

People and Work annual report 2022

Rhif Elusen Gofrestredig/Registered Charity Number: 515211
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Rydyn ni'n gyflogwr cyflog byw/We are a living wage employer



Introduction from People and Work's Chair – Ged McHugh

I am writing this in May 2022. The last 12 months have been unprecedented, tragic for some. Throughout this period People and Work has continued to work for the people of Rhondda and across Wales, though face to face contact has been limited, with certain areas of work affected more. Staff have embraced the working from home model and we are now moving towards a hybrid work model to enable staff to fully operate and develop. We are now in a far better place in terms of the vaccine and covid infection rates and it is hoped that this improvement will continue.

The economic situation is uncertain but particularly troubling, with the prospect of 10% inflation, rocketing fuel bills and low growth in the economy. This will impact particularly on people whose food and heating bills take up a higher proportion of household budgets. It must be recognised that there will be a fallout in terms of business failures, unemployment and particularly in available employment opportunities, especially for young people.

Most of the work done in 2021 was shaped by the restrictions necessary to control the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions forced new ways of working and People and Work has continued to adapt. Some changes are permanent and in 2021 People and Work moved into a much smaller office in Cardiff, in the same building, reflecting the expectation that staff will continue to work from home for much of the week. Meetings and interviews conducted via online platforms have become normal and whilst something is lost in not meeting face to face, the financial and pollution savings from not travelling as much are important enough to continue working this way.

Project work was hit harder than our research and evaluation work because it is about bringing people together but throughout the pandemic the Rhondda team, the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad partnership and Talwrn have worked very hard to compensate for the restrictions in face to face work. Online meetings have built relationships and in Rhondda the team have used digital solutions to social isolation and offered opportunities for outdoor team and group activities like Walking Rugby and Football, walking and running groups and 'Healthy Hillside' outdoor work.

People and Work recognises that employment is a key focus in improving people's life chances. Education, training and support for people to get into the labour market and secure jobs, are key ingredients of our work. This last year has seen the development of projects designed and implemented by Rhondda people and this locally led innovation will constitute a key component of our future way of working.

Financially, People and Work is in a satisfactory position at this point, with enough funding sources and research contracts secured for the short term. It remains to be seen how the funding landscape might change. People and Work also needs to work on its influencing role, in developing relationships with other organisations to contribute to understanding of what is needed and what works, given its long experience.

This report shows how People and Work is focusing on sustainable models of community support, looking at encouraging community leadership and at how communities can contribute to building and sustaining the local economy and protecting and cherishing the environment.

Achievements and performance

Work in Rhondda

People and Work is working with people in Rhondda to develop a new way of working that focuses on identifying and supporting leadership in the community and helping community leaders to work with the people around them. The approach uses a concept of 'alongsidedness': local people working together and in cooperation with each other. Rather than being delivered by people with expertise in areas of need, the work is led by people who can form effective and supportive relationships with other people in their community, and link them into networks and information that helps.

People and Work's role is to support community leaders with jobs (where appropriate), training, good networks, time and a context to work within. Throughout 2021 we focused on building leadership capacity through traineeships, work placements and pilot programmes, in preparation for developing a new five year programme – Cenhedlaeth Rhondda (Rhondda Generation). Over the last year we have employed 10 local people in leadership roles, including trainees supported by the Rank Foundation and the DWP Kickstart programme.

These were young people whose entry into the labour market was delayed or restricted by the pandemic, and were either unemployed or significantly under-employed. Nine were given trainee opportunities, three for a year and six through the Kickstart programme's six month placements. Tomas Jenkins completed his one year traineeship and was kept on to deliver the Green Light project, which he had been involved in developing. Rhian Edwards moved on to a valuable local role for another employer after her one year traineeship but left

a legacy through designing the 'Reading Rhondda' programme to support families to help their children's literacy.



Photo: *Michael Goodwin, RAP trainee, Ethan Jones, Rhondda Digidol lead and Tomas Jenkins, Green light lead.*

All these young people are from Rhondda and have brought their experiences and thinking into developing Cenhedlaeth Rhondda. This framework will build on the strengths of Rhondda and is focused on employment and skills, education

and learning, health and wellbeing and protecting the environment.

