

Leo Smith (2302380)



All pictures by Workplace colleagues (2025)

Community Profile



(Image 1, ND, discovercarmarthenshire.com)

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Introduction

This is a community profile conducted on the town of Kidwelly, where the author's current placement is based. According to Clarke-Drayson (2023, para 1), "The communities which young people are part of help to shape and change them." This is why community profiling is an important tool for youth workers. This community profile will examine the resources available to young people in Kidwelly, review demographic data on the population, and provide recommendations on how the area can better support its young people.

Figure 5 Kidwelly SWOT analysis

Key strengths • Growing population • Key local 'grounded' employers including Gravells and Burns • Kidwelly Castle and the attraction of c.30,000 visitor a year • Wider heritage and visitor attractions including Kymer's Canal and Quay, St Mary's Church, Parc y Bocs, Carmarthen Bay Holiday Park and Pembrey airport and motor racing circuit • Rail station with direct links to west Wales, Carmarthen Swansea, Cardiff, and Manchester • Wales Coast Path, National Cycle Route and extensive walking trails • High levels of community activity, organisations and local engagement	Key weaknesses • Aging population • Hidden pockets of high socio-economic deprivation within the town • Higher than average economic inactivity and low levels self-employment • Range and attractiveness of town centre business and attractions • Small number of micro businesses • Reliance on food, drink, accommodation and hospitality • Reliance on Llanelli and Carmarthen for employment • Range and availability of employment space particularly for small businesses • Prominent vacant buildings / sites • Low levels of visitor spend. • Lack of the visual use of Welsh, Welsh speaking staff and Welsh speakers establishing their own businesses.
Key opportunities • Recently secured Coastal Communities Fund supporting local marketing and branding initiatives, events and the growth of the local economy • Proposals for reopening the Industrial Museum and new town centre heritage visitor attractions • Investment to expand and create new enterprises by key local business • Re-purposing existing key sites and buildings • Investment available for SMART town infrastructure and digital technology • Support available for the circular economy and local energy generation	Key threats • Longer term economic and social effects of Covid-19 • Diversion of local business investment towards larger nearby centres e.g. Carmarthen and Llanelli

Image 2- Carmarthenshire County Council, 2021



Image 3 (Canva ND)

Kidwelly is a small rural historical coastal town in Carmarthenshire, West Wales. According to Kidwelly Town Council (ND, para 1), the area of Kidwelly is a mix of "rolling countryside, seashore

and woodland". The John Burns Foundation is situated on the edge of Kidwelly and has 20 acres of land available to use (Workplace Colleague, 2025), which includes the centre, which itself has a kitchen, conference rooms and reception area, dog parks, glamping pods, top and bottom gardens, a cabin, a woodshed, a bushcraft area, sheep fields and an orchard. According to The John Burns Foundation (ND), the Foundation itself has many different aspects. They rent out the conference rooms, dog parks and glamping pods to raise money and utilise the centre to provide exercise classes for the community. Additionally, they utilise the dog parks to train dogs and their owners to go into schools and assist children and young people with learning to read. They also facilitate the Better Tomorrow project, which focuses on working with children, young people, and adults with disabilities, utilising this space through activities such as apple picking, maintaining the garden spaces, and creating fence posts and raised beds.

Kidwelly has an industrial heritage and is one of the oldest boroughs in Wales (Kidwelly Town Council, ND). Currently, Kidwelly's surrounding areas are agricultural, with the town itself now adapted to cater for tourism and retail. The town has several historical tourist attractions, including Kidwelly Castle, a fourteenth-century bridge, and a former quay (Kidwelly Town Council, ND).



Image 4 (Canva, ND)

Ord and Mallabon (2018) argue that learning outside provides a challenge or contrast to a person's sense of 'place'. This means that learning for many young people and adults can be expanded and can improve their understanding of 'self' and the environment. Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development (1950) establishes the importance of developing identity and roles during adolescence (Orenstein and Lewis, 2022). If this is linked to the idea that learning outside

provides a challenge to one's sense of 'place', this may mean that learning outside during this stage of adolescent development may develop young people's role in looking after the environment, and they may identify with the outdoors more than their peers (Goodman, 2023).

