CASE STUDY

SOCIAL VALUE CALCULATOR *AT* CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Joining the DataHub has revolutionised Carmarthenshire County Council's internal processes and using the Social Value Calculator has allowed them to prove the impact generated on the local community

THE NEED

With budgets being constantly tightened, Carmarthenshire County Council needed a way to prove the value it was generating far exceeded the funding it was being given by the local council to run its services.

THE SOLUTION

Using the Social Value Calculator, Carmarthenshire County Council managed to evidence and continuously monitor the social value generated in improved health, subjective wellbeing, increased educational attainment and reduced crime.

Carmarthenshire County Council's seven leisure sites began working with the DataHub almost two years ago, having implemented the Social Value Calculator (SVC) module, BizInsight, Geo Impacts and the ukactive Benchmarking Service in August 2016. All data from the sites began live uploading to the DataHub, via Gladstone's Leisure Management System, later that year.

Carl Daniels, Senior Sport and Leisure Manager, says: "What initially drew us to the DataHub was the opportunity to accurately benchmark at the click of a button for the first time, using measures agreed by the sector; to see how we're performing in comparison to similar centres across the country.

I can honestly say working with the DataHub has already revolutionised our internal processes in a way no other software system I've encountered has."

The first stage was to have a DataHug – a process where operators' data is matched and standardised to allow like-for-like comparison. "For us this was a hugely valuable process," says Daniels. "It flagged up that data wasn't always being inputted in the best way and therefore our reporting wasn't accurate. We had to make lots of changes, start capturing the right data in the right way and clean up our act. For example, in one centre, a kettle bells class was called 'Tuesday Kettle Bells Sam', to make it easier for reception. But when reports came

THE BENEFIT

The DataHub journey has helped Carmarthenshire City Council to make data-driven strategic plans and increase the return on their investments.

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Sheffield Hallam University

experian™

global

DataHub

Building 3, Chiswick Park 566
Chiswick High Road London
W4 5YA, UK
+ 44 (0) 208 123 4693

datahubclub.com

through we couldn't ascertain how successful kettle bells classes were overall because every class had a distinct name. Those little changes made all the difference to the quality of our data and so our reporting."

The Carmarthenshire teams received a mix of bespoke training, via webinars, over the phone using screen sharing, via self-learning and in person with DataHub staff. The first module to be fully integrated was the Social Value Calculator (SVC).

"Sport and leisure provider budgets are being squeezed tighter and tighter," says Daniels. "Using the SVC we have established that seven of our facilities generate approximately £5m in social value every year – much more than we're being given to run those services. That's so powerful. In funding bids I'm able to show our exact contribution to health, crime, education and wellbeing and prove to the Council that extra investment will have a direct impact on the wider community."

Village dementia friendly – using the SVC I'll be able to state exactly how much of the social value we return is linked to dementia. It's incredible how far we can drill down and what we can extract."

The Carmarthenshire Sport and Leisure team is in the early stages of using the Geo Impacts model and is building it into strategic plans for the coming year, to see how much of the market its centres already penetrate compared to national penetration. "If nationally 16% of the population are playing, say, netball and they're mostly 18 to 30-year old females, but we only get 3%, we'll know exactly who to market to," says Daniels. "We can all be blinded by an enthusiastically-pitched idea and invest, only to see it fail. Geo Impacts is giving us robust rationale, not just experiences and hunches, to back up business decisions. We can make decisions for the future now, and devise programming based on sound knowledge of what consumers want," says Daniels. "In Carmarthen,

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Carmarthenshire County Council are currently looking to build a £200m Wellness and Life Science Village in Llanelli, incorporating new leisure centre facilities for the town. Daniels has used the SVC to ascertain the social value generated by the existing Llanelli Leisure Centre and, as the project progresses, he'll be able to conduct a health impact study to predict what social impact the new centre could have.

He says: "We currently generate approximately £1.5m in social value in Llanelli for a budget (excluding central costs) of less than £200,000. We've never been able to evidence that at the touch of a button before. The Council also has plans to make the

for example, we have a geographical area that's highly deprived. We've used SVC as a starting point to analyse what our social value return looks like in that area. One would assume the demographic would return high social value, but it didn't. This triggered us to look within Geo Impacts at engagement levels. We discovered we were getting hardly any usage from over 60s, despite the fact we offer free swimming to over 60s! We're now putting a specific marketing campaign in place to raise awareness of what this demographic can access, for free.

"Everything we do is going to be based on robust intelligence moving forwards, and being more informed can only make us more effective, which can only benefit our customers."