

Sustainable Development Charter

Annual Report 2015/16



Y SIARTER SUSTAINABLE
DATBLYGU DEVELOPMENT
CYNALIADWY CHARTER

About

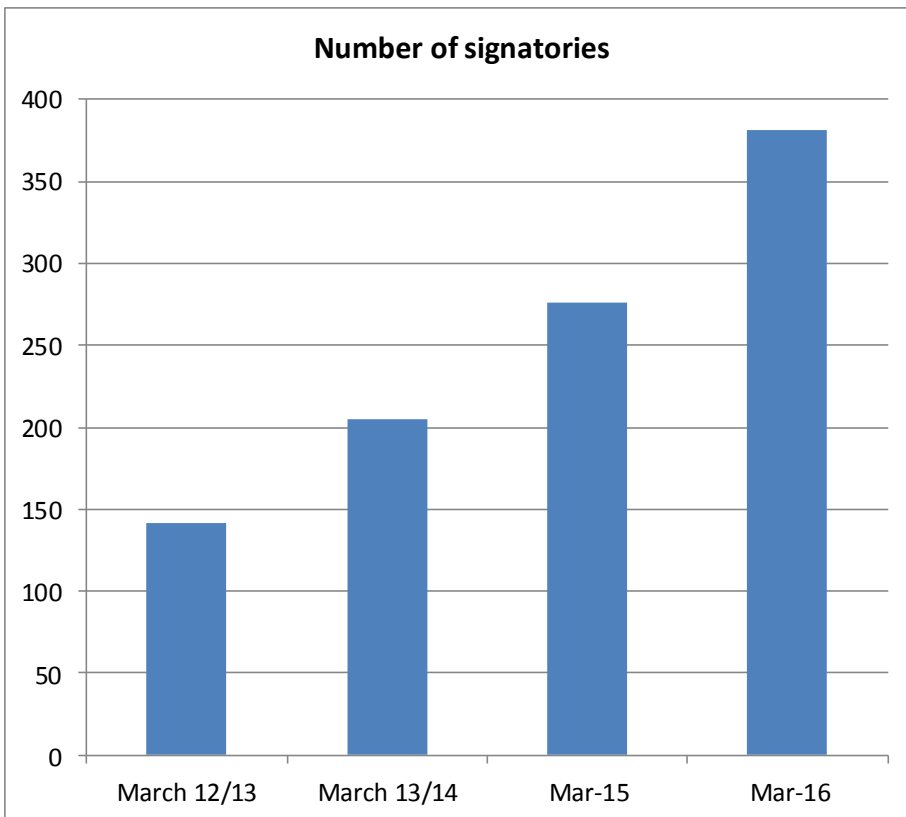
The Sustainable Development Charter has encouraged and enabled organisations across all sectors in Wales to make decisions that produce the best long-term outcomes for themselves and for the future of Wales.

The Sustainable Development Charter is Wales' highest profile commitment to sustainable development. Signing up to the Charter is voluntary and demonstrates that an organization commits to making sustainable development their central organising principle and to embedding sustainable development in its decision-making and ways of working.

Three hundred and ninety organisations have signed the Charter.

Signatories come in all shapes and sizes and hail from a variety of sectors. They include major multinationals, key public sector organisations and high profile voluntary groups.

This report is prepared by Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales. It is republished following minor amendments.



Growth

Over the last three years the Charter has seen a steady growth of signatories.

It is important to note how growth in the number of signatories has increased in the arts sector. In 2013/14 there were only five signatories from the arts and cultural sector - Hay Festival, National Museums and Galleries, Sherman Cymru, Wales Millennium Centre and Chapter Arts Centre. As of February 2016, there are 37 signatories from the arts sector.

Continued...



Mae'r Siarter Datblygu Cynaliadwy yn fenter gan Lywodraeth Cymru a weinyddir gan Cynnal Cymru - Sustain Wales.

The Sustainable Development Charter is a Welsh Government initiative administered by Cynnal Cymru - Sustain Wales.

