



This final section of the portfolio will focus on my learning and development from my time on placement, with links to my personal development plan (refer to Appendix 1).

A positive aspect during my development is that I have noticed that I automatically link theory and policy without thinking about it. For example, noticing when group dynamics and Tuckman's (1965; Kotinsky, 2019) group theory appears during sessions has enabled me to understand that, if disagreements occur, this is a normal part of group work. As a result, this has given me reassurance that I understand what I am learning about at university and has made my decision-making easier when helping to resolve those situations, as I can justify those decisions with theories and/or policies.

Additionally, linking to my personal development plan, I have delivered multiple sessions, particularly since discovering the NAOMIE needs framework (Ingram and Harris, 2001) to improve the needs of young people. My focus was around creative therapies, such as creating leaf pictures and stone painting, as they can be used for any ages and can be helpful for those with mental disorders (Mind, 2024). However, although there is limited research on its benefits

for all mental disorders, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) (2016) suggest that it is used frequently for those with schizophrenia and psychosis. This was important for me to consider as improving young people's well-being and mental health is what I am passionate about, and creative therapies such as art therapies can be helpful if they have difficulty putting their thoughts or feelings into words (NICE, 2016; Mind, 2024). In addition to this, implementing my current knowledge on the 5 ways to well-being (Health in Mind, 2024) into these sessions allowed me to uphold "educative" (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022, p.8) - one of the five pillars of youth work in practice - by using what I have learnt about maintaining well-being enabling others to learn.

Moreover, delivering a well-being workshop at university, and then delivering it at Foothold Cymru, resulted in me bringing my own ideas into placement, taking ownership and responsibility of the start of my success. Due to this, I questioned if I prioritise my own mental health enough as I advise and express the importance for others to look after their mental health, but I am "self-aware" (Perry, 2022, np) that I do not always listen to my own advice. Therefore, recently, I have set my own well-being targets. For example, setting aside at least one hour a day for screen-free time and scheduling in enough breaks when doing assignments. This has enabled me to manage my emotions as my mental health is in a good place, resulting in improved performance at placement, University, and at home.

Moving on, I have noticed the importance of having challenges for my learning to further develop my growth and overcome challenges. For example, I have worked with more young people with additional learning needs (ALN) such as Autism and ADHD. Prior to this placement I had not had much experience, and lacked confidence, working with those who have ALN. I took steps to overcome this such as building relationships with them and identifying what their triggers are, such as loud noises, adjusting the room environment to suit

their individual needs, and over time I stopped doubting myself as I was providing them with the best support that met their needs. This has inspired me to do an autism awareness course so I can understand more about what is going through their mind if they are unable to express themselves appropriately. It would also help me ensure that I have given them every opportunity to feel supported, and that I reflect on how I “respond to young people as individuals” (Sapin, 2013, p.60) to avoid making judgements.

Furthermore, understanding the importance for young people to have “experiential learning” (Cloke, 2024, np) - an active engagement process - by having that hands-on experience whilst learning and the positive impact it can have. This is not only for them, but also for myself in understanding how experiential learning is needed for my own personal and professional development too. The more experience I have had delivering multiple sessions not only has boosted my confidence, but it has also improved many skills, particularly my non-verbal communication skills, such as eye contact, facial expressions and hand gestures. Morgan (2023, np) suggests that these techniques, when used appropriately, can create a “connection”. This connection was evident with how well the young people engaged in the sessions and felt like they had a safe space to express any concerns, as they knew they had my full attention without me needing to speak. Following on from this, the importance of reflecting has been a big part of my development. Not just to see what the next step to take is, or what to take away from the experience, but also for me to look back on to see how far I have come. A favourite model of mine that I have used frequently is Kolb’s reflective model (1984; Butcher and Robertson, 2003) as it is easy to understand and it ensures that I have covered every aspect when reflecting, resulting in my reflective accounts being written effectively. Also, I now reflect more in-depth in situations, allowing me to understand my feelings a lot more, benefitting my professional and private life. One example is how I “located self” (Sapin, 2013, p.67) by understanding how my perspectives change through what I am influenced by within my immediate setting. Taking

this new understanding into consideration, I would like to try out other reflective models to further enhance my learning and depending on the scenario there may be other models that are better suited.

Lastly, I was fortunate enough to work alongside a level 4 student. This was a rewarding experience as I was able to encourage and support her through her professional and personal development. For example, she observed me over several sessions, she was able to see how I upheld the youth work values such as the National Occupational Standards (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019) throughout these sessions. This enabled her to have her own experiential learning and reflect on herself after she delivered her sessions which I supported her with throughout, as she considered me as a type of informal mentor to her. For myself, this improved setting my boundaries, the idea of “boundary management” (Ingram and Harris, 2001, p.58) enabled me to have better control when supporting her. This is because we both understood where my limits were being that we developed a wonderful friendship through placement and at university. As a result, this ensured that our personal and professional relationship did not clash when it came to working together.