Beames, Higgins, Nicol and Smith (2024) introduce the concept of Place-Responsive Education (PRE). Wattchow and Brown (2011, cited by Beames, Higgins, Nicol, and Smith, 2024) explain that PRE aims to respond to the social and ecological challenges faced by communities in specific locations worldwide. They argue that PRE is important because it can take place anywhere and examines both the present and the past of places. Giddens and Sutton (2021, cited by Beames, Higgins, Nicol and Smith, 2024) argue that without PRE, people will become 'rootless' or 'placeless', which leads to a breakdown in values and morality. Harrison (2010, cited by Beames, Higgins, Nicol and Smith 2024) states that repeated visits to 'places' have been shown to be very effective in encouraging young people to develop a relationship with places and their communities. This is important as relationship building is crucial to Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development.

McMullin (2018) argues that when creating a professional relationship with young people, the place and the space in which the young person is in needs to be considered. This is because certain stimuli may affect the young person's ability to engage. A barrier to building professional relationships while working outside is that there are new and diverse stimuli to distract young people, meaning they may not be able to fully experience and reap the benefits of forming a professional relationship. The types of relationships young people build are also important. Erikson (1950) argues that the relationships young people form shape them for life; therefore, if those relationships are positive, they are more likely to maintain a positive adult life. However, due to barriers in creating a positive professional relationship, young people are more likely to be exposed to antisocial behaviour (Meunier, 2021).

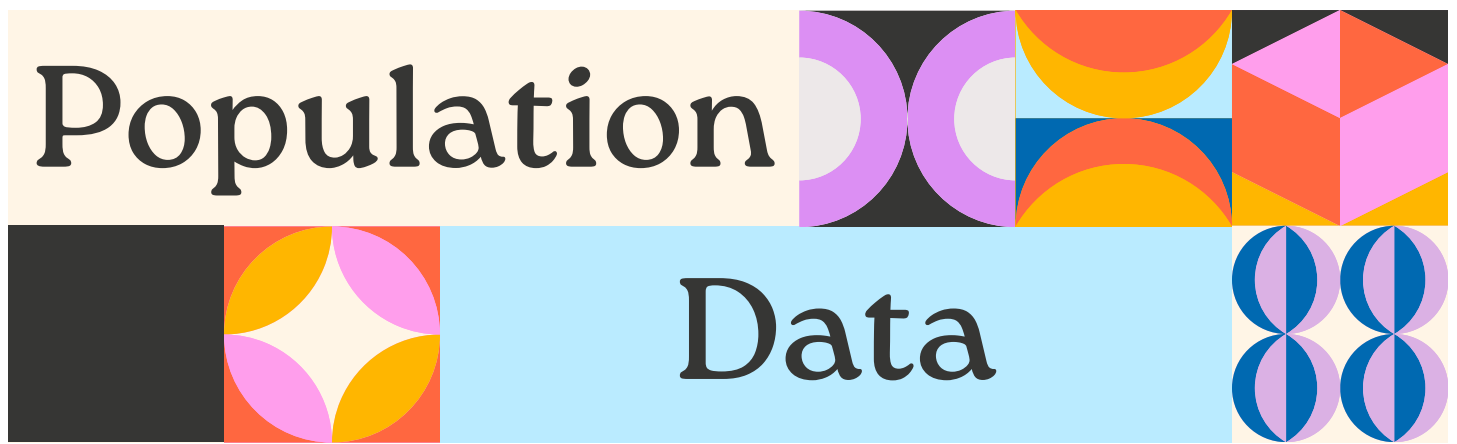


Image 5 (Canva, ND)

According to City Population (ND, para. 2), the town of Kidwelly covers an area of 11.66 km².

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the 2021 census revealed that the population of Kidwelly was 3,689, with 735 members of the population being aged 10–29, and 54.6% of the population identifying as Christian. The 2021 census also found that Kidwelly has a higher level of home ownership than the national average. Due to the town's small size, the author was only able to find information which also included the area around Kidwelly up to Trimsan.

According to the ONS (2021), 81.1% of those aged five or over are not registered as full-time students in Kidwelly and Trimsan, which indicates that a significant number of young people in Kidwelly and Trimsan may be NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). According to the Welsh Government (2025), Mid and South West Wales had a 14.2% rate of NEET young people in September 2024, the highest in Wales. According to the Welsh Government (2025) and Berry (2025), the high rate of NEET young people in Mid and South West Wales is likely due to limited employment opportunities and limited access to education. A high proportion of NEET young people are more likely to be disabled or disadvantaged.

