

Cwmpas is a development agency working for positive change in Wales. We are a co-operative, and our focus is on building a fairer, greener economy and a more equal society, where people and planet come first.

Cwmpas are digital leaders. We are passionate about digital transformation and using tech for social good. We support organisations and the third sector to evaluate, improve and implement digital change and to future proof their service delivery. We understand the digital inclusion agenda, the Welsh context, and the communities we work with. We have experience working with all health boards, all local authorities, Digital Health and Care Wales, Social Care Wales, County Voluntary Councils, large national 3rd sector organisations, local 3rd sector organisations and community groups, as well as direct delivery with citizens.

Current use of digital to design and improve public service provision around the needs of users (TOR1)

Evidence

Cwmpas endeavours to adopt the Digital Service Standard for Wales ([Digital Service Standard for Wales | Centre for Digital Public Services](#)). Our Business Growth and Consultancy (BGC) Team utilises a user centred service design approach to digital projects and services. The BGC team works in collaboration across the organisation and encourages the use of user centred design, and some colleagues have undertaken user centred design training in the organisation.

Delivery

We have adopted user centred design in the delivery of two current programmes:

NEWID - [Newid Cymru](#)

Newid is a Welsh Government funded programme designed to promote good digital practice across the third sector in Wales. This is achieved by providing training, support and information. The project has three partners, WCVA, Promo Cymru and Cwmpas. In this project, we have adopted a service design approach and we are delivering design digital services for the third sector. Fifty percent of the organisations we are supporting help local authorities with outreach, and health and social care delivery. This programme is supported by CDPS.

Ofcom – Media Literacy.

This is a three-year programme funded by Ofcom to provide Media Literacy delivery in Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have adopted a user centred design approach for programme and content design, and workshop delivery. We are also conducting user research within communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf over a period of 4 months to support the delivery and research of the programme. One member of the delivery team is also a board member of CDPS. Both Marc Davies and Samina Ali have completed service or user design courses to support them to deliver this programme.

Long-term planning and development of digital across the local government sector (TOR2)

Cwmpas has worked with a number of local authorities providing advice and interventions around Digital Transformation.

Evidence

- Cwmpas has worked with Powys Council to conduct a Digital Maturity Assessment, and supported them to develop their digital strategy and digital adoption across the organisation. This work was carried out 2022.
- In partnership with Owen Davies Consultancy, Cwmpas has completed research work around Internet Of Things (IoT) for Powys Council, which was looking at introducing footfall sensors in several towns of Powys to help with events and planning.
- We have had conversations with several councils around the adoption of technology, and "once for Wales" working with WLGA and CDPS.
- Cwmpas has also been responsible for delivering direct digital inclusion intervention in communities as a part of Shared Prosperity Funding with Digital Confidence Denbighshire and Digital Confidence Powys.

Cwmpas is the primary deliverer of support in the social economy in Wales. We have supported the development of social enterprises, co-operatives and employee-owned businesses since our creation over forty years ago. Through our existing programmes we support large sections of the third sector to develop and grow and this can include consideration of the use of digital for marketing, logistics and data handling. As we have 'on the ground' knowledge of the needs of a large section of social businesses who often deliver key services for public sector organisations we do feel that we could offer more to support bodies such as WLGA and CDPS in their long-term planning and development of digital across the local government sector.

The opportunities and challenges to moving the digital agenda forward within the sector(TOR3)

Challenges:

Each local authority faces its own challenges. We have been in a fortunate position where we have been able to observe and discuss a number of challenges across Welsh local authorities:

- There is often a lack of understanding around User Centred Design and how it can help save money, create efficient services and put the citizen (user) at the heart of those services. Good user design will recognise that it will still be necessary for some citizens to access services without using digital.

- Lack of skills: many councils do not have a clear understanding of Digital Design and Technology (DDAT) and how that can improve service delivery.
- IT is outsourced for a number of Local Authorities.
- Staff Retention - some councils are losing digital staff to health and civil service, as they cannot be competitive in their pay scales.
- Budgets- Many local authorities don't have the budget to upskill and train staff in digital. Succession Planning and Talent Pool Management is low on the agenda for many councils.
- Some local authorities are more advanced in Digital than others, some councils have migrated to the cloud, and are really advanced in adoption of digital technology and tools, and some are still operating with on-premise software solutions.
- Due to lack of clarity of services, local authorities often do not know which organisation to turn to for digital support, is it WLGA, or CDPS, or Soctim. As a result many are paying tech-based consultancies for support.
- Both WLGA and CDPS lack the full resources they need to provide full Digital Transformation services.

