

Regenerate NPT: Project Closure Report



Project Organisation: NPT Council Youth Service

Project Name: Cook Slow Learn Fast

Project Start Date: 1st September 2021 Project End Date: 31st January 2022

Date of Report: 24.03.2022

Attached Documents List: None

There is a mandatory requirement to complete this document at Project Closure. The purpose of the report is to provide a project level document evidencing how well the project has performed against the original Business Plan delivered by the Local Partnership and Local Action Group during the lifetime of the project, and how it has contributed to the aims and objectives of the Local Partnership's Local Development Strategy. Project performance against the planned/approved costs, delivery timescales and Key Performance indicators will also be detailed. **Please try and keep within the maximum word count.**

1. Background: (briefly detail the background to the Project – 250 max)	
<p>The aim of the project was to teach young people basic, practical cooking skills over a 10 week period. A slow cooker was provided to each young person and each week the ingredients required to create the recipe were delivered. Dropping the ingredients to each Young Person allowed Youth Workers to 'check in' with the Young people.</p> <p>The recipes provide enough food to feed the whole family or for a single person, enough to create four further meals that could be frozen and eaten at a later date.</p> <p>Young people learnt how to prepare and cook nutritional meals with a focus on promoting affordable, healthy, balanced diet for young people and their families within low-income communities. The project provided opportunities to develop and improve literacy, numeracy, ICT and independent living skills, enabling young people and their families to lead healthier lifestyles and achieve their full potential in a welcoming, safe, supportive environment staffed by qualified Youth workers.</p> <p>Sessions included budgeting tips and support, promoting the ethos that healthy eating does not have to be expensive. Batch cooking assisted Young People to manage their money better and help them not only improve their health but save money too, tackling poverty.</p> <p>Delivering ingredients each week to the young people provided an opportunity for staff to build relationships and trust with young people and carry out welfare and safeguarding checks. The project also opened up the Youth Service to a number of young people who may not have approached or sought Youth Service support.</p>	
2. Project Outcomes as per application	Was this achieved? What supporting evidence is there of achievement? If not achieved, why not?
To upskill and educate young people	<p>The young people gained new cooking skills and knowledge. Young people had the opportunity to try new foods and learn about healthy eating and the importance of having a balanced, nutritious diet. Young people also improved their communication skills and increased confidence levels.</p>

Teach independent living skills	Young people gained cooking skills and an understanding how to lead healthier lifestyles. Youth workers provided support and advice on budgeting, cutting heating/energy bills, benefits and employment advice. Youth workers were able to support and signpost to other departments within the Youth Service and external organisations to provide specialist support when required.
Provision mainstreamed into Youth Service delivery	Yes, further funding has been secured to continue until the end of the financial year, further funding is being sought for the financial year 2022/23
Obtain Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate	This option had to be revised due to the majority of young people having 'chaotic' lifestyles. An offer to work towards the qualification was made to all young people but most felt that they were unable to commit to working towards the qualification, even with Youth worker support.
Better mental health & well-being	The Slow cooker project provided young people support and open access to a Youth Worker. The young were able to access support from the youth worker and had twice weekly check in opportunities in a supportive, safe and engaging setting which has helped to build their confidence, which in turn has supported and improved their mental health. The slow cooker project provided the opportunity to try new foods whilst obtaining new cooking skills, which without the project they would not have had the exposure too. This all assisted to improve and enhance the young people well-being and mental health resilience.
Raise self-esteem and confidence	A safe online space for young people to build confidence, gain new skills, socialise and improve their mental health and well-being, online sessions will facilitate/enable learning about and gaining new skills and/or qualifications. The project provided support for those Young People who were experiencing food poverty but too embarrassed or ashamed to attend the food bank. The project educated young people on budgeting and how to make healthy meals on a budget, helping to address and tackle poverty, which helped to also raise their self-esteem and confidence.
Reduction in social isolation	As the project was held virtually, young people were able to remain in contact whilst adhering to Welsh Government advice and guidance to minimise contact and the subsequent imposed lockdowns. The virtual sessions allowed young people from across the whole of the Neath Port Talbot borough to attend. It removed the barrier of room hire that had adequate space and facilities to run the programme and transport to get to the venue. It provided an opportunity for young people to meet new young people and create friendships online. It also provided the young people a dedicated Youth worker who

