

Rhwydwaith  
**CYMUNEDAU MWY DIOGEL CYMRU**  

---

WALES SAFER COMMUNITIES  
Network

# COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WALES

**Wales Safer Communities  
Network Baseline Survey**

**October 2021**

# CONTENTS

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Findings</b>	<b>03</b>
General Findings	03
Skills and Expertise	06
Data and Evidence	06
Products	08
Data Sharing	08
Finance	10
Individual and Community Perspectives	11
Opportunities, Barriers and Challenges	11
<b>Future Focus</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>14</b>

# INTRODUCTION

---

The Wales Safer Communities Network was formed in January 2021. During early discussions it was identified that a baseline survey would be required. The baseline survey followed work on the workforce and Anti-social Behaviour. This baseline survey included specific questions for the Wales Data Analysis

Innovation and Improvement Network, as well as looking at the partnership background with the complexities of devolved and non-devolved public bodies being part of the community safety backdrop.



# METHODOLOGY

---

A survey was created and went live throughout the month of August up until 10 September 2021. The survey was circulated to the Community Safety Partnership Chairs, which was their first communication from the Network.

After the survey closed, it was identified that there was a gap in responses from the Police. To ensure that their voices

were heard, 3 police forces were invited to take part in short conversations with the Business and Network Development Manager, acting as the Head of the Network. Five people took part in conversations; 4 in pairs and 1 on their own. The findings from these conversations are included in this report and have been clearly identified when appropriate.

# FINDINGS

## RESPONDENTS

19 responses were received to the survey, 17 of whom regularly attended Community Safety Partnerships, and 2 attended on occasion. 12 responses came from Local Authorities, 2 from the Fire Service, and 1 each from Youth Justice Services, Third Sector CVC, Health Board, Registered Social Landlord and Police.

The 19 responses attended 14 Community Safety Partnerships, with each respondent attending almost 1.5 Community Safety Partnerships. Responses were received (and conversations held) from within all 4 of the Police areas, all 7 of the Regional Safeguarding areas and 17 Local Authority areas.

The number of responses to the survey was low and without further investigation we cannot say for definite why that might be. We will review the processes to see how we can increase response rates in future years.



## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Achievements in safer communities was attributed mainly to Community Safety Partnerships (73.7%), Partnership working with the Local Authority (73.7%), Partnership working with Community Cohesion (73.7%), followed closely by Regional Safeguarding Boards (68.4%), and Partnership working with both the Police and Fire and Rescue Services (68.4%). However, weaknesses were identified in partnership working with the private sector; with Higher/ Further Education and with community and town Councils (26.3%).

The lowest responses where there was no response or it was seen as not applicable were the Police and Partnership Board (47.4%), Criminal Justice in Wales (42.1%), and Regional Housing Support Collaborative Groups (42.1%). This suggests that a joint focus may be required by the Wales Safer Communities Board and Network for engagement with the two national groups to help improve connectivity and communication.

Almost two thirds of survey respondents identified strategic partnership and overall leadership being important to good delivery, with almost 70% identifying the importance of partnership working at an operational level.

The following were identified as being the most important for community safety in the last year:

- 1 **Greater emphasis on partnership working (84.2%)**
- 2 **Greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention (73.7%)**
- 3 **Wales Safeguarding Procedures (63.2%)**
- 4 **New areas of working (e.g. COVID-19 regulations) (63.2%)**



The weakest areas over the last year were identified as:

- **Increased use of data and evidence to plan and support community safety work; and**
- **Developing strategic assessments in partnership.**

Community safety issues across Wales are identified and prioritised according to the survey by:

- Joint 1. At a national level – new policy and legislation**
- Joint 1. At a strategic local level**
- Joint 1. At an operational local level**
  - 4. At a national level – National Boards e.g. Contest Cymru**
  - 5. Through community engagement and consultation**
  - 6. Through analysis of data**

The lowest response was through the strategic assessment.

# FINDINGS

Limited connections with Public Service Boards and Regional Partnership Boards was identified as a weakness. Comments from respondents included: issues only go to the Community Safety Partnership via Councillors and members of the public when other routes have failed; the impact of funding streams with the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) receiving the money that used to go to Community Safety Partnerships may be resulting in more siloed working and competition between Local Authority areas; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has stretched resources further. Stretched resource were also raised during conversations with police colleagues, with Community Safety Partnerships being a fraction and often an add on to existing roles.



