

# Exploring Impact

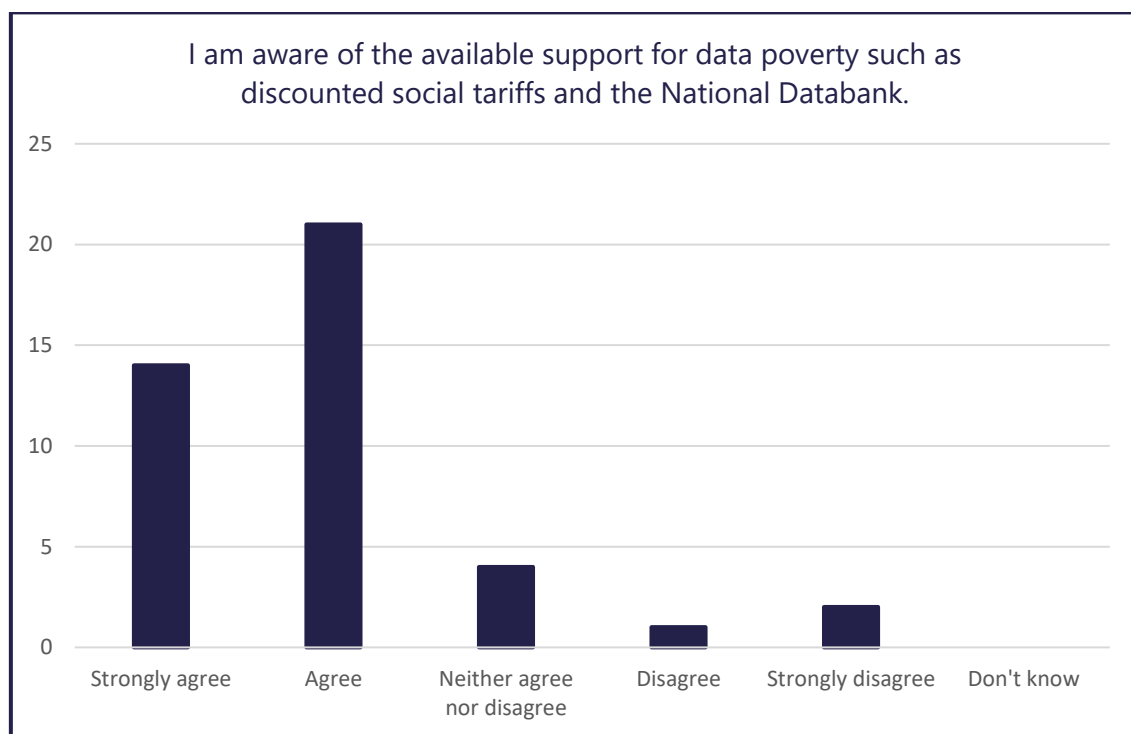
**Priority 3: Addressing data poverty as a key issue**

