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WPA Community Benefit Fund Report

2018-2024

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Welsh Procurement Alliance (WPA) not only delivers high-quality procurement solutions for the public sector, but we also ensure that we work to leave a lasting positive legacy for our communities.

Through the Community Benefit Fund, we have been able to support grassroots initiatives that tackle some of Wales’ most pressing challenges, from employment and skills development to health and wellbeing, community resilience, and environmental improvements.

What makes this fund so special is its connection to the people and places we serve. It’s driven by collaboration with local authorities, housing associations, and voluntary sector partners, ensuring that funding reaches those who can make the most meaningful difference.

I would like to thank all our partners, suppliers, and stakeholders for their continued commitment to social value whose efforts have helped transform ideas into action and made real change possible.

George Stevens
Director of Communities

Celebrating the power of collaboration and community impact in WPA

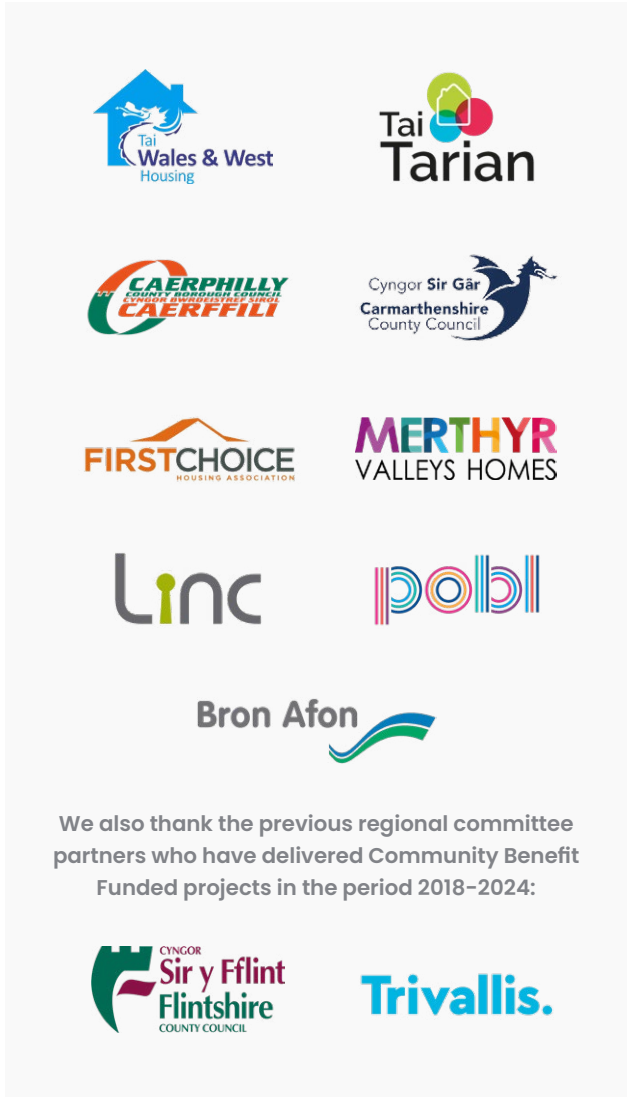
The Welsh Procurement Alliance (WPA) was established in 2016. It serves as a not-for-profit organisation that collaborates across the public sector in Wales, as part of the LHC Procurement Group, which has been delivering positive impact across the UK for almost 60 years.

WPA is governed by a regional committee, who set policy and ensure procurement solutions for housing, construction, and infrastructure projects and ensure they are properly managed and aligned to public sector need.

WPA Committee Benefit Funding has been provided to regional committee members since 2018 to support community projects in Wales.

The Community Benefit Fund is a dedicated funding initiative established by LHC Procurement Group, designed to support local communities.

Effort has been made to ensure organisations of different types are represented on the WPA regional committee. Current members include local authorities, small housing cooperatives and larger housing associations. The Committee provides a direct route Community Benefit Funding.