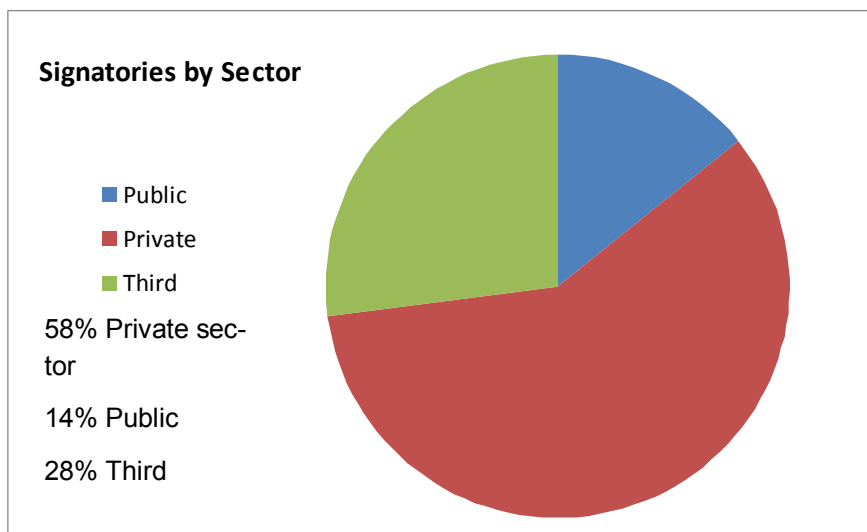


Growth cont...

The growth in arts sector signatories in 2015/16 is, we think, entirely due to the Arts Council's explicit request that arts organisations in receipt of public money sign the Charter. We have held two events this year with the Arts Council specifically for arts organisations and we have brokered the involvement of specialist support organisation Julie's Bicycle. Six out of 37 arts organisations have submitted evidence but almost all arts signatories have attended at least one of our two events.

Breakdown of signatories by sector (last year's figures in brackets)

There are 223 (87) Private sector signatories, 54 (39) Public sector signatories and 108 (65) Third sector signatories.



Its important to point out that recruitment has not been for number's sake but has rather been targeted at iconic organisations who have the potential to influence others. At all events and public engagement, we have promoted the merits of the Charter and there has been a steady trickle of recruitment based on a visible profile and a growing reputation.

Engagement Activity in 2015/16

The engagement and support we have offered has focussed on 'shared learning' - events in which a signatory acts as the host and peer to peer knowledge transfer is facilitated. We have held 12 Charter events this year across Wales and these have included:

- Two events for arts organisations (North & South) in collaboration with the Arts Council
- "Telling Your SD Story" - looking at the different ways language is used to describe and access concepts of sustainability (held with the Institute of Design, Swansea University)
- Implications of the WFG Act for Facilities Managers, Procurement Managers, Corporate Planners
- Breakfast event for new signatories to introduce the Charter and its support/requirements
- Climate change event in partnership with the Climate Change Commission for Wales

About half the attendees came from the private sector, a third from the third sector and about 20% from the public sector.

Over 255 people have attended these events - not all were from Charter signatories - many were from public bodies seeking greater clarity on legislative developments and this need was further supported by the involvement of signatories in 10 regional consultation events that addressed guidance on the WFG Act and the National Indicators.

In addition we have co-hosted two events for RSLs at which we promoted the Charter as something RSLs should sign because we knew that their core work delivers sustainable development outcomes relevant to the Well-being Goals.

The Annual Charter Conference

As in 2015, our commitment to hold an annual Charter conference was combined with a need to provide a focus for the Wales We Want initiative and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

On the 16th March 2016 nearly 300 people came to the Mecure Holland Hotel in Cardiff to witness a review of the last four years of Charter activity and its links to the Wales We Want and development/implementation of the WFG Act.

We used the example of Melin Homes - an active Charter signatory - to illustrate the collaborative, cross-sector and peer to peer learning strengths of The Charter. Their representative reported that involvement with the Charter had helped them develop new collaborations and give a context to the work they were doing with Cynnal Cymru and through the Arbed contract.

A workshop gave organisations an opportunity to give their opinions on what status the Charter should have in future and how it should operate. Cynnal presented data from this report and colleagues from the Welsh Government facilitated discussion.



