

ceca
Working for Infrastructure
Adeiladwaith yw'n Gwaith

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF 2026

Working for Infrastructure

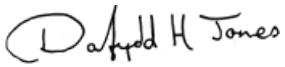
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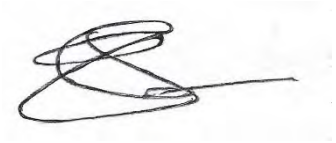
Working for Infrastructure
Adeiladwaith yw'n Gwaith

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 twelve months and what we achieved. It looks at what has changed over this period, what the likely challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us, and what will we do to support our members in moving forward positively.





Dafydd Jones: Chair, CECA Wales

Ed Evans: Director, CECA Wales



CECA WALES MEMBERSHIP

A E & A T Lewis Ltd

GRIFFITHS civil engineering and construction

SCOTT Established 1870

Balfour Beatty

bam

Beton Bauen SPECIALIST CONTRACTING

CAMBRENSIS CIVIL ENGINEERING LTD

Cambrian Civil Engineering

centregreat

COLIN JONES (Rock Engineering) Ltd

CROUCH WATERFALL

DINAS CONTRACTING Cyf

DT Contracting (South West) Ltd

E·D·S MARINE & CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS

EnCon Construction

envolve Infrastructure

ERH

WHITLEY

GallifordTry plc

G.D. Harries AND SONS Ltd.

GT Davies Ltd Groundworks & Civil Engineering

HOGAN

HORAN

HORIZON CIVIL ENGINEERING

IAN THOMAS Construction Services Ltd

JENNINGS

JONES BROS CIVIL ENGINEERING UK

Jones MULTI DISCIPLINE CONTRACTOR

KAYMAC MARINE & CIVIL engineering

KM

KNIGHTS BROWN

MPH CONSTRUCTION

MWT

NOEL FITZPATRICK CIVIL ENGINEERING & PLANT HIRE CONTRACTORS

OBR CONSTRUCTION

RMS Innovators in surface treatments

sacyr

Speedy

TARMAC A CRH COMPANY

TRJ

TWO PLUS TWO

VELTA

VIKING CIVIL ENGINEERING

WALTERS

WILLIAM HUGHES Peirianneg Sifil Cyf. / Civil Engineering Ltd.

Young Bros CIVIL ENGINEERING

www.ceca.co.uk/our-members

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

Our business plan priorities throughout 2025 were guided by CECA's Five Core Pillars, illustrated below.

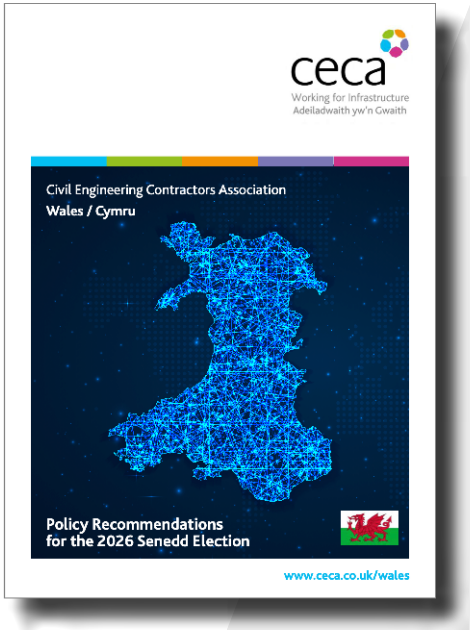


And if you need a reminder of what our plans were for 2025 you can find them at Publications - CECA in our *Meeting the challenges of 2025* report.

Creating Work Opportunities

We continued to work with governments and construction clients throughout 2025 to improve work opportunities for our members. With a new UK Government in place, and one facing some significant fiscal challenges, it was encouraging to hear of positive commitment towards infrastructure as plans started to emerge. We gained greater clarity during the Spring 2025 Spending Review which is slowly working its way through to Welsh Government priorities. Nevertheless the lack of visibility from clients on specific investment programmes in the public sector remains a frustration. This is something we will continue to pursue in 2026.

The UK and Welsh Government budgets had some positive news for Welsh contractors with a commitment to small modular reactors (SMRs) at Wylfa and increased rail investment in Wales, albeit stopping short of full devolution of the network which has undoubtedly benefited Scotland and Northern Ireland in recent years. Clarity is slowly emerging around Onshore and Floating Offshore Wind and the development of port infrastructure but it's still slow as is the AMP8 programme in the water sector. However, there was some relief for the roads sector in Wales as another local government borrowing initiative (LGBI) to pump prime investment in our roads came through and will continue into 2027.