We also thank the previous regional committee partners who have delivered Community Benefit Funded projects in the period 2018-2024:

Local Need

Lasting social impact is only delivered when outcomes are achieved that meet local needs. Using our regional partnerships and relationships that champion a local approach and working closely with our committee partners to tell us what their tenants, residents or users require remains central in our approach. Our committee members and their Community Benefit Fund delivery partners are often community anchor organisations that are well-established, trusted organisations at the heart of the local community. We have been working

with these partners embedded in the community and have a deep understanding of local challenges, priorities, and opportunities. Their close relationships with residents and stakeholders mean they are ideally placed to identify emerging needs and deliver tailored, meaningful interventions that acknowledge local challenges and priorities. Working with these partners to deliver the Community Benefit Fund has increased our ability to deliver stronger outcomes, greater inclusion, and lasting social value at across Wales.



The Need for Community Impact

Communities in the UK and beyond continue to face a range of critical social and economic challenges that require targeted support and intervention.

Some of the most pressing needs include:

- Cost of Living and Fuel Poverty:** Rising energy prices have left millions struggling to afford basic utilities, with many individuals unable to heat their homes adequately, leading to health and wellbeing concerns.
- Tenancy Sustainment and Homelessness Prevention:** Housing insecurity remains a major issue, particularly for young people, care leavers, and individuals facing mental health, addiction challenges and those recovering from domestic abuse.
- Health and Wellbeing support:** Mental health issues are on the rise, with significant increases in anxiety, depression, social isolation and reduced access to community-based support.

- Financial Hardship:** Low income families and individuals are facing increased debt, with many unable to afford rent, food, and essential goods there is significant need for financial education, income maximisation services, and employment support.
- Energy Efficiency and Sustainability:** Many homes across the UK lack proper insulation, leading to high energy costs and inefficient heating.

