

Adra's contribution to social impact 2015-2021

A holistic study incorporating health, economic impact and well-being

Executive summary report



About this report

This report is a summary of Afallen's findings, arising from data collection and analysis undertaken from March to July 2021.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of many Adra staff and stakeholders in the provision of data, and through the collection of their everyday stories about how they perceive the support that Adra provides.

This report was prepared by Dr David Clubb with the support of Angharad Owen, Caryl Lewis, Mark Drane, Dr Mark Lang, Nikira Bowen and Peter Trott.

Front cover photo provided by Adra.

Introduction

Adra's impact to the communities it serves is profound and recognised by a majority of the tenants, as well as a wide range of stakeholders.

In undertaking this work, we analysed and assessed qualitative and quantitative data from many different areas of Adra activity.

The evidence points to Adra being an effective and important anchor organisation in the provision of services linked to well-being, such as housing and supporting vulnerable customers, in the communities it serves.

Adra has also played a very important role in a cohesive multi-stakeholder response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Adra's response has been informed by the deep understanding of its workforce about the challenges faced by Adra's customers and the wider community.

Our socio-economic analysis demonstrates that some of the local areas served by Adra face long-standing challenges related to health, education and economic opportunity. The pandemic has tended to exacerbate existing inequality, highlighting Adra's role in mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on customers and wider communities.

Adra's critical role in a number of sectors most heavily impacted by successive waves of infection and lockdown has pushed it into the frontline of service delivery, a factor acknowledged and appreciated by customers and wider stakeholders.

Adra demonstrates good alignment with the Ways of Working as defined by the Future Generations Act; long-term, preventative, integrated, involved and collaborative. It is also well aligned with both a Doughnut Economics approach, and with the Sustainability Reporting Standard.

We have reported on quantitative and qualitative data. We urge the reader not to over-emphasise the monetary value we calculate, at the cost of the story being told by the outcomes that were not able to be associated with a monetary value.

Adra's presence in the community is characterised by thousands of acts of kindness and professionalism every day, and although it is more challenging to report on these outcomes than on monetary value, they are at least as important.

What people told us

The feedback, both from questionnaires and in-depth interviews, is extremely positive, with only a few areas highlighted as unsatisfactory by some respondents. We assess that Adra works effectively with stakeholders to provide good quality services which meet the needs of the customers and the communities they serve.