We also published our CECA Wales 'manifesto asks' report ahead of the Senedd elections in 2026. You can access a copy here. This sets out the high-level political objectives that we will be pursuing and you'll hear more about these in 2026.

Allied to the need for visibility of work is the process of gaining that work and this remained highly frustrating at times as overly complex procurement arrangements continued to increase bureaucracy, cost and complexity when we all know that there are simpler ways of doing this. The tendency for some clients to "dump risk" continued, leading to less bids from contractors and, inevitably, less value for money for the public purse. As we approached the end of 2025, however, there were some signs of increasing maturity in this area, so, fingers crossed that this continues into 2026. As the UK Procurement Act, which replaced EU procurement legislation and, in Wales, the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act, start to take effect we'll see how this plays out and whether or not 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!

Creating a safer workplace

For obvious reasons this remains a key priority area for our members and it was pleasing to see CECA's *Stop. Make a Change* programme increasing its profile in 2025. #SMAC2025 proved to be the most successful yet with a significant focus on mental health issues and a series of resources being shared with the industry via this link.

Creating a skilled workforce

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 funding for the southern hub at Bridgend and we have "in principle" agreements for the northern hub which will involve an alliance between both northern FE colleges and employers. We'll be progressing these in 2026.



Creating a talent pipeline

Our CECA Wales Foundations Group for young members, saw the previous members, Gruff, Rebecca, Jordan, Sam and Jack handover to the new team of Rebeca, Rhys, Jac, Dylan, Callum and Gruff. The previous team did some great work in creating resources to attract more young people to our sector. As well as launching their short film, which you can view here in Welsh, and here in English, they also hosted a new summer event for young professionals and their report on *Creating an environment for young Welsh professionals to thrive* was launched at the event. All our members have received a copy but here's a link to the e-copy on their webpage.

But the new team have picked up the mantle very quickly and are in the process of developing their "Ever thought of a civil engineering career in Wales?" booklet which will be shared with all of Wales' schools and colleges and will be free for members to use in their social value engagement with clients. They've also increased their social media profile so if you're not yet following them, you can do so at these links: CECA Wales Foundations Group LinkedIn, CECA Wales Foundation Group X (twitter.com), CECA Wales Foundation Group Instagram.

And, although we didn't host our "Most Promising" Awards last year, we'll be back on track in 2026. Here's the link to the Annual Awards page on our website if you need any inspiration ahead of our 2026 Awards.

Creating a better environment for all

We saw our new CECA Wales Foundation Group start to make their mark on sustainability and social value via their increasingly active social media presence.



Above: the 'Ever Thought of a Civil Engineering Career in Wales?' booklets in Welsh and English, developed by the CECA Wales Foundations Group, are forthcoming in 2026.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026



Our plans for 2026 will still focus on our "Five Core Pillars" to guide our business plan priorities but with a close eye on the broader business and political environment.

Whilst there are positive signs for businesses as we move into 2026 there remain a few concerns around global stability and domestic economic performance. And, of course, in Wales we have the Senedd elections in May which, with a radically new system of proportional representation and an increase in the number of Senedd members, potentially heralds a significant change in voter patterns which could shatter the hold that Welsh Labour has had on the nation. We have already developed a strategy for engaging with political parties before and after the elections to make sure we get our messages across on the importance of infrastructure and we will implement this through the year.

In terms of creating work opportunities we'll be pushing for greater engagement with clients both within Wales and at a UK level so keep an eye out for our programme of client engagement webinars which will take place on a monthly basis through the year. We will also be feeding into a Welsh Government review of "pipeline visibility" which, I hope, will eventually lead to a more formal system for public sector clients to share their work programmes.

We'll be working with client bodies to promote the concept of "value-based procurement", incorporating social value criteria and carbon management and a more mature approach to managing risk across public sector contracts and encourage a move away from "all-risk transfer" tenders. This will form the basis of our engagement with Wales' local authorities, via the County Surveyors Society (CSS) Cymru, the WLGA and the Welsh Government.

Our commitment to *Stop. Make a Change* 2026 will continue to underpin our commitment to creating a safer workplace. As soon as we have agreed the theme for 2026 we will issue a full briefing to members so that they can engage and participate in the campaign across the UK.