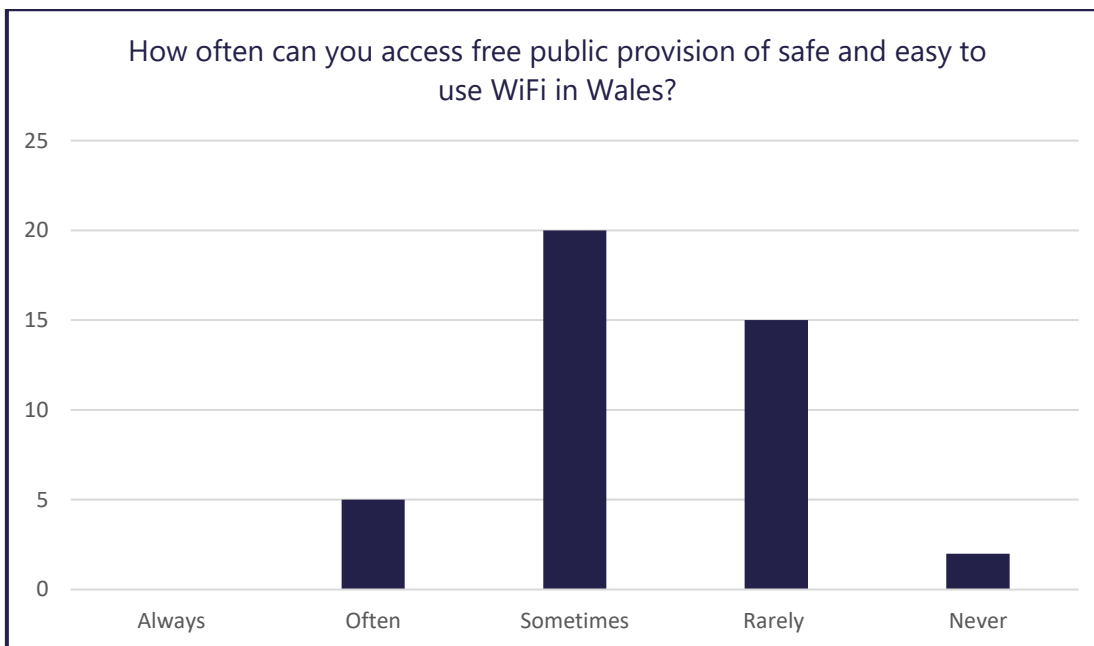
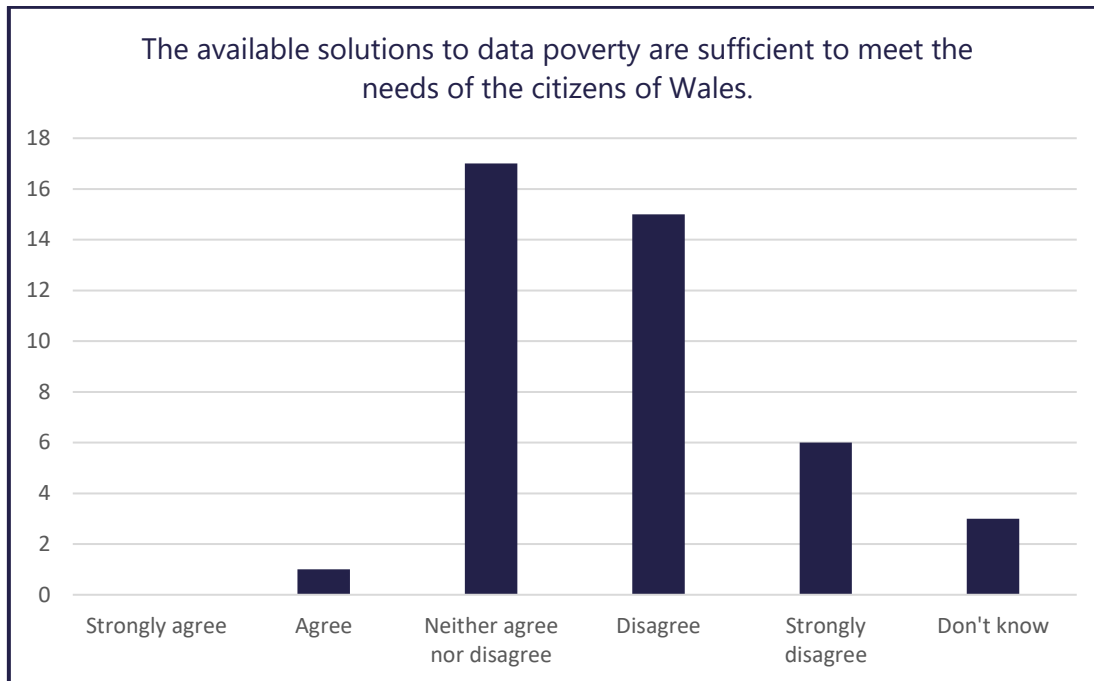
**December 2024**

