



# People, Planet and Power

Changing What we Measure to Change What Matters

Social Value Cymru has been helping people embed social value in their day-to-day work for over 10 years



*Yn cefnogi grwpiau gwirfoddol a chymunedol  
Supporting voluntary and community groups*

It's been over ten years since we launched Social Value Cymru at Mantell Gwynedd.

The vision for the establishment of Social Value Cymru came hot on the heels of two pieces of groundbreaking legislation in Wales. First came the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which reinforced a preventative and person-centred approach to care and support. It was quickly followed by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, a landmark piece of legislation placing a statutory duty on public bodies to work towards seven well-being goals. Social Value Cymru grew out of these two major legislative developments in Wales.

During its formative years, and as the work of Social Value Cymru was gaining traction, we were fortunate to have Dr Adam Richards, a world-wide leader in social value, to lead the development of the work. He helped firmly establish the service, giving it credibility and ensuring it was growing in line with Welsh Government priorities. It was during these formative years that he helped establish the team we have today, firmly placing Social Value Cymru as a lead provider in Wales for the measuring of social value.

We have ensured consistent investment in the Social Value team of four members of staff, two of whom who now enjoy Advanced Practitioner status and another two who are Associate Practitioners. We now enjoy a privileged status on the International Standards Committee contributing to the social value agenda throughout the UK. The work you see within this report demonstrates the diverse range of services which have benefitted from social value measurement and provides valuable insight into how organisations use the findings to help shape better services.

As we embark on another decade of Social Value Cymru, we look forward to helping even more organisations to measure their value meaningfully which, in turn, will help them plan their futures effectively and more sustainably.

**Bethan Russell Williams**  
Chief Officer  
Mantell Gwynedd



Ten years ago, Wales did something quietly radical. Through two landmark pieces of legislation - the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, it asked public services to stop measuring what was easy to count, and start accounting for what truly matters: the long-term wellbeing of people, communities, and the planet they inhabit.

Social Value Cymru was born from that ambition. What began as a local response to a national challenge has grown, over the past decade, into a respected, specialist voice helping organisations across Wales not just to measure social value, but to embed it, act on it, and use it to make better decisions for the people they serve. Crucially, all of this has been achieved in accordance with the highest international standards, ensuring that clients receive advice and support of the very best quality.

This publication marks that ten-year journey. Through the case studies gathered here, from social prescribing in Arfon to community energy initiatives in the Valleys, from foodbanks to arts organisations, we see the breadth of what social value measurement can reveal. Each story is different. Each

demonstrates the same essential truth: that when we take the time to understand what has genuinely changed in someone's life, we find value that conventional reporting simply cannot capture.

Wales has long been a test bed for progressive thinking. But high-level legislative ambition about wellbeing only counts if someone is doing the challenging work of measuring and managing the impact on wellbeing of our activities. That is precisely what Social Value Cymru has spent the last ten years doing.

As Wales looks ahead to another election, the voluntary sector deserves to be seen not as a supplement to statutory services, but as a cornerstone of them. The organisations featured in these pages are not filling gaps. They are generating real, measurable, lasting value for the people of Wales.

Changing what we measure changes what we prioritise. This is the evidence - rooted in Wales, and long overdue.

**Ben Carpenter**  
CEO  
Social Value International



## Social Value Cymru

Social Value Cymru was established in 2015 by Mantell Gwynedd. Mantell Gwynedd is the County Voluntary Council (CVC) for Gwynedd, supporting voluntary and community groups, promoting volunteering, and acting as a strong voice for the third sector locally.

Mantell Gwynedd recognised the importance of looking beyond outputs and numbers to answer the critical "so what?" question when money is invested in communities. From the outset, the aim was to ensure that all opportunities were identified to maximise positive impact for people and the environment.

We became members of Social Value UK (now the Institute of Social Value) and embedded the Social Value Principles within our organisation, building local expertise and leadership in social value measurement and practice.

Today, Social Value Cymru provides specialist social value support, advice, and consultancy services to private, public and third sector organisations across Gwynedd and beyond.

## Our Team

Social Value Cymru is led by our Social Value Manager, an Advanced Practitioner and Accredited Trainer with Social Value International. She also represents the United Kingdom on the Standards Committee, contributing to the development and refinement of social value standards, advancing best practice, addressing emerging challenges, and supporting the development of training, assurance, and accreditation.

Our team also includes an additional Advanced Practitioner and two Associate Practitioners. We work fully bilingually and bring extensive experience of working across both the statutory and third sectors.



# Strategic Context: Social Value and Policy in Wales

The concept of social value has become increasingly central to public service delivery and commissioning across Wales. Social value refers to the broader economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits generated through public investment, beyond immediate financial outputs. In the Welsh context, social value is closely aligned with legislative frameworks that emphasise prevention, collaboration, community resilience and long-term well-being.

