

# MEASURING WHAT MATTERS



The importance of  
social value  
reporting

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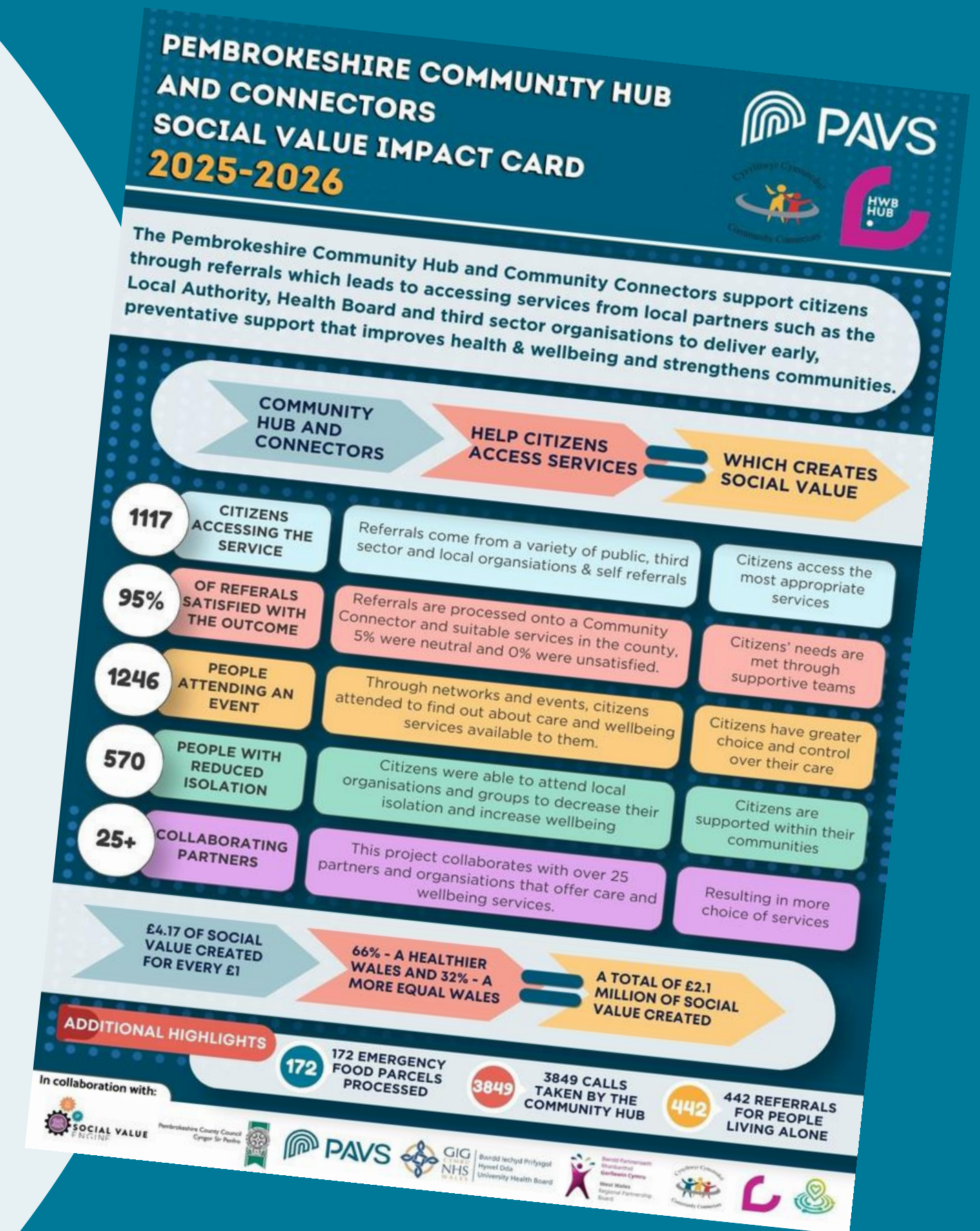
All QR  
Codes have URL  
links embedded

Unless attributed,  
quotes come from  
participants in our  
research study.