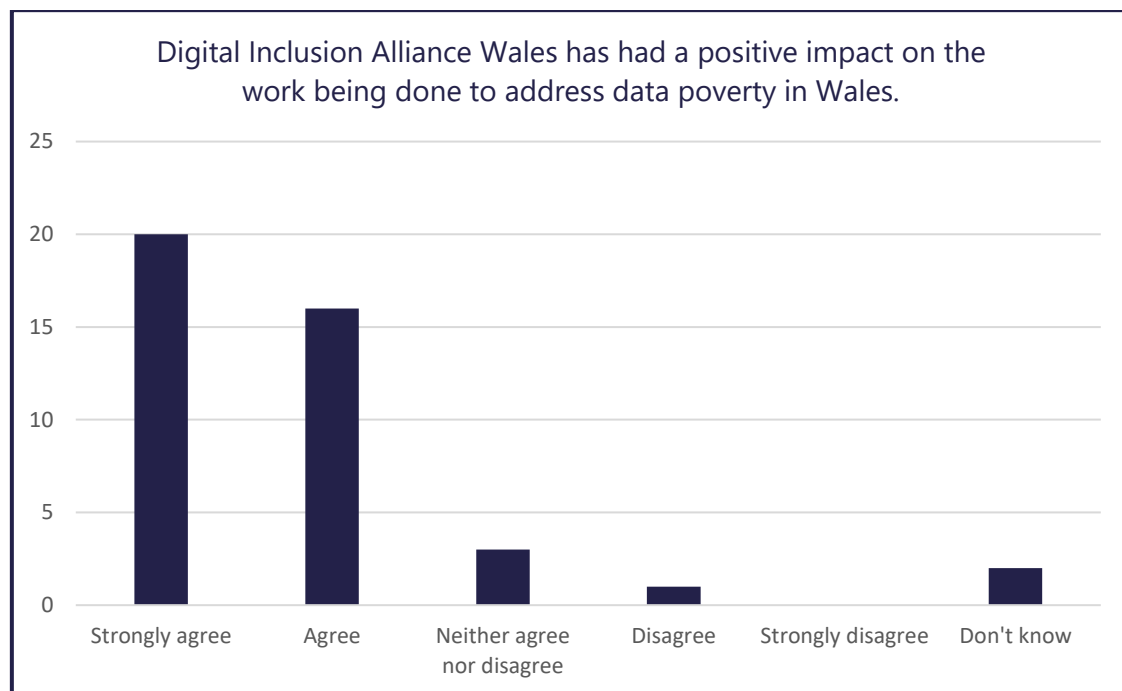
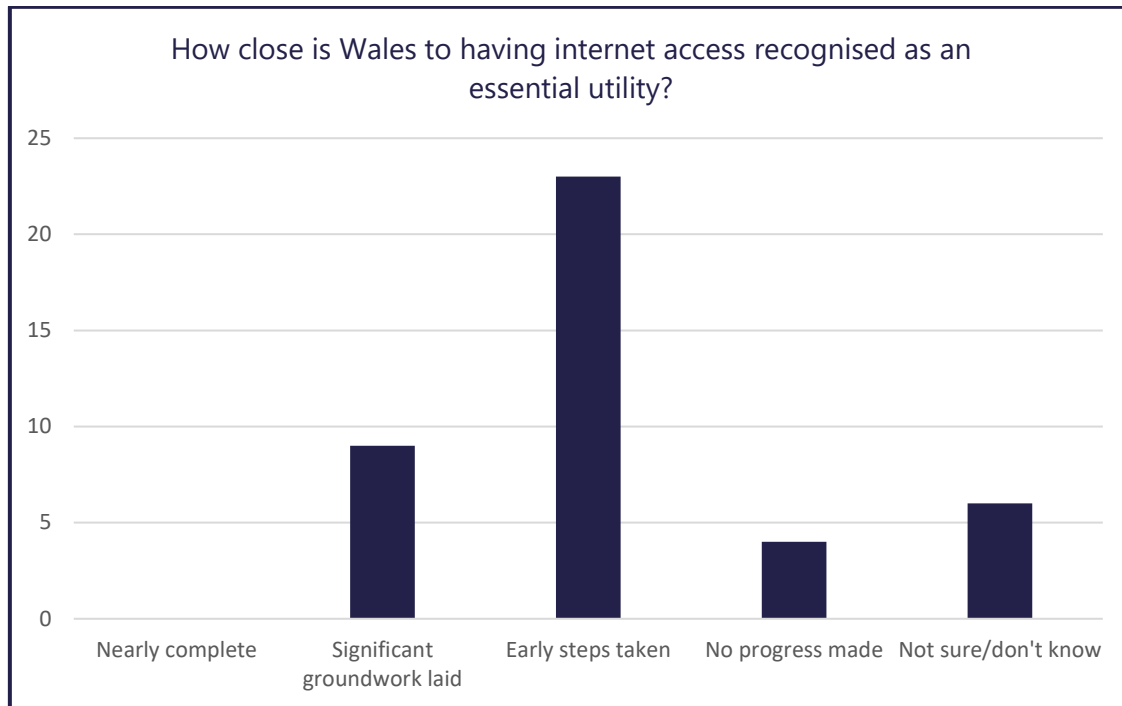


