise us and have the knowledge to refer us to resources and further information."

"PAVO have been a very reachable and responsive organisation to contact and have been a great sounding board and encouraging advisory body as well as signposting us to other resources," said a group representative. Forest Studio Tenants

"This training allowed our board of trustees to grow in size and confidence. Potential trustees felt able to stand at the AGM, supported by knowledge about their new role. Established trustees reaffirmed their contribution and commitment to the organisation." Women4resources, Swansea

"We are proud to be associated with a club that has so much history and has meant so much to the people of Treharris. The club is firmly established in the community and will celebrate its centenary in 2023. Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil provides the majority of our support with advice and guidance on our finance and administration." Ray O'Neill, Treharris Boys and Girls Club

"Through Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations' support the trustees have gained a greater understanding about liability, and the charity has received help from the revision and refreshment of their rules and structure." Western Beacons Mountain Rescue Team

CVC case studies

Setting up a charity

An inclusive play group for families in Cardiff and the surrounding areas exists to offer an all-day play provision for disabled children up until the age of 18. They had been previously funded by Cardiff Council, but funding cuts have meant that the Council could no longer afford to fund the service. The group wanted to set up as a charity to be more sustainable and access funding streams that they were not previously able to under the umbrella of the Council.

The play group contacted Cardiff Third Sector Council for help with a safeguarding policy and, after much searching for support, they were relieved to find someone that could assist. Due to the

unique provision, they offer, they did not need the extensive safeguarding required by Care Inspectorate Wales. From talking over the phone with the group, C3SC realised that there may be other support they needed so offered an opportunity for the group to have a face-to-face meeting. Their Third Sector Development Officer met the group and identified several policies that would help going forward e.g., confidentiality, equality and diversity, health and safety, volunteering, and disciplinary. The group were provided with templates and the opportunity to access on-going support to ensure that their policies met their needs. There was also an added offer for the group to come back to C3SC when they were able to apply for funding.

Becoming a Dementia Friendly Community

Dementia Aware St Asaph Action Group was formed in October 2019, following different dementia aware events organised by Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council. Their first aim was to organise dementia-friendly walks within St Asaph, organise Dementia Friends Awareness sessions and provide dementia-friendly signage, with a bigger picture goal of making St Asaph a recognised Dementia Friendly Community. To achieve these goals, they wanted to work closely with community groups and engage the wider community in St Asaph. At the same time, DVSC was working to spread awareness in St Asaph by organising a Dementia Aware Business Breakfast, an event attended by local people, businesses and voluntary organisations. With the support of DVSC the meeting focused on setting up a steering group, followed by a second meeting with speakers and more information about the steps to take to become a recognised Dementia Friendly Community.

DVSC provided support on many different levels, including grant funding, to kickstart the setup of the organisation, information, and resources from the DVSC website and reaching out to the wider community. DVSC provided support in forming the organisation, as well as support before, during and after meetings to set up an organised steering group ready to be constituted.

A founder of the group talked about her reasons for getting involved and the invaluable support she received from DVSC, saying: *"Although my professional background was nursing, including commissioning services for older people, including those with a diagnosis of dementia, it wasn't until my husband was diagnosed with dementia and I was living with it on a daily basis that I realised how much needed to be done in order to reduce the stigma and make life easier for people living with dementia. The*

opportunity to apply for the grant from DVSC has made it possible for me to make a positive contribution. I have been so pleased that we have been able to set up a strong steering committee to take this work forward."

Registering as a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Rhondda Lawn Tennis Club is based at Ystradefechan playing fields next to Treorchy Park. Meriel Gough from Interlink met with the Committee of The Club to discuss the club's development need – to create a tennis centre in Treorchy. To achieve this, they first had to incorporate and to develop a business plan. Meriel suggested the club become incorporated as a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Association Model. This would give the Committee members protection beyond Public Liability Insurance. As a CIO the club would stand a far better chance of accessing the level of funding need to develop the club house and improve the tennis courts.

John Denton, Treasurer, said: *"Meriel provided us with invaluable advice and insight into how we go about applying for our club to become a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Without her help we would have failed to achieve the CIO status. Her in-depth knowledge of what was needed, guidance as to where to look for information and advice, together with her explanations of the application process were crucial to our successful application. We were always extremely confident that we would achieve CIO status with Meriel's involvement in our application. I personally would highly recommend bringing Meriel on board at the start of your application to ensure its success."*

Measuring impact and social value

The Outdoor Partnership is a charity changing lives through outdoor activities. They have various projects and activities funded by various sources, and recently have received a £3 million grant from the Lottery Community Fund to look at rolling out what they have done in North Wales in other parts of the UK.

The Outdoor Partnership is one of 25 organisations who are part of the Measuring and Managing Social Value project in North Wales managed by Mantell Gwynedd. Their aim is to work with organisations to not only measure the social impact of one of their activities but also embed social value into their planning and decision-making, thus improving their governance.

Mantell Gwynedd worked with the North Wales Outdoor Partnership to measure the impact of their Pathways to Employment programme. During the past 18 months the organisation has made some significant changes to their programme based on engaging with stakeholders and embedding Social Value principles. The board now has a Social Value Champion who has been involved in all training and events, and social value is now communicated at board level.

Mantell Gwynedd's staff have been working closely with the North Wales Outdoor Partnership to take them through the impact questions, so they are able to embed these skills internally. They also received support on the new Impact Management toolkit which they are now using with current and new projects to set themselves social impact targets. This support has helped them with planning new projects, as well as maximising impact of their current services.

Tracey Evans, Chief Officer at the Outdoor Partnership, said: *"The Outdoor Partnership improves opportunities for more people in Wales to achieve their potential through outdoor activities. We can see the difference our projects have made to so many people, but it is difficult to demonstrate positive outcomes to our funding partners and stakeholders. Being part of this SROI project will help us to show our key stakeholders the return on their investment as well as helping us make internal decisions on service improvements and future strategic direction thus helping us improve our governance as an organisation."*

Creating a solid foundation for good governance

Mount Pleasant Hall provides a community hub for the surrounding area in Pontnewydd, an accessible venue for local groups and organisations to meet and undertake various activities. The hall has been in financial difficulty over the past two years, with its sustainability in serious doubt. Trustees were under significant pressure to grapple with rising debts and meet its commitments. In addition, the number of users at the hall had reduced, meaning that income was not as healthy as it needed be. Governance of the hall was patchy, with trustees not meeting regularly to discuss matters.

