

***Social Media and the effects it has on
the health and wellbeing of young
people: A Youth Work Perspective.***

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1. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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3. This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.

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CONTENTS

DECLARATION FORM & AI DECLARATION.....	2
CONTENTS.....	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
ABSTRACT.....	6
ACRONYM	7
1. INTRODUCTION.....	8
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	13
3. METHODOLOGY/METHODS.....	21
4. PRESENTATION OF DATA	29
5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	41
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	49
7. REFERENCES.....	53
8. APPENDICES	58
8.1. Appendices 1 Ethics Form.....	59
8.2. Appendices 2 Participant Letter, Consent Form, Questionnaire.....	83

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ABSTRACT

There has been much consideration towards the impacts that social media has on a young person's life, which is why the author has decided to conduct this research project which explores: Social media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work Perspective.

The author made this decision to investigate what it is that Youth Workers can offer young people, to ensure their safety while they use social media.

The purpose of the research is to promote healthy use of social media for all young people, while also exploring Welsh Government Acts and policies. The author's aim was to seek ways in which Youth Workers can do this, in a safe and non-judgemental environment. This research project was conducted with a qualitative approach, using questionnaires which were completed by seven Youth Work professionals, who work with young people daily. The research was analysed using a thematic approach.

This research has provided significant insight into the social media world that many young people are living in, some of which is very positive, there are however, many negative factors that has been considered. The author has provided suggestions as to how Youth Workers can support young people with their use of social media, while promoting safe and healthy ways where they can continue to enjoy the benefits that social media can bring.

The author has also provided recommendations at the end of her conclusion, as a means of delving deeper into the social media world that young people seem to thrive on.

ACRONYM

PSMU	Problematic Social Media Use
CYP	Children and Young People
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WG	Welsh Government
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work Perspective.

In recent years, concerns over young people using social media have grown, with many reporting that it has a negative impact on a young person's life. Sperling (2025) has shared research results which suggest that the younger a person is when they start to use social media, the more negatively this can impact on their emotional well-being, adding that girls will use social media to show everyone what they have been up to with pals, especially if one friend has been left out, while males often become more physically violent.

Zsila and Reyes (2023), however, view both sides of the dispute, explaining that while social media can be positive in the sense that it can help people to connect and stay in contact, it supports young people to discover others with similar interests. Zsila and Reyes (2023) discuss how social media provided support for so many throughout the pandemic. Zsila and Reyes (2023) also discuss how it can have very different outcomes for many with negative impacts such as dissatisfaction with body image, it can contribute towards addiction and can be the source of cyberbullying amongst young people, to name a few.

This dissertation will explore the positive and negative impacts that social media has on young people. This will be done with support from professional's working within a Youth Service and a school setting, in West Wales, who have kindly agreed to complete questionnaires. The focus will be to determine how the professionals view social media, and to determine the impact it can have on young people.

This will provide opportunity to explore interventions from a Youth Work perspective, whereby the author will consider various methods of how Youth Workers can best support young people who may be vulnerable when online and using social media.

Papamichail and Sharma (2019) reported how children and young people between the ages of 5 and 15 years were on average spending up to 5 hours and 24 minutes using social media, every day. This was despite them being in school for 5 days of the week and then sleeping anywhere between 10 and 16 hours a night.

The BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] (2017) discussed Ofcom's statistics, which suggest that half of young people between the ages of 11 and 12 years are illegally using social media, explaining that the legal age for a young person to use social media is 13 years of age. They went on to explain that many parents were unaware of social media having an age limit.

The dissertation will also explore ways in which Youth Workers can promote healthy use of social media platforms, focussing on the length of time a young person uses social media, and by conducting conversations that ensure young people understand the legal guidelines that come with online usage. The author will also explore ways in which legal guidelines could be made more stringent, to ensure that young people under the legal age are unable to gain access.

By conducting this investigation, the author believes that it will pave the way forward for Youth Workers to be able to support young people when they are faced with issues surrounding social media. This research can establish healthy ways with young people and with young people in mind, to be able to promote healthy use of social media. While considering the rights of the young person, it

would not be fair for the author to seek information that may cause harm to the young person, for this reason the author has decided to conduct research via the professionals working with them, however any findings in this research will be used to promote a more positive experience for young people using social media. It will aim to protect young people from further harm, because the author will not be in direct contact with them, the professionals will act as advocates on their behalf, sharing negative and positive experiences. The author thinks that by incorporating the perspectives and viewpoints of both young people and the experts who work closely with them, this will give a good idea of how social media impacts young people and whether social media is necessary to a young person's life.

They will have a good understanding of the negative and positive impacts that young people face when using social media.

The author hopes to gain knowledge from both a positive and negative view, to enable her to determine if social media platforms are useful and helpful to young people. The author will also consider how Youth Workers can better support young people when they have had negative experiences of social media, whereby they feel confident in seeking support, to improve their wellbeing. The author will also consider how Youth Workers may help young people who have had bad experiences with social media, so they feel comfortable asking for help, to enhance their wellbeing.

The author will conduct research on Welsh Government guidelines available to young people, along with the Online Safety Act (2023) and various journals surrounding the use of social media by young people.

A qualitative approach will be utilised to conduct this research, by preparing questionnaires for professionals, to establish the impacts of social media on a young person's wellbeing. Vaughan (2021) explains how qualitative research is best used when looking at more detailed data, where a deeper understanding of the subject can be gained. Numbers are not normally used for this type of research. Christiansen (2021) adds how qualitative research allows room to explore new information along with evolving information, in an environment that is ever changing. She explains how it is also ideal for taking opinions and beliefs of others on board.

The questionnaire will have 13 questions and will be sent to 8 professionals working with young people, either in a Youth Work environment or an educational setting, to determine the effects of social media. This will allow the author to consider ways in which Youth Work professionals can support young people with social media and promote a safer and healthier way for young people to use social media.