## Participant views are included throughout the report

"I repeatedly see Police undertaking problem solving and operational activity in isolation to address local issues they have identified as priorities. I have also observed social landlords implementing interventions and enforcement of tenancies on their estates without due regard to wider community safety partnership plans or resources. There appears to be a lack of clarity on the interface between the various strategic boards and plans and no coherent strategic vision on how complementary plans should be delivered in a co-ordinated way."



"We can all work more collaboratively ... progress is being made but more can be done."

## WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

Three of the five ways of working were utilised in Community Safety Partnerships and work: collaboration; involvement; and prevention. 17 of the respondents had seen partners acting independently to progress community safety issues that could have benefited from more collaborative approaches either frequently, on a few occasions, or infrequently. Devolved partners felt that they focused on prevention under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, whilst the non-devolved were more focused on crime and bad behaviour. This was supported in conversation, with four out of five being unaware or unsure of the wellbeing goals and ways of working and where there had been no focus on them.



"There is still a lack of understanding in relation to information sharing. The community safety department often only get the information when the situation has escalated."

# SKILLS & EXPERTISE

Skills and expertise were identified as high and moderate for partnership working at both the strategic and day to day projects, and for community engagement. It was lowest for mediation and trauma informed practice.



“As the CSP coordinator I work in isolation. I try to keep developing my skills and expertise via the internet and partners websites etc. I ensure that I share with partners all new information.”

This comment supports the findings of the workforce survey and workshops, which identified a range of sizes of Local Authority community safety teams, with an average of 3.4 full time staff. Furthermore, many Local Authority community safety teams are either working in isolation or have different parts of community safety being managed in different parts of the Local Authority, adding to complexities for partners such as the Police. Ensuring the right links at the right levels was raised as a priority during conversations.

# DATA & EVIDENCE

The majority of respondents said that development and delivery is evidence-based (84.2%) and is planned and assessed with reference to quantitative data (such as crime statistics, health data) (78.9%). Many respondents thought that there were links to other resources, however, the areas where some respondents disagreed were alignment with the Population Needs Assessment, Wellbeing Plans, and utilising existing data sources.

**84.2%**

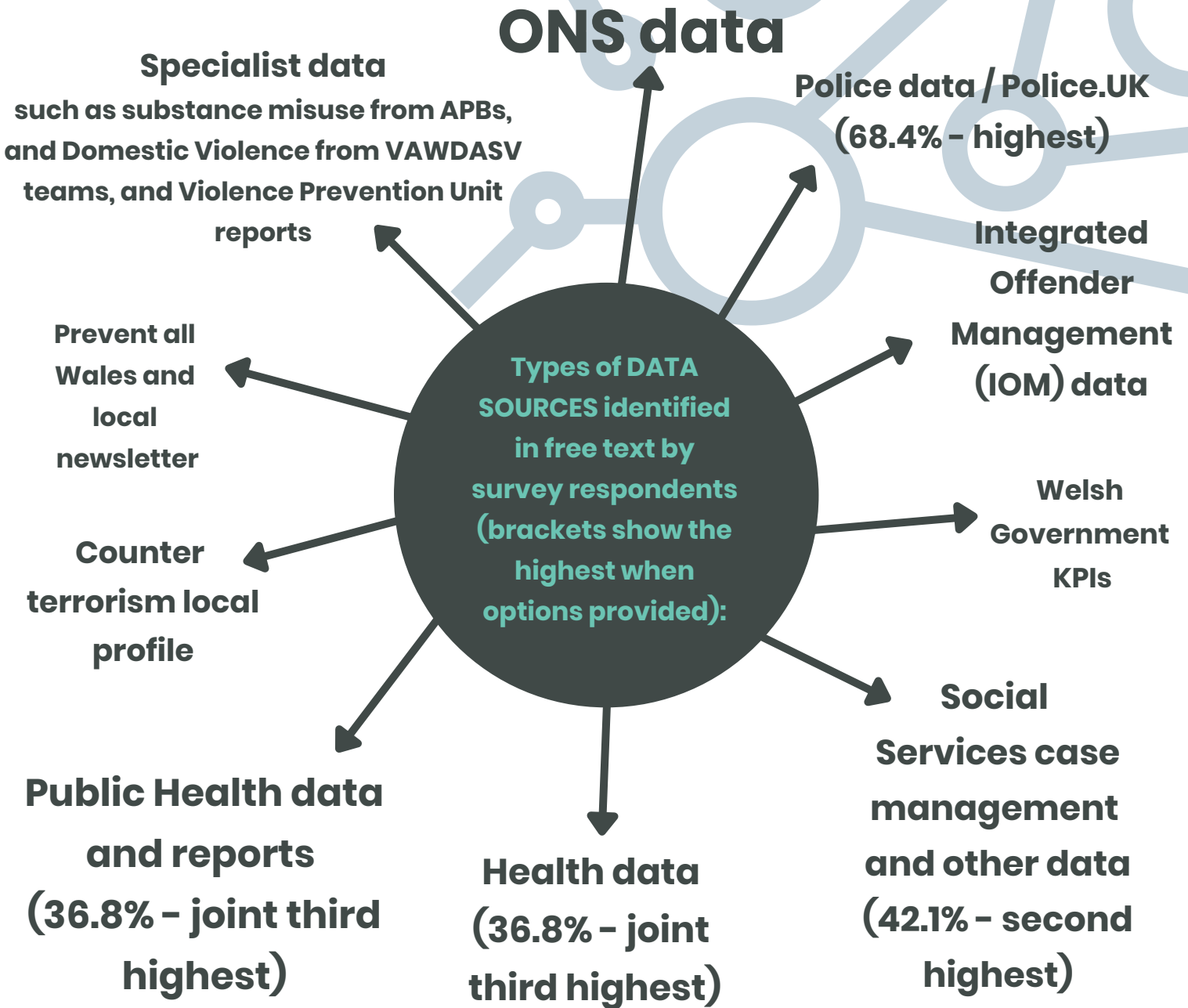
said that development & delivery is evidence based