	completed weekly check in's, welfare/safeguarding checks and a listening ear to provide advice and guidance which helped to address social isolation.
3. Strategic Achievements: (outline what the project has achieved in terms of alignment with LEADER Themes and Priorities and any contribution to national strategies - 300 max)	
Theme: 3	Priority: Accessible NPT
<p>This project was innovative as it was accessible to all as it was held virtually, removing barriers of any enforced local or national lockdowns and removed any travel constraints as Young People accessed the provision from home. It also overcame the barrier of sourcing a suitable venue that would be suitable to hold the target number of participants that was also suitably equipped to deliver the programme. This tackled social exclusion by re-engaging young people in rural communities by considering new, innovative ways of supporting individuals and their communities to maximise their well-being.</p> <p>This virtual space reduced isolation in rural areas by offering opportunities for young people to connect together in a safe online facilitated dialogue to discuss current issues that matter to them, develop a better understanding of each other, by building meaningful relationships and gaining important life skills e.g. skills such as budgeting, cooking skills, making healthy choices, nutrition, communication skills, promoting positive group work, collaboration and digital literacy. Provided an opportunity to achieve accredited training courses to address the digital skills gap among young people, although they did not wish to uptake this offer.</p>	
4. With regards to your comments at application stage, how have you managed this project in terms of sustainability? (What plans have been put in place to maintain the project once it is completed? 400 words max)	
Funding has been secured to continue to continue the sessions until the end of the financial year 2022 and further funding is being sought to mainstream the project into the Youth Service programme of delivery for 2022/23 financial year.	
5. Project Beneficiaries:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The young people participating in this project and their families. ✓ Youth workers who have had the chance to 'touch base' with the young people and ensure they are dealing with the changes brought about by Covid restrictions by suggesting appropriate coping mechanisms. ✓ Local food banks who had less pressure from visiting young people. 	
6. Cross Cutting Themes: If relevant, briefly describe how your project contributed to the following themes:	
Equal Opportunities:	
<p>Initially the course was developed to support services for underrepresented groups homelessness and young carers, this was opened up to include all young people living in rural areas 16-24 years old. It reach out to LGBTQ+ young Mums, Electively home educated young people and Looked After Children, many of whom then went on to build friendships and were signposted and now attend specialist groups to further support them. The course developed, supported and encouraged young people to gain and develop new skills whilst preventing feelings of social isolation and exclusion by using digital technology and the weekly check-ins by a trained Youth worker. It provided an engaging and exciting opportunity for young people to gain new knowledge and refine/build on skills they already had.</p> <p>Recipes were adapted to consider/offer alternatives to be inclusive of dietary requirements including vegetarians, vegan, religious beliefs and/or allergies/intolerances.</p> <p>All marketing and promotional material was produced bilingually.</p>	

Sustainable Development including Economic, Environmental and Social

The programme encouraged the use of Welsh produce.

Paper bags were used to package up and deliver ingredients to young people to prevent the use of single use plastic bags and staff encouraged the young people to recycle any packaging.

The project encouraged young people to find out about the Tir Morfa community garden to encourage them to become part of a local growing initiative to grow some of their own vegetables.

The introduction of the QR code meant that printed recipe cards did not have to be provided each week, instead the young people could scan the QR code and be taken to the step by step recipe guide and/or watch a pre-recorded video if they were unable to attend the session, thus reducing the number of printed recipe cards required.

Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

The project supported to reduce isolation and social exclusion in rural areas by offering opportunities for young people to connect together in a safe online environment with facilitated dialogue to discuss current issues that matter to them, developing a better understanding of each other, by building meaningful relationships and gaining important life skills. Twice weekly contact with a trained youth worker allowed young people to talk with a professional regarding any concerns or worries they had.

The course educated young people on how they can provide healthy nutritional meals for the family on a budget and 'batch' cook to save money. Specific sessions on budgeting and money matters were also provided and young people were signposted to external agencies for additional support to access grants and funding.