PIAS

The PIAS social enterprise, which re-sells donated sports clothing and equipment, was badly hit by the pandemic as it lost both its sales outlets and its collection points, and its income from sales dropped from over £11,500 in 2019 to less than £2,000 in 2021. However, PIAS manager, Natasha Burnell, was able to secure some funding from the Postcode Lottery which ensured that the provision of fitness and wellbeing activities that PIAS funds could continue despite the loss of income. PIAS now works with over 100 people a week from adult walking groups to after school fitness activities and runs group activities in school holidays.

PIAS has already diverted over 12,000 items from landfill. Building on its sustainability work, it uses an electric vehicle to transport people to activities

and, with support from the National Lottery Community fund, paid for the installation of a charging point in a leisure centre carpark in Rhondda. PIAS is now supporting a newly established CiC, Y Siop Fach Sero, which has leased the library building in Ferndale from the local authority in order to open a zero waste shop. PIAS aims to develop a sustainability hub alongside Y Siop Fach Sero which will include a retail outlet for the sports clothing and equipment.

Natasha has also worked with partners in Rhondda on starting a Benthg Library of Things, where people can borrow tools and equipment, and a Repair Café.

Rhondda Web

The Rhondda Web programme (2021-2022) focused on digital inclusion and has led to a new three year programme, Rhondda Digidol. Ethan Jones, who started with People and Work in 2020 as a trainee community leader, has developed coding clubs across Rhondda and is also tackling digital exclusion. So far, the digital inclusion project has worked with over 500 people including 20 groups in 15 locations in Rhondda. Taking its model from PIAS, the PIAT (Play it Again Tech) project, supported by the Rank Foundation's Time to Shine programme, aims to help people who have no access to IT equipment by refurbishing and loaning or giving out donated IT equipment, an approach tested by a pilot which is being developed in 2022. In early 2022 funding for a further 3 years was secured from the Moondance Foundation for Rhondda Digidol.

People and Work is now one of three Rhondda members of the UK Network of Online Centres developed by the Good Things Foundation. This means we are part of the National Data-bank, which has supplied free data cards to help tackle data poverty. People and Work is collaborating with other organisations focused

on supporting people challenged by the cost of living crisis to distribute the data cards.

In early 2022 a third Digi-Fest was run in partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd at Llwynypia. Over 300 children and young people came to experience digital technology workshops delivered by three local universities, colleges and local businesses.



*Ethan Jones
with primary
school pupils at
the 2022 Digi-
Fest.*

Green Light

The Green Light programme developed during the pandemic to help people who had lost their jobs, or saw no way out of unemployment or poor work. It provides very personal employment support through helping people think through their options, prepare a CV, learn about applying online, access qualifications and see what local jobs are available - [\(3\) The Green Light Project | Facebook](#). In the last year the project team (James Watts-Rees, Tomas Jenkins and RAP trainee Michael Goodwin) have worked with over 100 people, and 70 of those intensively. Funding from Confused.Com provided a budget for support activities and enabled People and Work to retain Tomas when his traineeship (supported

by the Rank Foundation) ended. Most of those supported have found employment and others have been supported to gain new qualifications.

Working with the Welsh Voluntary Sector

Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad

People and Work has continued to coordinate Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad, involving a nine organisation partnership - Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog, Partneriaeth Ogwen and Siop Griffiths from the slate valleys of North Wales; Tir Coed, Tir Dewi and Credu who work with woodland and land management, farmers and carers respectively; and Ynysybwl Regeneration Partnership, DOVE and People and Work's Rhondda project in the former South Wales coalfield. The partnership is focused on the role of community in supporting and growing the foundational or very local economy and each partner is funded to employ a leader from their community for a year to help them develop community involvement, repeated over three years.

The external evaluation from Y Ganolfan Cynllunio Iaith (the Welsh Centre for Language Planning) has identified the effectiveness of the partnership working that has been developed:

If forming a truly comprehensive, equal and collaborative partnership was the principal achievement of the first year, maintaining the co-creative relationship into the second year has been just as much of an achievement.

The evaluators also identified the impact on the nine community leaders employed for the year:

As in the first year of the project, their twelve months' experience with Slate, Coal and Countryside has been a transformative experience for all the trainee community leaders.