**78.9%**

said that development and delivery is planned and assessed with reference to quantitative data



“Data sources have dried up. Partners now publish information online, but most are either generic, agency level or LSOA – which does not assist in trying to determine County Level data. I produce an annual Strategic Assessment, but quality data is not available. [The] police used to provide data on a regular basis, but this is no longer available.”



In addition, (36.8% - joint third highest) was identified as socio-economic data when options were provided, and people reported carrying out focus groups, case discussions and 1:1 qualitative data collection to add to the data available.



# PRODUCTS

---

The products most likely to be provided to Community Safety Partnerships from the data are Operational Documents, followed by local community profiles, and regional profiles and strategic assessments. However, the above were identified by less than half of the survey respondents.

Community Safety Partnership analysis products was identified as an issue, with there being little to no official analytical products. However, in at least one area something is being developed. It was identified that much of the data comes from the Police and is often already analysed as they have more data analysis resources (a finding which is supported by the workforce survey and workshops).

There wasn't a clear picture of what key products were needed due to the variations in how community safety is managed across Wales. For example, one area focuses on just four key data

sets linked to four priorities agreed, whilst another is looking at all elements of community safety. Data is used for setting priorities, identifying service trends, and to ensure that resources are deployed appropriately including through commissioned/ funded projects. This finding contradicted an earlier finding that strategic assessments were not being used to identify and prioritise community safety issues, unless the strategic assessments are written and placed on a shelf whilst other data and processes are used for priority setting.

# DATA SHARING

---

There was an ask for more up to date data on a monthly basis. Whilst some areas have good data sharing, the frequency is often quarterly or not at all. It appears that a standard across Wales is required, which is accessible at a Local Authority level, in order to enable consistency and the opportunity for strategic assessments to be

developed across Wales which can react to new developments and duties as well as local issues and demands.

Data sharing is carried out via a range of programmes including Word, Excel, and Police Systems; however, the main method reported is Excel. Data protection being used to block sharing when no personal data is being shared came up in conversation and has been discussed at WDAIIN. Almost all have standard WASPI's set up between the partners on the Community Safety Partnership.

There was very little reviewing of products or auditing of data. This may reflect the current issues with data sharing resulting in limited opportunity for carrying out these activities. A suggestion was made that there should be a review of the data systems and sets that are available. To enable the current data landscape to be clear and any gaps to be identified, and for there to be a coordination function within the Network to support this.

There appears to be a shortage of focus on risk management across the Community Safety Partnerships, with a reliance on the Police MoRiLE where it is already a process. There is also an over-reliance on the Police data, which is seen as an issue by both the Police and the other respondents. This suggests that there is a reliance on data that identifies where there is crime and existing issues serious enough to be recorded on the Police systems, whilst the Community Safety Partnerships want to focus on prevention before issues become serious, to deliver against the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The fact that funding has moved from the Community Safety Partnerships to the PCCs may have increased this influence, but was raised by all partners including where there had been no change in funding.