Interesting questions from the floor for @Pdpartnership and the @WG_NatResMin #FutureCymru

Now to hear from @sophiehowe the New Future Generations Commissioner on the plans from April 1st when #WFGAct comes into effect #FutureCymru

Workshop time - feedback and ideas for the next steps for @SD_Charter @theCCCW, engagement and public bodies #FutureCymru



Now @CynnalCymru with the journey so far with @SD_Charter @theCCCW @TheWalesWeWant and #WFGAct – things learnt and achieved #futurecymru

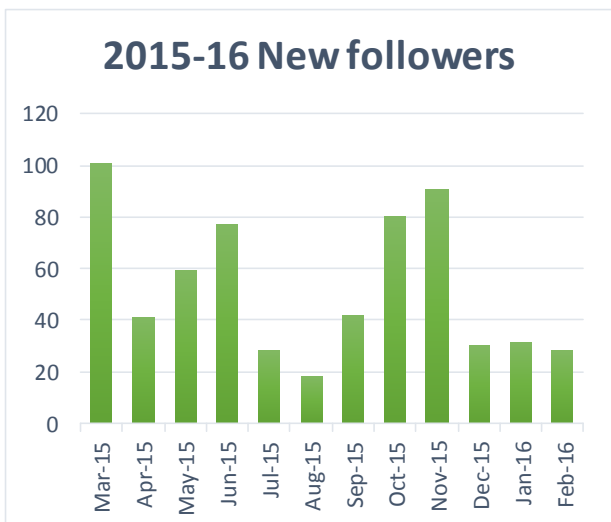
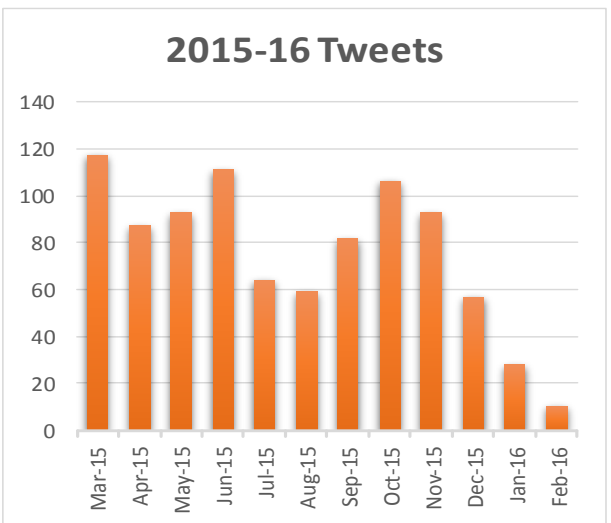
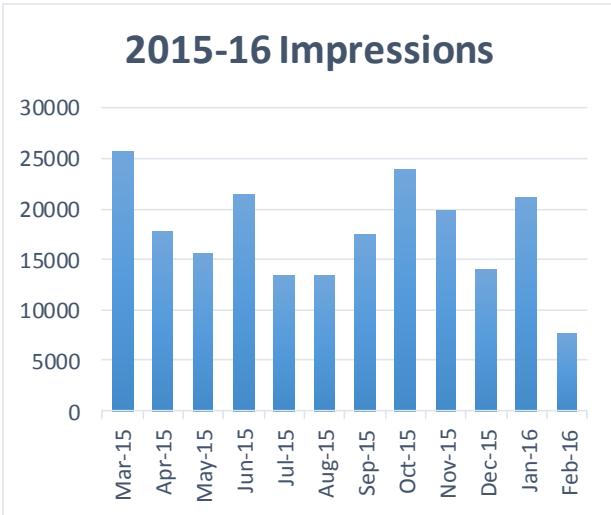


Engagement Activity

Twitter Activity

Overall Tweets 3,371 Likes 3,503
 Following 2,020 Followers 1,217

Activity by month



LinkedIn

There are **343** members in our LinkedIn Group there is good information exchange. The main use of this group by signatories is to share blog posts, share events and to highlight their own work on SD.

Engagement



St David's Shopping Centre signing & Green Roof Project

"Since joining the SD charter we have now formalised our Sustainability Reporting in the form of a Sustainability Challenge booklet which is distributed to all staff and stakeholders and communicates our achievements of the previous year and our targets for the coming year"

Steven Saunders, Alun Griffiths Contractors

Since signing up to the SD Charter we have linked in with Cynnal Cymru who have provided this much needed direction by conducting workshops and challenging us to record all of our current initiatives. We aim to increase our effectiveness in the upcoming years ahead.

Dan Cherry, Swalec Stadium

SD Charter Climate Change event at Tata Steel, Newport



Reporting by Signatories

The annual challenge for signatories is the key requirement to provide evidence of how their commitment to SD translates into practice. All new signatories are asked to provide existing policies or plans. Existing signatories were asked this year to provide additional specific evidence on what they are doing to deliver action relevant to the National Well-being Goals.

