



Regenerate NPT: Project Closure Report

Project Organisation: Neath Port Talbot Council Youth Service

Project Name: Clwb Ieuenctid Iaith Gymraeg/Welsh Language Youth Club

Project Start Date: June 2021

Project End Date: 22 December 2021

Date of Report: 28/02/2022

Attached Documents List: 1) Pilot Study Report

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)

Youth clubs were forced to close due to Covid19, and as part of a consultation with young people to see what support they required, it was identified that they would like to attend a youth club where the whole provision was offered in Welsh. Therefore the aim of this project was to pilot a 'virtual' youth club through the medium of Welsh and provide opportunities for young people to improve their Welsh language skills through activities which will help them with team building, problem solving and personal development (with an added option of gaining formal qualifications) in a supportive environment, staffed by qualified youth workers.

This pilot aimed to assist young people on their road to Covid recovery by helping reduce social isolation and allow them to engage and make new friends from among Welsh speaking communities in other NPT rural wards. Restrictions had impacted on young people and their abilities to socialise and make friends which was having a huge effect on their mental health. The project would provide opportunities for trained staff to interact with the young people 'checking in' on their mental wellbeing, providing an opportunity and avenue to speak to them outside of a formal educational setting.

The plan was for 'themed' guest speakers to give advice and educate participants around issues to do with improving mental health, developing Welsh language skills, exploring local issues like rural deprivation and environmental concerns and increasing knowledge of local culture and celebrating Welsh heritage. Participants would undertake fun challenges to improve self-confidence and encourage problem solving, working together and improving social skills.

2. Project Outcomes as per application

Was this achieved? What supporting evidence is there of achievement? If not achieved, why not?

Increased knowledge of Welsh culture, traditional and heritage

Yes, cultural visits took place to the capital of Wales and young people undertook a tour of Cardiff castle, learning about the history of the castle. Young people also learnt how to cook traditional Welsh recipes, providing many an opportunity not only to learn new skills and taste/try new foods expanding their tastes.

	Arts and crafts activities provided a fun and engaging opportunity for the young people to learn about symbols of Wales.
Provision mainstreamed into Youth Service delivery	Yes, further funding has been secured to continue the virtual Welsh Youth club until the end of the financial year, further funding is being sought for the financial year 2022/23
Increased skills and qualifications	The young people gained new IT skills, communication, increased confidence and communication skills. Young people who participated in the programme achieved a food hygiene and an allergy awareness level one certificate. Further qualifications (Agored Cymru - Arts & Crafts) were completed but external verification is not taking place until March.
Better mental health & well-being	<p>The Virtual Welsh Youth provided young people support and open access to a Youth Worker. The young people made new friends, practised speaking and writing in Welsh in a fun, supportive, safe and engaging setting which has helped to build their confidence, which in turn has supported and improved their mental health. The virtual youth club provided new experiences and skills to the young people, which without the youth club they would not have had the exposure too. This all assisted to improve and enhance the young people well-being and mental health resilience.</p> <p>The Youth club received funding from the Youth Service to attend a trip to Oakwood Park during half term which provided a boost to the young people and allowed them to meet for the first time as a group in person.</p>
Reduction in social isolation	As the Youth Club 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 Youth Club allowed young people from across the whole of the Neath Port Talbot borough to attend. It removed the barrier of transport and provided an opportunity for young people to meet new young people and create friendships, this aided a smooth transition for young people that were commencing Year 7 as they had met young people from other schools in the youth club that were also transitioning, they also had made friends with young people that were moving up into Year 8.
Produce a Pilot Study	Pilot study was carried out and the completed document has been submitted to RDP and LEADER.
Formal Qualification for participants	19 Qualifications were achieved to date.
Guest speakers to inform participants	The Youth Club had talks from NPT Youth Council to promote Youth Council membership and opportunities. They also were involved in the NPT

	Lets Talk campaign and consultation, where they had an opportunity to discuss what matters to them now and in the future, what their local area needs where and how they felt NPT could help to “Recover, Reset, Renew” following the COVID pandemic. This feedback will help shape NPT’s Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27.
On-line sessions to refine digital skills	All sessions other than the initial promotional taster sessions, Oakwood excursion and Cardiff visit were all held virtually.
Llangrannog educational excursion	Due to the on-going COVID restrictions the Llangrannog residential wasn’t able to go ahead, so this was not achieved.
Team building, personal development, problem solving – challenges for young people to help them improve self confidence	Virtual sessions included a number of activities to encourage team work and problem solving, examples include quizzes, arts & crafts, cooking and information dissemination. Sessions provided an opportunity to speak with a trained youth worker and welfare checks. Sessions provided young people chance to meet new people and make new friends, whilst also gaining new skills and experiences which all assisted to improve self-confidence.
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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tackling social exclusion by considering new, innovative ways of supporting individuals, of all ages, and their communities to maximise their well-being. Young people and parents were informed that this was a pilot project and that it would end in December. As time went on a couple of parents asked what they could do to help secure additional funding and one parent offered to set up a fundraising group to raise money so the provision could continue. ✓ Re-engage young people in rural communities to support their well-being. ✓ Provide accredited training courses and access to work experience for young people. ✓ Address the digital skills gap among people of all ages. ✓ Re-engage children and young people with education and recreation post COVID-19. 	
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 Virtual Welsh Youth Club until the end of the financial year 2022 and further funding is being sought to mainstream the Virtual Youth Club 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 pilot and their families. ✓ The local Welsh communities – this project will support and strengthen Welsh language skills within these small village communities. ✓ 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. 	
6. Cross Cutting Themes: If relevant, briefly describe how your project contributed to the following themes:	