# Introduction

The impact of supporting Pembrokeshire communities to be active, connected, resourceful and sustainable places, where people can live well.

The “So what?”



Community Hub and Connectors example of an Impact card

# Background

**Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS), with support from freelance consultants Sarah Hughes and Karen Scott, drew together insights on what is working in our communities to demonstrate social value, where the potential lies for extending this work, the enablers and barriers, and our recommendations on what needs to change.**

“Supporting community action is not a “nice to have” but an intelligent investment in social and economic wellbeing.”

Building Communities Trust (BCT)  
Thriving Welsh Communities



“We want a Wales where the indispensable work of community groups is recognised, respected and supported.”

# Role of Social Value in Welsh Policies & Frameworks

"Real change doesn't come from government acting on its own. It comes when public services, voluntary organisations and communities work side by side, bringing together leadership, local knowledge, trust and practical action." CEO, WCVA

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales ) Act 2015



"Sets out five ways of working needed for public bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals. This approach provides an opportunity for innovative thinking, reflecting the way we live our lives and what we expect of our public services."

## Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014



Section 16 of the Act legally requires local authorities to promote how social enterprises, co-operative organisations, co-operative arrangements and third sector organisations provide care, support and preventative services in their area.

The Code of Practice for the Act (Part 2) requires that Regional Social Value Forums are established to bring together 'social value' organisations / providers, including the voluntary sector, to develop good practice and innovation and support the Regional Partnership Boards to achieve the best possible outcomes for people in need of care and support. (WCVA)

# Role of Social Value in Commissioning

## Role of social value in the commissioning process



“When tendering public sector contracts Community Benefits must be a key consideration in all procurement strategies”



“Commissioning requires a whole system perspective and the ability to nurture and facilitate a range of collaborative and co-productive relationships.”

## Opportunities for the Third Sector

Shifting to future generations thinking requires a culture change:

- Recognising the third sector as a partner of choice;
- Preparing third sector organisations to respond to public procurement opportunities;
- Potential for smaller organisations to form alliances.



“Social Return On Investment (SROI): Not just a figure, but a story commissioners and funders must hear”  
Social Value Cymru



# Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)

Working in equal partnership with the voluntary sector to build a better Wales.



## Partners for progress

“It is time to modernise our understanding of public services in line with both the principles of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and with the reality of much support and action in our neighbourhoods being provided by community organisations.”

## Ready to help

“We [the voluntary sector] are not just service providers – we are equal and strategic partners. Early, regular and ongoing dialogue with government and the public sector is essential if we are to tackle Wales’ biggest challenges together.”

## Delivering change

“Social value is not an ‘add-on’ – it is our purpose and in our DNA. It is written into our governing documents, monitored by trustees and delivered in every action we take. We exist to improve lives, strengthen communities and create a fairer Wales.”

# The 8 Principles of Social Value Reporting



“understanding what has changed in someone’s life as a result of particular activities, and valuing those changes.”

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 Critical Role of the Third Sector in Delivering Social Value

“Always asking ‘How do we prove our worth?’”

“Social value isn’t a quick fix, or a nice number, but investigating how to address long-term resilience for communities”

## Delivering for Pembrokeshire

Pembrokeshire has a vibrant third sector that benefits from strong public sector partnerships. As the county voluntary council, PAVS represents the sector across strategic partnerships, with its Strengthening Communities team linking to the Public Services Board (PSB).

Pembrokeshire’s third sector delivers a wide range of services, particularly in prevention and early intervention. For example, the Pembrokeshire social enterprise network, hosted by PAVS, includes 130 organisations, 70 of them in care and wellbeing.

Through a Regional Integration Fund project called 'Catalysts for Care', PAVS have investigated and applied the Social Value Engine tool to support the third sector and calculate their social value.