In terms of developing our workforce and attracting new entrants we will be directing our efforts towards the development and implementation of the two Civils Groundworks Training Hubs, in the north and south, to increase the quantity and improve the capability of civils and plant trade operatives. Having secured CITB funding we will be developing the service offer of each hub and sharing this with civil engineering contractors and other stakeholders across

Wales to maximise the outputs of both hubs. We'll also be exploring other sources of funding to support school engagement and other employment programmes for work ready opportunities. With an ageing workforce it's essential that we address this long term issue and we hope that all our members will support the hubs as the "go to" centres for expanding our workforce.

Alongside this will be our continuing support of higher and degree apprenticeships to ensure that we have a strong supply of civil engineers, project managers and quantity surveyors entering the workforce.

After a lull of a few years we're also optimistic that we'll be able to re-introduce our CECA Wales Leadership Challenge which is a partnership with the Armed Forces to provide our aspiring young people with a unique leadership and teamworking experience. Pressures on the Armed Forces' resources in recent years has disrupted this popular programme but we think we have found a joint solution to re-energise the Challenge so look out for more announcement in 2026.

The new members of our CECA Wales Foundations Group also have a full programme of work to support our efforts to create a talent pool for the sector. As well as expanding their social media presence, which is invaluable in engaging with other young people, they will also be launching their *Ever thought of a civil engineering career in Wales?* booklet which will be shared with all of Wales' schools and colleges and will be free for members to use in their social value engagement with clients. They will also be moving some of our current school engagement initiatives forward and these will hopefully inspire members with their own school engagement initiatives.

After a brief lull our Annual Dinner and Awards, where we celebrate the most promising amongst our workforce, will be back on course for **24 April 2026** at the Cardiff Hilton. If you'd like to enter any of your workforce for the Awards click here for more details.



And last but not least we'll be making a greater push in 2026 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 action plan contained in our *Delivering Greater Value* 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.

So that's the headline stuff but, 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. promoting the value of infrastructure investment at Welsh and UK levels through a targeted communications plan with key politicians and decision makers

2. engaging with prospective candidates and parties ahead of the 2026 Senedd elections and pushing forward with our "manifesto asks" for infrastructure which you can view here Senedd elections 2026 – making the case for infrastructure - CECA

3. supporting CECA's Sector Groups to deliver improved engagement between members and construction clients and regulators at a UK level

4. developing our relationship with the County Surveyors Society (CSS) Cymru, which comprises all of Wales' local authority directors for highways and environment, to improve client/ contractor engagement

5. 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.

6. informing and influencing discussions in key policy areas including fair payment, retentions, insurance/liabilities and pipeline visibility



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.

CREATING A SAFER WORKPLACE

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

1. inputting to the CECA Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group to deliver targeted resources to support CECA Wales members

2. participating in CECA's *Stop. Make a Change 2026* programme via the CECA Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group

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

    - an updated 'CDM Guidance' document

    - A quarterly briefing from the Group on health, safety and wellbeing legislation and guidance, and associated developments of relevance across the sector in Wales and the wider U.K.



Above: Stop. Make a Change 2025 took place across the month of October.



CREATING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

This is all about how we support the development of skills and training across our membership.

Our plan for 2026 is to:

1. progress civil engineering operative (groundworks) training hubs in the north and south of Wales
2. work with members, Medr and universities across Wales to ensure access to degree apprenticeships
3. recognise our "most promising" workforce members as we host our CECA Wales Annual Awards on 24 April 2026 – here's our CECA Wales Awards 2026 - Call for Entries
4. input to the CECA Training and Development Group to deliver targeted resources and information to support CECA Wales members
5. continue delivering our training programme on NEC4 and legal updates for members and continue to publish monthly NEC4 bulletins
6. re-establish the CECA Wales Annual Leadership Challenge
7. promote an expanded training programme with additional modules relating to social value and carbon management.



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 :

- supporting the new members of our Foundations Group to extend their social media presence to inspire people to join the sector
- launching the CECA Wales Foundation Group careers booklet titled "Ever thought of a civil engineering career in Wales?" which will be shared with all of Wales' schools and colleges and will be free for members to use in their social value engagement
- working with CITB and other industry partners to deliver Civils Training Hubs in the north and south of Wales which will provide a focus for showcasing work opportunities for a new generation of civil engineering and plant operatives
- working 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
- finalising the development of new resources, via our Foundations Group, to support the new Welsh curriculum and promote an improved delivery model for social value
- supporting and promoting alternative pathways into the industry via the new Civils Training Hubs, including routes for employing ex-offenders and ex-Forces personnel.