TVA were approached by the local councillors to support the management of the hall and its volunteers. TVA offered skills and knowledge to the organisation to help manage the financial situation, set up a solid structure for governance and ultimately move the organisation to a more sustainable position. TVA continued to work with the trustees until they felt confident to manage the hall successfully.

Councillor David Daniels said: *“TVA have been fantastic right from the off. The situation the hall was in was dire and the future in serious doubt. At the point of TVA intervention, we were seriously closing the hall and winding up the organisation. This would have impacted the wider community, who use the hall as a venue for many community-based activities, as well as for events such as weddings and birthdays.*

TVA have been a solid support throughout, with Vicky and Aimi offering professional guidance to the trustees, ensuring that the organisation can get back on its feet and on top of the financial and governance challenges. Without TVA's intervention, this hall would have closed. Their support has been invaluable, and I would highly recommend their services to any other community halls or organisations facing difficulties.”

WCVA case studies

Governance health checks

Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team (EYST) supports BME young people, families and individuals including refugees and asylum-seekers living in Wales. It does this through the provision of a wide range of services including education, employment, health, family support and community safety. They also aim to challenge and counter negative stereotypes about ethnic diversity and to increase awareness and understanding about the diverse communities who live in Wales, improving community cohesion.

The BME Skills Project is a 3-year project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund in Wales. It is a partnership between EYST, C3SC, SCVS and AVOW. The project supports BME organisations on their development journey. The cornerstone of their methodology is using an organisational Health Check.

WCVA provided a two-hour training session for the BME Skills Project staff on using governance health checks. Delivered by Mair Rigby, Governance and Safeguarding Manager, the session included a presentation on health checks and the main products currently on the market. It was followed by a workshop session providing attendees with an opportunity to go through the WCVA Governance Health check and ask any questions.

“The support from Mair and the bespoke workshop she delivered was a great help to the BME Skills Project. It helped us make more informed decisions about our methodologies and inspired us to make changes that improved the delivery of project which in turns help the BME community groups we support,”
said Lloyd Williams of EYST.



Engagement and influencing

Wellbeing Goals This pillar of activity contributes to the following Wellbeing Goals – A resilient Wales, A healthier Wales, A more equal Wales

Our goal Public policies and services are improved through third sector organisations influencing (working with TSSW).

How we helped

- Information, news and up-dates on policy developments through our websites, e-bulletins, blogs, meetings, networks and events
- Facilitation of local and national networks to bring together groups with each other and public bodies
- Co-ordination of third sector involvement in policy development and scrutiny
- Promotion of Infoengine, a free online directory of third sector community services, connected to Dewis Cymru
- Promotion of the Third Sector Data Hub
- Provision of a third sector perspective through membership of local Public Service Boards, Regional Partnership Boards and other local/regional forums, and a range of partnerships at national level
- Facilitation by WCVA of the Third Sector Scheme, including the Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) meetings with the Minister with responsibility for the third sector, and meetings between each Minister and relevant third sector networks

What you said about our services

71% of individuals who had accessed TSSW engagement and influencing support found it useful in enabling those they work with to influence policy development, service planning and delivery.

67% felt it had helped them to meaningfully engage with public bodies in policy development and design and delivery of services.

67% said the TSSW support had been useful to a great/some extent in increasing the skills and capacity to influence policy and services.

Key performance indicators

1,554 interactions with organisations on influencing and engagement, with an average of 75 minutes per interaction

669 organisations supported with direct information and advice on influencing and engagement

101,209 information sheets downloaded

5,042

participants at 308 networks, partnerships, forums and events

77 organisations supported to access specialist information and advice

What people said about our engagement and influencing support



"We have worked well in partnership with Conwy Voluntary Services Council. I value the uptake from staff as, significantly, gambling harm is not something which affects only our service users but also our friends and colleagues. So, if staff are also cascading then this will mean a significant impact on community awareness." Urtha Felda, Gamcare



"Without PAVO's support the specialised services we provide and our new innovative model for delivering and increasing

services would be lost. Supporting our Board and Director has been fundamental to sustaining the organisation and securing an opportunity to achieve sustainability." Disability Powys

"The work undertaken by Torfaen Voluntary Alliance has fully engaged with people who manage the community venues in Torfaen. This strengthens the chance of success in being able to fund someone for a sustained period to offer the support that these venues need to deliver to their communities." Pontypool Council



CVC case studies

Building strong regional partnerships

Section 16 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty upon local authorities (with partners) to promote the development of not-for-profit organisations to provide care and support services and preventative services. These models include social enterprises, co-operatives, user led services and the third sector. The supporting Code of Practice in relation to this duty requires local authorities, with health board partners, to establish regional forums to support social value-based providers to develop a shared understanding of the common agenda, and to share and develop good practice. The aim of these forums is to encourage a flourishing social value sector which is able and willing to fulfil service delivery opportunities.

North Wales Social Value Forum Steering Group (NWSVFSG) meets four times per year and is accountable to the North Wales Regional Partnership Board (NWRPB). The Group is chaired by third sector leaders – Ann Woods, CEO of Flintshire Local Voluntary Council has chaired since March 2018. Membership of the group is comprised of a broad cross-sector of relevant networks e.g., County Voluntary Councils (CVCs), social value service providers, local authority representatives, and the three Regional Partnership Board third sector members.

A work programme is in place and achievements of the Steering Group to date include an established web presence – www.northwalescollaborative.wales/get-involved/social-value-forum/ – a governance and accountability process, communication plan and working definition of social value. All North Wales CVCs have contributed to

this agenda through the work led by Mantell Gwynedd and Social Care Wales.

Maria Bell, Regional Business Manager – Commissioning, provided her views on this vital partnership work. She said:

“The Regional Partnership Board and regional collaboration team acknowledge the significant contributions of FLVC, both in regards chairing the NWSVFSG and in promoting social value activities and organisations across North Wales.”

In addition to local development work, Ann Woods, Chief Officer of FLVC, has provided much appreciated leadership for the regional Steering Group:

- Engaging other CVC Chief Officers in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act requirements in relation to the Forums and the work of the Steering Group
- Reporting on behalf of the Steering Group to the Partnership Board
- Acting as an ambassador for the North Wales Steering Group in other networks such as the Social Value Cymru Network, Co-production Network for Wales and in the WCVA and Wales Co-operative Centre developments regarding review of Forums and development of the toolkit.