“

“There is no additional resource for the CSP. In an ideal world all partners would be involved in producing community safety assessments/ reports etc.”

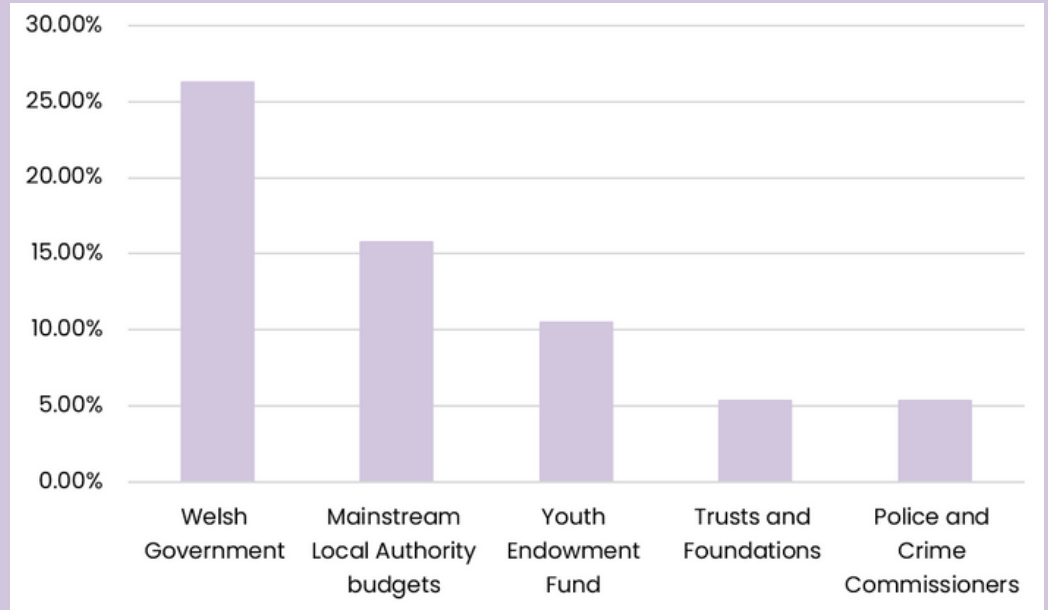
“

One respondent also noted that “prevention work does not fit neatly on our current system.”

# FINANCE

**Sources of funding for community safety appear to be fairly scarce for the public sector. For the last two years, funding has come from:**

*(figures are the % of all respondents who responded to the points)*



Almost all responses commented on the reduced budgets, but also on Westminster programmes such as Safer Streets. These were seen as time consuming, not available to all areas, and focused on crime rather than prevention and the causes of crime. The reduced amount of funding was seen as leading to a more reactive community safety response as there is limited funding for prevention. However, all respondents and conversations shared a commitment to prevention and the need to prioritise it.

There was a call for clarity and transparency around the process for how PCCs prioritise funding, so that it is an even playing field for all Community Safety Partnership areas. This is especially important in light of the rate of data analysts in the Police, which has remained high, whilst the Local Authority community safety teams have been reduced to just 20% (Workforce Survey 2021).



“There has been spending – but this is by individual agencies/ partners and is not joined up or evidenced based.”



“We could do a lot more preventative and early intervention work if we had more funding. At the moment we are mainly reactive and fire fighting as we do not have the staff or funding to do more.”

# INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Survey respondents were positive about the knowledge by Community Safety Partnerships at the individual and community levels. This was especially true for lived experience and understanding the needs of vulnerable/ at risk communities. This may be due to the data that is available from the Police and social services.

## OPPORTUNITIES, BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

There are advantages to overlapping responsibilities of community safety with:

**Joint 1. Public Protection**

**Joint 1. Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards**

**Joint 1. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Boards**

**Joint 4. Community Cohesion**

**Joint 4. Safeguarding**

**6. Contest**

The area identified to be the most challenging is between community safety and the Regional Partnership Boards.



“

“The development of so many partnerships and specific funding streams has led to a breakdown of true, holistic partnership working and a return to silo working.”

“

“A reoccurring matter is the difference between information sharing legislation. Safeguarding colleagues rely on consent. Health struggle to share any personal information. DWP cannot share (UK policy). Under the Crime & Disorder Act information can be shared. All of these differences can cause issues/ misunderstanding etc. Challenges in relation to discussing funding when differing priorities/ focuses for agencies come to the fore in a partnership.”