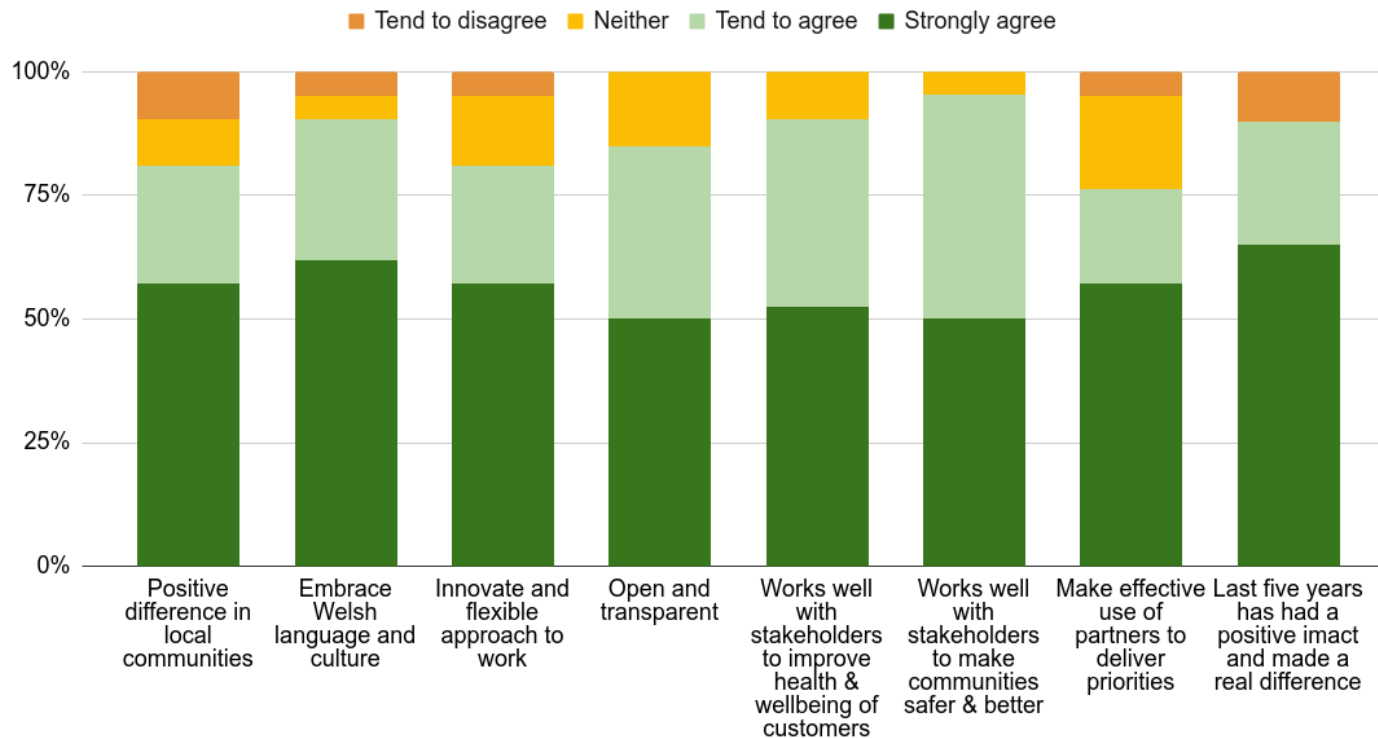
Customers, staff and stakeholders told us that Adra makes a real difference to the quality of people's lives and the communities that they serve. The evidence, collated, suggests that Adra is open, transparent and flexible in its approach. Adra encourages a learning culture which strives for excellence, continuous improvement and encourages innovation.

The feedback is well-illustrated by the graph below that shows the proportion of stakeholders agreeing with statements about how Adra works in partnership, and the difference Adra makes to local communities.

In every case, more than 75% of respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, with statements about Adra's positive performance; no respondent strongly disagreed with any of the statements.

Stakeholder, staff and customer feedback has highlighted priority areas for development in order to maintain service quality and meet customer outcomes and needs:

- Tackle loneliness & social isolation
- Improve mental health support and early intervention
- Increase debt management & employability support
- Support customers to develop digital skills, improve access to broadband and equipment.
- Upgrade older accommodation blocks, ensuring that they are fit for purpose
- Improve responsiveness of housing repairs
- Ensure that expansion/growth plans include effective workforce planning, to ensure adequate capacity/staffing/backroom infrastructure to deal with the increased demands.



In their own words

Adra customers

"They are a fair company with high standards"

"They are great, very helpful"

"They all seem to work well as a team and things are sorted out quite quickly when I raise something"

"A lot of little niggles about the house build up after time and they impact your health and well-being, it is making me really stressed"

"What they have done for me is incredible, they have adapted it to a high standard so that I can come home, it has been completely wheelchair adapted, even the garden, they have gone over and above, and I can't thank them enough."

Adra staff



"I genuinely love working for Adra, I feel part of a team and am appreciated by managers and co-workers"

"I feel that Adra are expanding quickly and that we need to take a step back and make sure that the quality of some support services does not suffer as a result, we are already stretched".

"Quality has improved and specialisms within our field have developed"

"Excellent employer, who is determined to get better and achieve loads more in future as the company progresses"

Adra stakeholders



"Brilliant company all round!"