The nine community leaders employed through the project worked with over 1000 people in 2021. The evaluation identified an impact on the communities partners work with:

Without doubt, the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project's second year has seen continued broadening and deepening of experience and learning within the communities; indeed, of learning through experience.

Whilst each partner is different, the group have valued commonalities and the effectiveness of the network in promoting shared learning and support has been significant. The evaluators are working with the partnership to help to capture the whole project learning and to look at how this is disseminated:

At the core of the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project is the commitment to change. The planned-for change within the Theory of Change is radical. It is not temporary but permanent. Not short-term but long-term. A foundational change. Change that aims to make a real difference to individuals, to communities and to Wales' Community Development landscape as a whole.

(Quotes taken from Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad: Beth ydym wedi ei ddysgu yn yr ail flwyddyn? *What have we learnt in the second year?*)

In 2021 the group were able to meet face to face for the first time (the project started at the beginning of 2020) and a visit to the South Wales partners proved an effective and positive experience for everyone. The group visited the North Wales partners in Spring 2022.

Talwrn

Talwrn is a partnership of voluntary sector leaders in Wales convened by People and Work. It is an informal group and during the pandemic it moved to holding online meetings with an average attendance of eight. The meetings provide an opportunity for sharing learning and ideas, peer support and challenge, and

collaborative working. The members include people who work across Wales, people working at a county or regional level and others working with a single community and this mix, combined with the fact that the type of work done varies widely, offers members valuable insights that inform and shape their work.

Evaluation and Research

People and Work influences and informs policy and practice both through its work with communities and through providing evaluation and research support to the public and voluntary sectors in Wales. This latter function also provides an independent income stream that supports and complements our project work and funding.

We focus on qualitative and quantitative work that meets with the charity's overall objectives and we are committed to studies that enable clients to support people as effectively as possible. Our recent work has helped to shape policy and service delivery for people with additional needs, those seeking better employment, and voluntary organisations wanting to develop their roles.

Evaluation and research for the Voluntary Sector in Wales

We continue to provide evaluation support to the Invest Local programme run by the Building Communities Trust (BCT) and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. Starting in 2016, we are working over 10 years with BCT to support the 13 communities in the programme to capture learning and understand the effectiveness of the support and investment (£1million per

community) that they are accessing. We have been looking at the impact of the pandemic on the communities over 2021.

In 2021 we published a report of research commissioned by the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project and Building Communities Trust on the role that community initiatives played in tackling the impact of the first pandemic lockdown, [A Community response to covid-19 \(squarespace.com\)](#). The findings were discussed and shared at Gofod3, the WCVA's digital conference around communities and Covid, and the Cross Party Group on Poverty and informed BCT's submission to a Senedd inquiry.

We are also providing evaluation support to Care and Repair Powys and Age Cymru Powys for their Mamwlad project ([Mamwlad \(ageuk.org.uk\)](#)) which targets support at farming families in Powys.

We provided evaluation support to Age Cymru West Glamorgan for a project around home help for older people and evaluations or research for - Interlink (the association of voluntary organisations in Rhondda Cynon Taf): the CGL ACE programme that focuses on supporting people from minority ethnic communities into work; and Spectacle Theatre in Rhondda.

People and Work has recently completed research for Adult Learning Wales on the people who undertake adult learning and its impact on them, informing their work and their advocacy around the Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into the Tertiary Education and Research Bill.

At the end of 2021 People and Work was commissioned by the Wrexham Food Poverty Network through AVOW (the Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham) to inform the Network about community based food initiatives in Wrexham, who uses these services and what is known about their impact on people; looking at how things had changed following the end of the pandemic

and what plans for the future groups have as a new cost of living crisis develops.

People and Work have also been commissioned to evaluate a Community Renewal Fund project based in Gwynedd called 'Tîm o Amgylch y Person Ifanc' (Team around the Young Person), which aims to improve partnership work between different agencies that support young people. All fieldwork is conducted through the medium of Welsh and all reports are produced firstly in Welsh.

Working with the Public Sector in Wales

People and Work is providing evaluations of three regional ESF funded programmes run by Welsh local authorities to support people in, or into, work:

- In Ynys Môn the Expanding Môn's Horizon's programme targets people who are in low skilled or insecure work to build on their skills and find better work;
- Skills @Work is an anti-poverty programme working in Cardiff, Newport and Monmouthshire with people who are in employment but have low skills, to help them progress in work;
- The Journey2Work programme works to develop the employability of people who are economically inactive and/or long term unemployed in Newport, Cardiff and Monmouthshire.

