

What is the Wales Co-operative Centre?

The Centre is a co-operative development agency that supports the development of co-operatives and social enterprises. It also helps to tackle social exclusion and bring economically inactive individuals back into the world of work.

The importance of the social economy in delivering jobs and services is recognised by Government at all levels. Established in 1982 as an Industrial and Provident Society, the Wales Co-operative Centre is a key partner and deliverer in helping develop this sector of the Welsh economy.

Its team of business advisors and development officers work across Wales empowering individuals and communities to take control of their future and establish businesses with social and ethical goals as well as sound economic objectives.

Since 1982 the Centre has helped set up over 1,000 businesses across Wales and continues to support existing businesses through a range of business support and training services. Today it is the largest co-operative development agency in the UK.

In supporting the development of a thriving co-operative sector in Wales, it is a key deliverer of the Welsh Assembly's Social Enterprise Action Plan. It chairs the all Wales Social Enterprise Network and is a board member of the UK Social Enterprise Coalition.

The Centre employs over 50 staff based around Wales and is accountable to a voluntary management board.

What Services Can We Offer?

The Wales Co-operative Centre manages four major initiatives in Wales:

Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support

The Social Enterprise Support Project and Training Project target co-operative social enterprises, providing them with advice, skills and knowledge to become successful trading enterprises. Since January 2004, the Centre has helped establish over 150 businesses leading to the creation or safeguarding of over 1,000 jobs with 1,700 benefiting from its training courses.

Digital Inclusion

The Communities 2.0 initiative aims to tackle digital exclusion in the Convergence areas of Wales. The Centre is working in partnership with the University of Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire County Council, Novas Scarman, and the Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services to deliver this six year Welsh Assembly Government programme. This programme follows the success of the Communities @One initiative which provided support to community groups and voluntary sector organisations enabling them to engage with technologies in ways that were relevant to their lives. It also included a grant fund to help community and voluntary groups access the technologies that would benefit community members.

Financial Inclusion

The Centre works with Credit Unions in Wales and manages several financial inclusion projects, such as the Department for Work and Pensions Growth Fund, the Financial Inclusion Champions initiative and the Debt Redemption and Money Advice scheme.

Fair Trade

Our Fair Trade Marketing Officer works with mainstream businesses who wish to adopt a fair trade policy, as well as emerging fair trade businesses.

Contact

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