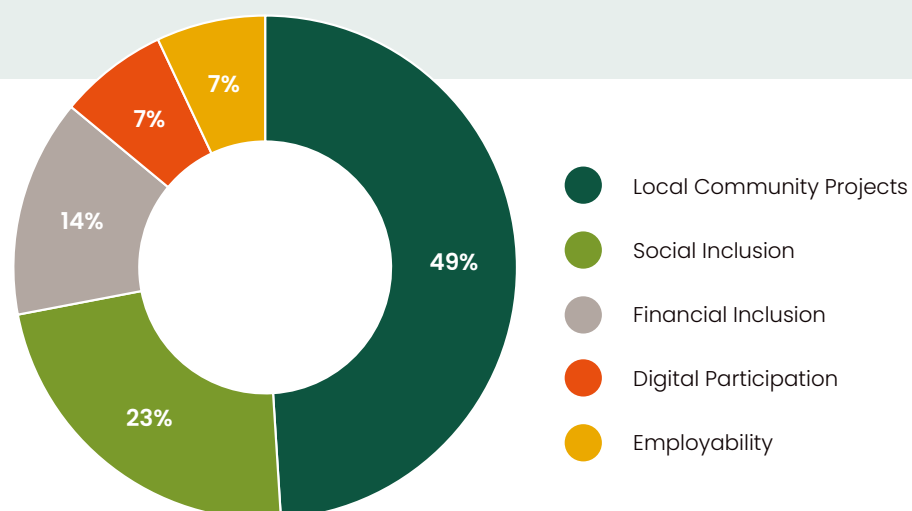
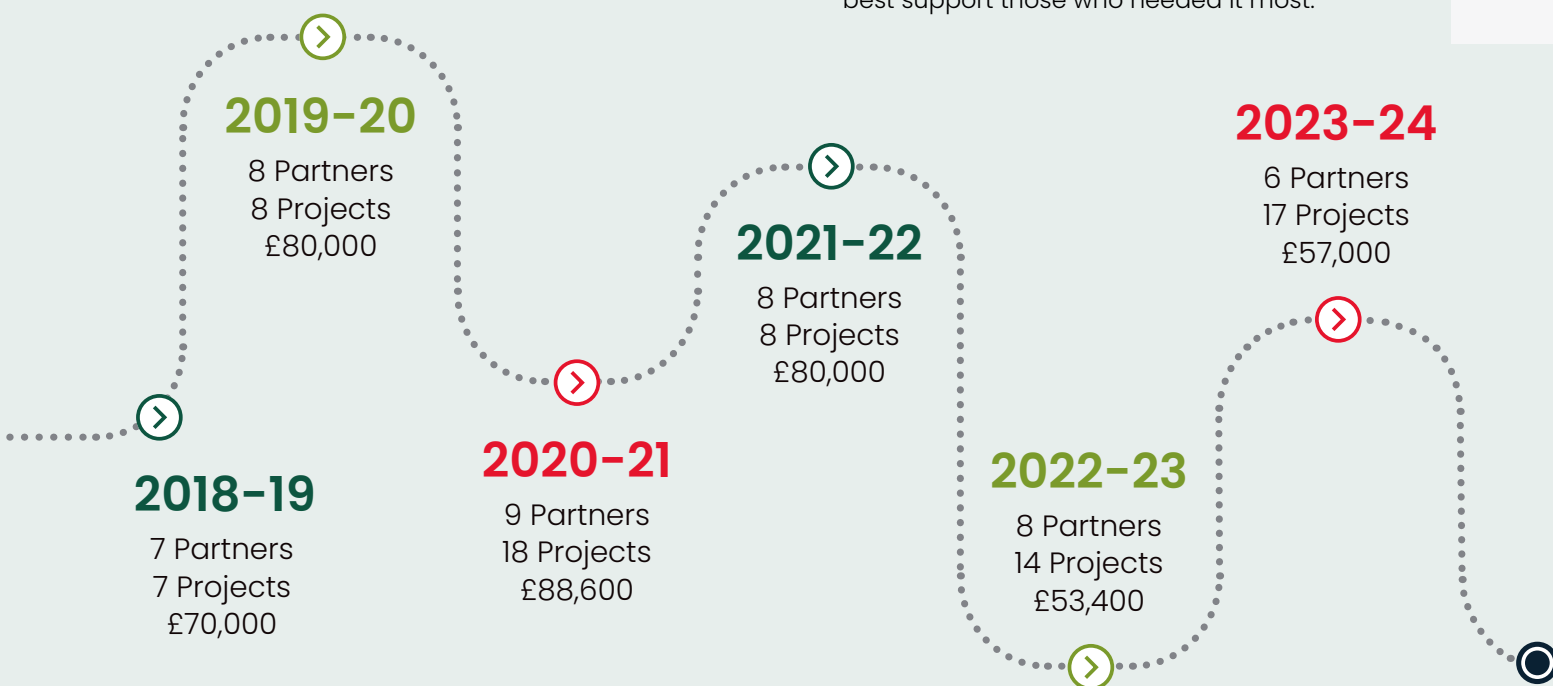
At the core of the WPA Community Benefit Fund is the belief that strong, resilient communities are built through collaboration. The fund has brought together local authorities, housing associations, and a range of partner charities and community groups to address these urgent needs and foster long-term sustainability.

By engaging local stakeholders and supporting grassroots initiatives, the fund has ensured that every pound invested delivers maximum social impact. The importance of a flexible, community-led approach, driven by local regional committees has been key to the programme's success.

Journey to Date

As a committed not-for-profit procurement organisation, WPA reinvests surpluses into community benefit initiatives.

The Community Benefit Fund was a key mechanism designed as an extension of WPA's commitment to social responsibility to get funds directly to those who could best support those who needed it most.



Eligibility and Priority Themes

In order to meet changing needs across our communities funding has been given to a wide range of projects spanning diverse impact areas.

Priority themes identified with Community Foundation Wales in 2018 for funding were Local Community Projects, Social Inclusion, Financial Inclusion, Digital Participation and Employability.

A key focus has also been to work with groups that may otherwise struggle to attract funding from larger Trusts and Foundations.

Projects ranged from IT infrastructure support in local Community Centres, to providing employability training and job clubs for local people, and improving outdoor green spaces in collaboration with local people as well as a resident led grant programme for local community groups.

Some regional committee members applied for the same delivery partners each year, with amended and adapted projects, while others have looked to provide a wider range of activities and beneficiaries year on year.

The Themes of Local Community Projects, Social Inclusion, Financial Inclusion, Digital Participation and Employability were identified when we started to work with Welsh Procurement Alliance back in 2018. By 'Local Projects' we mean that the funding was used to support specific local organisations. For some, the full funding will have

supported one particular organisation, for many, it was a range of very small, local groups that will have applied to a grant making programme such as 'Pitch for Pounds' run by Bron Afon Housing Association.