NSPCC [National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children] (2024) explain that social media can often provide young people with opportunity to access harmful content, there is also the worry of young people being exposed to risks of online abuse. However, The National Centre for Biotechnology Information (date unknown) argues that social media can have a positive impact on young people, for some it can give them a sense of belonging, while for others it's a means of staying connected to family, in particular for young people in care.

There are many arguments surrounding the use of social media, which is what interests the author, and engaging with the professionals who work with young people on a daily basis, will help determine an outcome as to whether social media is a necessary means of communication.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has become an aspect of everyday life that appears to be constantly changing and evolving. This literature review will explore the impacts that social media platforms have on young people, from both positive and negative perspectives, while exploring how a Youth Work approach would benefit young people and their knowledge of social media.

Key literature will be explored from sources to include journals, books and Government guidelines. They will introduce the key themes that are evident throughout this research.

The themes that are apparent whilst engaging in relevant literature include young people experiencing a sense of belonging within communities that may include their friendship circles and/ or online forums/ chat groups. The benefits this can have on a young person's well-being, and how it can provide them with an identity and/ or individuality, more commonly if they have found themselves as part of a community whereby, they feel more accepted. E.g. LGBTQ+ groups or ADHD groups. There is also reason to believe that social media can support young people in being more confident. The author knows that in this instance, a Youth Work setting could be a positive factor for young people who are looking to be accepted, because within Youth Work there is no judgment, it is an environment where positive relationships are promoted, both amongst peers as well as with Youth Workers, as outlined in the Youth Work National Occupational Standards Functional Map (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019). Jeffs and Smith (1987) understand that the role of a Youth Worker is to socialise and to promote socialising, in a safe space where there is no judgment, but simply to encourage young people to be confident individuals.

There are negative aspects to young people using social media, according to Adam (2021) whereby literature discusses online bullying, lack of/ and interruption to sleep, young people becoming anxious if they don't receive 'likes' or if they are ghosted, meaning that they have tried to connect with someone but not received a response.

Papamichail and Sharma (2019) reported that some young people use social media so frequently that they struggle to engage with people face to face, with concerns that the younger a person is when they start using social media, the more it will impact their well-being as they get older and add discussions surrounding addiction. A Youth Work approach would be a good distraction for young people who rely too much on social media, because as outlined in the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services [CWVYS] (2018), Youth Work is inclusive and will enhance a young person's social skills because it provides young people with opportunities, which often does not include using a screen.

Another focus will be on that of the movement in Australia whereby they have made the decision to ban all young people under the age of 16 from using social media, this ban will commence later in 2025. Lefevre (2024) explores why the move is positive explaining the importance of keeping young people safe online and notes that for some young people the move could cause more harm because they rely on social media so much.

The Impact of social media

Montag et al (2024) conducted qualitative research surrounding problematic social media use [PSMU], whereby they explain how research suggests that

when young people use social media too frequently, suggesting that this is an indication of addiction which can lead to them becoming more impulsive and experiencing issues surrounding attention and concentration. Montag et al (2024) go on to explain how as a result it can highly impact a young person's well-being, as well as affect their education. PSMU affects a young person's cognition, changing the way they process information and how they learn and understand new information.

However, Allen et al (2014) conducted qualitative research ten years previous, relating it to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), suggesting that social media is in fact a positive aspect of a young person's life whereby it can provide young people with a sense of belonging and giving them the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships of a social nature. Allen et al (2014) explain the importance of a young person being accepted and experiencing a sense of belonging, explaining that the social connections that a young person holds can affect their psychosocial wellbeing, a lack of this can contribute towards feeling lonely, anxious and depressed.

The virtual college (2024) conducted research explaining how one in five young people between the ages of eleven and nineteen have been a victim to cyberbullies. They explain how social media has made it very difficult for young people to switch off their screens, describing it as an addiction due to young people having the constant urge to check if their last post has enough 'likes', or if their profile has enough followers.

Ehmke (2025) has echoed this in their research by interviewing clinical experts, they suggest that cyberbullying issues have increased, they explain that social

media make it easier for young people to say things that they would not consider saying direct to a person's face. They explain how this is more common in females, suggesting that females are less likely to want to engage in conflict when they are face- to- face, suggesting that such actions can cause high anxiety and self-doubt for the recipient. Ehmke (2025) explains that often this is because females generally are more likely to compare themselves to other people and/ or celebrities.

Ugwu et al (2023) suggests that a young person's well- being is in jeopardy when considering PSMU. They explain how a young person is more likely to experience anxiety and depression, which can sometimes lead to them taking their own life. They explain how often this can be caused when people they know portray a perfect lifestyle through social media. They go on to say that issues that young people also struggle with because of PSMU include body image and eating disorders.

The virtual college (2024) explain how young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four are more frequently denied support or treatment for issues that may be affecting their psychological health, in comparison to any other age group. However, the virtual college (2024) go on to explain how a young person can be best supported with social media use, such as- giving advice, and understanding where they could find support, when communicating with them, ensure that young people have your full attention. The virtual college (2024) also suggest promoting healthy choices by eating well, getting plenty of exercise and ensuring that young people get sufficient rest and sleep. Youth Workers could encourage young people to spend quality time away from the screen by organising activities where all young people are included.

Furthermore, Tibber and Silver (2022) describe how social media can have a positive effect on a young person's well-being because it can support young people to foster self-acceptance. Tibber and Silver (2022) explain that this is because a young person will often check their own profile on a social media platform, whereby they will have posted content that celebrates all the good things that they may have experienced or encountered.

Tibber and Silver (2022) then go on to explain how young people will often conduct a search on social media with a specific goal in mind, this can often lead to social connections or information that young people would like, this can often leave them with a sense of achievement and again a sense of belonging, which in turn can heighten a young person's well-being.

Furthermore, Augustine (2022) celebrates the positive aspects of social media, suggesting that he enjoys receiving birthday wishes every year from family and friends. Augustine's (2022) writing style is biblical, often referring to the bible and how his belief helps him with the few pressures he feels that social media brings. Augustine (2022) also discusses Government and politics, suggesting that social media can provide young people as well as adults with a voice when discussing these topics.