## Quantitative results from survey

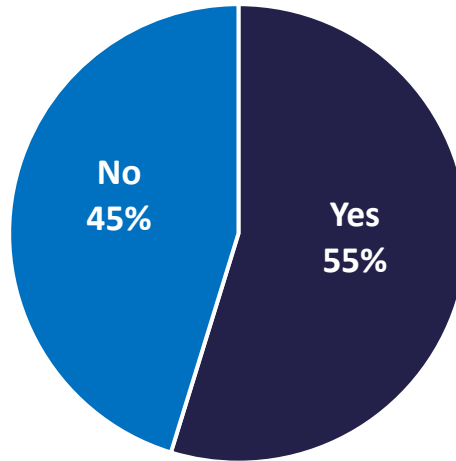
- There were 42 responses to the survey.
- 83% of respondents agree that they are aware of existing solutions to data poverty such as social tariffs and the National Databank.
- The existing solutions to data poverty are not sufficient to meet the needs of the citizens of Wales, with only 1 respondent agreeing to this statement. DIAW Network members think that more needs to be done.
- Access to free public Wi-Fi varies, with most people reporting that they can access it only sometimes (48%) or rarely (36%).
- Respondents are positive about the progress on work being done in Wales to make the internet an essential utility, with 76% saying early steps have been taken or significant groundwork has been laid.
- 86% agree that Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales has had a positive impact on the work being done to address data poverty in Wales.
- Only 55% of respondents are part of a group where they discuss data poverty.







Are you a member of any boards/partnerships/groups where you discuss solutions to data poverty?



## Content analysis of policy and strategy documents

- Documents were searched for the key terms: digital inclusion, digital exclusion, Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales, (digital) connectivity, (digital) accessibility, (digital) skills and (data/digital) poverty/affordability.
- The Wales Centre for Public Policy report was commissioned by the Welsh Government to conduct a review of international poverty and social exclusion strategies, programmes and interventions. This report aims to bring together the significant amount of evidence produced for the project to frame and inform Welsh Government discussions on 'what next' and to provide conclusions on how the Welsh Government should approach attempts to alleviate poverty and social exclusion in Wales based on the interconnections and common threads between different types of evidence. Although not a policy or strategy document, it was commissioned to inform policy and strategy and so is included here.
- The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation was last updated in 2019. In 2019 an indicator for digital access was added which is calculated as the proportion of homes and small businesses unable to receive fixed line broadband at a download sync speed of 30Mb/s or higher (superfast broadband). This includes properties with no broadband coverage. The source was Ofcom's Connected Nations Report for Spring 2019. However, this indicator is not necessarily an indication of poverty, as it could be a lack of infrastructure.
- As there are no overarching poverty strategies or action plans available, the documents used for the UK, Scotland and Wales are Levelling Up, A Fairer Scotland and Cymru Can which are all designed to set out a vision for how each country will improve equality, prevent or tackle persistent poverty, and make these countries better places for everyone to live.