An issue pointed out by Carmarthenshire County Council (2021) is that a lot of people living in Kidwelly rely on Carmarthen or Llanelli for employment, this is evidenced by the 2021 census which find that 40.9% of those aged sixteen or over travel more than 10km to work, and only 21.5% travel less than 10km to work, with 20.8% working mainly from home. There are pandemic-related statistics related to this variable, which may affect the number of people who work from home; however, these statistics do show that most people living in Kidwelly and Trimsan rely on

travelling to outside towns for employment. This suggests that one of the potential reasons why many young people in Mid and South West Wales are NEET is that they cannot travel to areas with more employment opportunities. However, from September 2025, for young people with a free MyTravelPass, bus fares will be capped at £1, with day tickets priced at £3, potentially allowing more young people to travel to their place of employment.



Image 6 (Canva, ND)

One of the social assets of Kidwelly is the John Burns Foundation, a community centre that is accessible to all. Another social asset is the Princess Gwenllian Centre, another community centre that all can access. However, there are few resources available specifically for young people. Currently, there are only two youth-specific groups in Kidwelly: the 1st Kidwelly Scouts and the Better Tomorrow project, provided by the John Burns Foundation. The town had a third youth provision, Kidwelly Youth Action; however, this centre has been closed for reasons the author cannot determine.

In 2021, Carmarthenshire County Council created the Kidwelly Sustainable Economic Growth Plan. This initiative was established to economically revive the town and its surrounding areas by creating new employment and economic development opportunities, thereby enhancing the social, environmental, and cultural sustainability of the town and its surroundings. This plan has led to Kidwelly starting to become a 'Smart Town', according to Davies (2022, p.1), a Smart Town embraces "new technologies to achieve economic, social and environmental benefits". According

to a Facebook post by Davies (2023), funding has been allocated to enhance the town hall and town square. Additionally, a bid focusing on cycle and footpaths has been started.

However, according to the UK Parliament (2025), there are many critiques and challenges to creating sustainable development plans. These challenges challenge its practicality, effectiveness, and fairness. They argue that most growth comes at the expense of the environment. They also argue that there is a lack of clear strategies and measurable targets and that the goals of these plans are too broad to be measured.



Image 7 (Canva, ND)

Based on this research, the author recommends that the Welsh Government and Kidwelly Town Council promote the fact that young people can access bus travel for a reduced cost with a MyTravelPass, which may encourage them to travel for employment purposes. Additionally, there are numerous opportunities for Kidwelly Town Council to establish youth groups. For example, with the help of young people, they could fundraise to reopen Kidwelly Youth Action, which would meet the National Occupational Standard for engaging young people in the development of youth work (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019). Longitudinal research conducted by the UK Government (2024, para. 2) revealed there is “a clear association” between participating in youth work provision and positive outcomes relating to young people’s physical and mental health; it also showed improvement in anti-social behaviour and engagement in education. This research highlights the importance of youth provision, thereby highlighting the need for additional youth provision in Kidwelly.

An opportunity for the John Burns Foundation is to focus on place-responsive education (PRE), which Beames, Higgins, Nicol and Smith (2024) suggest helps young people form a connection to their community and the environment in which they live. Working with the community is a key area of the National Occupational Standards of youth work and supports “inclusive and collective working” (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019, Signpost, No 37). According to the National Youth Agency (2024), PRE in youth work enhances engagement and relevance by including activities aligned with local needs and experiences, which increases participation and provides better outcomes.

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Image 2– Carmarthenshire County Council, 2021

Image 3– Canva, ND

Image 4– Canva, ND

Image 5– Canva, ND

Image 6– Canva, ND

Image 7– Canva, ND

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In-depth SWOT analysis of the project

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STRENGTHS

- Being outdoors benefits wellbeing
- All staff are extremely enthusiastic
- Gives young people the opportunity to learn life skills (e.g cooking)
- Educates young people on the natural environment
- Young people centred
- Is a new and developing area of youth work
- Accessible to young people and adults with cognitive disabilities

- Not all young people can access
- Only one staff member is youth work qualified
- We cannot force young people to engage
- Does not teach young people to advocate for their rights
- Funding reliant
- There are many barriers to working outdoors- e.g weather
- Limited number of staff