However, Maskell (2020) discusses her own experiences of growing up surrounded by the impacts of social media, suggesting that she started using social media platforms at the age of 13. Maskell (2020) discusses having lost two friends due to the influences and algorithms that comes with social media.

Maskell (2020) also compares social media to cigarettes, suggesting that it should also come with a health warning. The author has considered the role of a Youth Worker and believes that with a Youth Work approach social media would

be a far more positive experience, because as highlighted in the Youth Work National Occupational Standards Functional Map (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019), Youth Work is about educating young people on the risks along with showing young people how they can use social media to their advantage, in a positive manner

A Social Media Ban

Nogrady (2024) describes how Australia will bring in a social media ban for all young people under the age of 16 years, with intention of the move being put in place before the end of 2025. Nogrady (2024) argues that simply banning young people from using social media could be doing more harm than good, suggesting that when looking at online issues like bullying, she believes that bullying will happen regardless of whether young people are online or not. Nogrady (2024) suggests that young people will likely find loopholes whereby they will be able to use social media despite a ban being put in place. She also discusses how young people who may be isolated from their own communities often relies on social media to be able to engage with others, suggesting that the move could have a big impact on them.

However, Zach (2025) suggests that the new movement has conducted new conversation amongst other nations who are also now considering the removal of social media platforms as a means of supporting young people's well-being. Zach (2025) goes on to discuss how the US put a ban in place to stop people using the Tik Tok social media platform, back in January 2025, she goes on to discuss how this movement could see Tik Tok being removed from the internet by the next deadline. Zach (2025) also voices concern that while social media

platforms may be banned, that if young people really do want to get online, they will find alternative methods which may not be as regulated as the social media platforms that we know today, this could be a worry for both young people and their parents/ carers. Zach (2025) also mentions how social media platforms can bring comfort to many young people, in particular where specific groups are concerned, young people often join online groups whereby they feel more accepted than they do when they are amongst their peers, in particular with groups to include LGBTQ+ and ADHD, where they feel they can engage with other young people who may be facing the same issues and challenges as themselves.

While the Welsh Government (2023) has set out guidelines to support parents and guardians, and guidelines to support schools with the use of social media, the author was unable to find guidelines targeted at young people. This is another reason why Youth Work intervention would be beneficial for young people accessing social media platforms.

Conclusion

To conclude, literature such as Tibber and Silver (2022) suggests that social media has many positive factors where it has been known to support young people, especially with their well-being, it makes them feel included, it gives them a space where they can engage with like-minded people. Social media platforms have become a space where they can share their stories with family and friends, as well as giving them an opportunity to engage with them, especially family or friends that perhaps they would not normally meet up with on a regular basis.

However, it is quite evident that most of the literature presented speaks negatively about young people using social media, the literature certainly opens up conversation about how as Youth Workers, we can begin to break down the barriers surrounding social media, and how we can promote safe and healthy use for its young people. According to Ananya (2023) algorithms are a big concern because it means that a young person only must view a certain content once for similar content to keep appearing on their screens, which can provide young people with unhealthy interests in certain topics and trends. Cyberbullying is another big concern as highlighted by both the Virtual College (2024) and Ehmke (2025) during the literature review, which explains that while many young people find it easy to say and do unkind things behind a screen, for the young person being targeted it can have undesirable consequences.

3. METHODOLOGY/METHODS

This chapter will discuss the methodology behind the author's dissertation topic, which explores and researches '*Social Media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work perspective*'. The dissertation will discuss how Youth Workers can better support young people using social media. NSPCC (2024) explain that social media can often provide young people with opportunity to access harmful content, there is also the worry of young people being exposed to risks of online abuse. However, The National Centre for Biotechnology Information (date unknown) argues that social media can have a positive impact on young people, for some it can give them a sense of belonging, while for others it's a means of staying connected to family, especially for young people in care.

There are many arguments surrounding the use of social media, which is what interests the author, and engaging with the professionals who work with young people daily, will help determine an outcome as to whether social media is a necessary means of communication.

Methodological Approach

The author has chosen a qualitative approach to her research, with the understanding that engaging with professionals who work with young people and who have discussions surrounding social media, will be beneficial in gaining insights into how young people are affected by social media usage.

Thomas (2016) explains that qualitative research is often used to gain understanding of opinions of the people at the heart of the research project.

Thomas (2016) goes on to say that listening to people's opinions can lead the way to gaining further information and pave the way for new information.

The author recognises that by engaging with Youth Workers, teachers and other professionals who work with young people, they will be able to discuss the positive aspects that social media platforms bring, along with the dilemmas that continue to be raised. The professionals will also be able to share ways in which healthy social media usage can be promoted while explaining methods that work well for them when supporting young people who may be experiencing issues or anxiety because of social media. The author expects the professionals to be willing to discuss any concerns that they have themselves regarding young people using social media, relying on social media and becoming addicted to social media.

Laal and Ghodsi (2011) suggest that when professionals come together to share views and opinions, then this makes for a form of collaboration, where everyone can learn together and find new outcomes and approaches. Act for Youth (2025) understand that when teams and professionals collaborate, they are working together to achieve a set goal, explaining that when collaboration is a success, professionals become more competent and accountable in their role. The author knows that engaging with other professionals and listening to their views will enhance her knowledge, which she can then share in her research, with a view to enhancing the Youth Work approach to social media and the issues that surround it.

Methods

The qualitative approach will be to ask professionals working within a Welsh council to complete and return a questionnaire that has been prepared by the

author, that will encourage them to engage in discussion surrounding their professional approach when working with young people who use social media on a regular basis.

All questionnaires will be held on record until a final grade has been awarded to the author, once the grade has been awarded, all questionnaires will be destroyed by the author to ensure confidentiality is adhered to.