99 responses were received which is an improvement on last year but still low overall with about a third of these being simple statements containing vague commitments such as “we will aim to reduce the amount of waste we generate.” Twenty one case studies provided some useful insights into how the principles of sustainability were being applied to deliver aspects of the national Well-being Goals. Some of these were offered voluntarily and some were produced as a result of our own investigations. We also used the submissions by Charter signatories to the Cynnal Cymru awards as evidence.

Last year we noted that most of the submissions we received were environmental policies or simple statements of intent regarding environmental impacts. We deduced that Charter signatories were largely unaware of the definition of Sustainable Development as an integrated, whole system approach despite a suitable definition being provided on sign up.

In response to this we organised a meeting of best practice exemplar signatories to consider the challenge of integrated reporting (IR) and thinking. The deliberations of this group has produced a simple guide for signatories.

Frequency of Types of Submission, 2016

Case Study	24
Brief statement/update	21
Env. Policy	19
SD report	10
SD policy/strategy	9
Corporate Annual Report	7
Business Plan	4
CSR statement	3
Infographic	2
SD statement	2
Single Integrated Plan	2
CSR report	1
LDP	1
green audit	1
Improvement plan	1
NRG & proc policy	1
Visitor leaflet	1

The weakness of relying only on voluntary submissions is illustrated by the fact that **88 signatories have never engaged at any level with The Charter.**

The numbers of exemplar submissions remains similar to last year at ten. Interestingly, almost all of these are new **which means we are adding to the exemplar list with two signatories showing a marked improvement on the quality, relevance and depth of their reporting.**

The overall message from analysis of this year’s submissions is that we are involved in a major task of behavioural and cultural change and it would be naive to assume that the Charter, more than any other mechanism can bring about rapid change. Nevertheless, while it is clear that some organisations have signed the Charter as a gesture, others are truly getting to grips with the challenge of sustainability and change is happening. An ongoing challenge for the Welsh

Government is that the Charter is only as good as the people who sign it and unless the people/person responsible for it is enthusiastic, well-informed, suitably senior - or even still employed by the organisation - then engagement will be minimal or absent and consequently there will be no learning or improvement.