# Capturing Outputs, Outcomes and Impact

Pembrokeshire's third sector creates measurable, lasting change by improving lives, strengthening communities, and generating significant social value. Capturing and evidencing this impact is essential to show that investment in third sector organisations is both worthwhile and a good use of resources.

| DEMONSTRATE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | EVALUATE                                                                                                                                                               | CELEBRATE                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Data collection, for example:</p> <p>Paul Sartori: 1104 Hospital Admissions saved / avoided</p> <p>VC Gallery: 14900 Volunteering Hours across many different projects</p> <p>Cilrath Acre: 1932 Portions of Vegetables grown and donated to the food bank</p> <p>Blue Horizons: 195 people accessing inclusive watersport sessions</p> | <p>Gather narrative stories, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Case studies</li><li>• Most Significant Change</li><li>• Magic Moments</li></ul> | <p>Understand impact, value achievements, promote successes.</p> |

# Social Value Impact Report



**For every £1 invested  
£3.71 of social value is created**

In collaboration with:





IT Support

304

Members Getting IT support  
- improving mental health

Free Counselling

595

Counselling sessions for  
mental health support

Arts and crafts

1,650

Members accessing Arts and  
crafts sessions

Social Value  
Impact Card  
2024-2025

Volunteering

14,900

Volunteering hours over  
12 months

Gardening

154

Members taking part in  
gardening activities

Addiction Support

92

People accessing addiction  
support sessions

For every £1 invested  
into the VC Gallery  
£3.96 is created in  
social value

In collaboration with:





# SOCIAL VALUE IMPACT

## 2023 - 2024



**For every £1 invested, £4.29  
is created in social value**

**29,378**  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

This many  
volunteer  
hours were  
done by the  
Bluetits  
Volunteers!!



**80,000**  
MEMBERS

Members  
able to  
participate in  
their  
communities

**3,380**  
LIVING WAGE  
HOURS

We pay our  
team the  
living wage

**100,000**  
CUPS OF TEA

Over 100,000  
post swim  
cups of tea  
with even  
more belly  
laughs

**72,000**  
MEMBERS

People  
having an  
improvement  
in their  
mental  
health

**23,400**  
SWIMS

Over a year  
Bluetits  
facilitated  
23,400  
swims!

**48,000**  
MEMBERS

People having  
an  
improvement  
in their  
physical  
health



In collaboration with:



**Catalysts for Care**  
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES PEMBROKESHIRE



# Social Value Impact Card

2023 - 2024



**£2,550,770**  
**Cost to run the service**

**£6,728,489**  
**Created in Social Value**

In collaboration with:



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Hywel Dda  
University Health Board



# Our Approach

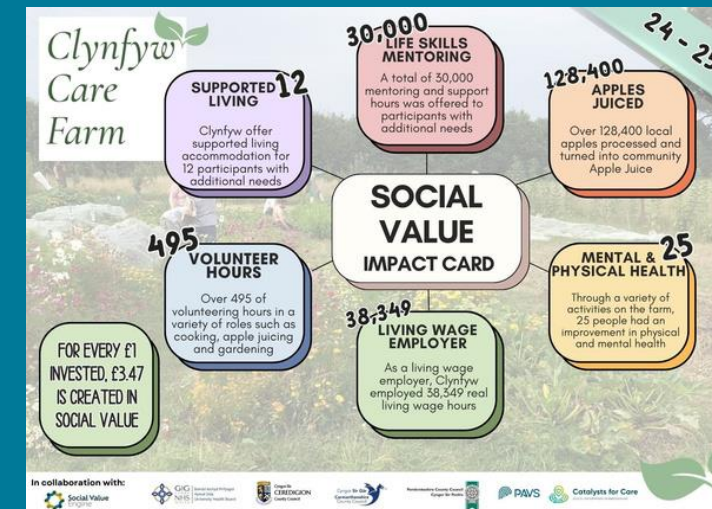
- \* Develop understanding of PAVS' approach to quantifying social value that demonstrates third sector impact.
- \* In-depth review of PAVS' portfolio of social value reports\*, Social Return On Investment (SROI) values and impact cards.
- \* Focus Group meeting (representatives from West Wales Regional Partnership Board, Pembrokeshire County Council, PAVS and Together for Change).
- \* One-to-one structured interviews with lead person from organisations who had gone through process (Cilrath Acre, Clynfyw Care Farm, DASH Ceredigion, The Bluetits Chill Swimmers, VC Gallery).
- \* Collation of feedback, identifying common themes, challenges & limitations (findings).
- \* Drawing conclusions and making recommendations for future third sector support and to inform a Communities Policy for Wales.