The questionnaire will provide an opportunity for the professionals completing it to provide an e-mail address, should they be willing to answer further questions if they provide answers that open conversation. This will only be done if the author finds an answer particularly interesting, and wishes for the professional to elaborate further, in the interest of the dissertation.

If a Teams meeting is conducted for further conversation, a voice recorder will be used to ensure that accurate information is recorded. Any recordings that are made will be kept confidential and will be secured with a password. The recordings and any other data will be discarded once the author has received her grade. The data protection Act will be abided by as well as university procedures for data protection.

All data will be stored on the cloud, the author has considered it's two factor authentication, encryption and back up facilities and understands this will be the safest way to hold the data until it has been destroyed.

Working with professionals will provide a good opinion on how social media affects young people, because it will be taking on the views and opinions of the young people along with the professionals working closest to them. As outlined in the Youth Work National Occupational Standards Functional Map (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019), a Youth Workers role is to build positive and

meaningful relationships with young people, while paying attention to the things that they enjoy, along with their health and wellbeing. As agreed by Opie and Williams (no date) who discuss the five pillars of Youth Work and its duty to educate, empower and be inclusive, while encouraging young people to participate and be expressive.

Groundwater- Smith et al (2015) explain the importance of engaging with young people when conducting research that refers to them. When this is not possible, it is still important that their voice is heard. This is done through advocacy. The National Youth Service (2025) explain how an advocate can support a young person to understand their rights, support young people to have a voice and support them to make informed decisions.

Bhandari (2022) argues that when carrying out any research you must consider any possible harm that may be caused to participants, and work with your supervisor to mitigate as much risk of harm as possible or organise intervention if someone is affected.

For this research, the author will not be engaging directly with young people, to ensure that no unnecessary harm is caused. The professionals will act as advocates on their behalf.

This research will contribute towards a more resilient and healthier generation of young people in Wales whereby they can access support, if the world of social media becomes challenging for them. As outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC] (no date) the author will consider the 7 core aims that have been set out for children and young people, this means that they are entitled to having a flying start in life, have access to a good level of education, have the best possible health for them and are free from abuse or

harm, have access to sporting opportunities and they have the right to play, it means that they are respected and listened to, they live in a safe home with a good and supporting community surrounding them, it also means that poverty does not put them at a disadvantage.

The author will also consider The Future Generations Act (2023) which notes 7 national wellbeing goals to ensure a better future for the young people living in Wales. The Future Generations Act (2023) is an act that the Welsh Government has a duty to execute and comply with, it includes prosperity, equality, cohesive communities, vibrant culture and a globally responsible Wales. As discussed by Rose (2021) Youth Work is a positive and compelling influence, which has the potential to bring change for the better to the lives of young people, especially where Welsh Government precedence is concerned.

When approaching an organisation for research purposes it is important to contact the organisation to first ask for approval to be able to do this, as Cresswell (2014) explains. The author contacted senior members of staff from the local authority to gain this consent.

The author has sent the questionnaires out to around fifteen potential participants and expects to receive at least 55% in response.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis will be utilised throughout this research, where the author will look for themes and patterns in the data that is presented. Nowell et al (2017) explains how thematic analysis within qualitative research, is to analyse something that individuals will already have lived experience of, to gain

knowledge on where key issues are presented, to gain more understanding and depth.

The author intends to publicise any findings by reporting back to the Youth Service who have been assisting with the research for this dissertation, the author will then approach the Youth Service and request to share these findings further.

The author understands that the outcome of this research will encourage young people to be more responsible, knowing that they can seek advice from Youth Workers and other professionals to gain knowledge on how to be safe online.

"Knowledge itself is power" (Foucault, 1988, p. 30).

The author understands that successful research into issues that surround young people, will aid informal education along with promote a young person's wellbeing. As the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services [CWVYS] (2018) explain, Youth Work is inclusive and educative while supporting young people to develop skills and knowledge in a non-judgemental way. The research will provide Youth Workers with knowledge surrounding social media and the issues and benefits that it presents, this can be shared with young people to enhance their wellbeing along with their social skills and awareness.

Research Considerations

The author has had to take into consideration the volume of time it has taken to plan this research project, while trying to gather as much relevant information as possible. The author has had to also consider the time it would take to plan and prepare a questionnaire, distribute it after first gaining ethical approval and

approval from the local authority, and then the time frame that it would take to receive the questionnaires back from the participants._

Conroy (2018) describes the importance of setting achievable time frames when working towards research goals, he also suggests taking regular breaks to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

The dissertation has presented challenges, which has often left the author feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to begin, which was another reason why it was so important to try and adhere to time frames, even when sometimes this seemed impossible.

Ethical considerations

Bhandari (2022) describes how gaining ethical approval for any research project is crucial as it allows the researcher to gather information that will determine if the aims and objectives can be ethically accepted and ensures that they are in line with the institutions code of conduct. The author was granted ethical approval by the Institute of Education and Humanities Centre for Childhood, Youth and Education. The National Youth Agency (2014) note the Youth Work code of ethics, which are relevant when considering any research project that involves young people. To highlight, it is important for Youth Workers to appreciate the contribution of other professionals who engage in the welfare and well-being of young people, to promote the most positive outcome.

The author understands that while conducting any research, it is important that any participants can make an informed decision about partaking in the research project, which is why a letter has been given to all potential participants explaining the purpose of the research and to explain who the author is.

Cresswell (2014) explains the importance of this and understands that such letters should also state how long the questionnaire will likely take to complete. The participants will also be provided with a consent form which will explain that they can withdraw from the research project at any time, should they wish to, it also explains that any information the participants decide to share will be kept anonymous and their details will be kept confidential. The participants will be asked to initial each statement on the consent form, to show understanding for each one. Cresswell (2014) explains that when such documentation is presented and completed, it provides understanding to the protection of a participant's human rights.

