

South Wales, UK



## Community Impact Initiative CIC

Keyword(s):

**Labour market and VET, disadvantaged groups of learners, community education, career guidance, inclusion, local and regional development, entrepreneurship**



### Introduction

The Community Impact Initiative (the Cii), is a social enterprise working with people from a range of backgrounds to renovate empty properties, with the aim of improving the local area and developing key skills needed for work. The Cii won a Learning and Work Wales Inspire! Award in 2020. A short film is available at <https://www.learningandwork.wales/the-community-impact-initiative-cic-community-project/>

Behind the renovations are people who have overcome adversity, which can include homelessness and drug addiction, or those looking to build their confidence, develop skills, gain qualifications and meet new people.

The main aim of this project is to support the local community through helping people develop their personal skills and employability skills so they can make positive life choices. Through their work they hope to not only develop new skills for adults across Wales, but also bring empty properties back to life.

The Cii provides a wide range of construction and trade services for domestic and commercial clients across the UK and in doing so they provide work tasters and placements for people from disadvantaged backgrounds, providing a stepping stone into sustainable and meaningful employment.

Current projects include:

- Building Resilience in Communities: <https://www.the-cii.org/bric/>
- Building a Legacy: <https://www.the-cii.org/building-a-legacy/>
- Women Construct Wales: <https://www.the-cii.org/women-construct-wales/>
- Community Employability Pathway: <https://www.the-cii.org/community-employment-pathway/>

### **Main challenge**

The Cii is supporting people to make positive life improvements, and where appropriate gain employment, while at the same time regenerating local communities and providing safe housing in Wales where there are issues with housing and empty properties.

### **Timing**

The Cii CIC was established in 2016. The length of training that people take part in is dependent on the project they are involved in and their own personal circumstances.

### **Objective**

The Cii supports people to improve their health and wellbeing, build their confidence and self-esteem, learn new skills, achieve qualifications, and make positive life improvements.

This is achieved while at the same time regenerating and invigorating physical communities, returning empty properties to the housing market in an environmentally friendly and energy-efficient manner, improving the living standards of our communities, and providing an affordable and effective solution to the housing and empty property issues of Wales.

The Cii aims to instil a sense of community pride, resilience, and ownership through their actions.

### **Target group**

Cii supports people ranging in age, gender, and background to make positive change, empowering them to take ownership of their journey. Circumstances, background, and support needs are often unique and complex, and the support doesn't discriminate – the Cii focuses on a person's future, not their past.

The project has received applications from learners aged 15 to 70 years old. Learners sign up to take part in the programme for a variety of different reasons, for example, one woman who lost her husband and realised she didn't have any basic DIY skills so wanted to develop her skills and help the community at the same time. Another learner was a young man whose parents died at a young age, felt isolated and often went days without seeing anyone and came to Cii looking to develop his communication skills and make friends.

### **Geographical range**

The Cii currently operates across South Wales, having recently delivered contracts in Neath, Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypool with long-term growth aspirations to extend its geographical coverage across the UK.

### **Stakeholders and partners**

Stakeholders and partners include:

- CITB
- Chwarae Teg
- Pen y Cymoedd Community Fund
- National Lottery Community Fund
- European Social Fund

### **Strategy / materials**

The Cii currently employs two multi construction tutors who oversee the project and work with licenced plumbers and electricians to safely install water and electric into the properties. Once completed, the houses are put back onto the market and any profit received from the sale goes directly back into the purchase of the next house.

### **Resources**

The Cii CIC is a not for profit organisation which receives support from trusts and foundations as well as donations and fundraising.

### **Compliance with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**

The Cii uses sustainable development principles to regenerate empty properties, reducing the effects of anti-social behaviour, crime and vandalism and the detrimental impact this has on local communities.

### **Innovation(s)**

The Community Impact Initiative innovatively combines skills development and learning with community regeneration. As a Community Interest Company, every penny that Cii generates is used for the sole purpose of their activities, with all income invested back into their work to continue community initiatives.

### **Impact**

So far, over 100 disadvantaged individuals have been supported since the CIC's inception in 2016.

Key impacts include:

- Healthier community members: Cii supports community members to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing, leading to a happier, more active community.
- A better skilled workforce: learners develop skills that lead to enhanced and more diverse employment prospects.
- Better engaged communities: The support empowers people to take ownership of their individual journeys, taking pride in their actions and resulting in better engaged community members.
- Improved physical spaces: The Cii uses sustainable development principles to regenerate empty properties, reducing the effects of anti-social behaviour, crime and vandalism and the detrimental impact this has on local communities.
- More resilient communities: Learners develop attitudes, behaviours, and skills that result in improved confidence, motivation, and resilience, supporting them to make positive life decisions, changes, and improvements.

For a selection of success stories please see <https://www.the-cii.org/impact/>

### **Website/Social Media profile(s) of the initiative**

<https://www.the-cii.org/>

### **Contact details**

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<b>Researcher/interviewer</b>	Learning and Work Institute
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