Digital inclusion

Without appropriate investment in digital inclusion, the business case for digital transformation does not add up. The level of digital exclusion in Wales is higher than in the rest of the UK, with as many as 7% of the population, or 170,000 people, not using the internet. The portion of the public who remain digitally-excluded include some of the people most likely to be socially-isolated, reliant on public services and users of health and social care services. They risk being left behind in the digital health revolution.

It is essential that digital inclusion is at the heart of digital transformation. Ensuring that everyone can confidently access digital public services and participate in digital society is central to successfully achieving the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

In addition, it is essential that digital inclusion is at the heart of investment in digital transformation for there to be a coherent business case. Digital transformation must be more than finding cheaper ways to deliver services, but about creating a service with the end-user in mind. If investment in digital transformation makes accessing services more difficult for those who need it most, it will exacerbate inequality and inefficiencies. If we do not bring everyone along with us on the journey to more efficient and effective public services, we will need to duplicate services or people will fall through the gaps – leading to poorer well-being and more costs in the long-term.

It is clear that digitally-transformed public services are essential, and that we maximise the social value that can be created by embedding digital services in local government – but ensuring this is done in a user-led way is key.

Last year, we brought together nearly 100 key stakeholders to a conference in Cardiff, launching our Digital Inclusion: Vision for the Future report. Following years of working on digital inclusion in Wales, we presented five specific recommendations for policymakers:

- There should be a national digital inclusion programme that:
 - Delivers direct, targeted support to the 7% of people who are still digitally excluded, and those who do not have the five essential digital skills.
 - Provides the support, collaboration, and amplification to organisations and community groups to establish a mainstreamed digital skills and inclusion agenda, that is the responsibility of everyone in Wales.
- Implement the findings of the Minimum Digital Living Standard research pilot and expand to all households in Wales
- Funding of the Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales must be continued to ensure its sustainability and enable it to consider options for a transition to alternative funding sources, should that be required in future.
- Public sector should develop strategic partnerships with the technology industry to support an expanded digital Inclusion programme.
- All digital transformation programmes in the future should include a percentage of their funding for digital inclusion.

Opportunities

- A review and update of the Welsh Government Digital Strategy. If we are to work in a user centred way then the strategy needs to be agile and put the user at the heart of its delivery. This would also create an opportunity to bring in Media Literacy, under the Digital Skills function in line with the Online Safety Act 2023.
- Third Sector to work more closely with CDPS, and WLGA. At the moment we work in collaboration when required, but we believe that there is a need for a CDO for Third Sector, to enable the sector to have a seat at the table, and to bridge the gap in digital between third sector and Local Government.
- A dedicated budget for digital for Local Authorities assessed by a business case.
- User Centred Design (UCD) training to be subsidised to enable digital skills enhancement. There should be a UCD specialist in every organisation.
- A shift and support for more projects to be managed and delivered in an agile way.
- Innovate & look at emerging technology, especially Artificial Intelligence.
- Wales has developed high-quality [Digital Service Standards](#) – we now have the opportunity to promote adoption and implementation, holdi organisations to account and measure outcomes.

To better understand how local authorities collaborate and share knowledge and experiences on developing digital, and to look at mechanisms to scale up and share good practice and innovation (TOR4)

There are some brilliant “Communities of Practice” set up, and we also have a “Service Design Cymru” Community set up for sharing best practice.

Lots of people from both Local Government, Civil Service, and Third Sector access and use these communities of practice.

The challenge is every council is different is size and needs, around digital technology and digital adoption as already expressed in the questions above.

A central "Knowledge Hub" with toolkits would be most helpful in the follow areas:

- UCD- UX, Customer Journey Mapping, etc.
- SAAS solutions
- Procurement frameworks and procurement support of Digital Solutions
- Directory of SAAS suppliers that provide the solution in Welsh to comply with the Language Standards.
- How to scope the need for new Digital Technology
- How to write a business case
- APM – methodology- real life council examples.
- Emerging Technology & Innovation.

In relation to digital inclusion, the [Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales](#) has been recognised by members as being a key asset in ensuring a space for peer-networking, data gathering and experience-sharing, fostering meaningful change across sectors. It is growing to be an influential hub to support organisations, small and large delivering digital inclusion systematically across the country and we would want to see more organisations joining the network in the next phase. We have representatives of local government in the Alliance and would welcome more to join and benefit from having a dedicated space to learn from others and discuss digital inclusion.