Research Limitations

The author is aware that the research may be affected by the time constraints, due to the dissertation having a submission date. The author will overcome this by adhering to time frames to ensure the research project remains on target. It could also be affected if there is not as many participants as expected when the author made predictions on the research expectations. This is a factor that the author doesn't have control over; however, the author will continue to encourage potential participants to engage in the research and being available to answer any queries they may have. Jansen and Phair (2022) explain how the empirical or theoretical limitations that are encountered in research, can reveal the weaknesses and areas for improvement.

4. PRESENTATION OF DATA

This chapter is a presentation of data, where the author will present the data that has been gathered, as a means of exploring *social media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work Perspective*.

The author will be analysing the information that has been provided through the questionnaires, looking for any similarities in opinions, and looking to see if there is any data that can be displayed in a chart, where numbers have been provided. While the author will not be discussing any results in this chapter, this will follow in the next chapter- Discussion of data.

This presentation of data will begin with an introduction to the participants and the age groups of young people that they work with. It will then move on to the various trends in social media platforms that they have observed.

The third section will include professional opinions on why a Youth work approach can be beneficial while informally educating young people on healthy use of social media. The author considers a Youth Work approach to be an appropriate way to support young people who may be affected by negative social media experiences.

As stated in the CLD Standards Council Scotland (2019), a youth workers values support commitment to the interest, health and wellbeing of the young people that they work with. A Youth Work approach includes supporting a young person with no judgement. The presentation of data will also present negative and positive effects that young people experience when using social media platforms.

It will also demonstrate policies that the participants are familiar with in their own work setting, along with a discussion surrounding the social media ban in Australia, whereby the participants have kindly shared their views.

Introduction to the Participants

Seven professionals have participated and completed the questionnaire, which will aid the author in making a conclusion about the effects that social media can have on a young person, and how Youth Workers can promote healthy use of social media.

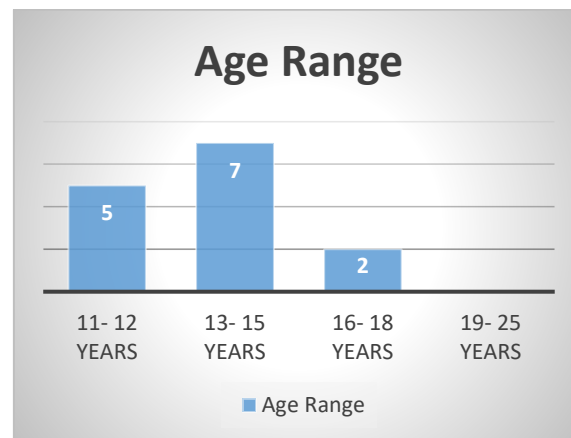
The professionals that have participated will be referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7 for the sake of this dissertation and as a means of protecting and honouring their confidentiality and anonymity.

While the participants work with young people of similar age groups, they work in very different Youth Work roles, P1, P2 and P7 work in a school-based environment, P3 supports young people to remain in education, while providing support for their families, P4 over sees a school based team, P5 supports young people in their return to education while also working in a youth club and P6 works in a youth club setting. All participants have discussed promoting a Youth Work approach when discussing social media with young people, with two participants saying:

“Youth Worker is a trusted person for young people to speak to, who will open up and will explore more on the issues. The skills a youth worker has given young people will promote them to speak up and open up with any issues in a non-formative environment”.

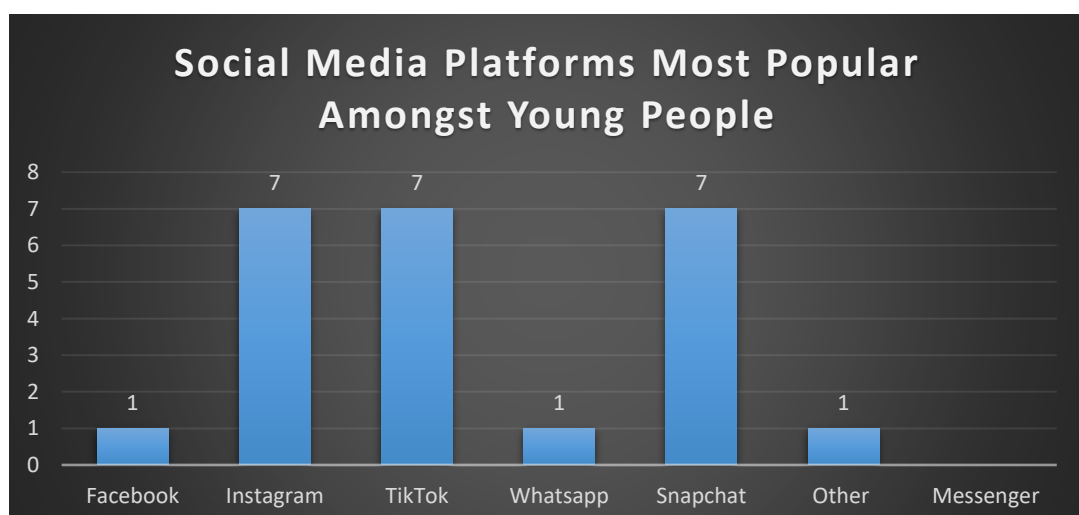
“100% the more you preach the less they will listen, you need to engage young people where they are and use tactics to allow young people to learn by thinking for themselves”.