"Congratulations on your success – it is unbelievable how fast the company has developed and grown over the years"

"Very glad to see the views of stakeholders being sought, looking forwards to seeing Adra go from strength to strength"

Adra's Development Team are very proactive and an easy partner to work with"

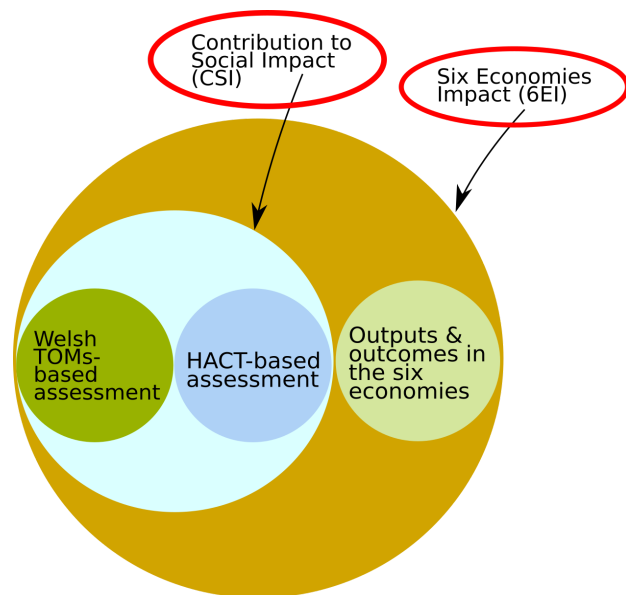
Two frameworks for evaluating social impact

£286m

The total value of Adra's outputs and outcomes according to the Six Economies model.

£52m

Contribution to social impact arising from outcomes of Adra's activity from 2015-2021 using methodologies based on HACT and TOMs



Our assessment uses two different approaches, both aimed at deriving insight into aspects of Adra's activity.

Our overall approach was to take a holistic view of all Adra's activities, using our innovative Six Economies model, to encompass as much social value as possible. This is an economic valuation that incorporates a wide range of outcomes from Adra's activity, including social, health and well-being indicators, as well as the amount spent in different sectors of the economy. The total value from this model was calculated as £286m.

We also calculated a 'Contribution to Social Impact (CSI)' from the outcomes of the work that Adra carries out for its customers and stakeholders. This incorporated two methodologies on the perceptions of value people obtain from different interventions namely HACT¹ and Welsh TOMs². Both of these methodologies demonstrated significant value arising from Adra's activities across a wide range of sectors, such as resolving Anti-Social Behaviour, providing housing that tenants are able to afford, supporting customers experiencing financial difficulties, and outcomes arising from the timely maintenance of properties. The total value from this approach was calculated as £52m.

Whilst this report has used well-established methodologies to identify a contribution to local economies, Adra clearly delivers a wider range of services that positively impact on its tenants and wider stakeholders in ways that are not quantifiable using these methodologies. We have sought to balance traditional methodologies of reporting against wider CSI using established and holistic methodologies.

Our approach is a hybrid that appropriately balances the desire to understand in as much detail as possible the wider contribution made by Adra in its communities, with the structured approach of the HACT and Welsh TOMs calculators.

¹ Developed by the [Housing Association Charitable Trust](#) and used under license

² Developed by the [National Social Value Taskforce](#) with the support of WLGA, and used under license