The foundation of this approach is embedded within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This landmark legislation places a statutory duty on public bodies to work towards seven Well-being Goals: a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and a globally responsible Wales. The Act requires organisations to adopt five ways of working — long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement — ensuring that public services generate sustainable social value for current and future generations.

Complementing this framework is the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which reinforces a preventative and person-centred approach to care and support. The Act emphasises early intervention, community-based provision, co-production and empowering individuals to maintain independence and well-being. Together, these legislative frameworks establish a clear expectation that public services in Wales move beyond reactive models of intervention and prioritise community capacity building and resilience.

The Welsh Government has further strengthened the strategic emphasis on social value through procurement and commissioning guidance that encourages public bodies to consider wider community benefits in funding decisions. The Welsh Government promotes a “social partnership” approach, recognising that voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises play a critical role in delivering preventative services and improving well-being outcomes.

Within the health sector, this strategic context aligns with the broader shift towards population health management, social prescribing and community-based support. The NHS in Wales is increasingly expected to demonstrate not only clinical effectiveness but also social impact — including reductions in health inequalities, strengthened community networks, and improved mental and physical well-being.

In this context, social value is not an additional outcome but a core measure of success. Initiatives that promote early intervention, reduce demand on statutory services, support workforce well-being, strengthen community assets and empower individuals contribute directly to the Welsh Government’s long-term well-being objectives. Evaluation of programmes within Wales must therefore consider both direct service outcomes and the broader social value generated across communities.

## The 8 Principles of Social Value:

1. Involve stakeholders;
2. Understand what changes;
3. Value the things that matter;
4. Only include what is material;
5. Do not over-claim;
6. Be transparent;
7. Verify the result;
8. Be responsive.

The eighth principle was introduced in recent years and is arguably the most important if we are to achieve transformative change. While the other principles focus primarily on measuring and reporting social value, this principle emphasises the importance of implementing recommendations. Doing so helps to improve positive outcomes and minimise negative impacts on people and communities.

Further detail on the Principles and standards is available from Social Value International<sup>1</sup>. From the very beginning stakeholders are involved to explain what has changed for them meaning that they are able to put in their own words what elements of their well-being have changed. This is an opportunity for those directly and indirectly affected by activities to have a voice, and it addresses the requirements of the legislation to ‘involve people that are served’ and to ‘understand the integrated impact of decisions’. Moving away from a culture whereby those making decisions do so without complete information about the impacts of their decisions, the legislative framework and the Principles of Social Value both demand that the voices of all the people affected are heard, listened to, and included in decision making.

1. Social Value International

## SROI: Not Just a Figure, but a Story Commissioners and Funders Must Hear

When we talk about Social Return on Investment (SROI), it is important to recognise that it is so much more than a number on a page. SROI is a framework that captures the real, lived impact of our services on individuals, families, and communities — outcomes that often cannot be fully expressed in financial terms alone. While the ratio provides a clear and accessible summary of value created, the true strength of SROI lies in the evidence behind it: the voices of beneficiaries, the changes in well-being, the prevention of future costs, and the strengthening of local systems. It tells the story of how investment translates into meaningful, lasting change. For commissioners, this means SROI is not simply a performance metric, but a strategic tool that demonstrates accountability, informs smarter resource allocation, and highlights the broader social value generated beyond contractual outputs.



## What is social value?

People may interpret the idea of social value differently, but at its core it is about understanding what has changed in someone’s life as a result of particular activities, and valuing those changes. Based on 8 principles, social value allows us to discuss the outcomes of our work in the same language as the costs of producing them. By monetising changes in people’s well-being, decision makers have more information about the relative worth of different outcomes to a range of stakeholders.

This information means that outcomes for the same stakeholders can be compared to each other, and the costs of their creation – allowing us to make decisions to increase the positive impacts of our work. Importantly, it does not always mean that we must employ expensive techniques with high scientific rigour; but what it ultimately does is increase the likelihood of making decisions that have the greatest possible positive impact, within the limits of the resources available.

# Case studies

These case studies are just some of the organisations that we have worked with over the last ten years to measure and manage social value. Here's a summary of their activities and how they contribute towards the well-being goals in Wales.

By working with the third sector, the public sector can make a positive contribution towards achieving these goals.



**A Wales of Cohesive Communities**



**A Healthier Wales**



**A Resilient Wales**



**A Globally responsive Wales**



**A more Equal Wales**



**A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language**



**A Prosperous Wales**

## Arfon Community Link, Mantell Gwynedd



This social prescribing project has supported individuals for over ten years to re-engage with community activities and overcome initial barriers, helping to improve their health and well-being. The SROI framework has been used throughout the project's duration to measure outcomes and ensure the service continues to adapt to the needs of individuals. It has also helped inform decision-making, enabling the project to maximise its impact.