The following chart displays the age range of the young people, that the participants typically work with. No participants worked with anyone over the age of 18 years: -



Similar Trends

The participants were asked if they had specifically noticed what social media platforms the young people that they work with, would normally use. These were the findings:

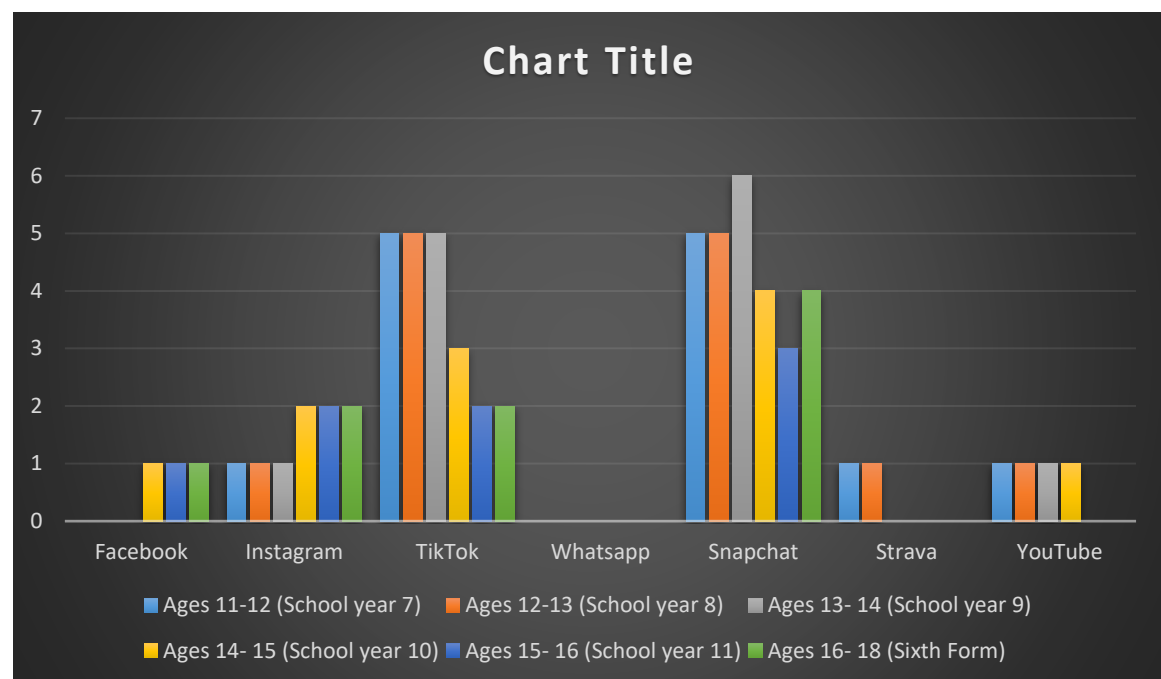


It is quite evident to see that all Participants agreed that Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat are the most popular platforms amongst the young people that they

work with, while P1 has observed young people also enjoying the platform

Strava, stating “individuals who are sport orientated like to follow one another on here and watch each other’s achievements”.

Here the participants were asked if they had noticed any trends or observed certain age groups preferring to use specific platforms.: -



While the results are shown on the chart above, P5 added “I have been told by under 15’s that Facebook and WhatsApp are for old people”.

P6 gives a similar view and adds “TikTok is now hugely popular amongst teenagers, and YP are more inclined to use the platforms listed above rather than older, more established platforms like Facebook, Whatsapp and Messenger”.

While P7 had a slightly different observation, suggesting that “TikTok and Snapchat tend to be used by young people in years 7 to 9 while Facebook and Instagram tend to be used by those in years 10 and 11”.

On this occasion Whatsapp has not been mentioned, however Snapchat is said to be the most popular platform amongst young people.

You Tube has also been added to the list of Social Media Platforms used by young people.

Age Restrictions

When asked if there was enough safeguarding around social media platforms, the participants were unanimous in saying that there was not enough safeguarding:

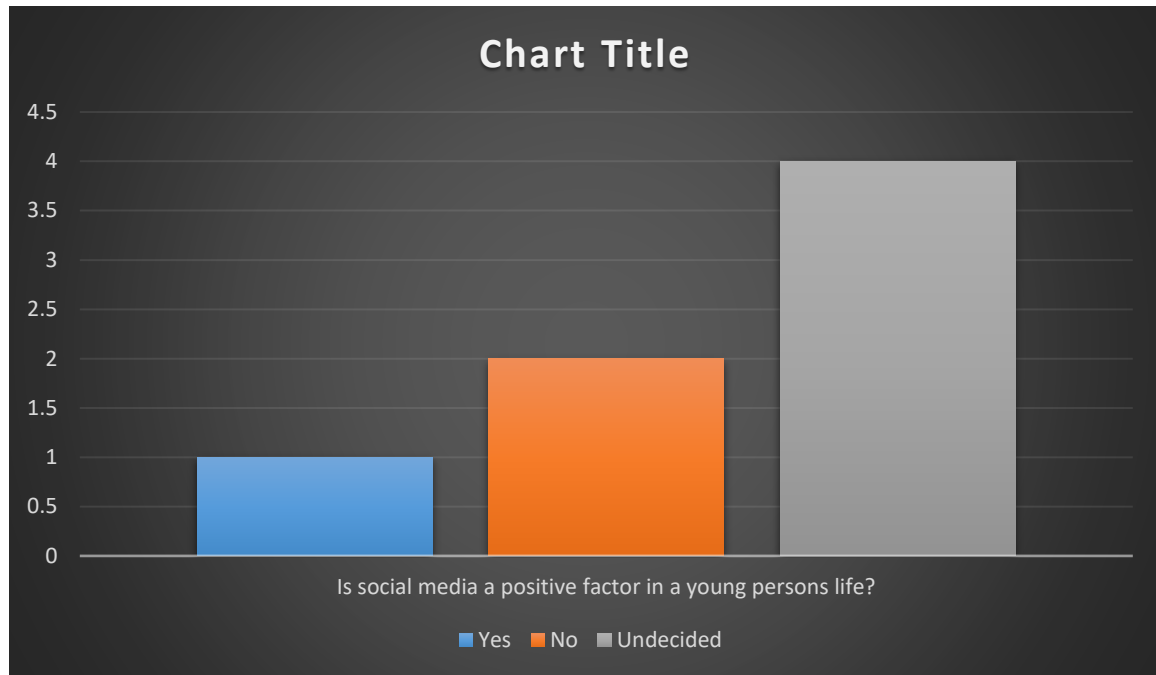
Regarding age restrictions, P2 added “They are not checked. They are ineffective in my view. They are only in place due to advertising rules in the US (United States)”.