Raising awareness of vital local voluntary services

Mind Monmouthshire is a locally trusted independent mental health charity which provides a point of contact, information, and a wide range of services for people experiencing poor mental health across the whole county of Monmouthshire. Mind Monmouthshire is one of several voluntary sector organisations involved in a multi-agency group looking at Poverty and Inequality and the impact of Covid-19. The group is Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) led and feeds into the Public Service Board to direct priorities and resources. During discussions voluntary organisations

felt there is often a lack of understanding from statutory partners about their sustainability due to the current commissioning model and short-term grant funding. The Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership Officer for GAVO (Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations) Monmouthshire saw an opportunity to communicate with statutory partners. To raise awareness of the valuable health and wellbeing services being provided and highlighting the ongoing insecurity and uncertainty of funding these services.

Funding and commissioning are a real barrier to long term provision. Grant funding is useful in getting ideas off the ground and for running pilots to evidence efficient and effective approaches, it is not right for reliable long-term service provision. The commissioning model is a challenge to local organisations, but large national charities can easily write and submit tenders and secure the contracts. Local, valuable 'grassroots' work is lost because of this commissioning system.

An alternative to the current commissioning model was suggested – a 'paid to share' commissioning model, where 'small local' effective models that work well are recognised and the organisation is 'paid to share'. They would work with other community organisations in other areas to replicate and adapt the model to suit.

Although this communication does not solve the immediate and ongoing problems it helps to raise understanding of the needs of the voluntary sector and could influence future decision making.

Bernadette Kelly from Mind Monmouthshire thanked GAVO's Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership Officer, saying to partners: *"As you are all aware, we are constantly on the lookout for 'bits and bobs' of funding and will continue to do so. The Board at Mind Monmouthshire has invested some reserves into a Business Development worker, and that has produced some limited successes, but everything is very piecemeal. I'm not sure how a 'paid to share' model would work but I would be interested in finding out more. There is a lot of great partnership work across Monmouthshire and we are happy to build on that, but we need funding!"*

Improving public engagement

For our communities to be resilient and empowered, people within them need to be enthused and engaged in planning and co-producing public services and confident that their voice is being heard. The Joint Engagement and Consultation Board is a partnership board between the County Council and Medrwn Môn and this board focuses on how the County Council engages with the public.

Medrwn Môn have supported the use of the Principles of Engagement with the County Council on its development of its corporate plan. The consultation was prepared through the Engagement Board and Medrwn Môn was able to influence the design, format, and process of the consultation on the plan. This resulted in the County Council presenting the Corporate Plan in an easy read format with support and advice from the Community Voices project. This work built upon the work that was undertaken through the Community Involvement Officers project, which engaged with people and communities and avoided over-consultation. For the first time, groups were able to input responses to the Corporate Plan as well as encouraging people to think differently from their perspective of individual, family or community member.

Giving the voluntary sector a voice

Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations facilitates a bi-monthly meeting between voluntary sector mental health charities and commissioners at Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys County Council. The aim of these meetings is to discuss new initiatives, funding, gaps in service and any issues arising from commissioned services. Clear lines of communication make relationships and cooperative working much more possible.

In late 2018, providers asked PAVO to prepare a business case on the combined impact of organisations in their community and the 'value added' to funding from commissioners. The business case looked at how charities' staff add to the value of work by supporting volunteer workers, applying for additional funding, and lending local expertise to strategic boards and networks. In addition, the report outlined how activities of the organisations produce savings for statutory services through preventative work. Case studies within the report showed the personal benefits of work done by the mental health providers.

Claire Cartwright, Association Director of Ponthafren Association, said: *"The PAVO team are able to coordinate and facilitate the voluntary sector of Powys, enabling it to have a voice and seat around the table ensuring the sectors' views, quality of work and the innovative role we provide the community is showcased and valued."*

Co-producing new services



The Swansea Co-production Network are a collective of individuals and organisations interested in supporting and developing co-production with statutory partners. They offer training and support with involvement in commissioning co-productivity and commissioning for co-production. The network is funded by Swansea Council for Voluntary Services with Swansea Council.

The Social Services and Well-being Act asks local authorities to ensure access to an independent professional advocacy service. Swansea Co-Production Network wanted to achieve a service that was commissioned co-productively with a specification that required the new service to work co-productively. They did this by establishing working relationships with individuals and organisations whose experience and expertise could inform the specification and procurement process. The network held workshops, undertook a survey, and talked to providers to gather information to inform the service design.

This way of working was a challenge as we all needed a shared understanding of co-production and the barriers to working collectively and treating each other as equally valuable. The network learnt that it is essential to agree co-production and co-production commissioning definitions and have support from procurement. This work had a positive impact on trust and working relationships between the individuals involved, third sector organisations and statutory partners. The key partners and

support agencies involved were Swansea social services department, Swansea Disability Forum, City of Sanctuary, Golden Thread Advocacy, and Swansea Carers Centre Work. A tender for this work was issued May 2019 with the network involved in interviewing applicants and the making the final award for the service.

SCVS provided practical and emotional support as well as training for individuals and third sector partners involved. This included funding workshops to ensure voluntary sector partners and individuals could take part in a venue and at times that suited them. Support and guidance also offered to social services staff new to working alongside individuals and third sector organisations as equals.

Kelvin Jones of the Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) Steering Group said: *"As a citizen being involved at the very beginning, being valued, and having regular meetings to develop trust and set our own timescales enabled us as a group of citizens and professionals to plan, develop and deliver collectively ways to capture what makes a good IPA service, the foundation of the procurement process."*

Creating a shared understanding of the benefits of social prescribing

The Cwm Taf Public Services Board is a regional body including Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil. The Well Being Plan includes an overarching objective entitled 'Tackling Loneliness and Isolation'. Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil's Chief Officer was appointed to lead work in this area. During the initial stages it became clear that a plethora of emerging activity could collectively be described as 'social prescribing' – for instance, GP Support Officers, Community Coordinators, Wellbeing Coordinators, Social Navigators and so forth. Social prescribing is an important way to tackle loneliness and isolation.

A report to Cwm Taf Public Services Board concluded that a shared strategic approach was required across the partners. It was recognised that this strategy would also require the support of the Regional Partnership Board and needed to support the Transformation agenda. Local Public Health Consultant Sara Thomas was asked to lead on the development of a Social Prescribing Concept Paper. A multi-agency steering group was set up for the region and a workshop held in summer 2019. The final paper and its recommendations were approved by both the Cwm Taf Public Service Board and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board.

Sara Thomas said: *"The commitment of third sector partners has been central to the progress we have made in raising the profile of social prescribing in the region. Through our collaborative approach we have achieved a shared understanding of social prescribing and recognition amongst partners of its importance to people's health and wellbeing."*

WCVA case studies

The forum brought together sector organisations from all around Wales and the UK.