OPPORTUNITIES

- Utilising the community aspect of the foundation and enabling young people to get involved
- Allowing outside youth groups to access the space
- Running education sessions for families on growing your own food on a budget
- Having an LGBTQ+ group
- Having the young people assist the foundation in fundraising (e.g. making things to sell)
- Teach young people to use their voice to advocate for environmental change
- Involve young people in the development of the centre and funding bids

THREATS

- Only funded for five years
 - If people stop coming there will be no project to run
 - The changing environment and whether it will be safe to work outside in the rising heat
 - Relies on the organisations safeguarding polices, therefore we are limited in how we can protect ourselves
 - New organisations very similar are popping up around the world, therefore we face a lot of competition
 - Having unqualified workers means they are more likely to spread misinformation

Introduction

The John Burns Foundation is a community centre founded by philanthropist John Burns in 2006 (The John Burns Foundation, ND). As part of their level six placement, the author worked in the 'Better Tomorrow' project, which works with children, young people, and adults in the outdoors, kitchen, and woodworking. According to Youthworknews (2017, para 1), a

SWOT analysis is an “integral part of any youth organisation“ because, according to CIPD (2025), it allows an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. This SWOT analysis will examine the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strengths

Image 1 (Canva, ND)

Pillman (2022, p.7, quoted by Welsh Government, WG, 2023) suggests that “Outdoor learning has become increasingly important over the last few years, especially as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic”. Schirp (2018, p.40) argues that a benefit of outdoor education is that it develops children and young people as “whole individuals” rather than being reduced to their future working capability. Boultan and Thomas (2022, quoted by WG, 2023) state this may be because outdoor education connects children and young people to the natural environment, helping them build empathy for nature and reflect on their own impact on the environment. This helps them develop a sense of ‘place’ in the outdoors. Additionally, Boultan and Thomas (2022, quoted by WG, 2023, p.8) state that “Children of all ages develop the important skills of confidence, resilience, empathy, assessing risk, problem solving, and teamwork while learning outdoors”. It can also be argued that outdoor learning pushes young people’s boundaries, as Halliday (2000) suggests that learning outdoors is distinctly different from a classroom environment, and this disturbs routine patterns of behaviour.

The Better Tomorrow project offers young people a form of informal education. Jeffs and Ord (2018) argue that most outdoor education programs are based on predetermined principles,

following strict programmes. However, the Better Tomorrow does not do this, because of the youth work-centred approach, it focuses on informally educating children and young people on important subjects such as sustainability and the environment.

The project also gives young people the opportunity to learn vegetarian recipes using the vegetables they help grow in the garden, teaching them the importance of healthy eating. According to Youth Health Data (2021, para 2), “only one in eight young people eat five portions of fruit and veg a day”. Teaching them more vegetable-based recipes will encourage them to cook these at home, promoting a healthier lifestyle. According to the NHS (ND), having a healthy diet means young people are more likely to be confident and able to learn, and they are also less likely to experience health issues later in life.



Image 2 (Canva, ND)

While the Better Tomorrow project has many strengths, it is limited in its capacity to support many young people. During their time on placement, the author helped support two school groups, together consisting of ten young people, all of whom received youth worker support. However, due to limited facilities, other young people who receive youth worker support or those who fly under the radar do not have the opportunity to partake in the project. This is a missed opportunity, as the author believes that each young person should have the opportunity to learn about the outdoors and gain important life skills such as cooking and woodworking, thus fulfilling the “education” element of the Five Pillars of Youth Work (Youth

Work in Wales Review Group, 2022). Additionally, the project does not “assist young people to recognise, realise and defend their rights” and misses the opportunity to “encourage engagement of young people in their community” (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019 YW14, F1).

According to Tinney (2023), there are many barriers to facilitating learning outdoors, such as the need for professionals to receive specialist training so they can learn to appreciate the outdoors and then pass this on in their teaching. Additionally, Tinney (2023, p.9) suggests that “In Wales and the UK there still appears to be risk aversity”, with practitioners worrying about the risks that learning outdoors can pose, and many risk assessments and safety procedures must be put into place before an activity outdoors can be completed. This creates a barrier to learning outdoors, as many practitioners may not have the time to complete such risk assessments. This also means that practitioners will not be promoting healthy risk-taking, something that Long (2018) argues is an important aspect of youth work.



