

Co-operatives UK is a non-profit network of thousands of businesses. As the national federation of co-operatives, Co-operatives UK has a strong track record in promoting co-operation as a successful solution to a wide range of social issues. We actively promote and deliver new approaches, based on the founding traditions of the co-operative movement – collective action and co-operation, empowerment and enterprise – that offer a foundation for fresh and innovative solutions to help tackle the challenges of today in genuine collaboration with communities.

We and our member organisations have facilitated local level co-operation to help people set up care co-ops to tackle the crisis in social care. Currently we are developing an innovative co-operative model to help the self-employed (the new ‘precariat’), to empower those facing risk and disadvantage in today’s challenging economy. We are bringing together key stakeholders in this space including trade union representatives, sector experts and infrastructure bodies and worked with a range of stakeholders to produce the ‘Not Alone’ [report](#).

We publish an annual account of [our impact](#) as an organisation which includes work to promote, develop and unite co-operative enterprise. We are custodians of the largest co-operative dataset in the UK and publish the [Co-operative Economy](#) report and as a commitment to openness and sharing, make this available as open source data.

We operate the [Community Shares Unit \(CSU\)](#) which over the past five years has helped hundreds of local communities to raise over £60 million in share equity and deliver local solutions to local issues. We have helped local communities to take over village stores and village pubs, set up community energy renewable projects and take ownership of local assets such as heritage piers (Hastings Pier). In implementing the [Booster Programme](#), a Power to Change funded support programme, CSU is directly focusing support on innovative approaches to the use of community shares as a funding mechanism, including the aim to support communities working with local authorities to improve outcomes and resources into the long-term, especially in more deprived areas. During 2015 our [Community Economic Development \(CED\) programme](#) successfully supported 49 groups to take a lead in shaping their economies for the benefit of their community. [The Hive](#) Business Support programme is a new dedicated business support programme for co-operatives, funded by The Co-operative Bank. This 3 year initiative is helping new co-operatives to form, existing co-operatives to grow and businesses transition to a co-operative or community owned model. By 2018 this programme will have provided over 1,500 packages of direct support across the UK.

We are able to offer key services and expertise to assist The Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN) to provide sustainable solutions to the service challenges facing local authorities and communities including:

- **Innovative policy development**, testing and prototyping including action-based research, stakeholder management, workshops, and evidence gathering.
- **Impact measurement** systems and frameworks.
- **Peer review** as an approach for reflective and collective learning and developing best practice and quality standards.
- **Capacity building and legacy planning.** We focus on providing tools, resources and support which upskill beneficiary organisations to be able to ensure sustained growth within their enterprise. We support peer to peer activity in order that beneficiaries can go on to support other emerging organisations.