



# MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF 2025

Working for Infrastructure



## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THIS DOCUMENT?

Every year we revisit our priorities for the forthcoming 12 months, we review what's changed in Wales and beyond and we consider what we need to do to make sure that the business environment is as good as it can be for our members. That means looking back, considering our current situation and what we need to do for the future.

This document sets out the themes and priorities that CECA Wales pursued over the last 12 months and what we achieved. It looks at what has changed over this period, what are the likely challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us and what will we do to support our members in moving forward positively.



**John Griffiths: Chair, CECA Wales    Ed Evans: Director, CECA Wales**



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## SO, WHAT DID WE DO OVER THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS?

The work programmes that we set out for 2024 were based on the business environment at that time with a particular emphasis on our five "core pillars", which have served the organisation well in terms of aligning the work of the different nations and regions of CECA, creating a greater collective impact, improving the understanding of our partners and stakeholders of the work we do, and communicating better with our members.

We continued to work with governments and construction clients throughout 2024 to improve work opportunities for our members. However, there was a great deal of uncertainty during this period as the UK went through a General Election which resulted in a change of government with a different set of priorities. Since the election the plans of the new government have started to emerge with a positive emphasis on infrastructure albeit against a backdrop of uncertainty over investment levels which has also worked its way through to Welsh Government priorities. We expect to gain greater clarity during the Spring 2025 Spending Review.

The procurement landscape has also been in flux with the introduction of the Procurement Act which replaces EU procurement legislation and, in Wales, the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act. The impacts of both of these Acts will emerge in 2025 as they come into force. Nevertheless, public procurement remains a concern for Welsh contractors and we will have to see if the work done by CECA Wales in trying to influence these Acts and better inform clients on the implications of poor risk management leads to any improvements. Inevitably much will depend on the behaviours of public sector procurers!

Whilst championing the role of higher apprenticeships across Wales our main focus was the development of bids to CITB to secure funding

for the introduction of two Civils Training Hubs, one in the north and one in the south. These will support the provision of improved training and apprenticeship opportunities for civils and plant operatives, where resourcing challenges remain and are likely to worsen as age profiles increase. We have been able to secure 'in principle' agreements to both hubs and we hope to progress these further in 2025.

Our CECA Wales Foundation Group for young members, on the back of launching their short film to help attract more young people to the sector (you can view it [here](#) in Welsh, and [here](#) in English), hosted a new summer event for young professionals and their report on *Creating an environment for young Welsh professionals to thrive* will be launched in 2025. Their work was also prominent at our [Annual Awards 2024](#), which successfully promoted our "Most Promising" young people.



Above: the CECA Wales Foundations Group



## MOVING FORWARD: WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

**Our focus on our “Five Core Pillars” will continue to guide our business plan priorities as we move into 2025.**

In terms of work opportunities we hope to see greater clarity emerging from the UK Government in terms of their investment priorities for infrastructure, particularly in Wales. We will be looking closely at the Spring Spending Review which we expect to be positive for rail investment in Wales albeit stopping short of full devolution of the network which has undoubtedly benefitted Scotland and Northern Ireland in recent years. We also hope to see greater clarity around onshore and floating offshore wind and the development of port infrastructure and will be engaging with clients in both the energy and water sectors as their investment priorities accelerate. And, with some relief for the roads sector in Wales, we'll be pushing for another local government borrowing initiative (LGBI) to pump prime investment in our roads. Politically we will also be developing our CECA Wales manifesto ahead of the Senedd elections in 2026.

We'll closely monitor the introduction of the UK Procurement Act and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act in Wales to see if they lead to any improvements across the procurement landscape. The concept of “value-based procurement”, incorporating social value criteria and carbon, seems as far away as ever despite our 2021 [Delivering Greater Value](#) report recommending changes. However, this legislation may offer an opportunity to deliver the improvements needed. We'll also keep pushing the Welsh public sector for a more mature approach to managing risk across public sector contracts and encourage a move away from “all-risk transfer” tenders. This practice by some clients and their representatives does nothing to foster the collaborative and productive behaviours needed to deliver high quality infrastructure.

In terms of developing our workforce and attracting new entrants we will be directing our efforts towards the development of the two Civils Training Hubs, in the north and south, to increase the quantity and improve the capability of civils and plant trade operatives. As well as securing CITB funding we will be looking at other sources to support school engagement and other employment programmes via the hubs. With an ageing workforce it's essential that we address this long term issue and we hope that all our members will support this proposal.

We will also be introducing new members to our CECA Wales Foundation Group. The existing team have done fantastic work and they will be rounding off their term with a sponsored charity bike ride in support of the Sir Gareth Edwards Cancer Charity and a launch of their report on inspiring young industry professionals. The new group members will establish their own programme of work as well as moving some of the existing school engagement initiatives forward. We hope to introduce them to our members at our Summer Lunch 2025 which will, for this year only, be replacing our Autumn Annual Dinner and Awards as we transition back to our pre-Covid Spring dinner and Awards in 2026.

And last but not least we'll be working on initiatives to 'create a better environment for all' with social value featuring highly within the new Civils Training Hubs and further development of the carbon action plans contained in our [Decarbonising Our Infrastructure](#) report.