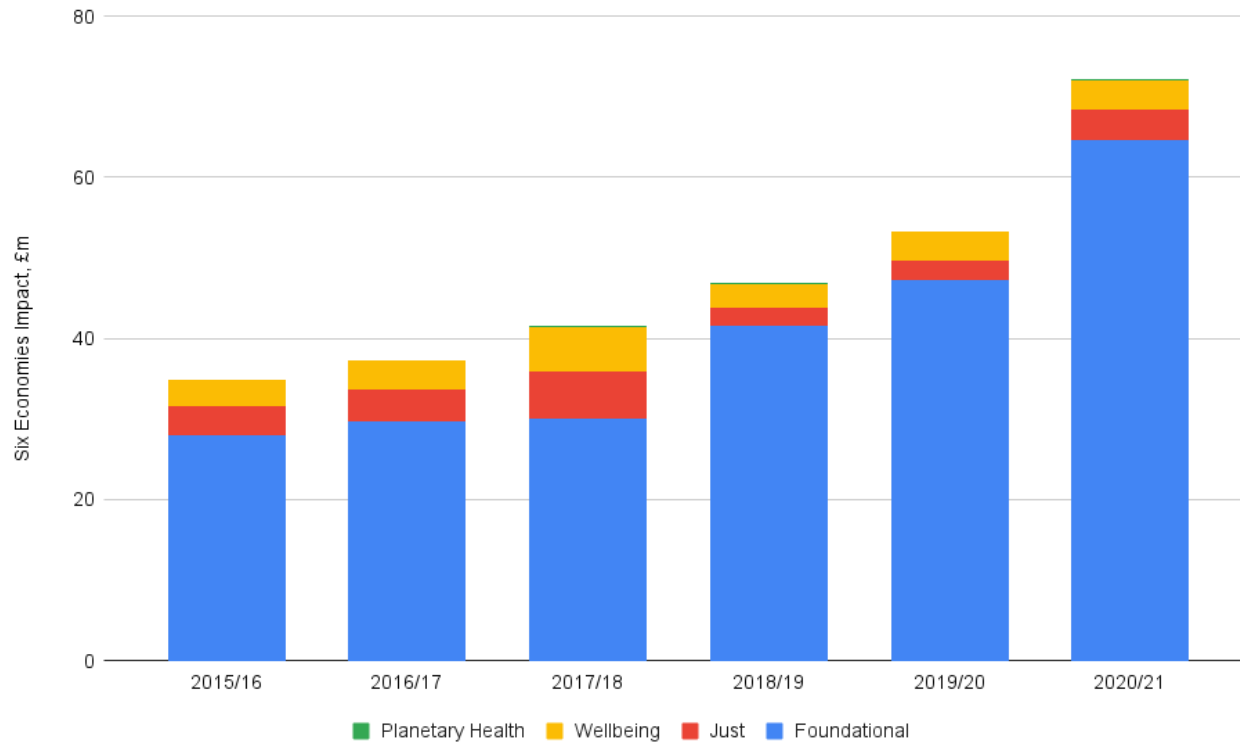
The Six Economies model

All economic reporting methodologies face different but significant constraints in capturing data as a result of their methodological approach. The Six Economies approach enables us to capture elements that are generally absent from other methodologies, such as the social value from Adra's reducing CO₂ impact or of managing land assets with an ecological perspective. The economies are:

- Cultural economy
- Just economy
- Well-being economy
- Foundational economy
- Planetary health economy
- Planetary health economy
- Circular economy