\* Generally produced using Social Value Engine's assessment tool, accredited by Social Value International

# Review of Social Value Reports, Impact Cards and Process



1



2

3

Social value reports, impact cards, and SROI values capture significant effort and delivery, evidencing community impact and voluntary contribution in Pembrokeshire – supported through robust data collection and trustworthy Social Value Engine proxy validation.

SROI adds context on the value and worth of work beyond money, helping express social benefit, while impact cards visually convey this story more accessibly, through examples and graphics, and are useful promotion materials.

PAVS' supported process enables groups to produce social value reports that provide detailed numerical output, with impact cards drawing out highlights. This tells part of the story and the opportunity to present narrative context is limited.

# Focus Group Perspectives

“Need to raise awareness much more widely”



“Language is important – the same words mean different things [to different people]”



## Language

We need to have a shared understanding of what we mean by ‘social value’.



## Credibility

We need to have confidence in the data used, and the way in which the SROI value is calculated.



## Awareness

Social value is being used in social care, but there is scope to extend it further to other departments and public sector organisations.



## Consistency

We need to be sure that social value approaches are applied in the same way, and moderated.

# What's Working Well

## Evidence of impact and value

- The data provides robust evidence of voluntary and community sector activity delivering social value in Pembrokeshire.
- The approach helps organisations evidence their output and wider impact, with SROI values and supporting data strengthening funding applications and stakeholder communication.



Every £1  
invested =  
£3.50 social  
value  
created



Pembrokeshire voluntary  
organisations' average  
social value



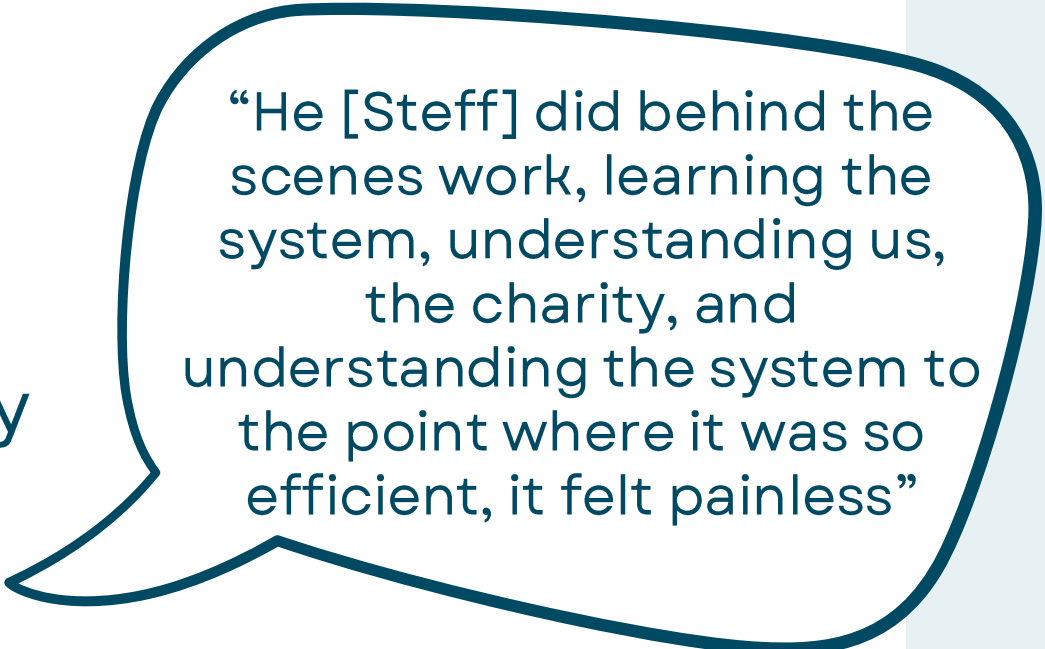
“Useful tool for  
us to send to  
commissioners”



# What's Working Well

## Practical support and capacity building

- Groups greatly value the support from PAVS, that adds capacity and includes clear guidance on the process, proxy selection, and use of the Social Value Engine tool.
- The holistic developmental element of the process was essential in moving organisations along the journey of demonstrating impact and making invaluable connections.
- Independent support and moderation through PAVS adds credibility and is particularly useful for smaller or less experienced organisations.