Local projects mainly fell into support for Social Inclusion and Financial Inclusion, with considerable overlap. However, it is estimated that approximately 66% of projects included under the Local Projects heading will also have supported Social Inclusion with 34% of projects covering initiatives based on Financial Inclusion.

Many projects naturally cut across multiple themes. For instance, an initiative in supporting young people may foster social inclusion by helping individuals connect with others in their area, but may also improve integration and community cohesion, enabling better and cross community relationships. In addition, this can also enhance employability by equipping participants with improved confidence and soft skills needed to access job opportunities.

Partner Collaboration

The success of the WPA Community Benefit Fund is built on strong collaboration between key partners, each playing a vital role in delivering meaningful community impact.

Our regional committee members and Community Foundation Wales, our current Charity Partner, serve as a crucial link between WPA and the communities we support. Engaging with local community groups and grassroots organisations is essential for ensuring that funded projects are relevant and impactful. These partners help identify urgent local needs and facilitate community engagement, ensuring that initiatives are co-designed with the people they serve.

By fostering partnerships across these key groups, the SWPA Community Benefit Fund continues to reinforce our shared commitment to social impact.

The Role of WPA and Community Foundation Wales



In Wales, we engaged closely with our regional committee throughout the period, engaging with delivery partners across grant giving cycles, developing relationships and ensuring from application to delivery – funding is going to those who need it most, creating and maximising our impact.

We have worked with charity partner Community Foundation Wales and drew on local knowledge to jointly identify a range potential projects, we actively support applications and signpost match funding opportunities to maximise the value of the delivery.

10 Partners

Receiving £429,000
Creating £3,821,367
in Social Value

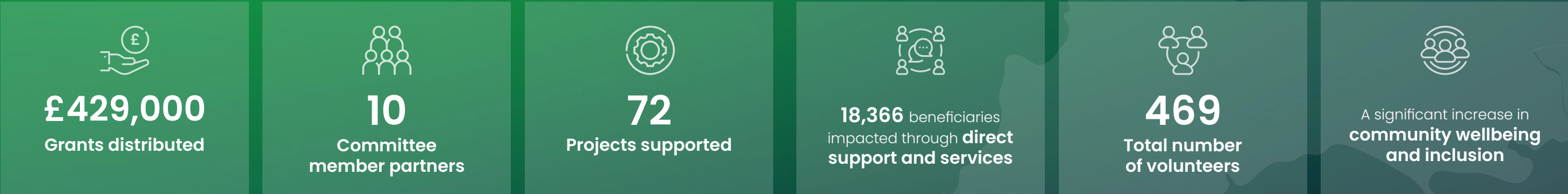


WPA Community Benefit Fund Impact

Since 2018, WPA Community Benefit Fund has supported 109 community projects across Wales, awarding a total of £429,000 in funding.

These projects have positively impacted thousands of individuals, addressing key societal challenges such as social inclusion, financial hardship, employability, and health inequalities.

Key Achievements





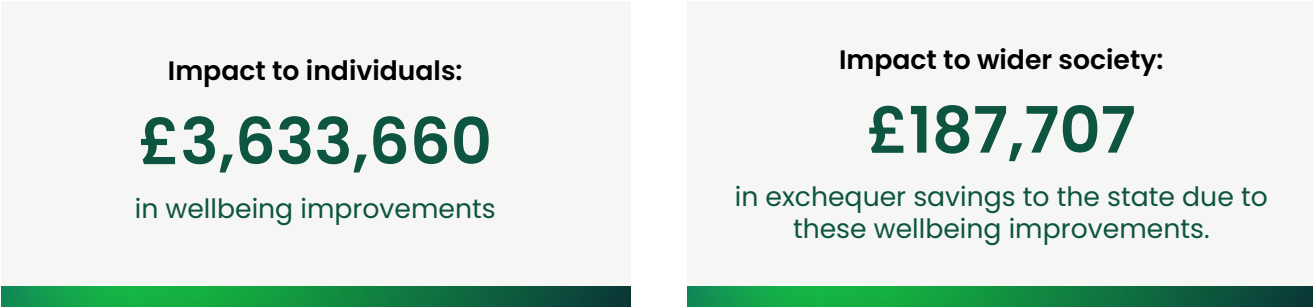
Social Impact in Wales

Social value measures the wider outcomes that Community Benefit funded projects bring to individuals and communities, beyond purely financial metrics and inputs.