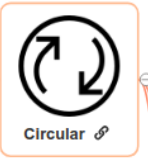
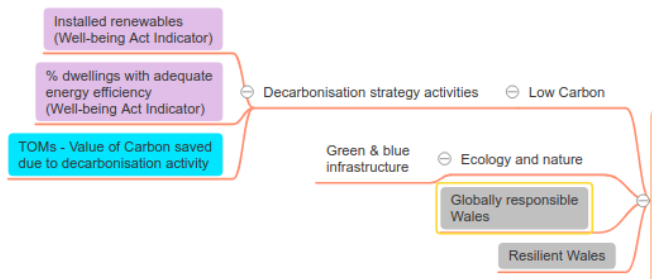
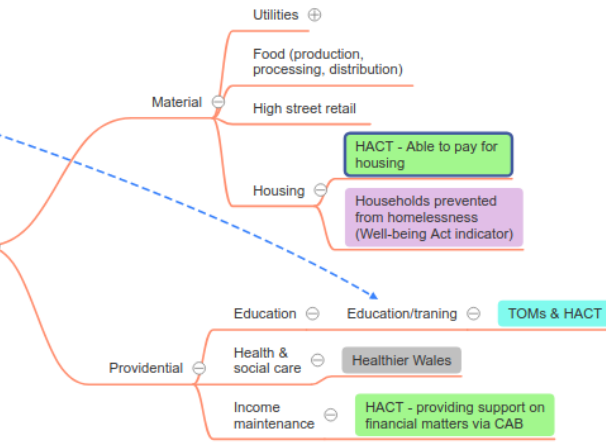
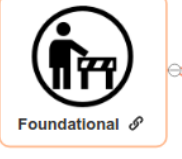
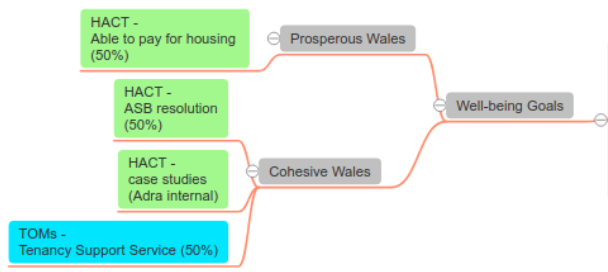
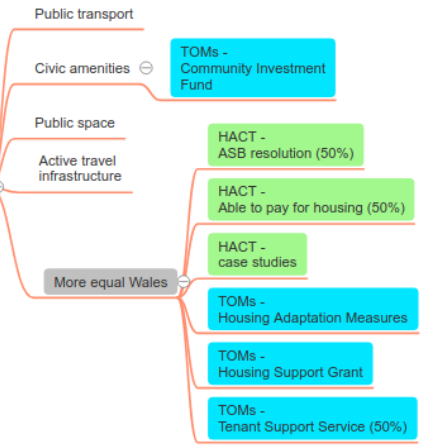
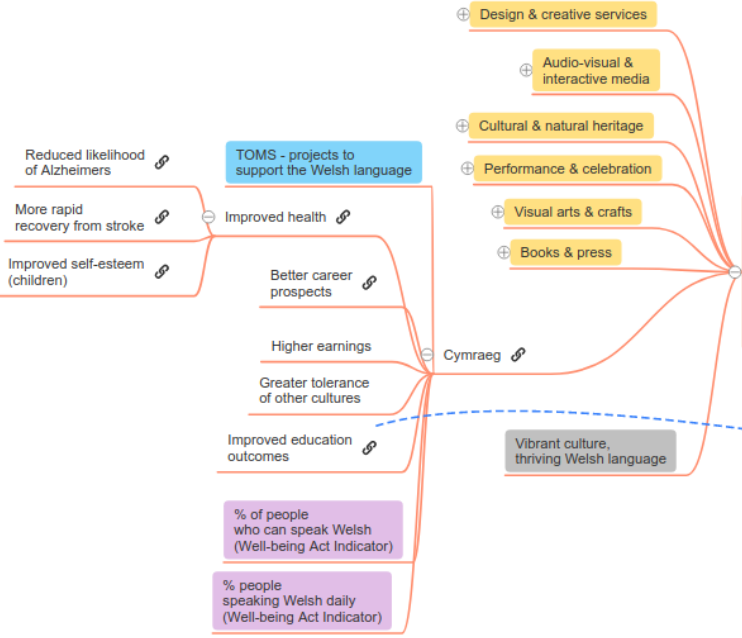
We have described the relationships between the different components of each of the economies in a mind map (overleaf). Adra's activity in providing secure and affordable accommodation places most of its impact in the Foundational economy, which encompasses housing, as well as some aspects of health, social care and the maintenance of income.

However Adra also generated significant value in the Just and Well-being economies which are strongly linked to two of Wales' Well-being Goals. Adra's strong contribution to the Just Economy aligns it with 'A More Equal Wales'; and its contribution to the Well-being Economy supports delivery of 'A Healthier Wales'.



A valuation of Adra's activity according to the six economies model. We were not able to calculate a value for Adra's activities in the cultural and circular economies.