In the year the UK began the process of leaving the European Union, it was – and will remain – more important than ever to continuously collaborate with others to achieve the best outcomes possible for everyone in Wales.

The Civil Society Forum on Brexit is a collaborative partnership between WCVA and Cardiff University bringing together members from across the voluntary sector. This year, we brought organisations – including our sister infrastructure bodies – NCVO, NICVA and SCVO – together at a conference in Belfast exploring the effects of Brexit on civil society across Britain.

Our Deputy Chief Executive took part in a roundtable discussion, sharing his views on the impacts of Brexit on voluntary sector funding, while Counsel General Jeremy Miles spoke in a panel debate, highlighting the key role of voluntary organisations in Wales.

Later in the year, the Forum hosted a Brexit and BAME people event in Cardiff, in partnership with Ethnic Youth Support Team, Show Racism the Red Card and Race Council Cymru, with attendance from Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt and Jeremy Miles.

Finally, at the beginning of February, a range of sector organisations from across Wales took part in a Forum visit to Brussels to build on the First Minister's statement that *"we may be leaving the institutions of Europe, but we are still part of Europe."*

The message received throughout the trip was that European networks are not closed to Wales. There is genuine enthusiasm and passion to ensure that our shared values form the basis of building future relationships to benefit the most deprived in our communities.

Attendees in Belfast found the conference “very useful” and “wonderful”, with organisations making useful contacts from outside their home nations. Delegates at the BAME event said how it was “important to hear real life experiences” and brought light to “the realities of Brexit and the impact it poses on BAME communities.” The meetings held in Brussels allowed WCVA to tell the sector that Europe is still keen to retain and make new links with Wales, even after Brexit, an incredibly valuable message.

Establishing the Social Partnership Council

In late 2019, Welsh Government issued a consultation on social partnership, detailing how it wanted to create “a more inclusive Welsh economy in which no-one is left behind.” Part of this work was to establish a Social Partnership Council, comprising the public sector, private sectors and trade unions. The voluntary sector, despite being closer to many people at risk of being left behind than other sectors, was not mentioned.

We took this issue to a meeting under the Third Sector Scheme with the Minister for Housing and Local Government in March 2020. Attendees at this meeting included Wales Coop Centre, Citizens Advice Cymru and Cytun. We discussed this issue with Ministers and officials, and the Minister agreed that the sector should have a voice on the Council. WCVA's Chief Executive was then invited to be part of the initial Shadow Social Partnership Council, ensuring a sector voice can influence future discussions in this area.



Volunteering

Wellbeing Goals This pillar of activity contributes to the following Wellbeing Goals –
A Wales of cohesive communities
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Our goal Wales benefits and thrives because of volunteering (through the work of TSSW and partners)

How we helped

- The national Volunteering Wales digital platform, a database of volunteering opportunities
- Information, news and up-dates through our websites, e-bulletins, blogs, meetings, networks, events and learning opportunities
- Bespoke advice to volunteers and organisations, and in some areas, facilitation of Volunteering networks and Volunteer Manager's Forums
- Celebrated volunteers through local and national events and awareness raising during Volunteer's Week

What you said about our services

98% of individuals that accessed volunteering support found it useful in helping them access high quality information, advice and support to recruit and manage volunteers.

92% said that TSSW support had been useful in ensuring the contribution of volunteering to the wellbeing of Wales is promoted and championed by decision-makers and the public.

65% found it helped them to a great/some extent to learn and continually improve the volunteering experience.

Key performance indicators

4,175

volunteers supported to enter a volunteering opportunity

293

volunteers signed up to a volunteering opportunity through www.volunteering-wales.net

497

organisations supported with direct information and advice on volunteering

69

organisations supported to access specialist information and advice related to volunteering

33,732

information sheets downloaded on volunteering

What people said about our volunteering support



"BAVO has provided essential guidance on volunteer application processes, especially in relation to the physical and mental health of volunteers who will potentially find themselves in situations of extreme stress with the safety of the public and each other in their hands." Western Beacons Mountain Rescue Team

"When I started volunteering with Community and Voluntary Support Conwy, I volunteered with several organisations, one of which was Crest. After seeing what I was capable of, Crest offered me a position within the organisation. Now I am an accredited trainer working full time for Crest and in charge of the retail division. This all started through volunteering with CVSC."



"For me, it was 'Dream, Believe Achieve.' I dared to dream about a change in career. I had CVSC behind me who had the belief in me. I am now in a new career. Just look what I achieved!" Stephen Pugh, Crest

"Having worked as a lecturer and being a type 1 diabetic, I wanted to get involved in helping out with diabetes education after I left my lecturing job. Research led me to EPP Cymru, and I started volunteering as a tutor and hoping to help expand the education and support for people with diabetes in our area. Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations' Volunteer Centre provided all the materials, venues, training, and organisation for the courses to take place."

I believe that course participants have benefited from gaining confidence and feeling less isolated as well as receiving practical help. On a personal level I find that volunteering has made me feel more useful and confident that I can help and motivate others."

William Tregaskes from the museum said "Having joined the Cwm Taf Managing Volunteers Network organised by Interlink, Cynon Valley Museum Trust hosted their last forum, and it has really helped to give me a wider understanding of the sector in RCT. Interlink also book our rooms on a regular basis (e.g., for training and funding events) and this helps the organisation to become sustainable financially."

Medrwn Mon Supported the establishment of three Men's Sheds in Holyhead, Beaumaris and Llangefni, with 59 men engaged. Brian, a member of Holyhead Men's Sheds, said: "I was feeling overwhelmed and lost until I met Veronica, the Local Asset Co-ordinator for Holyhead. She helped me get the support I needed and help me re-connect with my community through the Men's Shed. I now volunteer with the Men's Shed and attend the Older People's Forum and computer courses so I can keep in touch with family."



Ollie Gordon-Rump said "Volunteering for CATCH has opened my eyes to how some people live because they have no choice. It has also shown me how much work and organisation goes on behind the scenes that the public are unaware of."

"Volunteering is an amazing opportunity, as it allows me to engage in many different activities, such as debates and interviews, and has also allowed me to meet and work with a wide range of people, who I wouldn't necessarily be able to work with normally." Courtney, student at University of Wales Trinity Saint David's

"Since volunteering I have gained a paid job and I have also got a lot more confidence and met so many people. The volunteering centre at Torfaen Voluntary Alliance helped me to find a volunteer role with the MS Society which I really enjoyed. Volunteering is really good, and it gave me confidence. I would recommend it to anyone."