“He [Steff] did behind the scenes work, learning the system, understanding us, the charity, and understanding the system to the point where it was so efficient, it felt painless”



“Having an independent organisation to facilitate means it's [SROI value] more reputable”

# What's Working Well

## Organisational learning & strategic benefits

- The process also supports strategic planning, collaboration, and a better understanding of organisational value (unintended outcomes).
- Commissioners strongly support the use of social value beyond social care, but acknowledge that it will need resourcing, and increased awareness and shared language across the public sector.



Helped “to understand our organisation better and to be able to share that with our volunteers and members”

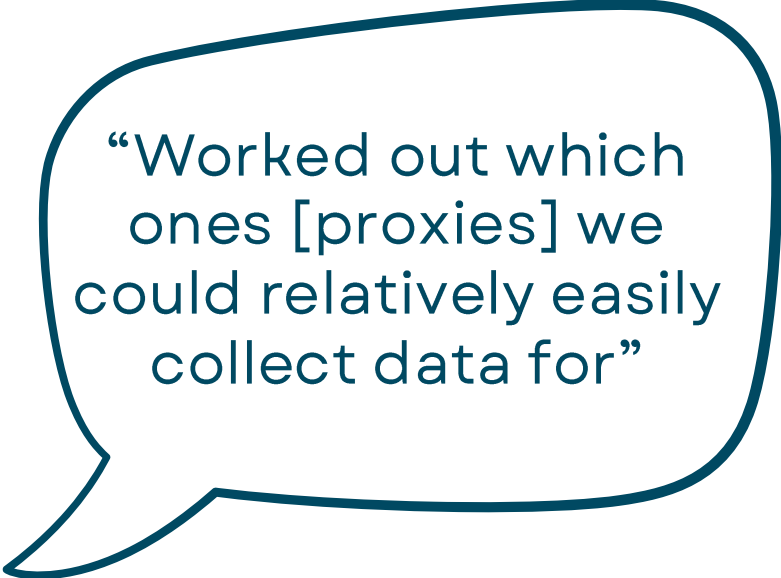


“Would love to see it [Social Value Engine] being more easily available for more groups”