Image 3(Canva, ND)

As listed above, the project has many missed opportunities. For example, the project could utilise the Foundation's community aspect and include young people in community activities such as exercise classes, which many older members of the community in Kidwelly attend. This may help alter the community's view of young people, as many communities view young people as “naive, entitled or lazy” (iwill movement, 2024, para 2).

The Foundation also has an opportunity to provide a space for groups to access. According to Adeaga (2025), 'space' is important in developing identity for young people. For example, if a local LGBTQ+ group was interested in accessing an outdoor space, then the John Burns Foundation could provide this. The author is currently campaigning for this to be set up and believes it is important for LGBTQ+ people, especially young people, to have their own group; something that the UCLA Centre for the Developing Adolescent (2025) argues helps young LGBTQ+ people thrive. Additionally, Swaim (2022) states that learning outdoors can boost people's physical and mental health in many ways. Looking after mental health is especially important for LGBTQ+ young people, as Stonewall (2020) found that half of LGBTQ+ young people have experienced depression.

Additionally, the Foundation can invite other outside youth groups to use their space for sessions. For example, they could invite local youth groups from Carmarthenshire, who do not have access to an outdoor space, to complete a session on biodiversity and sustainability. Inviting outside organisations would increase the Foundation's social capital, as Steenis, Boat and Seward (2025) explain that when young people and adults collaborate, this allows young people to access networks, develop skills and confidence and create change. Recent research conducted by SEEd Youth Listening Project (ND) found that young people wanted to make a positive difference to climate change, but require more education to do so. The Foundation could meet these needs and provide this education, which in turn supports young people to advocate for their interests, something which is important to the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.



Threats

One threat to the project, as it is to all youth work organisations, is funding. Bewsher (2025) reports that between 2010-11 and 2023-24, there has been a £16.6M cut to funding of youth work in Wales. The Better Tomorrow project has been funded for five years and has currently run for three. Staff running the project are unsure whether the project will continue after funding runs out (Workplace Colleague, 2025). While the John Burns Foundation itself is founded by philanthropist John Burns, it is still a charity and relies on funding and donations like any other charity organisation.

Another threat to the Better Tomorrow project is that it relies on school-based youth workers to bring young people to it. If school-based youth workers fall ill, as happened during the placement, the project will have no young people to work with. The project also works with disabled adults who face the same barrier; if their support stops bringing them, the project will have no one to work with.

Additionally, due to the changing climate, the Health and Safety Executive (ND) explains that the rising heat due to climate change poses a risk to those working outside and increases the risk of heat-related health issues. Tinney (2024, p.9) points out that practitioners in the UK are particularly "risk adverse", meaning that youth organisations and schools will be less likely to allow their young people to work outdoors.

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Image 1– Canva (ND)

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Summary of own learning and development

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(Image 1 + 2 – Leo Smith, 2025)

The John Burns Foundation was another completely different placement, and I really enjoyed it. Most of the aspects of the placement would not be traditionally counted as youth work, as I worked with those under the age of eleven and over the age of twenty-five. However, as one of my colleagues explained to me on my first day, I would still use my youth work skills with those above and below my usual range of work. I found this to be true, and by experiencing different age groups with differing abilities, it built my confidence and my experience, broadening my ideas as to what I would like to do in the future. This is a summary of my learning and development

during this placement, where I will critically evaluate activities I ran and link them to my professional development plan.

According to the University of Wales Trinity St David (2025). A Youth Work Graduate should be able to demonstrate: understanding, developing and managing their professional role, fostering demographic and inclusive practice, maintaining and developing organisations which support practice, facilitate personal and collective learning and enabling multi-agency working. During my time at the John Burns Foundation, I managed to fulfil most of the aims of my professional development plan. I fulfilled the aim of working in accordance with the Five Pillars of Youth Work (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022) by utilising current activities from the Royal Horticultural Society's website and tailoring them to specific groups. I did this by facilitating activities, which I created in collaboration with my colleagues, such as creating a bee post for solitary bees, creating a dead hedge and wild flower planting. During these activities, informal discussions took place about how we were helping biodiversity by creating habitats and food for wild animals. The informal discussions took place instead of creating activity worksheets as a way of enabling informal education. Smith (1989) argues that 'informal' is used to indicate something unconventional, or is defined by using everyday conversational language, rather than the written word. This shows that discussion is an informal way of educating. Davies, Taylor and Thompson (2015) argue that informal education achieves the goal of 'educating' young people more easily than formal learning.