### Outcomes

- Reducing isolation
- Improving mental well-being
- Improving physical well-being
- Collaboration across the statutory and third sector

**Themes** Social Prescribing, Community



## South Denbighshire Community Partnership



Your Place or Ours is a community-focused project delivered across the Corwen and Llangollen area, supporting the development of an empowered, healthy and thriving community where everyone feels they belong. At the heart of this work is Canolfan Ni in Corwen, which has become a central hub and go-to place for local people. From here, the project provides a wide range of activities and services including lunch and social clubs, community transport, access to advice and support, family events, and much more.

Alongside centre-based provision, the project also delivers services through outreach in community venues and locations across South Denbighshire, ensuring that support is accessible to those who may not be able to attend the centre. Through this approach, the project brings communities together, reduces isolation, and supports people of all ages to lead healthier, more connected lives.

### Outcomes

- Reducing isolation
- Improving mental well-being
- Improving physical well-being
- Collaboration across the statutory and third sector

**Themes** Social Prescribing, Community



## Cwmni'r Frân Wen



This report details the analysis of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation conducted on the Olion project, which is a multi-arts project that has engaged young people from North West Wales and residents of Bangor to co-create a large-scale theatrical experience in order to bring the community together and celebrate the diverse, unique identity of the city and share it with the world.

### Outcomes

- An improved sense of belonging
- Feeling more positive about the future
- Using creativity to improve mental well-being

**Themes** Children and Young People, Art, Volunteering



# Case studies

## GISDA



This report details the analysis of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation carried out on the GISDA Housing Support project, which is a project that provides support to young people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Fundamental to the success of this project is the provision of a service that not only looks at providing accommodation, but looks at every aspect of the young person's life in order to ensure support in the short term, but which helps to prepare them for living independently in the future.

### Outcomes

- Improved mental and physical well-being
- Feeling more positive about the future and their ability to be independent
- Feeling less isolated

**Themes** Children and Young People, Homelessness



## The Outdoor Partnership



Fundamental to the success of their projects is the employment of local Development Officers with various skills and experience to contribute, but most importantly, perhaps, a passion for the outdoors. By identifying the need in the local areas, collaborating with stakeholders as well as fully utilising the natural resources available, they are able to coordinate a programme of support and activities to minimise barriers for participation and improve well-being.

### Outcomes

- Improving mental and physical well-being
- Improving independence
- Reducing isolation
- Clubs being more inclusive and financially resilient

**Themes** The outdoors, Physical activity



## Arfon Foodbank



This report highlights the growing need for a Volunteer Coordinator at Arfon Food Bank due to increasing demand for its services and the resulting need for effective volunteer recruitment and retention. The role has had a positive impact by improving volunteers' experiences through better role matching, listening to feedback, and strengthening team relationships, which has increased motivation, retention, and a sense of community. Volunteers also gain pride and social connection through supporting their local community. Additionally, the food bank provides significant support to visitors by addressing both immediate food needs and underlying financial issues, leading to improved financial independence and well-being.

### Outcomes

- For volunteers: a sense of belonging and a sense of achievement
- For beneficiaries: improved mental and physical well-being and improved financial independence

**Themes** Poverty, Volunteering



## Tech in Care, Medrwn Môn

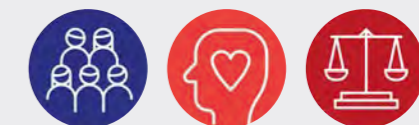


This report evaluates the social value of the 'Technology in Care' project delivered by Medrwn Môn, which provided technology devices, internet access, and digital support to individuals across Anglesey to improve their health and well-being. Working with GP practices, social prescribing services, and community groups, the project helped individuals and unpaid carers develop digital skills, increase independence, and improve mental well-being by enabling access to online resources, communication, and learning opportunities. Community groups also benefited from Wi-Fi access, allowing them to offer digital activities and expand their reach.

### Outcomes

- Reducing digital exclusion
- Improving mental well-being
- Improving independent living

**Themes** Social prescribing, Technology



# Case studies

## North Wales Multicultural HUB



One of the impact goals of the project was to 'create / promote a more multi-cultural, vibrant and diverse Wales'. By supporting the groups with small pots of funding, alongside networking opportunities and support around general project management and promotion, the HUB has supported a programme of creative practice to raise awareness and knowledge of various cultures and practices. Various events and festivals have been supported by the HUB to grow and become embedded within the communities.

### Outcomes

- For the community groups: an improved support network locally, improved sense of belonging, improved capacity and leadership
- For community members / participants: improved sense of belonging, improved mental well-being, and improved independence.