Six economies



Link to Foundational Economy

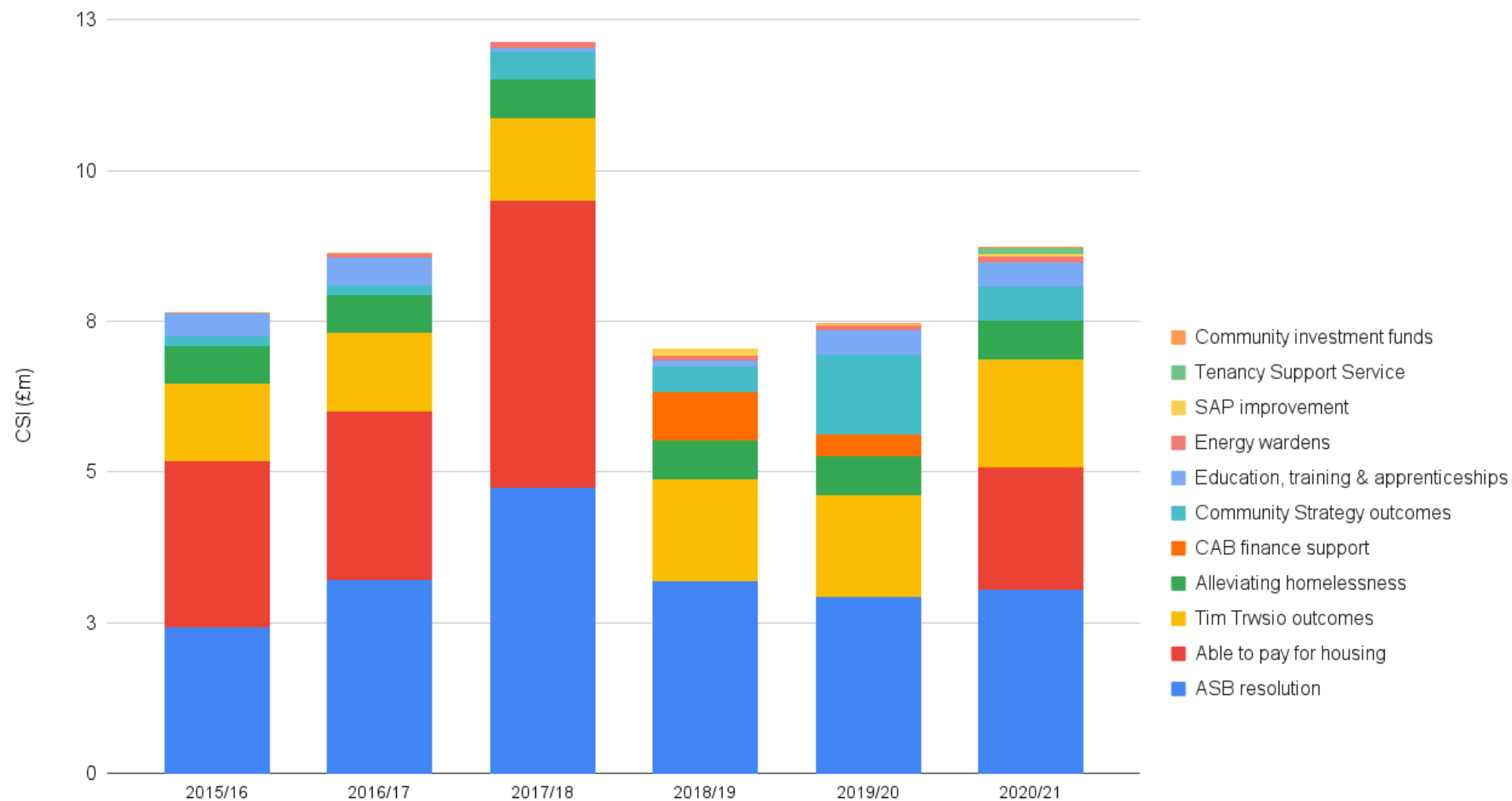
Contribution to Social Impact (CSI)

In order to produce values consistent with standard methodologies in the social housing sector, we adapted two existing methodologies, HACT and Welsh TOMs.

HACT's methodology is derived from HM Treasury guidelines on evaluating policy, and uses a wellbeing value assigned to a particular outcome. For example, resolution of anti-social behaviour, or regular participation in a voluntary group activity, would both count as 'valuable' outcomes, and be assigned a monetary value, if they were direct outcomes of Adra's activity.

HACT's social value is focused on outcomes for tenants. Welsh TOMs allows us to consider a wider range of indicators based on wider organisational indicators. Welsh TOMs is a Wales-specific derivation of a UK social value approach that incorporates all the requirements of the Welsh Government's Community Benefits Toolkit. It uses the UK Government Unit Cost Database supplemented by Stats Wales data to provide a proxy social value from a given indicator.