We have also:

- undertaken a review of Neurodevelopmental services in Wales for the Welsh Government, which outlines an ambitious vision for the future development of Neurodevelopmental services and the wider system of support for neuro diverse people and their families in Wales;

- continued to work with Old Bell3, Cardiff University and DateB on the evaluation of the Welsh Government's PaCE programme that supports parents to access employment;
- started working, again with Old Bell3, Cardiff University, DateB and IFF Research on an evaluation of the Communities for Work (CfW) and Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) programmes for the Welsh Government.

The evaluations of PaCE, CfW, CFW+, Journey2Work and Skills@Work, come at a critical time as the Welsh Government and local authorities develop their plans for new employment support programmes as European Structural Funding for Wales winds down. The evaluations will help to target work where it is most effective.

Future proofing our systems

The charity has worked to bring down its overhead costs as much as possible this year. The research team have, mostly, continued to work from home and the expectation is that they will only meet up in the office once or twice a week in future. As noted above, we have, consequently, moved our main office into a much smaller room in the same building in Butetown, considerably reducing rent costs. We have dispensed with fixed landline and broadband costs by moving our phone to an online system and using a monthly paid broadband dongle.

Next steps

We have a team of 8 young leaders in Rhondda who have worked with People and Work to develop the Cenhedlaeth Rhondda approach. This is a planned programme of work in Rhondda over the next five years focused on employment and skills; health and wellbeing; and protecting the environment. The plan is to

develop work on each of these themes but also to link them to provide an holistic approach so that work on developing digital skills includes looking at employment opportunities; help for families to support their children's reading is linked to getting fit and setting up adult reading groups; and social enterprise support is linked to saving the planet.

Going into 2022, funding had been secured for: Rhondda Digidol to support digital inclusion and IT skills development over the next three years; a one year pilot Reading Rhondda programme to work with families on literacy and oracy; and a one year pilot PIAT programme to refurbish IT equipment for people who are digitally isolated. People and Work also secured a grant from the Third Sector Resilience Fund for Wales Phase 3 Scheme, administered by WCVA to help us recover from some of the impacts of the pandemic. This has funded our project manager's post and has allowed us to develop a funding strategy to secure funding for Cenhedlaeth Rhondda including moving the PIAS model into one that focuses on environmental issues and supporting social enterprise and enabling Green Light to develop and to build a preventative programme focusing on raising awareness of the labour market amongst children and young people in schools in Rhondda.

Structure, governance and management

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee and does not have any share capital. The Trustees are also the directors for the purpose of company law. Those who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the 2021 financial statements were:

Christala Sophocleous

Phil Watkins (Treasurer)

Gordon Davies

Jan Huyton (Vice Chair)

Ged McHugh (Chair)

Gareth Lewis

Mary-Ann McKibben

David Rees

Staff

Dr Duncan Holtom heads up the research team working with Rhodri Bowen, senior researcher, and Heather Pells.

James Hall is operations manager looking after IT systems, office bases and equipment. He also heads up partnership work, and manages the PIAT and Rhondda Digidol programmes and the community development lead, James Watts-Rees. James Watts-Rees is community development lead and manages the Green Light programme with Tomas Jenkins.

Natasha Burnell leads on social enterprise and environmental sustainability and manages Natasha Owen, who leads on Reading Rhondda.

In the last 12 months People and Work has employed 10 trainees: Rhian Edwards and then Justin George through the Rank Foundation's 12 month Time to Shine programme; Tomas Jenkins and then Michael Goodwin through the Ranks Foundation's 12 month GAP scheme; Morgan Rhoderick, Dominic Turner, Abigail Parry, Caelan Bradley, Antony Jenkins and Justin George (who then progressed to Time to Shine) through the DWP 6 month KickStart programme.

Dr Sarah Lloyd-Jones is employed as Director with overall management responsibilities for the charity, working with Trustees. Sarah also leads the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project and Talwrn and is involved in some of the research and evaluation work.

Ann Churcher is the administrator.