P3 stated “CYP (children and young people) bypass the age restrictions by putting in the incorrect DOB (date of birth), I feel enforcement is minimal. Some CYP do not have the emotional maturity or digital literacy to navigate the risks associated with social media and use of technology. Exposure to cyberbullying, inappropriate content, online predators and mental health pressures can significantly impact our CYP. Safeguarding measures are inadequate, ineffective age verifications, exposure to harmful content, online predators, cyberbullying, data privacy issues, impact on mental health and sleep”.

While P7 believes “Age restrictions on social media should be higher than what it is. This is due to the negative and graphic content that can be obtained through the uses of social media. One issues at this moment is that young people are recording their peers getting into physical altercations, this could be one of the reasons that lead to phones being banned within school in school hours”.

Professional Opinion

The participants were asked to share their opinion of social media and whether they believed that it has a positive effect on young people. The chart below shows the participants general thoughts: -



The data that has been collected suggests that the participants were undecided when asked if social media platforms were considered to have a positive effect on young people.

When asked, P2 said “No – generally it is divisive and used for inappropriate or even dangerous activity. There is little I hear in my role of positive social capital”.

P3 was asked the same question and responded with “social media can have both positive and negative effects on young people, depending on how it is used.

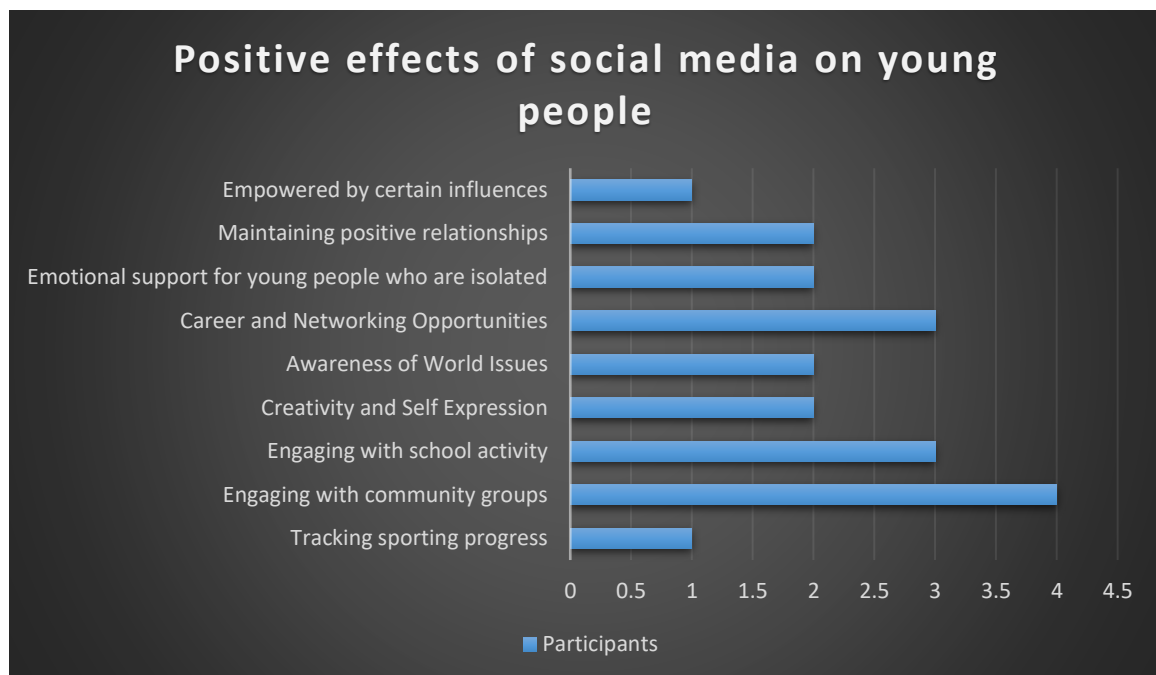
When used mindfully and responsibly, social media can have a positive impact by fostering social connections, providing access to educational resources, and offering platforms for self-expression and support. However, excessive or

inappropriate use can lead to issues such as cyberbullying, mental health concerns, unrealistic comparisons and sleep issues”.

While P7’s response was “social media can have a positive effect if used correctly. Inspire themselves to do better in life overall in their field of chosen career path or maybe personal life from seeing positive reinforcements”.

Positive Aspects of Social Media

The participants were asked to provide examples of positive effects that they had observed from young people using social media, the results are as follows: -