"Our initial [Volunteering Wales Grant] funding has become integral to our operations. We have met so many wonderful people, who have not simply impacted on developing the lives of our participants but enhanced our workplace too. Many are still with us, either continuing in their role as a volunteer or have become a member of our paid team of staff." Andrea Wayman, Elite Supported Employment



CVC case studies

Making a difference through volunteering

Kate volunteers weekly at Clwyd Special Riding Centre (CSRC) as a side walker, helping horse riders on their lessons both inside the complex and out on the track. *"Volunteering to me means appreciating what you have and giving something back,"* she said.

She first got involved with the centre through Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham's Volunteer Centre, where she went to find out what volunteering roles were available. *"The Volunteer Centre was able to put me in touch with CSRC through their Volunteer drop in,"* she said.

"Where I was able to meet with the volunteer co-ordinator from the centre who explained what was available and arranged for me to visit the centre and sign up."

"Riders can have lessons with qualified instructors and volunteers are needed to help or just be on hand. Without enough help the lessons would not go ahead and they make such a difference to the riders. Some say little but the smile on their face when they are in the saddle says it all."

"I get a real feel-good feeling from knowing that what I am doing makes a difference in the lives of others. In addition, it is like a mini workout walking around the arena or the track. The centre is set high up in the countryside so there is the added benefit of being close to nature in the summer months when riders are outside."

Building a strong volunteer team



Tŷ Hafan is a registered charity and has supported 800 children and 770 families from all over Wales, both at the hospice and in the community. Families can stay at the hospice for respite care, and they also visit them at home, hospital, and school.

Tŷ Hafan launched their retail shops to help fund the hospice and care staff. The shops would not run efficiently without the valuable support of their volunteers. It was vital to have the help of support agencies, such as Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations, for us to build a team of volunteers.

The team at BAVO have referred several people to us as volunteers, some of whom have been with us for years. It is always difficult to recruit volunteers. Through working together with BAVO, we have helped several people gain the confidence to pursue, and in some cases achieve, paid employment. BAVO are without doubt the team who have supplied the best service, covering initial referral, guidance for volunteers, and support as and when needed.

Volunteering – where you give a little and gain a lot

Skills and Volunteering Cymru (SVC) is an independent, volunteer-led charity based in Cardiff. Their volunteering projects cover South Wales and work with the homeless, children and young people, those with disabilities, and the environment. Sophie is a lead volunteer on the NHS Placement scheme at SVC. Her role is to organise proactive sessions with patients and help with the volunteer recruitment aspects in terms of interviewing and inducting.

Since volunteering with SVC, Sophie's confidence has significantly improved and is better at organising her time and planning for volunteering sessions. Volunteering with SVC has also enabled Sophie to undertake training in mental health awareness, dementia awareness and dealing with aggressive behaviour. Altogether, volunteering has helped Sophie develop as a person and helped her employability. When asked to describe volunteering in just one sentence, **Sophie said:** *"Volunteering is an absolutely joyful experience where you give a little, gain a lot."*

Connecting students with communities

Through higher education funding and contributing match funding, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council have led a multi-agency approach to linking volunteering with under-graduate study at Glyndwr University. Working initially with Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham, FLVC have gone on to negotiate the delivery of volunteering skills courses and volunteering tasters' sessions with Glyndwr students. This has culminated in students accessing accredited Volunteering Skills courses and meeting FLVC staff in a community setting to explore volunteering opportunities. They also met and learnt from community workers the difference volunteering can

make to community resilience and the students' own career development and employment skills.

During a visit to the university's Plas Coch campus, Welsh Government Education Secretary Kirsty Williams met with four different groups about their work with people across North Wales and beyond. These included staff, students and partners on programmes covering public services leadership and social prescribing, as well as teams who cover community volunteering and mental health work, which FLVC are closely involved with.



Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said:

"I am pleased to have the opportunity to visit Glyndŵr University to see the good work being carried out, connecting campus with community."

Universities should be accessible and relevant to their local communities, whilst also being open to students, scholars, and intellectual developments from around the world. We have a proud tradition of this kind of civic engagement, and I'm delighted to see new ways of taking this work forward."

Shaping a new approach to volunteering

The Memo Arts Centre, then Memorial Hall and Theatre, was established by the people of Barry following World War II for the people to be entertained and for a memorial to those who gave their lives in service. The Memo works with the widest group of partners to deliver support and strengthen our connection to audiences and users of all ages and background within the context of the local social economic environment. It is the largest Arts Centre in the Vale of Glamorgan and the only cinema in Barry.

In 2019, a Volunteers Coordinator was appointed to support the centre's work and grow its volunteer base. They attended training delivered by Glamorgan Voluntary Services about recruiting and training new volunteers which was incredibly useful and timely. It helped the Coordinator to start everything on the right foot and have all processes in place, so the centre had best practice from the word go. It has had a positive impact on communications and clarity about the role of volunteers at the Memo.

Megan Merrett, Volunteers Coordinator at Memo Arts Centre, said: *"It gave me the confidence that my approach was appropriate and necessary for safeguarding and supporting volunteers. It also helped me rethink the induction and make it more practical and flexible. Being invited to take part in the Volunteers Fayres has enabled me to network with other volunteer coordinators, organisations and individuals interested in volunteering. GVS training gave me the confidence and knowledge to fully support our new volunteers and helped to shape our approach to volunteering."*

Tackling loneliness

As part of Powys Befrienders groups, Angela Witherstone runs a knitting group in Crickhowell. There was a need in the community for more people to get out and socialise. The group meets every Tuesday and at least 20 people attend the group and enjoy the knitting and a natter. Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations offered a comfortable place to meet, deals with any issues if they arise and support if needed.



Angela said: *"It has meant that I get out of the house. I have forged friendships and it has also given me the opportunity to help and support other members of the community. The knitting group has made a huge difference to not only our members but also other organisations within our community. The members enjoy meeting up and socialising with their friends which has helped them not to feel so lonely."*

WCVA case studies

New Pathways – Volunteering Wales Grants

New Pathways offers support for people affected by rape and sexual abuse through a range of support services for women, men, children and young people. Before engaging with Volunteering Wales Grants (VWG), New Pathways already had well-established systems in place to promote volunteering. The VWG support was used to explore ways in which to further improve the volunteering experience and raise the profile of its work.

Certain systems of communication were lacking within the organisation and although the necessary information was available for volunteers, this needed updating. New Pathways updated and completed all volunteering-related policies while involving volunteers in the process. This created information on explicit roles for volunteers, what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation. This collaborative approach had a direct impact on both the operations and the governance of the project.