Another aim of my professional development plan I managed to fulfil was working with young people and others, as I described in my SWOT analysis. I felt that the John Burns Foundation could use the community aspect of its work to do more intergenerational work between young people and the older generation. This already took place with the younger school group, as it took place at the same time we had a gardening group for the older generation. It was nice to see the conversations between the two groups and the activities taking place. However, I still felt as though intergenerational activity was still needed for the youth group. When I brought the idea to my supervisor, he suggested that I utilise the fact that a chair exercise class took place at the same time the youth group normally finished. I then consulted with the young people as to whether they would be happy to take part in this class, and they were. According to UNICEF (2022), consulting with young people allows policymakers and practitioners to gain young

people's views on a particular topic and learn from their experiences, which is why it is an important tool to utilise in youth work. We reminded them that they needed to be respectful during this class and split them up among the group. The class went well, and most of the young people engaged well. I later found out that one young person did the exercises at home with their Nan, and they also continued to attend the classes as they enjoyed them. Taking part in this class fulfilled the aims of the Youth Work National Occupational Standards (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019) by encouraging young people to engage with their community (F1) and supporting inclusive and collective working (Signpost No 37).

Some of the aims of my professional development plan were about educating myself. I aimed to educate myself about biodiversity, how to engage with neurodivergent young people and to learn from my mistakes by engaging in critical reflection. According to the National Youth Agency (2025), engaging in critical reflection allows a youth worker to improve their practice, set meaningful goals, and continue to enhance support and outcomes for young people. I also observed how the qualified youth workers I worked with engaged with the young people and utilised this. I met my aims by utilising the knowledge of those around me about biodiversity, and also researching how a certain activity may help biodiversity or link with sustainability, so this could be discussed during the activity.

I also observed how the youth workers engaged with the young people, especially with those who were neurodivergent. I tried to make sure that all the activities I ran suited both those who were neurodivergent and those who were not. For example, when doing pumpkin carving, I offered the option of painting the pumpkins instead of carving them and made sure to praise both groups for the work they did outside, even if their efforts were different. I did find it hard to make sure every activity was accessible, especially with woodwork, as it can be dangerous. However, I learnt that if the young people's engagement levels differed, that did not matter, as long as they enjoyed the activities and were safe. This fits in with the Principles and Purposes of Youth Work in Wales (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022) as it made sure the activities were inclusive by assessing individuals' needs.

I did have to adapt two of the aims of my professional development plan. I aimed to assist young people to become advocates for biodiversity in their own community, and to use wildflower seed bombs. I also wanted to promote self-care and provide optional assignments around self-care. I

adapted these by adapting the way I viewed the young people's community. Because we were unsure as to whether the young people would be allowed to wildflower seed bomb in their own community, we adapted to way we viewed their community and used the centre instead. We also encouraged the young people to ask if they could do this activity in their schools, which I know some of the young people did. They were also encouraged by this, and some started raised beds in their own gardens. While I did not meet the aim of encouraging them to advocate for environmental change, I did start them thinking about how they can make their spaces more biodiverse and wildlife-friendly.

Additionally, I did not provide the young people optional self-care assignments to do at home; however, we did have a discussion about how they feel when they are working outside, and some said "cold and bored", while others said they felt "calm". I then encouraged them to think about these feelings whenever they felt stressed, and encouraged them to go outside if they could. For those who did not connect with being outside, I asked how they felt when they were doing craft, and they said they felt "relaxed", so I encouraged them to take part in craft activities when they were feeling stressed. I am unsure as to whether the young people did this at home; however, hopefully, it gave them some ideas of what to do when they are feeling overwhelmed. This is important as the Mental Health Foundation (2018, para 1) reported that "39% of young people reported suicidal feelings due to stress".

While I did not meet all the aims of my professional development plan, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the John Burns Foundation, and I feel that I have built my confidence and ability to run activities, even if I have not personally planned them. This is a huge development for me, as I would normally panic and not be able to run activities if I did not have step-by-step instructions on how to do them. Additionally, I have gained confidence in working with the community and the older generation, including those with disabilities, and realised that you can form similar relationships as you can with young people. My time at the Foundation has influenced my way of thinking, and I hope I can do something similar when I graduate.

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Image 2– Leo Smith (2025)

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