As in previous years we'll maximise our impact and reach by working closely with our broad range of partners from across the sector.

## FIVE CORE PILLARS FOR CECA WALES

So, as we move into 2025, we will continue to develop our five 'core pillars', which were established by the CECA Chairs Strategic Forum in 2024 and adopted by the CECA Wales Executive Board. As a reminder, here are the five "core pillars" :

1. "Creating Work Opportunities"
2. "Creating a Safer Workplace"
3. "Creating a Skilled Workforce"
4. "Creating a Talent Pipeline"
5. "Creating a Better Environment for All."

By articulating our priorities in this way we feel that it'll be easier for our members and partners to understand how we're supporting them, not just in Wales but across the UK, and to use our collective "CECA strengths" in a more impactful way. But, of course, everything we do will be underpinned by our commitment to promote the infrastructure sector and work in partnership with others to help deliver our priorities.

We will also be working with colleagues across CECA to "re-energise" our sector groups and refocus them on our five core pillars. By bringing greater clarity to the groups it will be easier for our members to understand what they should expect from the groups and how these can support the daily work of our members. This will become clearer as we move through 2025.

However, if you want to know what all this will mean in terms of actions on the ground for CECA Wales then read on!



## CREATING WORK OPPORTUNITIES

This is all about our engagement with construction clients, developing construction related policies, supporting a pragmatic commercial environment and identifying future workload opportunities for our members.

We'll do this by :

1. supporting the transition of CECA Sector Groups to deliver improved engagement between members and construction clients and regulators at a UK level
2. promoting the value of infrastructure investment at Welsh and UK levels through a targeted communications plan with key politicians and decision makers
3. meeting key Welsh/Wales based clients in a structured engagement programme to influence thinking and decision-making around infrastructure and civil engineering matters in Wales.
4. working with clients to publish their 12-24 month work programmes
5. informing and influencing discussions on fair payment, retentions and insurance/liabilities
6. promoting more equitable forms of risk management amongst clients
7. informing and influencing policy making by inputting to infrastructure specific Welsh and UK government reviews

8. taking a lead role on appropriate and specific industry groups
9. engaging across the sector to achieve a fairer, more balanced procurement process that recognises equitable risk transfer.

Have a look at our *Delivering Greater Value* report (click [here](#).)





## CREATING A SAFER WORKPLACE

This is all about the health, safety and wellbeing of our people and we'll support this by :

supporting the transition of the CECA Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group to deliver targeted resources to support CECA Wales members

supporting CECA's *Stop. Make a Change* annual programme via the CECA Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group

distributing resources developed by the CECA Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group including promoting :

- a. Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) programmes
- b. health, safety and wellbeing legislation and guidance
- c. details of the 2025 CECA *Stop. Make a Change* campaign
- d. initiatives and best practices to enhance physical, financial and mental health wellbeing.





## CREATING A TALENT PIPELINE

This is about attracting more people to the sector and giving them clear career paths. We'll seek to do this by :

1. increasing our engagement with younger members through our Foundations Group – we will be transitioning to a new group membership in 2025
2. hosting a CECA Wales Summer Lunch for members, with recognition of our “most promising” young people, as we transition to a new Spring 2026 date for our CECA Wales Annual Awards
3. Launch the CECA Wales Foundation Group report on “Creating a better environment for young Welsh professionals to thrive”
4. work with CITB and other industry partners to progress Civils Training Hubs in the north and south of Wales and to provide a focus for showcasing work opportunities for a new generation of civil engineering and plant operatives
5. work with Medr, the new body overseeing tertiary education, to review the recently launched Construction and Built Environment qualifications at GCSE, A-level and Foundation Apprentice level
6. finalise the development of new resources, via our Foundations Group, to support the new Welsh curriculum and promote an improved delivery model for social value
7. supporting and promoting alternative pathways into the industry via the new Civils Training Hubs, including routes for employing ex-offenders and ex-Forces personnel.



Have a look at our film produced by the CECA Wales Foundation Group which is aimed at attracting new people to our sector (click [here](#)).

## CREATING A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

This is all about increasing sustainable practices across the sector, decarbonising our operations and increasing our social value.

To do this we'll :

1. support the transition of the CECA Environment Group to deliver targeted resources and information to support CECA Wales members including:
  - providing guidance on ways to reduce their carbon footprint
  - improving their understanding of carbon management planning for SMEs
  - share good practices across our membership
2. work with partners to support construction clients to increase sustainable practices and reduce the carbon footprint of infrastructure projects across Wales by implementing the Action Plan in our 2021 report on Decarbonising Our Infrastructure / Datgarboneiddio Ein Seilwaith which is still relevant today
3. work with construction clients to develop models for better delivery of social value
4. support our Foundation Group to deliver resources for members to better deliver social value at schools and colleges.







Working for Infrastructure

## REGIONS & DEVOLVED NATIONS

CECA members are supported by a network of six regional offices across England, a national office in Westminster, and offices in the devolved nations of Scotland and Wales.

CECA's regions and devolved nations are:

- CECA **Scotland**
- CECA **North West**
- CECA **North East**
- CECA **Yorkshire & The Humber**
- CECA **Wales**
- CECA **Midlands**
- CECA **Southern**
- CECA **South West**







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