Relationships built between the Youth Worker and the young people assisted to close the gap of those young people most at risk of underachievement by providing support to increase skills, self-esteem and confidence, assisting to overcome barriers that they have in their lives, signposting to other teams in the Youth Service or other suitable/relevant organisations.

Young people reported that they felt that their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills improved through completing the course as these skills were embedded throughout the course delivery. Improving these skills will assist young people to become more employable.

7. Conclusion Summary: Please provide a summary on the project's performance, identifying any key issues that need to be addressed:

a) Summary

- Upskill and educate young people
- Teach independent living skills
- Provision mainstreamed into Youth Service delivery
- Better mental health & well-being
- Raise self-esteem and confidence
- Reduction in social isolation

b) Key Issues

- During the pilot it was identified that not all the young people had access to what staff considered as cupboard staples, therefore a starter pack was introduced and delivered to the young people at the start of the programme along with the slow cooker – cost effective.
- It also became apparent that some young people didn't have basic cooking utensils like chopping boards so additional money was spent to purchase items for young people.
- Delivering ingredients to run the course on a Friday didn't work, it meant that if young people weren't in to accept the delivery staff had to work on a Saturday to deliver ingredients.
- Not enough consideration was given when estimating the how much time would be need to be allocated to sorting ingredients into packs and delivering the packs to young people throughout the Neath Port Talbot County borough to the young people.
- Running two 10 week course consecutively was difficult, especially factoring in staff absence due to COVID and annual leave.

c) What went well?

- Raised the profile of the Youth Service to outside organisations.
- Promoted and forged partnership working with external agencies.
- Opened up Youth Service support to young people that would not have previously sought support.
- Allowed young people to build friendship and join specialist groups to provide on-going support (6 new young parents joined a specialist young parents group run and supported by the Youth Service following the slow cooker project)
- Weekly drop offs allowed Youth workers not only to carry out welfare and safeguarding checks but to build professional relationships with young people providing an opportunity to signing posting to other organisations where necessary.
- Provided additional skills to young people.

d) What didn't go well?

- The young people were not interested in completing a qualification. Due to the chaotic lives of some of the young people the project was viewed by some of the young people as a life line in proving a warm cooked meal each week the offer.
- Obtaining evaluations was time consuming as young people didn't complete them and staff needed to chase some young people multiple times.

e) What could have been done differently?

- Run the course mid-week, not on a Friday.
- Run one large programme and not run the programme consecutively.
- Use the QR codes from the start, this decrease printing cost and reduce carbon footprint and also allows us to track the number of young people accessing the recipes.

8. TO BE COMPLETED BY LEAD BODY:

Project Performance – Financial & Indicator Achievements: (detailed performance against approved timescales and budget expectation, including reasons for all variances)

a) Performance indicator achievement against targets approved: Final position:

PI Reference	Approved Target	Total Achieved	Justification for underachievement	How has achievement been evidenced
LD.CL.003	Number of jobs safeguarded through supported projects			
	0.8	0.8		Received confirmation
LD.CL.006	Number of Information dissemination actions/promotional and/or marketing activities to raise awareness of the LDS			
	25	29		Social Media, Specific NPT Youth app and recipe cards
LD.CL.008	Number of Participants supported			
	80	84		Attendance sheets, Evaluation forms and School Registers
NPT01	Number of communities supported			
	8	13		Attendance sheets and Evaluation forms
NPT02	Number of groups engaged			
	5	6		Attendance sheets and Evaluation forms
NPT03	Number of children and young people participating in the project			
	80	84		Attendance sheets and Evaluation forms
NPT04	Number of women participating in the project			
	40	49		Attendance sheets and Evaluation forms

NPT05	Number of Welsh speakers participating in the project		
	8	9	Attendance sheets and Evaluation forms
NPT07	Number of individuals with disabilities participating in the project		
	2	0	Information not available
NPT10	Number of participants receiving formal training		
	60	0	PI withdrawn
b) Pilot Activities/Projects: Outlining all of the stages and activities, including the timelines. To promote externally and link to the Wales Rural Network Website. Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable for this project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X			
c) Feasibility Studies: To promote externally and link to the Wales Rural Network Website. Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable for this project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X			