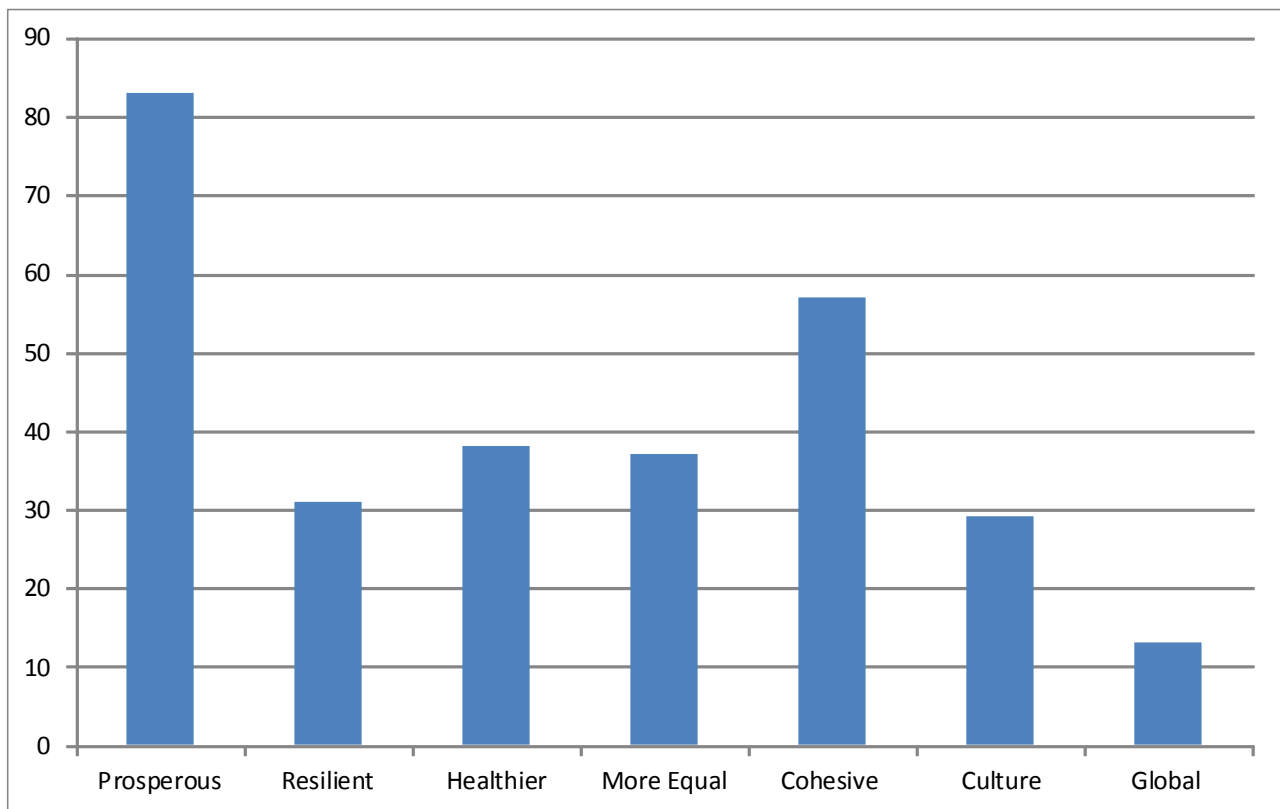
Scoring / Analysis Method

The well-being goals were broken down into component themes, and submissions were analysed to see if they provided evidence of either a commitment to deliver on these components or practical outcomes achieved in the past 12 months.

The graph on the following page shows the frequency with which these components were referenced.

Some components are clearly specialist and likely to score low such as “produce artistic output” or “enables Welsh sports to compete”. The graph below shows the frequency with which submissions correlated with the over-arching goals.

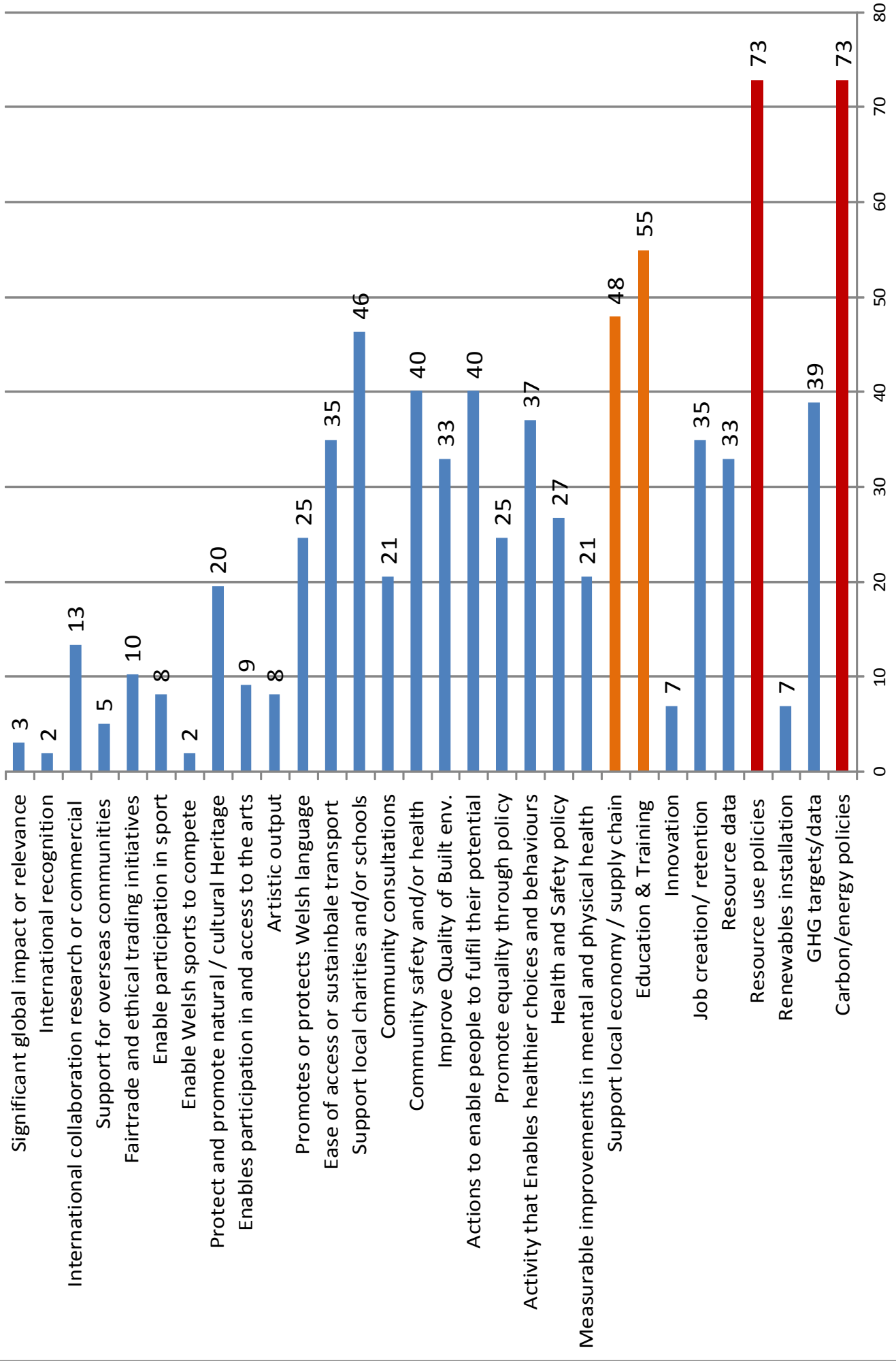
Frequency of evidence submitted that corresponds to themes within the well-