We recognise that to deliver real social value, understanding the impact for each of our social value areas is key to ensuring we prioritise and support the communities in ways that are needed most. This includes measuring impact at multiple levels: for individuals, communities, and wider society.

As part of monitoring and reporting of the fund, our charity partner Community Foundation Wales have carried out a range of engagements to measure the benefits and impact areas that were delivered through the projects.

Using the available data gathered from this shows £420,900 financial input from grant funding to communities gives the following indicative social value:



Total Indicative Social Value:

£3,821,367



This has been calculated using average wellbeing uplift on individuals supporting or benefiting from local projects in the community based on the monetary value of materials, funds or volunteering, and a range of additional outcomes including:

 Apprenticeship	 Energy efficiency improvements
 Ability to access advice locally	 Heat housing in winter
 Member of social group	 Improved confidence
 Increased exercise	 Access to internet
 Access to parks or greenspace	 Gardening
 Training	 Improved diet
 Improved ability to pay rent and maintain tenancy	 Financial comfort
 Increased recycling	 Improved belonging to neighbourhood

Cyfle: Construction Apprenticeship Programme

Funding: £20,000



Young people in Carmarthenshire, particularly those furthest from the workforce, face significant barriers to employment in the construction industry. There was a need for support around training, practical experience, and long-term career opportunities to help these young people build sustainable futures.

Partnership

Carmarthenshire County Council partnered with Cyfle Building Skills Ltd, a charity experienced in delivering shared apprenticeship schemes and sponsor of Youthbuild UK. The £20,000 Community Benefit Fund grant supported a comprehensive construction apprenticeship programme, with collaboration from local contractors and colleges.



Personal success story

BD, a plumbing apprentice who overcame personal challenges to excel in training, was recognised with award at UK Young Builder of the Year Awards 2023 and secured full-time employment with his host employer, Sustainable Fuel Solutions.

Impact

- 22 new apprentices employed in trades including bricklaying, carpentry, painting and decorating, plastering, plumbing, technical, and electrical work
- All apprentices are working toward NVQ Level 3 qualifications by July 2025
- A further 20 second-year apprentices are on track to complete their training by summer 2024
- Apprentices split their training between college (1 day/week) and site work (4 days/week), with a 90% qualification attainment rate and 90% job retention post-apprenticeship

Outcomes

Increased employability, skills, and confidence for young people

Strong relationships built with local employers eager to retain talent

Indicative Social Value delivered:
£252,758*

*Calculated using HACT valuations

Caerphilly County Council: 'Growing Space'

Funding: £14,400



Growing Space was established to support adults with mental ill health, autism, and learning difficulties by providing activities and social prescribing, giving access to a range of local services, including community gardening, exercise, food provisions and even training and employability support.

Partnership

Collaborations were formed with Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service, Caerphilly County Borough Council's Multiply project, and local community groups such as Caerphilly Food Network and Parent Network. Partnerships also extended to healthcare providers through GP referrals and nature-based therapy programs.

Impact

The project exceeded expectations, supporting 40% more beneficiaries than planned, delivering 113 qualifications, and establishing new initiatives like the Food Pantry and vertical growing methods for local food production. Engaging with nature sessions became a key referral route for GP surgeries.



“Really enjoyed meeting people, I thoroughly enjoyed our walk around Caerphilly Moat today talking with the group.”

Outcomes

- Reduction in loneliness and social isolation.**
- Strengthened community connections** via shared gardening, cooking, and food distribution.
- Expansion of nature-based therapy**, with peer mentors completing facilitator training.
- The Care Project** faced challenges but remains in pursuit of funding to resume operations.
- Increased employability and well-being** through skill-building and accredited training.

Indicative Social Value delivered:
£147,352*

*Calculated using HACT valuations

What's next?