**There was confidence in being able to deliver community safety, especially in:**

- Outcomes based approach
- Community engagement
- Evaluation and improvement planning
- Evidence-based planning

**The areas of low confidence were:**

- Adequate funding to meet the challenges
- Accessing and analysing data
- Generating data and evidence of impact
- Influencing the local wellbeing plan

**Opportunities were seen as coming from:**

- Learning from best practice
- Digital communication as a community engagement tool
- Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews/ Adult & Child Practice Reviews
- Innovation
- Community empowerment
- Post-COVID community dynamics (positive)

**Whilst challenges from:**

- Post-COVID community dynamics (negative)
- Cross-cutting issues such as poverty, loneliness, wellbeing
- Differing needs in a rural/ small town/ urban contexts

## FUTURE FOCUS

There have been a number of reviews of Community Safety Partnerships since 2016. There is a lot happening, but nothing appears to have changed “on the ground”, according to one respondent.

# 57.9%

of respondents to the survey thought that the Wales Safer Communities Network provided an opportunity, with none seeing it as a challenge



“I fully support community partnerships as a way forward to collectively enhance community opportunities and skills and provide better outcomes [...] there will be some practice learning from our Covid experience that will help us develop a more personal approach to service delivery rather than a corporate one that was often non-negotiable. By listening to the community with open ears we can truly assess their needs and identify the risks and work together to address these.”

# SUMMARY

**Throughout this report there have been a number of recurring themes:**

- The need for more data sharing.
- Data and the strategic assessments are not being utilised to identify local needs and priorities, but rather, are being done in isolation by partners with the Community Safety Partnerships being provided with only some of the data that could enable more effective, efficient, and in some instances, preventative work.
- A focus on issues at specific geographic areas rather than taking a preventative approach that focuses on stopping the issues from developing in the first instance.
- A need for understanding between evidence-based and a public health approach – the public health approach was seen as a gap, whilst evidence-based was often positively scored.
- Not all data was understood, for example, that IOM data would include probation information.
- A standard for data to be available across Wales which is accessible at a Local Authority level appears to be required to enable strategic assessments to be developed consistently across Wales.
- The need for less silo working and more joined up working between the different partnership arrangements, including learning lessons between and across the partnerships.
- The challenge of differing devolved and non-devolved focuses.
- There is a feeling across the baseline survey, which was also evident in the workforce survey, that some work is not being done in partnership, but whoever has responsibility progresses it leading to silo working.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clarity on the interface between the various strategic boards, plans and coherent strategic visions, in order to reduce silo working and duplication and increase the focus on prevention activities.
2. WDAIIN to pick up and focus on the data sharing issues.
3. Wales Safer Communities Network and Violence Prevention Unit to work together to provide consistent guidance for the Strategic Assessments that cover all elements of community safety and can future proof for any changes that may be brought in by either the UK Government or Welsh Government.
4. Learning and Best Practice Sharing across partnerships and across Wales to be an increased focus for the Wales Safer Communities Network, including case studies and sharing of reports.
5. Wales Safer Communities Network to work with WCCSJ to develop formal research into specific elements of community safety to build the evidence base, especially focusing on prevention.
6. The profile of the Network to be raised with the Chairs of Community Safety Partnerships via a formal letter from the Wales Safer Communities Board Co-Chairs, or Co-Chair organisations and the Head of the Wales Safer Communities Network.
7. Wales Safer Communities Network to facilitate workshops and other activities to assist in identifying and resolving barriers or perceived barriers between partners.
8. Police and Crime Commissioners to consider how they can improve transparency in the decision making processes that they undertake around funding proposals, whether to the UK Government, Welsh Government or internally.
9. Increased connectivity and communication between national boards and forums with the aim of improving information flow.
10. Mediation, Trauma Informed Practice, and Partnership Problem Solving to be prioritised in the Wales Safer Communities Network training programme.
11. One Community Safety Partnership to trial the joint production of the strategic assessment involving multiple partners, and to provide learning to the wider sector (if required, supported by the Wales Safer Communities Network and the Violence Prevention Unit), building on work in North Wales where all partners fund partnership data analysts based in North Wales Police.



THE WALES SAFER COMMUNITIES NETWORK WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL PARTICIPANTS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION BY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY.

For more information contact -  
[SaferCommunities@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:SaferCommunities@wlga.gov.uk)

Copyright 2021 © Wales Safer Communities  
Network, WLGA



Rhwydwaith  
**CYMUNEDAU MWY DIOGEL CYMRU**  
**WALES SAFER COMMUNITIES**  
Network



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Part Funded by  
**Welsh Government**