Equal Opportunities: Providing a virtual online youth club ensured that the provision was open to all young people – the aim was to provide a Welsh speaking youth club in line with the provision that is currently offered in English. All young people were warmly welcomed and encouraged to participate in all the activities. Laptops and various wifi connection devices were available for lone to those young people without suitable equipment. This was achieved.

Sustainable Development including Economic, Environmental and Social:

The need and demand were identified prior to submitting our application. The virtual sessions and two trips were both well attended by the youth members.

Through sessions delivered and active participation in consultation and questionnaires young people were given the opportunity to have a voice and say on matters important to them and what improvements they felt were need in their local communities and throughout NPT.

Due to on-going restrictions and the average age of participants within the group guest speakers to promote and market local volunteering opportunities (as restrictions are lifted) especially to develop were not deemed suitable.

Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

The Welsh Youth club assisted to close the gap of those young people most at risk of underachievement by providing sessions to increase skills, self-esteem and confidence, all will be designed to assist to reduce barriers to becoming NEET.

Accredited training courses were available alongside fun and engaging sessions, however the young people were not keen on undertaking formal qualifications as they wanted the youth club to be an informal, fun space where they could switch off, escape day to day life, make friends, relax and gain new experiences.

Opportunities linking other youth groups and organisations to work in partnership occurred and linking up with a small local charity provided back to school bags and provisions. Youth Workers were able to identify young people that would benefit from this support and provided new school bags, stationary and water bottles for those identified as needing this support.

Local money saving initiative MY TRAVEL PASS was advertised, raising awareness of cost saving travel initiatives.

Including the delivery a cooking project to cook traditional Welsh recipes and providing all young people with a slow cooker, a weekly recipe and ingredients taught young people not only cooking skills but how to create healthy, nutritious meals on a budget. Teaching young people to batch cook also encouraged budgeting and assisted some families who were struggling with food poverty to have access to a family meal without accessing foodbanks.

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

a) Summary

The project was a huge success and not only achieved the key objectives that were set out in the project proposal but also a number of unexpected positives.

During the times when schools were closed and social mixing was limited the activity packs were dropped to the houses of the young people. Parents would often say that the activity packs were a lifeline for the young people and they really looked forward to Monday as they knew their packs were coming. Parents also commented on how impressed they were with the project and how much their young person was benefiting from it.

One parent said that her daughter was really nervous about her first day in the new comprehensive but her daughter came home from school extremely happy as she had seen members of the Welsh youth club in school and had been talking to them, helping her transition. The young people gained experiences, skills and qualifications that without this project would never had experienced, all whilst having fun and making new friends.

The project achieved much more than what was set out to achieve and it has support and benefited young people who have attended and assisted to strengthen working relationships with local

Welsh medium schools in the NPT borough. It also enabled us to pilot activities that we can now be rolled out to wider community based youth clubs.

The project has also contributed to the local authorities Welsh Language Strategy.

b) Key Issues

- **Staffing**

A month into the project the activity worker handed in his notice. Staff recruitment posed difficult as the post required a fluent, confident Welsh speaker who also held or was committed to achieving a Level 3 Youth Work Qualification.

- **Labour intensive**

Not enough consideration was given when estimating the how much time would be need to be allocated to delivering activity packs, ingredients and the necessary resources throughout the Neath Port Talbot County borough to the young people. The amount of staff time it took to make up the resource packs was also underestimated. Delivering activity packs to the school during term time did assist to decrease the amount of time spent on delivering resources.

- **Engaging activities**

Creating engaging, participative online activities that catered for varied interests was challenging. Staff were very keen to ensure that activities were fun, engaging and educational without being repetitive. A bank of resources, games and activities have now been created that can be modified and adapted incorporating relevant Welsh themes, traditions and customs alongside other traditional celebrated calendar events with a Welsh twist.

- **Technical support**

Staff had to learn and adapt quickly to delivering session online. To begin with there were some technical difficulties surrounding Council licences, privileges, Microsoft Teams and HWB licences. However these were overcome and a secure, safe team was created, providing peace of mind and security to parents, young people and staff that only authorised individual were able to access the sessions.

- **OCN Qualifications**

Due to the funding only being available until December 2021 some qualifications could not be counted as achieved due to the moderation window being March 2022 and being out of the reporting timeframe. However these qualifications will be moderated and paid for by the Youth Service so all young people who have successfully completed their OCN's and achieved satisfactory moderation will achieve their qualifications.

c) What went well?