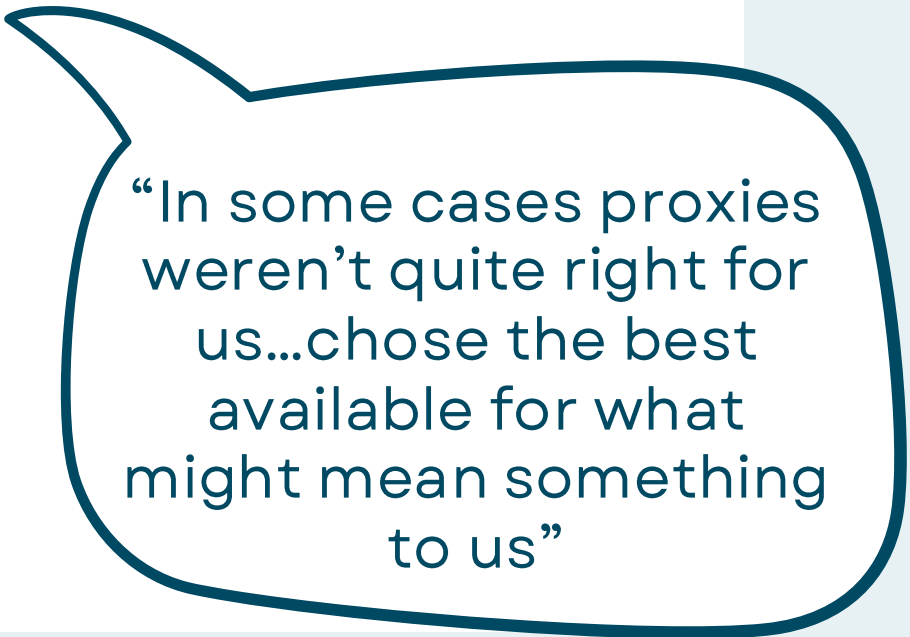
# Challenges & Limitations

## Methodological limitations & practical challenges

- The process depends on capacity, good data collection, and appropriate proxy selection, and it is not an exact science.
- Social value concepts and tools were useful, but were often seen as ‘nice to have’, and sometimes proxies were not felt to be the best fit for the organisation.
- Proxy values and underpinning research will need periodic review to remain credible and reflect changing circumstances.



“Worked out which ones [proxies] we could relatively easily collect data for”



“In some cases proxies weren’t quite right for us...chose the best available for what might mean something to us”

# Challenges & Limitations

## Credibility, interpretation & communicating impact

- SROI and social value assessment tools are useful, but it is important to still show impact beyond the £3.50-for-£1 headline.
- Impact cards tend to show activities and outputs more clearly than outcomes, so narrative explanation and case studies are still needed to give a fuller picture of impact.
- Key concerns include credibility, consistency and the risk of over-monetising impacts.

“Proving the benefit is really hard....this number was a helpful addition to the narrative”

“Worried about it [impact card/SROI value] being manipulated by funders to meet whatever outcomes they want”

# Challenges & Limitations

## System-level readiness and use of SROI

- There is some concern about comparison or competition between organisations' SROI values, so the framework should be positioned as a shared method rather than a ranking tool.
- Current Welsh Government frameworks and systems can feel fragmented and too focused on the short term to enable holistic and effective social impact reporting.

There's a "learning curve for the people who we are telling it [SROI value] to"

"it means working with communities as partners, not just asking them to pick up the pieces." WCVA



# What Matters

Increased recognition and a **shared understanding of language used** in social value reporting, across all sectors, is important.

Being clear about terms such as ‘social value’, ‘outcomes’, ‘impact’ and what is meant by each of them is critical to defining success by what matters, and demonstrating how groups and services are making a difference.



“The word “impact” means different things to different people. To some, impact means long-term, transformational change. To others, it means any positive difference.”



“In the language of evaluation, we are talking about the need to measure outcomes rather than just outputs.”

Social Value Cymru

# What Matters

The cost burden of calculating social value and SROI cannot be expected to lie with the group or service but instead should be part of a fully costed evaluation framework. **Ongoing resources** will be needed to continue social value impact work in any meaningful and affordable way for third sector organisations.

There is also an opportunity to use SROI at a policy level to provide support and evidence to programmes that **invest in community and voluntary organisations**.



Picture credit: Leonara Buckland

“Does need that person with the expertise who knows how the SVE works”

# What Matters

Third sector groups greatly benefit from **guidance and developmental support** including thinking through the data collection process.

Frequently, this guidance is more important than understanding the mechanics behind the social value assessment tools, resulting reports and the SROI value itself.

“That time was invaluable...We couldn’t have done it without Steff...we’re always chasing our tails”

“Collecting the right sort of data and how anecdotal stories become real evidence that can be used in an SROI.”



# What Matters

**The whole story** - Meaningful evaluation combines measurable outcomes with lived experience, by drawing on a range of **evidence-based approaches**.

Tools such as impact cards, social value reports, along with narrative case studies, like 'Most Significant Change' and 'Magic Moments,' offer different perspectives. These can be tailored to the audience and together help build a more complete picture.