Importantly, there is very little overlap between the two methodologies, allowing us to combine their values for a total social value of £51.4m from Adra's activities (see graph below).



Additional validation

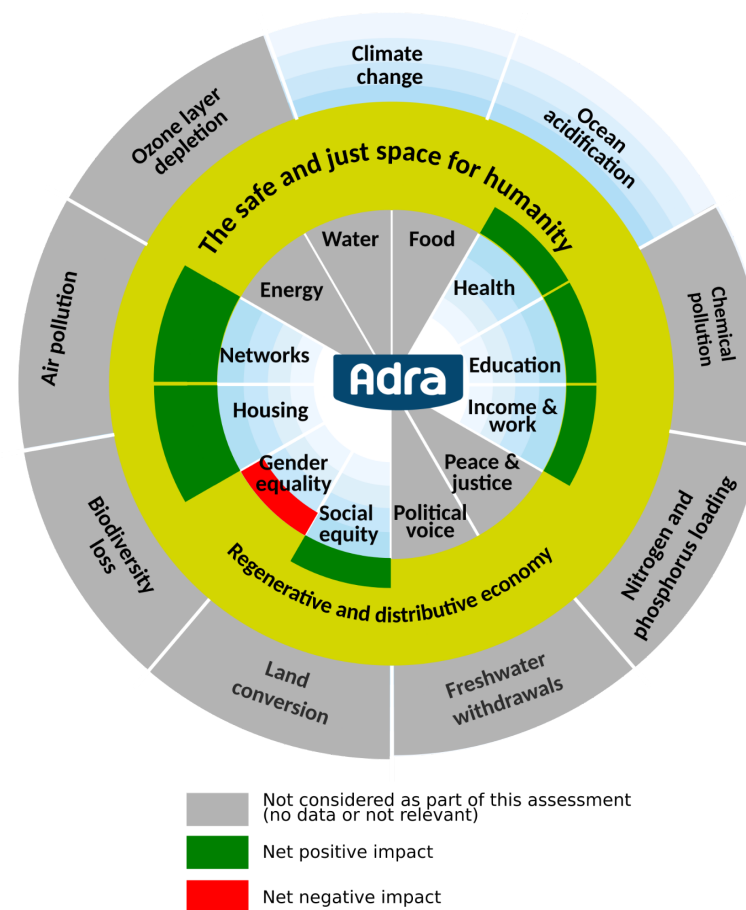
As part of our assessment of Adra’s performance, we assessed the organisation against two additional frameworks.

The first of these is based on the Doughnut model which delineates a set of indicators aimed at improving equity in society - the social foundation - and restoring a resilient and biodiverse environment - the environmental ceiling. The space between these ‘limits’ is the doughnut; the safe and just space for humanity within a regenerative and distributive economy.

We found that not only does Adra perform strongly against most of the eight indicators against which we were able to assess, but that it is strongly aligned with the five generative traits that make up the Doughnut economics framework.

Doughnut trait	Adra’s alignment
Purpose	Adra exists to provide good quality, affordable housing, and to support the communities in which it operates
Governance	The Society does not trade for profit, and nothing is paid or transferred by way of profit to shareholders of the Society. Any surplus is reinvested in the Society
Networks	Strongly embedded in a range of local, regional and national networks; and with public, private and third-sector organisations
Ownership	Adra is a Community Benefit Society and a Registered Social Landlord
Finance	Adra invests for long and purposeful social return

We also assessed Adra against an initiative launched in November 2020 and aimed at the housing sector; the Sustainability Reporting Standard. Adra was an early participant in the scheme. We find that Adra performs strongly against the 48 criteria, aligning with 36 of them.



Recommendations

Established methodologies suggest there are a range of actions Adra can take to simplify and speed up its reporting against both HACT and Welsh TOMs. In addition the Six Economies model has helped identify those areas where Adra is having a positive impact but where such impacts are more difficult to quantify.