Another area it was looking to develop was a wider range of services for beneficiaries, as well as providing more volunteers with the opportunity to work for the organisation. In response to this need New Pathways looked to engage more with non-counselling volunteers. This involved changing its current recruitment process to better target administrative volunteers. It also developed a new training package, job descriptions, and task-and-finish projects that volunteers could join in as and when they were able to.

Finally, New Pathways was aware that its Investing in Volunteers (liV) award was due to expire; therefore, as part of its reapplication, it wanted to conduct a review of volunteering, specifically examining the policies and procedures that it currently had in place.

To help with this, New Pathways attended training sessions run by WCVA and local County Voluntary Councils. Furthermore, it utilised guidance on the liV as well as resources from the WCVA website for its policy reviews and adaptation. This enabled the organisation to ensure that it was able to ensure that best practice was maintained within the organisation.

"The training and recruitment process were known to be exceptional and I found exactly that. These things have not changed. What has changed, as the organisation has grown significantly, is the experience of being a volunteer. The new volunteer handbook was a very welcome development, as it brought together all the policies and procedures, basically everything a volunteer needs to know."

Shine – Volunteering Wales Grants

Shine are a charity that provide specialist advice and support for families affected by spina bifida and hydrocephalus in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. They provide advice on benefit entitlement, support for carers, employability support, education, and mental well-being support.

Before engaging with the VWG, their volunteer engagement was sporadic but since engaging with the funding, they have been able to review all their volunteering documents and launch a volunteer toolkit. This has enabled them to roll out volunteering opportunities and provide meaningful support to anyone who chooses to engage as a volunteer.

They have established two new volunteer roles within their organisation to engage with volunteers. Their volunteer ambassadors can volunteer in a variety of ways, and volunteer buddies work in a supporting role for Shine ambassadors and staff who need assistance such as setting up stands at events.

In terms impact, there has been a reported increase in the keenness of volunteers to do more and attend more events. In addition, volunteers have begun to take on new roles, such as peer support volunteers, that did not exist previously.

"The VWG has really helped us as an organisation to invest time and energy into supporting our volunteer ambassadors. Seeing them flourish as individuals by gaining confidence and skills and a pride in the role they have developed has been fantastic."



Sustainable funding

Wellbeing Goals This pillar of activity contributes the to the following Wellbeing Goals –
A prosperous Wales
A resilient Wales

Our goal Third sector services contribute to community wellbeing

How we helped

- Information and resources on our websites, social media, learning programme and events, including regional events, delivered in partnership with the Fundraising Regulator
- Launched Funding Wales, an online database of funding opportunities
- Hosted funding fairs and other opportunities to engage with funders
- Bespoke guidance on funding bids and application processes
- £9,746,372 of funding awarded by TSSW partners to third sector organisations

What you said about our services 94% of individuals that accessed sustainable funding support found it useful to a great/some extent in making better use of evidence to develop their services.

69% found it useful to a great/some extent in networking, learning and supporting organisations to share best practice.

Key performance indicators

1,107

interactions with organisations on sustainable funding, with an average of 69 minutes per interaction

1,107

organisations supported with direct information and advice on sustainable funding

106

organisations supported to access specialist information and advice

154,653

information sheets downloaded

£7,487,493

funding awarded to third sector organisations following support from TSSW partners

What people said about our sustainable funding support



"AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham) supported the Friends of Wrexham to secure £10,000 from the Lottery with help and advice on the application from the very first stage to promotion of the service. Shirley Burn, Chair of the group, said: 'This grant will support so many carers who are usually unseen and unheard and will do so much good. This project was conceived by the carers themselves, who recognised what they needed to stay strong and well and got together to apply for a grant to ensure they had access to the support they wanted.'"

"Denbigh Youth Shedz wanted young volunteers to prepare and distribute care packages to young homeless people on the streets of Denbighshire once a month. Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council undertook an organizational health check of Denbigh Youth Shedz and it was awarded a £1,760 Youth Led Grant."

"All the homeless people receiving care packages benefitted from the project. It had a profound impact on the young Youth Shedderz in terms of raising their consciousness around homelessness issues. A huge level of learning went on also in terms of budgeting when creating the care packs. For the Youth Shedderz involved the project was great socially, morally and in terms of employability." Scott Jenkinson, Denbigh Youth Shedz

"It was a lovely event, I'm really glad I attended. I met some very interesting people running some wonderful organisations. This is going to be a useful space for learning and supporting. Thanks, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS), for the opportunity!"



"The help from TVA is greatly appreciated. Without them, we would not have a clue on how to apply for funding. Thanks to TVA we can keep it going." Thelma McDouglas, Croesyceiliog Befriending Hub

"Voluntary Action and Merthyr Tydfil and Interlink RCT initiated a dementia-related grant scheme which has been hugely significant for our organisation. The scheme prompted us to consider more specially the needs of people living with dementia and their carers, and how we could be relevant to them." Gellideg Foundation Group



CVC case studies

Taking a community choir to the next level



The Cornelly Songbirds Ladies choir was created in October 2019 to provide an opportunity for community members to develop their singing skills in a safe social group setting. Cornelly Songbirds' lead person approached Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations to apply for funds to help the group develop and meet community needs.

The choir met with BAVO Development Officer Angela Davies at the end of 2019. *"From the first day Angela was very easy to talk to with a world of knowledge that could support us to get properly established. Angela helped us to understand what we need to do to become a constituted group and apply for funding. She gave us the confidence to apply for the Connecting Communities Fund and Cornelly Songbirds have been successful in getting a grant for just under £5,000. Now that we know the support is available, we can develop further with the support of BAVO and gain the knowledge and confidence to apply for funding ourselves."*

"We feel safe and secure in the knowledge that Angela is at the end of the telephone when we need her. Thank you for all for your advice and support over the last few months. Our choir would not be in this fortunate position without your guidance. You have been fabulous, and your support has been invaluable."

Working together to secure vital funding

R was set up five years ago to support parents with mental health issues. It offers peer support to parents across Ely and Caerau without judgement and provides activities for both parents and families throughout the week. Cardiff Third Sector Council was asked to contact R by a community support worker at ACE (Action in Caerau and Ely). Under Community First funding ACE were able to support R, but once the funding ended, they were no longer able to help.

C3SC went along to meet the group to get an understanding of their needs. R were looking at funding for equipment and trips to enhance the much in demand provision to families in the area. They were cautious of doing too much, and advised they needed to build their confidence gradually to consider applying for funding.