	Digital Inclusion	Digital Exclusion	Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales	(Digital) Connectivity	(Digital) Accessibility	(Digital) Skills	(Data/Digital) Poverty or Affordability	Total
Child Poverty Strategy for Wales, Welsh Government (2024)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Poverty and social exclusion: A way forward, Wales Centre for Public Policy (2022)	0	6	0	1	3	2	1	14
Cymru Can: The strategy for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2023-2030	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3

Levelling Up the United Kingdom, UK Government (2022)	0	0	0	13	1	11	0	25
Fairer Scotland Action Plan, Scottish Government (2016)	0	0	0	1	8	2	3	14

# Case Studies

## David Jones, Digital Learning & Development Specialist Monmouthshire Building Society

### 1. Briefly tell me about your project/programme

Monmouthshire Building Society (MBS) has over 150 years of history and is addressing data poverty by helping its predominantly older demographic transition to the digital age. Recognising that many of their members lack instant access to technology, digital skills, and the internet, the organisation has implemented a slow-burn adjustment process to build confidence and competence in digital skills. They have established a network Digital Champions in their branches who provide digital checkups, covering safety, security, internet connectivity, and basic digital skills. The Champions work alongside Budget Buddies who do financial checkups. This grassroots approach ensures that members are not forced into digital adoption but are supported in understanding the benefits and necessity of digital tools.

### 2. How does the organisation work towards our outcomes?

*a) Internet access is recognised as an essential utility in Wales, with Ofcom continuing to strengthen its role as a regulator in its reporting and in its support for vulnerable customers, groups and communities.*

MBS supports the recognition of internet access as an essential utility. They emphasise the importance of continuous improvement in internet speeds and infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to prevent digital poverty.

*b) There is co-ordinated, collaborative promotion of available support such as discounted social tariffs for broadband and mobile data and the National Databank.*

The organisation promotes available support through their Digital Champions, who are equipped with information about social tariffs and other resources. They collaborate with third sector partners and housing associations to refer members to established programs that can help them get connected. This coordinated approach ensures that members are aware of and can access the support they need.

*c) There is free public provision of safe and easy to use WiFi, and community-based support for digital inclusion across all areas of Wales.*

While the organisation itself does not provide public WiFi, they support initiatives that aim to create free WiFi zones in local communities. They recognise the importance of safe and easy-to-use public WiFi.

*d) Cross-sector collaboration continues to research and design long term, sustainable solutions to data poverty with a specific focus on Wales.*

MBS engages in cross-sector collaboration by working with local partners and housing associations. They participate in initiatives like Tech for Good Wales and host meetings to support community-based digital inclusion efforts. This collaborative approach helps design and implement sustainable solutions to data poverty.



*e) There should be free and equal access to public services for all people in Wales. Work should be undertaken to allow the current zero-rating of some public sector websites to be extended to all digital public service websites and apps and they should be designed to minimise data usage as much as possible.*

The organisation supports the zero-rating of public service websites and apps to ensure that all residents can access essential services without incurring data costs. They support the extension of zero-rating to all digital public service websites and apps, recognising the importance of minimising data usage for vulnerable populations.

### **3. How did being a part of the DIAW help this particular project (examples if possible)?**

Being a member of the Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales (DIAW) has provided MBS with valuable connections and insights. The Alliance has helped them understand the specific needs and challenges faced by their members and has facilitated partnerships with local organisations. For example, their collaboration with housing associations and participation in Tech for Good Wales have been instrumental in supporting their digital inclusion efforts. The DIAW has also provided a platform for sharing best practices and learning from other members' experiences, which has been crucial in shaping their approach to tackling data poverty.