Based on our research and analysis, we suggest the following overall recommendations to improve the speed and accuracy of reporting on social impact or value:

- Incorporate 'standard' HACT questions within an ongoing programme of tenant engagement to avoid the use of proxy data and align more tightly with established HACT methodology
- Investigate the potential for new forms of tenant engagement, such as mobile apps, to incorporate questionnaires as part of a holistic approach to data collection
- In a resource-constrained environment, prioritise the collection of data for those aspects of the HACT methodology that will deliver the biggest contribution to local economies, such as resolution of anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues, alleviation of homelessness, affordability of housing or involvement of tenants in training, volunteering or other social engagement

- Use the Welsh TOMs methodology in the procurement process to require suppliers to report on contribution to social impact on behalf of Adra
- Align internal programmes and projects more closely with established methodologies to streamline collection of data on project outcomes
- Create the responsibility for an annual social impact report internally and provide resources to organise and streamline data collection. This will obviate the need to procure external specialists to provide the functionality, and embed expertise in social value within the organisation

We have also made recommendations relating to facilitating data collection in the relevant sections of the main report.



Looking forward

Adra is a socially progressive organisation that makes a significant contribution to its local and regional economies. Our engagement with a range of stakeholders, staff and customers provides evidence that supports our analytical conclusions; Adra is a key organisation, involved in a plethora of activities that support both community activity and socio-economic wellbeing in the areas in which it operates.

Adra has played a significant contribution in safeguarding health, supporting well-being and contributing to local economies over the period assessed by this study.

Adra's impact is exemplified by the myriad of changes made as a response to the pandemic. These changes have been necessary in front-line delivery, and they have also highlighted Adra's role as an important regional partner, able to leverage trust and networks developed over a long period.

Feedback from staff, stakeholders and customers is very positive, and provides a narrative of Adra as an organisation that is becoming increasingly important and influential locally, whilst maintaining an agility that has allowed it to respond rapidly to recent socio-economic challenges.

Although we may still be in the early stages of understanding the true nature of systemic changes to society as a result of the pandemic, it seems more likely than not that there will be no going back to 'business as usual'. Adra's ability to recognise need

and to adapt demonstrates an organisational resilience that suggests it will be well-placed to continue to support its customers.

Reporting on social impact is a useful exercise, not just in its own right, but because it can help inform discussions about what new services are needed, and what is no longer viable or necessary.

For example, even though responding to the pandemic is an immediate and entirely valid priority, the crises of climate change and nature are still with us, and growing increasingly urgent.

Adra has already embarked on an ambitious decarbonisation programme; is there scope as Wales attempts to 'build back better' to mandate that new developments are created with nature as a key component? Can Adra's existing land portfolio be managed for the benefit of nature, perhaps in partnership with others?

Climate change will require a 'Future Generations' mindset, creating multiple wins from individual interventions. Green infrastructure that reduces ambient heat levels, reduces rain run-off and improves mental and physical health is a perfect example of a holistic approach to solving a particular problem. Going beyond the physical envelope of the buildings to incorporate a nature-based approach (such as the 'building with nature' standard³) could be a useful strategy. A local environment improved with nature will simultaneously improve the physical

and mental well-being of Adra's customers, as well as producing myriad benefits for local ecology. Such holistic solutions may be possible in many areas of Adra's service delivery sectors.

The increasing urgency of our climate challenge will doubtless create grave difficulties in some areas of society's response, but there are also opportunities to improve outcomes overall, going beyond the climate emergency adaptation and mitigation. Adra's opportunities to improve future outcomes depend upon understanding the likely physical (climate-related) and policy direction of Welsh and UK Government. The fact that Adra has a decarbonisation strategy and is mandating high levels of thermal performance for future housing are good indicators.

Adra's engagement with the issue of social impact is laudable. We believe that Adra has the skills, experience and organisational capability to perform assessments on social impact. Undertaking this process internally could provide Adra with additional insights into aspects of social value which will influence a strategic approach and deliver additional positive outcomes across all areas of activity.

³ See buildingwithnature.org.uk for further information



Every year Afallen donates 10% of its profits to good causes

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