To conclude, my experience at Foothold Cymru has enabled me to complete the requirements for level 5 and has allowed me to progress professionally to level 6. Also, being offered a job at this organisation has given me reassurance that I am on the right path and have the necessary skills needed to be a good youth worker. Going forward, I have requested a meeting with my learning mentor to discuss my feedback from my report, which I will take on board for my next placement. I would also like to do further courses, such as first aid, safeguarding and child protection, and like previously mentioned an autism awareness course to ensure I am up to date with recent policies and ensuring that I continue to provide young people with the safest environment possible.

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Appendix 1: Personal Development Plan

	Develop a range of activities for young people ages 11-25 that reflect the values of Youth Work	Develop a safe space for young people to express the issues that affect them	Undertake a NAOMIE needs assessment to find out the needs of young people	Lead and manage a session	Understanding and maintaining boundaries
What do you need to learn?	1) The interests of young people. 2) How the activities are suited to their personal, social and educational development. 3) Why is experiential learning important and how do young people learn from it?	1) What are the issues that affect young people? 2) Why are safe spaces important 3) How to create a positive safe space environment.	1) What is a NAOMIE needs assessment and its purpose. 2) What are the 'needs' of young people which need a focus and how I can make improvements to the lives of young people.	1) How to limit risks. 2) What are the different approaches I could use? 3) Develop my own learning style.	1) The purpose of having boundaries. 2) How to ensure that boundaries are not crossed? 3) The difference between professional and personal boundaries

Activities you will learn from (how will you learn, what will you learn from)	1) Have discussions with young people about what their interests/hobbies are and what they would like to learn. 2) Ensure that I work in accordance with the 5 Pillars of Youth Work. 3) Ensure that I uphold the National Occupational Standards values throughout sessions. For example, allowing young people to have their say on what they would like to do.	1) Have discussions with young people about the issues in society that affect them if they are comfortable to share them. Also offer one-to-one discussions if required for the personal issues affecting them. 2) Discuss with the young people about what they consider is a safe space and implement their answers within the sessions.	1) Research information on what a NAOMIE needs assessment is and its purpose. 2) Have discussions with young people on what issues they think need to have a focus. 3) Look for examples in placement that could be included in the NAOMIE assessment. For example, the projects I am involved in.	1) Risk assessments for each activity. 2) Lead and manage more than one session to gain more experience. 3) Provide youth work support to young people and colleagues. 4) Have discussions with colleagues for advice if needed and request feedback meetings with learning mentor after the session. 5) Use my current knowledge and do research on the different approaches. 6) Look back on the feedback from my previous placement to improve in my development.	1) What I believe is appropriate and aligns with my personal values. 2) Have discussions with colleagues about what is expected of me and if I have any concerns. 3) State my boundaries from the start to prevent misunderstandings.
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Appendix 2: Tracking hours sheet

Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: Kelly-Leanne Tomlinson			
Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru			
Date	Hours Completed (face to face)	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes
24/07/2023	8 hours	KLT	Fish Clay models and seashell picture making.
25/07/2023	8 hours	KLT	Fish Clay models and seashell picture making.
26/07/2023	8 hours	KLT	Fish Clay models and seashell picture making.
01/07/2023	8 hours	KLT	Silly sports session and olden days sports session.
02/07/2023	8 hours	KLT	Silly sports session and olden days sports session.
07/08/2023	8 hours	KLT	Making and having afternoon tea.
08/08/2023	8 hours	KLT	Foothold Cymru open day.
15/08/2023	8 hours	KLT	Making dream catchers and creating storyboards.
16/08/2023	8 hours	KLT	Making dream catchers and creating storyboards.
22/08/2023	8 hours	KLT	General craft session and baking.
23/08/2023	8 hours	KLT	General craft session and baking.
30/08/2023	8 hours	KLT	End of Summer party.

Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: K L Tomlinson		Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru	
Date	Hours Completed	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes

25/10/2023	2 hours	KLT	Trainee youth worker's chosen activity – Autumn picture making.
26/10/2023 (100 hours complete before the module).	2 hours	KLT	Trainee youth worker's chosen activity – Autumn picture making.
01/11/2023	3 hours	KLT	Halloween party.
08/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Watercolour pictures.
09/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Watercolour pictures.
14/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Planning with young people for upcoming events in the Build on Red project
15/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Making apple cake and biscuits.
16/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Making apple cake and biscuits.
21/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Additional planning and making pizza.
22/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Christmas pictures.
23/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Making kites.
29/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Music and movement.

Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: K L Tomlinson		Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru	
Date	Hours Completed	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes
30/11/2023	2 hours	KLT	Music and movement.
05/12/2023	3 hours	KLT	Pamper session.
06/12/2023	2 hours	KLT	Making Christmas cookies.
07/12/2023	2 hours	KLT	Making Christmas cookies.

13/12/2023	2 hours	KLT	Christmas card making.
14/23/2023	2 hours	KLT	Christmas card making.
20/12/2023 (137 hours before Xmas break)	3 hours	KLT	Christmas party.
08/01/2024	3 hours	KLT	Theatre meeting/start of planning.
09/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Making fruit cakes.
10/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Making fruit cakes.
17/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Clay work
18/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Clay work

Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: K L Tomlinson		Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru	
Date	Hours Completed	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes
23/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Stone painting.
24/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Collage picture making.
25/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Collage picture making.
30/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Stone painting/crafts
31/01/2024	2 hours	KLT	Board games.
01/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Board games.
06/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Logo designs.
07/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Valentine's cards
08/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Valentine's cards
14/02/2024	5 hours	KLT	Half term activities.

15/02/2024	5 hours	KLT	Half term activities.
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Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: K L Tomlinson		Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru	
Date	Hours Completed	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes
20/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Making Wind chimes
21/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Glass window making
22/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Glass window making
27/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Logo designs
28/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Bread Art
29/02/2024	2 hours	KLT	Bread Art
02/03/2024	3 hours	KLT	Drum and bass workshop
06/03/2024	2 hours	KLT	Stone painting, music and dancing
07/03/2024	2 hours	KLT	Stone painting, music and dancing
09/03/2024	6 hours	KLT	Performance training
	201 face-to-face hours		

Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: K L Tomlinson		Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru	
Date	Hours Completed (non-face-to-face)	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes

01/07/2023	2 hours	KLT	Own research on Foothold Cymru. For example, social media and Foothold website.
10/07/2023	3 hours	KLT	Total meetings and emails before starting placement.
12/07/2023	1 hour	KLT	First 3 way meeting.
21/07/2023	10 hours	KLT	Induction day and reading staff handbook.
25/07/2023	30 minutes	KLT	Staff meeting.
06/08/2023	4 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 1.
20/08/2023	6 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 2.
22/08/2023	1 hour	KLT	Staff meeting.
29/08/2023	7 hours	KLT	Staff meeting and planning for Summer party.

Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: K L Tomlinson		Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru	
Date	Hours Completed	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes
03/09/2023	6 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 3.
26/09/2023	5 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 4.
27/10/2023	5 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 5.
06/11/2023	6 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 6.
08/12/2023	7 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 7.
02/12/2023	7 hours	KLT	Total time researching, additional reading and writing up info sheet.
12/12/2023	1 hour	KLT	Meeting with chief executive.
14/12/2023	1 hour	KLT	Staff meeting on project planning.
16/12/2023	6 hours	KLT	A walk around Llanelli for community profile.

19/12/2023	2 hours	KLT	Christmas party planning.
21/12/2023	7 hours	KLT	Research, additional reading and writing up community profile.
16/01/2024	5 hours	KLT	Additional reading and writing up Naomie needs assessment.

Student Name: Rachael Major			Level: 5
Learning Mentor: K L Tomlinson		Placement Provider: Foothold Cymru	
Date	Hours Completed	Learning Mentors Signature	Brief outline of Session/Experiences/Outcomes
26/01/2024	7 hours	KLT	Writing up reflection 8.
29/01/2024	3 hours	KLT	Choice's substance misuse training part 1
03/02/2024	6 hours	KLT	Researching, additional reading and writing up in depth analysis
05/02/2024	3.5 hours	KLT	Housing training.
19/02/2024	4 hours	KLT	Choice's training part 2.
25/02/2024	10 hours	KLT	Total supervision meetings
04/03/2024	12 hours	KLT	Writing up risk assessments (3 hours each).
08/03/2024	8 hours	KLT	Chosen activities planning (2 hours each)
13/03/2024	1 hour	KLT	Final 3 way meeting.
15/03/2024	7 hours	KLT	Total meetings with learning mentor
18/03/2024	5 hours	KLT	Total tutorials with lecturers (30 minutes each)
21/03/2024	66 hours	KLT	Total time setting up and tidying up after sessions. (30 mins each, 66 days at placement).
	225 non-face-to-face hours		

	Total hours = 426		
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