"It's like a jigsaw puzzle – need all the bits"

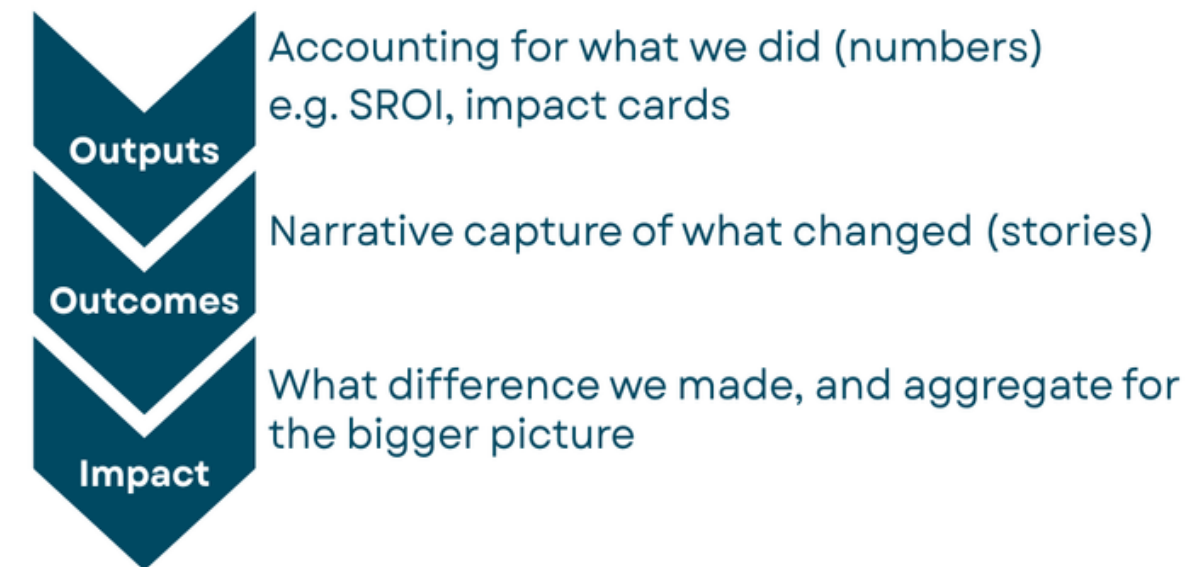
"Numbers show scale, stories reveal meaning....the best evaluations combine both approaches."  
Social Value Lab



"Qualitative and quantitative are both valuable ...they tell different sides of the story... all is really good evidence of the value we bring to the local area"

# Conclusion – Measuring What Matters

## Social value reporting is:



Our short research study brings together evidence from organisations that have collected data, assessed social value, and applied that learning in different contexts.

Calculating their social value helps organisations to demonstrate impact and underpins co-production. To ensure future third sector support for this process and inform a Communities Policy for Wales, we have set out seven recommendations, split across Welsh Government and the public sector; funders and commissioners; and county voluntary councils.

# Recommendations

**For Welsh Government and wider public sector including Public Service Boards and Regional Partnership Boards**

1

Adopt a shared framework for social value reporting, with clear definitions and expectations, to ensure consistent use of 'social value' and 'impact' across funding, commissioning and delivery.

2

Resource trusted third sector infrastructure organisations, such as County Voluntary Councils, to coordinate social value assessment tools and provide moderation, technical support and quality assurance.

3

Recognise the third sector as a strategic partner in delivering social value, and resource it through equitable funding, co-production and collaborative decision-making.

# Recommendations

## For Funders and Commissioners

4

Require funders to specify clearly when social value reporting, including SROI, is expected, and to reflect the associated resource implications by allocating sufficient funding, time and capacity-building support for delivery.

5

Adopt a balanced approach to impact reporting that combines quantitative evidence with qualitative insight, ensuring that reporting captures both measurable outcomes and the lived experience needed to tell the full story of change.

# Recommendations

## For County Voluntary Councils

6

Embed social value support within holistic organisational development to strengthen practice, encourage peer learning and share effective models across sectors.

7

Strengthen evidence-based practice by supporting organisations to improve how they collect, analyse and report qualitative and quantitative data, using the process not only to demonstrate impact but also to drive learning, adaptation and continuous improvement.

**This report demonstrates the need to continue to fund the third sector and recognise its value in our communities.**

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**With our thanks to all those who  
contributed to this report.**