The Third Sector Development Officer (TSDO) from C3SC set them up an online account as they were anxious to avoid doing anything wrong and felt overwhelmed. A funding search was run using Funding Cymru (<https://funding.cymru/>) and they identified Awards for All funding to be the best fit for their needs. Working together they tackled the application question by question, coaching the group and building their confidence slowly. The process took about six months from first meeting until submitting the application. The group were overjoyed when they were successful, and it has impacted positively on their mental health. They are now keen to do more together and even try new things.

Increasing participation in sport

Colwyn Bay Watersports (CBW) is the only organisation of its type that is fully committed to providing water sports activities to disadvantaged people on the North Wales coast. They provide sailing, windsurfing, paddle boarding, kayaking and other sea and lake-based activities to young people. Participation looks to enhance quality of life and promote a healthy and sustainable community spirit, breaking down economic barriers and providing opportunities for anyone and everyone to have access to water-sports.

Conwy Voluntary Services Council provided support to CBW on funding, volunteering, and governance. This included looking at draft applications, which CVSC input strengthened to help secure £15,590 over two years from the Gwynt y Mor fund and £6,500 from Rhyl Flats to employ a staff member as a Community Engagement Officer.

The appointment of the Engagement Officer has enabled CBW to reach out to local schools/community groups to promote the mental and physical wellbeing benefits of sport as well as break down 'elitist' perceptions to improve access. The officer has also implemented a Volunteer Programme which will ensure that every hour spent has maximum personal benefit to the individual and the community being served.

Funding to secure new facilities at local bowls club

Treuddyn Club was established in 1987 for the purposes of playing bowls. The club was financially sustainable for their day-to-day activities, but its 32-year-old timber building had reached the end of its life and required additional outlay to replace. They had not applied for funding before. Flintshire Local Voluntary Council supported them to apply to the Bryn Gwalia Bowling Club Fund for a

grant towards a replacement timber building, which included veranda for spectators and storage space for ground maintenance machinery and materials. The funding application was approved and a grant of £2,500 was awarded. The new building is now in place.

Before:



After:



Improving access to green spaces

The Cornfield Project was established in 2012 to return an overgrown green field site to the community for recreational, sporting, and general wellbeing purposes. Volunteers have enlisted the help of the local community and partners to clean up the site, which was previously overgrown and difficult to access. It now boasts tiered planting, over 50 fruit trees, plus bird and bat boxes, insect and toad abodes and a sensory area. Picnic benches and seating has been installed around the site, along with a memorial garden, shelters and planters.

The main challenge is still access to the field, which gets very waterlogged during the winter months. Access paths and a ramp have been installed, but it remains inaccessible to bicycles, wheelchairs, prams, and mobility scooters. The project's priority is to secure funding to install a firm track around the site to improve accessibility.

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations has helped with community consultation on the need for the site and the community's development priorities. GAVO has worked to engage partners in multi-agency meetings, suggested funding routes and prepared bids to support the installation of a firm track around the site. GAVO has also supported the group with policy development. Training has included a WCVA Safeguarding Surgery to develop a suitable safeguarding policy and a funding surgery with the Lottery People and Places Advisors. Practical support has been provided in engaging partners, calling meetings, providing minute and note taking, planning etc.

GAVO has helped to identify funding sources and support the group with applications. To date, the project has secured £38,295 from several funders, including Monmouthshire County Council and Sport Wales. **Mike Fuller from The Cornfield Project said that they "received tremendous support from GAVO when preparing its recent submission for funding. The advice and guidance given made a very challenging task much easier to achieve, resulting in a successful bid."**



Bringing national funding to local groups

Key Funds enables organisations to work with communities and partnerships to place communities at the centre of local activities. They can provide a catalyst for community-centred development as well as combating social exclusion in communities by supporting actions which encourage people to get involved in their communities, build self-esteem and promote healthier lifestyles.

Medrwn Môn administered a Key Fund to community groups and voluntary organisations on Anglesey that work with families, carers and children with Autism. 311 people engaged with the projects funded through this Fund. Each community group arranged autism-friendly days out and events such as football tournaments, visits to Anglesey Sea Zoo and Pili Palas Nature Centre, Flip Out trampolining centre and music sessions. Feedback highlighted that family members, parents, carers and children had benefited from being able to attend the trips without worrying about it being too busy or too stressful for the children as it was a relaxed autism friendly session.

Medrwn Môn is ideally placed to translate national aims and goals set by Welsh Government through the Key Funds into a local perspective for the voluntary sector to take effective action. Key funds are especially helpful as a means of facilitating the bottom-up approach through enabling smaller community groups to a route to funding. Key Funds simplify the process for applicants whilst maintaining the integrity of the main funding source.

Being active and having fun

Rhayader and District Sport and Recreation Association exists to promote sport and recreation in Rhayader and the wider community. Membership is open to anyone in the area who has an interest in supporting the association to achieve its aim and is willing to adhere to the rules of the association. Their first big collaborative project came about when the local bike shop owner shared his vision for a bike track in Rhayader. The track's completion in August 2019 took five years to materialise.

They demonstrated great perseverance in working together to gather community views, crafting three large funding applications, and developing partnerships with landowners and businesses. All three funding applications were successful. However, the application for planning permission hit a few snags. The team remained focused and negotiated with funders to adjust the project's timeline.

The project has helped to bond the team, made up of members of different groups which would not usually have worked so closely together. The bike track has given the community an open access recreation facility which gives all the opportunity to stay active whilst making fun memories with friends.

"The thought of the community enjoying the bike park was fuel enough to navigate through any setback. Witnessing our team members use their individual skills and strengths to achieve a collective goal has had a lasting effect on me. I fully appreciate how being part of a strong, close knit community mean we can call upon each other to get things done."

Alan Samuel

But they could not have achieved any of this without the help of Tim Davies, Community Development Officer of Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations. They registered

with PAVO and invited Tim to join their meetings. He had an immediate impact on the project and helped to make key decisions through providing timely and up to date information. He gave the group both the vital information about funding providers and options to consider regarding our governance.



Securing a more stable future

Circus Eruption is a registered charity and uses circus skills to enable disadvantaged young people of all abilities to maximise their potential through inclusion, participation and empowerment. They aim to create fun, reduce stigma and increase confidence, resilience and belonging. The circus needed a permanent space after several moves in a few years. A building of their own would mean current projects could be more stable and their future was more secure.

While they received an informal loan for purchase, they needed support for the building's development, both in terms of funding for renovations and clear thinking about its future potential.