We can see from the graph above (and on following page) that signatories still have a tendency to report environmental management issues as “sustainable” (energy and resource efficiency) and are inclined to report on economic indicators such as jobs created/retained, training provided or support for the supply chain and local economy. Additionally, they report on community engagement activities and community benefits delivered. There is a tendency to overlook staff well-being - equalities and health and safety - as a core aspect of sustainability. Biodiversity rarely gets a look in and very few organisations are aware of the global context of their actions.

In the graph on the following page, the themes picked out by red indicate the continuing tendency to interpret “sustainability” as an environmental issue. Support for the supply chain and education and training score well because these are often cited with respect to environmental management systems and because there are a number of educational establishments submitting evidence. If the Charter is to be offered as a means by which non-public bodies can contribute to the National Well-being goals then a certain amount of re-education and clarification is required on what is meant by “sustainable development.”

Frequency of evidence of specific goal themes in the documents submitted - numbers indicate % of total



Exemplars and Good Practice - A Cross-Sector Network

As mentioned previously, all but one of this year's exemplars are new to the exemplar list. As with last year, an organisation is named as an exemplar either for a strategy or a report. In either case, they earn their status by demonstrating a coherent understanding of the integrated, whole-system nature of sustainability. This year, in response to the challenge we issued, the exemplars are;

<u>SIGNATORY NAME</u>	<u>NATURE OF THE SUBMISSION</u>
Alun Griffiths	Sustainability policy and report
Bridgend College	Annual Sustainable Development (SD) report
British Polythene Industries	Annual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) report
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Single Integrated Plan for county borough
Chapter Arts Centre	Annual Charter Update
City and County of Swansea Council	Sustainable Development report, Case studies
Costain	CSR policy, Sustainable Procurement Policy, Env Policy, Wales Info-graphic 2015
Keep Wales Tidy	SD policy and report
M&S	Annual SD report
Redrow	Annual SD report

The **Vale of Glamorgan County Council** were late in submitting because their internal corporate planning process extended beyond the reporting window. Their late submission however was a draft corporate plan in which the corporate objectives are mapped to the national Well-being Goals and there is a commitment to use the Local Development Plan to underpin a wider commitment to sustainable development. Once the corporate plan has been adopted (and is no longer draft) it can be named as an example of good practice.

Cwmbran Community Council submitted a report which cross references their activities in the past year to the Well-being Goals. While lacking detail and quantitative data, it sets a good precedent for this council and others (community councils and third sector bodies) to follow.

The identity of this year's exemplars underlines the fact that the Charter is a cross-sector network and not just a business network.

Of those who submitted evidence, 50% were private sector, 26% public and 24% third. Compared to the proportions of signatories, these figures indicate that public sector signatories are disproportionately contributing more to the Charter as a means for gathering evidence.

One hundred and one Charter signatories attended our dedicated Charter events this year. Of these, 25 were from the public sector, 36 from the private and 40 from the voluntary or not-for profit sectors.

	Proportion of Signatories	Submitting Evidence	Attending Events
Public	14%	26%	25%
Private	58%	50%	36%
Third	28%	24%	40%