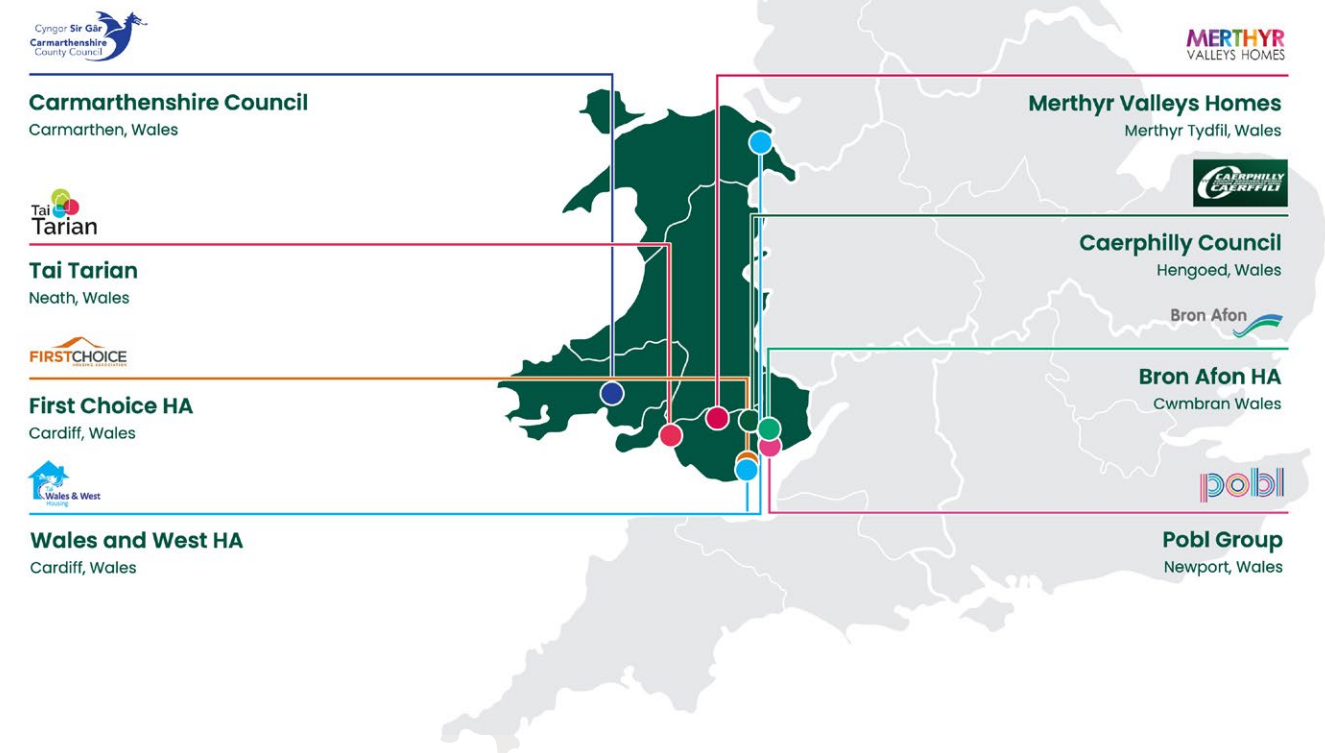
As shown in this report, the WPA Community Benefit Fund delivers transformative social impact, creating lasting change for communities across Wales. Through strategic funding, strong partnerships, and a commitment to social value, the fund has successfully supported 72 projects and thousands of individuals.

Looking ahead, WPA remains committed to investing in community-driven initiatives, ensuring that the fund continues to empower people, strengthen neighbourhoods, and build a fairer society.

In 2024/25 we have funded projects for all current regional partners in Wales and will report on the impact once they have been delivered in the forthcoming year.

Heading into 2026–27, LHC Procurement Group remains committed to distributing surplus back into our local communities ensuring impactful support for a range of local and community-led projects. This reflects WPA commitment to generating greater social value.

Regional Committee





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**Improving lives and places
through quality procurement solutions**

For more information about the WPA Community Benefit Fund and its future plans, please visit:
www.welshprocurement.cymru/who-we-work-with/community-benefits/ or contact our
Group Social Value Manager at **Michael.McLaughlin@lhcprocure.org.uk**

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