## **Sophia Koopman, Business Development Director Netomnia**

### **1. Briefly tell me about your project or programme.**

Netomnia, is the UK's fourth largest full fibre network operator and we're rolling out brand new fibre infrastructure in several Welsh towns and cities, including Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, Barry, Wrexham, Neath, Bridgend, Llanelli, Morriston and Hengoed. Netomnia's network, delivers speeds of up to 8,000Mbps, with symmetrical download and upload speeds. The reliability this infrastructure brings, empowers residents and businesses to innovate, collaborate, and stay ahead in a fast-developing digital world. Our investment in these locations reinforces our commitment to building robust, next-generation connectivity that will support the community's digital evolution for decades to come.

To specifically address data poverty, Netomnia's partner Internet Service Providers (ISPs), such as YouFibre, offer flexible packages such as pay-as-you-go contracts and social tariffs, including an economy tariff of £15 for 50Mbps upload and download speeds.

Our rollout programme in Wales emphasises accessibility by working with Welsh social landlords to bring fibre connections to blocks of flats, ensuring that residents have a choice of providers and affordable options.

### **2. How does Netomnia work towards our outcomes?**

*a) Internet access is recognised as an essential utility in Wales, with Ofcom continuing to strengthen its role as a regulator in its reporting and in its support for vulnerable customers, groups and communities.*

Netomnia supports the recognition of internet access as an essential utility alongside energy, water and gas. Internet access in a digital age is vital for many people's ability to access to health services, education, income and work.

Our network rollout is ensuring that millions of people across the UK will have access to a fast and reliable service, supporting the Government's Project Gigabit policy and the digital upgrade to phone services.

By 31st January 2027 service providers will need to migrate most analogue telephone lines to digital phone lines. Digital phone lines require power from a broadband connection to function. A power outage will disable these phones unless a Battery Backup Unit (BBU) in place. Vulnerable users or those who rely heavily on their landline will be able to obtain a BBU free of charge when contracting a new service or from an existing provider or other retailers.

*b) There is co-ordinated, collaborative promotion of available support such as discounted social tariffs for broadband and mobile data and the National Databank.*

Netomnia's partner ISPs promote social tariffs through direct communication with residents. We advocate collaboration with social landlords during wayleave negotiations to highlight the education piece of affordability options to residents in need. This coordinated approach helps to increase awareness and uptake of discounted tariffs.

*c) There is free public provision of safe and easy to use Wi-Fi, and community-based support for digital inclusion across all areas of Wales.*

It is important for residents to access the internet in a safe and supportive environment such a community lounge in a block of flats or public space (schools, GP libraries, community centres) which are part of the Project Gigabit GigaHubs programme.

*d) Cross-sector collaboration continues to research and design long term, sustainable solutions to data poverty with a specific focus on Wales.*

Netomnia engages in cross-sector collaboration by working with various stakeholders, including landlords, councils, and community organisations. There are many options available in Wales to provide free or subsidised internet access to residents or tenants as well as private public partnerships to provide devices and digital skills training.

*e) There should be free and equal access to public services for all people in Wales. Work should be undertaken to allow the current zero-rating of some public sector websites to be extended to all digital public service websites and apps and they should be designed to minimise data usage as much as possible.*

Netomnia supports the concept of zero-rating public service websites to ensure that all residents can access essential services without incurring data costs. We recognise the importance of minimising data usage for vulnerable populations.

### **3. How did being a part of the DIAW help this particular project (examples if possible)?**

Being a member of the Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales (DIAW) has provided Netomnia with valuable local presence and insights. The Alliance has helped us understand the specific needs and challenges faced by communities in Wales. Additionally, the collaboration with DIAW has facilitated connections with other stakeholders and supported the implementation of community-led digital inclusion initiatives.

# Thank you for reading.

Get in touch: [diaw@cwmpas.coop](mailto:diaw@cwmpas.coop)

Follow us: [@DIAWales](https://twitter.com/DIAWales)