All key outcomes were achieved whilst providing a safe, fun and engaging space for young people to enjoy, make friends and gain new skills and experiences.

- Increased knowledge of Welsh culture, tradition and heritage
- Provision mainstreamed into Youth Service delivery
- Increased skills and qualifications
- Better mental health & well-being
- Reduction in social isolation

There were also a number of unexpected positives.

- Provided small opportunities and new experiences, like visiting the capital of Wales, tasting new foods, ice skating, providing craft materials and making new friends from across the Neath Port Talbot borough, that would not have occurred had the Virtual Youth Club not have been created.

- Shortlisted as finalists for Youth Work Excellence Awards in category - Welsh Language Youth Work. The Youth Club was nominated and shortlisted as finalists for the creation of the virtual Welsh language Youth Club. The judging panel commended the project for the ability to see the challenge of the pandemic as an opportunity for change and development, highlighting their approach to working with the schools as an excellent basis for developing Welsh language youth work.
- Allowed 2 trained, skilled, enthusiastic Youth Workers to retain their roles and continue using their Welsh language skills whilst embarking on their higher educational journey in English Universities.
- Strengthen working relationships and partnerships with Welsh medium schools throughout Neath Port Talbot.

d) What didn't go well?

Not enough consideration was given when estimating the how much time would be need to be allocated to delivering activity packs, ingredients and the necessary resources throughout the Neath Port Talbot County borough to the young people. The amount of staff time it took to make up the resource packs was also underestimated. Delivering activity packs to the school during term time did assist to decrease the amount of time spent on delivering resources.

Young people were not keen on undertaking formal qualifications as they wanted the youth club to be an informal, fun space where they could switch off, escape day to day life, make friends, relax and gain new experiences.

e) What could have been done differently?

Delivering activity packs to schools during term time assisted to decrease the amount of time spent on delivering resources. Although delivering to school does not allow for home visits/welfare checks to be undertaken, however providing Wales does not enter another period of lockdown welfare checks would not be needed as school staff could raise any concerns to the Youth worker on delivery of resources.

Online sessions provide a safe space for Youth workers to build professional relationships with young people signing posting to other organisations where necessary for additional support.

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			
	0.3	0.3		Confirmation email from Project Lead
LD.CL.004	Number of Pilot activities undertaken/supported			
	1	1		
LD.CL.006	Number of Information dissemination actions/promotional and/or marketing activities to raise awareness of the LDS			
	40	29	In hindsight 40 was too high for such a short project	Social media posts
LD.C.L008	Number of participants supported			
	30	107		Attendance registers
NPT01	Number of communities engaged			
	6	5		Attendance registers/school post codes
NPT03	Number of young people participating in the project			

	30	107	Attendance registers	
NPT04	Number of women participating in the project			
	15	49	Attendance registers	
NPT05	Number of Welsh speakers participating in the project			
	30	107	Attendance registers	
NPT07	Number of people with disabilities participating in the project			
	2	0	No sensitive data available from schools	
NPT10	Number of participants receiving formal training			
	30	13	Young people not keen plus further Agored mediator slots unavailable until Feb/March 2022	
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable for this project <input type="checkbox"/>				
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"/>				
d) Project Closure Financial Position against original approved: (following final claim)				
Timescales	Original Approved		Adjusted Approved	Final Closure Date
	From	To	-	22.12.21
	22.6.21	22.12.21		
e) Summary of Financial Performance				
		Original Approved	Adjusted Approved	Final Claim
Total Project Costs		12,759.10		12,168.05
RDP Funding		10,206.41		9,618.59
Levered Funding		2,552.69		2,549.46
Intervention Rates	% RDP	80%		
	% Match	20%		
		Cost Heading	Justification for under/overspend	
Under/overspend				
			Underspend as a result of less staffing costs and the Llangrannog trip not taking place.	

9. Handover contact details: For post project monitoring and evaluation activities, Welsh Government will require contact details of staff who may be able to provide assistance.

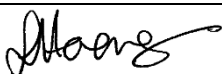
Name: Rachel Davies Designation: Grants & Marketing Youth Worker

Email: r.a.williams@npt.gov.uk Telephone: 01639 763030/07966 292282

Website address: www.npt.gov.uk

Facebook page: NPT Youth Service

Document Retention Procedures: Documents (which includes all evidence relating to your project) must be retained in a suitable format for a period of 10 years following the end of the current LEADER programme – this means at least until 2031.

Signed: 
(Project Lead)

Date: 17/03/2022

Signed: *MS Bray*

Date: 21/03/22

(RDP Manager – Lead Body)

Post Project Activities by the Local Partnerships and Local Action Group:

Define what activities need to be undertaken by the Lead Body after the project has been closed
include any post project follow up actions which may need to be undertaken following project closure:

Completed PCR to be forwarded to LAG & WRN