Above: the CECA Wales Foundation Group members in 2026, L to R: Rhys Jones (CentreGreat); Callum Maddocks (Knights Brown); Dylan Rigby (Andrew Scott); Rebeca Jones (Jones Bros Civil Engineering Ltd); Gruff Roberts (Walters); and Jac Benyon (Jones Bros Henllan Ltd)

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. input to the CECA Environment Group to deliver targeted resources and information to support CECA Wales members including :
    - publishing a quarterly bulletin with Wales-specific guidance on environmental matters and share good practices across our membership
    - updating guidance to SMEs on ways to reduce their carbon footprint
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. support our Foundation Group to deliver resources for members to better deliver social value at schools and colleges
4. deliver a bid-writing course for SMEs on social value.



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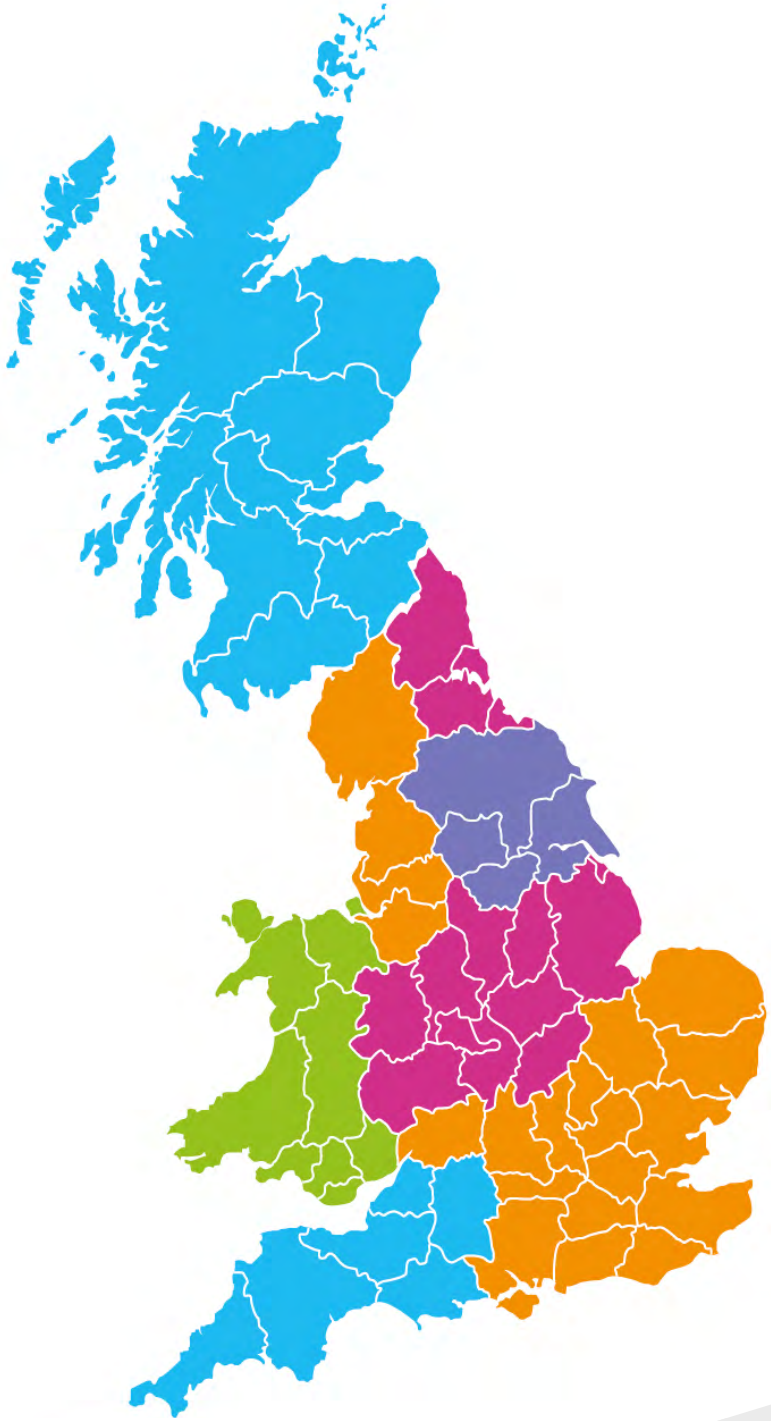
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REGIONS & DEVOLVED NATIONS

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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