Swansea Council of Voluntary Services has made a significant contribution to their work through recognising what is behind the immediate funding needs and supporting us to make relevant, timely and high-quality applications. In one case this advice contributed to significant success – the largest single grant Circus Eruption has

ever received from the Moondance Foundation. SCVS have listened a lot and responded appropriately. This has resulted in new connections and ideas, enabling the organisation to function better and support those we work with.

Karen Chalk from Circus Eruption said:

"SCVS have been there for us. Increasing sustainability is tough for small charities, but consistent, knowledgeable, constructive, responsive engagement from SCVS has been crucial. There's a direct impact from funding advice, but the support has positively affected confidence too – we know they are cheering us on!"

WCVA case studies

We supported voluntary organisations through the Help Wales After Storm Dennis Fund

Back in February, communities in Wales were torn apart by Storm Dennis and the flooding it caused. Our President Michael Sheen saw the destruction caused by the storm and raised more than £85,000 for voluntary organisations fighting the flooding – which was then distributed through WCVA's Help Wales After Storm Dennis fund.

The devastation was particularly prevalent in parts of South Wales, where community organisations suddenly had to become hostels, food banks and furniture suppliers.

"The majority of the funds received by the centre were spent assisting those who are uninsured," **says Trallwn community centre's Kate Fullstone, whose area was affected badly by the floods.**

"Many residents couldn't afford insurance due to past flooding, or their insurance simply didn't cover the sheer amount of damage. Funding from WCVA enabled our organisation to help these people piece their lives back together."

MAP provided an easy-to-use interface to better support applicants to access funding opportunities

This year WCVA introduced the new MAP (Multipurpose Application Portal). Feedback from applicants showed that existing online applications were too technical, complex, uninviting, or simply not user-friendly. To address these issues, we developed our own online application portal.

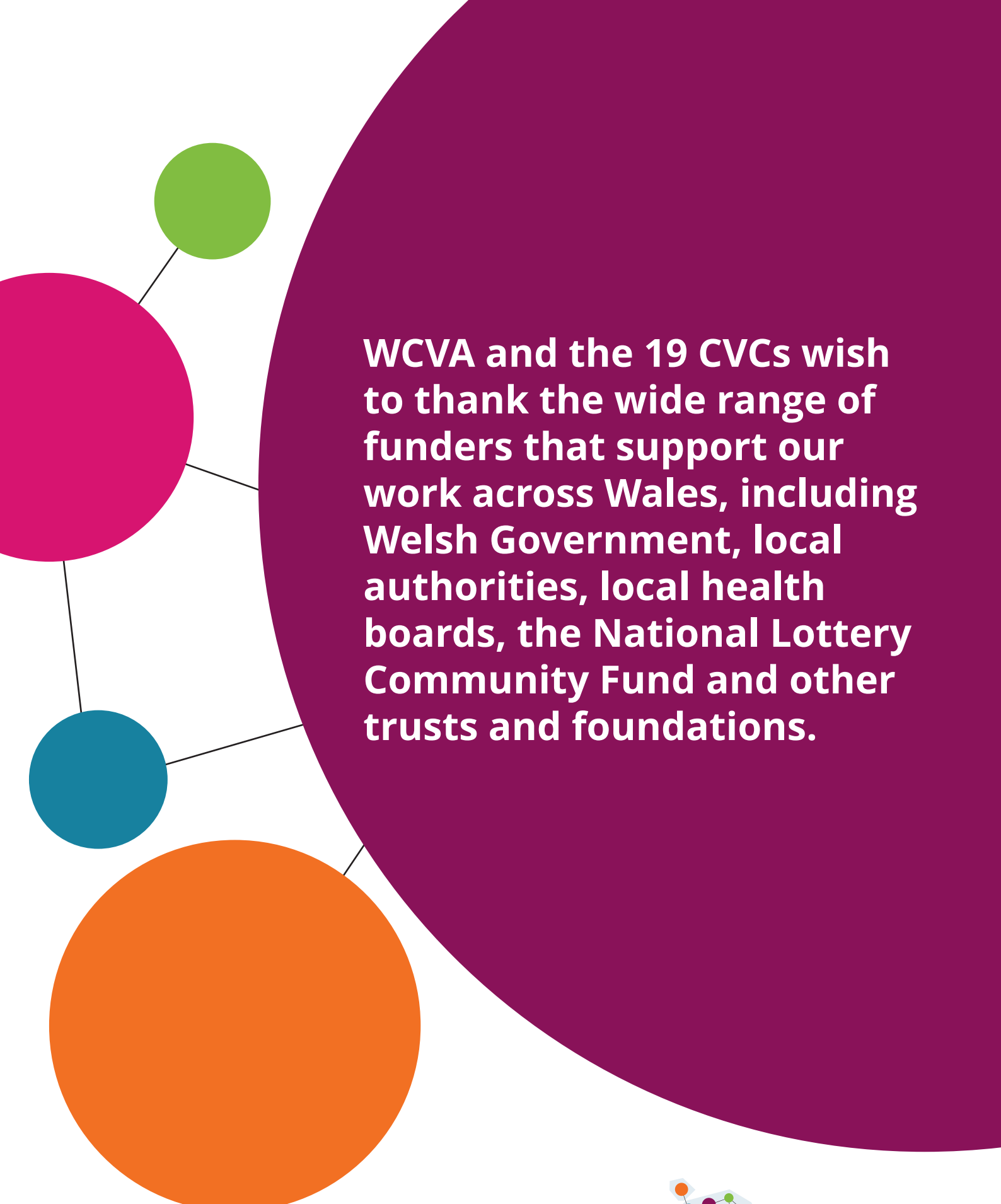
Working with staff and voluntary organisations, MAP was created to be an adaptable system that could handle the different types of funding projects that WCVA manages and be flexible for future funding.

MAP went online in January 2020 and feedback has been extremely positive. The system has proved to be quickly adaptable to user feedback and easy to modify for new projects such as the emergency COVID-19 funding which was introduced in March.

"...In the maelstrom of trying to keep up to date with ever changing information whilst still leading a medium sized voluntary organisation that is on the frontline of supporting the most vulnerable children and families in Wales – time and capacity is currently everything... The MAP portal, which we have never used before, when applying for the VSEF [Voluntary Services Emergency Fund] we found to be extremely user friendly."

"In this very challenging time we found the entire process to be clear, concise, quick, easy to navigate, appropriate guidance and easy to navigate through the pages." **Media Academy Cymru.**

In the first three months since MAP was launched, 392 organisations have registered on the portal.



WCVA and the 19 CVCs wish to thank the wide range of funders that support our work across Wales, including Welsh Government, local authorities, local health boards, the National Lottery Community Fund and other trusts and foundations.



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector
Support **Wales**