**Themes** Inequality, Arts



## Denbighshire Leisure



This Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation highlights the positive impact of Denbighshire Leisure Ltd's Community Arts project, funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund, which delivered creative well-being and intergenerational activities across Denbighshire. Between July 2023 and November 2024, 2,098 individuals participated in music, dance, art, and creative sessions held in towns and rural villages. The activities helped people build confidence, make new friends, and feel a stronger sense of community while improving their mood and mental well-being. Longer-term sessions also supported individuals experiencing challenges such as dementia, anxiety, stress, and depression by reducing isolation, increasing self-esteem, and providing coping strategies.

### Outcomes

- Improved mood
- Improved sense of community
- Improved self esteem
- Reduced isolation

**Themes** Art, Mental health, Dementia



## DEG



DEG supports individuals, community groups and organisations across north-west Wales to become more sustainable and resilient in the face of rising energy costs and the climate emergency. Through practical advice, community-led climate action and support for local energy initiatives, DEG helps people feel more informed, more connected, and more able to take positive action within their communities.

### Outcomes

- Community members feel more connected, more able to contribute to local climate plans, and experience an increased sense of purpose
- Community organisations report improved financial sustainability and greater confidence in managing energy use
- Individuals feel more informed about energy efficiency and more empowered in managing their household energy needs

**Themes** Community energy



## Awel Aman Tawe



The projects improved well-being by reducing isolation, boosting confidence, and strengthening community belonging through activities and volunteering. Education programmes raised environmental awareness, while transport and energy advice increased independence and eased cost-related stress. Renewable energy initiatives also helped organisations cut bills and support sustainability. Overall, the projects delivered meaningful benefits while strengthening community resilience.

### Outcomes

- Volunteers at Hwb y Gors feel less isolated, take pride in helping others, and have developed a stronger sense of purpose
- Participants in Hwb y Gors activities report improved mental well-being, new skills, and a stronger sense of belonging within their community
- The We Are Energy Warriors programme has increased pupils' knowledge of environmental issues, strengthened their sense of responsibility for environmental action

**Themes** Community energy



# How investing in Social Value can ensure transformative change

Each individual report is available to view and includes its own SROI ratio results. The individual results are not presented here, as doing so could invite direct comparisons.

As highlighted previously, each situation and project is unique, and the focus should remain on measuring impact and building on the recommendations provided by beneficiaries – an approach these organisations are actively taking.

It is, however, useful to consider the overall SROI. The total investment was **£8,977,937** generating a value of **£35,443,034** with a **Social Return on Investment of £3.95**. Collectively, these organisations support individuals and communities to improve well-being and contribute positively to the well-being goals in Wales.

Beyond that figure is the hundreds of citizens of Wales that have been supported by the third sector to improve their health and well-being and to contribute positively towards change.

By fully applying social value principles, we are able not only to evidence the impact of our work, but to actively direct our resources where they will achieve the greatest benefit. This approach ensures that every investment is purposeful, targeted, and aligned with delivering meaningful outcomes for individuals and communities.

The diagram on the following page captures key insights gained over the past decade, informed by both practical delivery experience and guidance from Social Value International. In an increasingly competitive funding environment, the ability to clearly demonstrate impact and value for money is critical. Encouragingly, funders are placing greater emphasis on social value and impact management to inform their own strategic priorities, reinforcing the importance of robust and transparent approaches such as this.

At the heart of our impact is the dedication and expertise of our staff and volunteers. As demonstrated in the case studies, their work delivers measurable and lasting change—improving lives, strengthening communities, and in some cases contributing to life-changing or even life-saving outcomes. These impacts extend beyond the individual, generating wider social, economic and environmental value.

We also recognise that capturing and evidencing this change requires a structured and consistent approach. While frontline teams see the difference their work makes every day and adapt responsively to stakeholder needs, social value frameworks enable us to systematically gather evidence, amplify stakeholder voice, and demonstrate outcomes at a strategic level. This ensures that the perspectives of those we support directly inform service design and delivery.

For funders, this provides confidence that resources are being used effectively, outcomes are being rigorously measured, and continuous learning is embedded within the organisation. The insights generated allow us to refine our approach, prioritise interventions that deliver the greatest impact, and ensure that future investment achieves maximum social return.



# How are we embedding social value at Mantell Gwynedd

We are passionate about embedding the social value principles within Mantell Gwynedd. We have established a Social Value Subgroup, which includes our Chair, Chief Officer, and the Social Value team, to review how we measure the impact of our services and to make recommendations based on data to maximise our impact.

Following the Social Value Management Pathway has helped demonstrate that we are embedding the necessary systems and practices to continuously improve the value we create.



To view some of our reports please visit our website



*Yn cefnogi grwpiau gwirfoddol a chymunedol  
Supporting voluntary and community groups*



Please contact us for more information



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[www.mantellgwynedd.com](http://www.mantellgwynedd.com)



SocialValueCymru