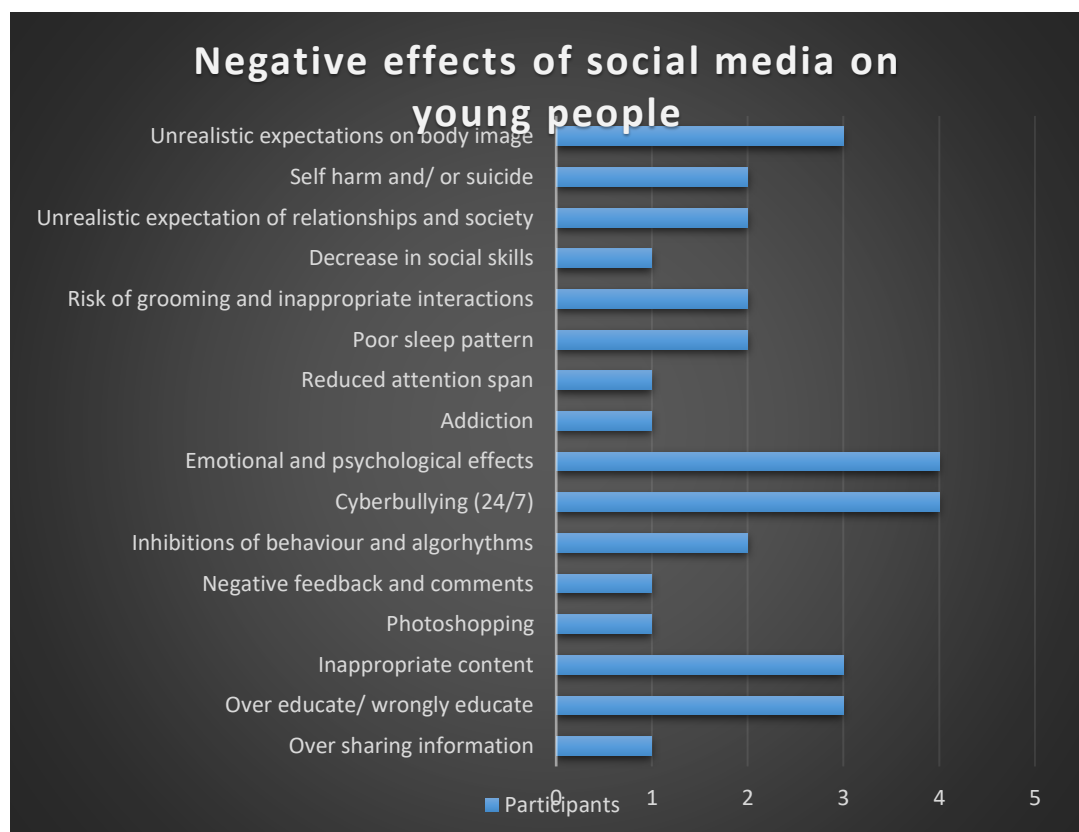
Similar positive effects were observed by all of the participants, with P7 suggesting “Some young people will be motivated and empowered to certain influences on social media either that be to be more kind/honest with themselves or maybe they are looking at going into a certain career and if so then they tend to follow the patterns of those already in that career. For example, a lot of young people, typically male at birth will inspire to do woodwork or sports and therefor will follow people on certain platforms of those they inspire to be like”.

P3 added “Social media pages for schools to engage with parents and wider community”.

With P1 suggesting “Most recently, the Netflix documentary ‘Adolescence’ has been highly publicised over social media therefore this has sparked healthy conversation about each perspective. Some of the cohort will use for positive content like using it to record their hobbies e.g., skating tricks. They will use social media to keep track of what local community groups are doing e.g., Youth Centre. Good discussions around how algorithms work and quickly it will continue sending you things of a similar nature”.

Negative Aspects of Social Media

The participants were asked to provide examples of negative effects caused by social media usage, in young people, and to list what the effects were, the following chart shows the effects that were listed: -



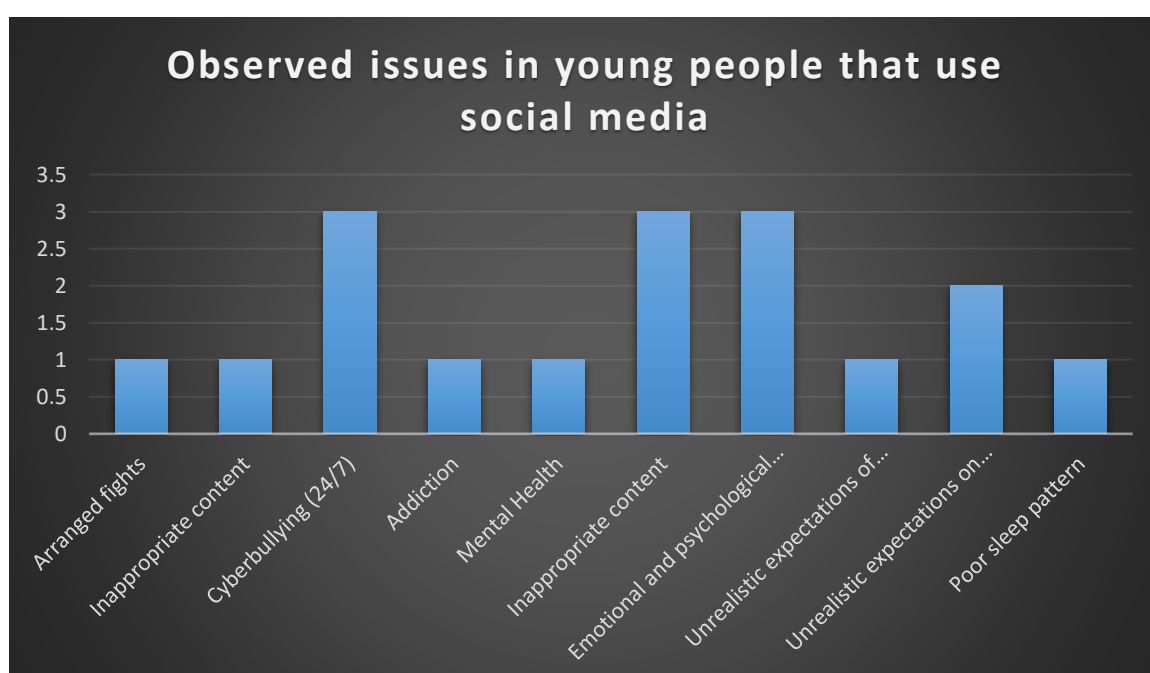
There was more listed on the negative chart, in comparison to the positive chart, with Emotional and psychological effects and Cyberbullying (24/7) seeming to be the two biggest concerns amongst the participants.

P6 suggested that “social media can make young people feel inadequate, self-conscious, self-critical and pressured, and also provide a primary platform for bullying”. While P4 listed the following negative effects- “bullying, suicide, self-harm, grooming, unrealistic expectations on body image, society”.

P2 answered with “Sadly yes – including suicides and suicidal ideation, bullying. I think this is a trend where people feel less accountability online- this is ALL not just young people”.

Observed Negative Effects

While data has been gathered to describe the known effects of social media, the participants were also asked if they would be willing to share the negative effects that they have observed themselves whilst working with young people, to see if they correspond with what is already known, here are their observations: -

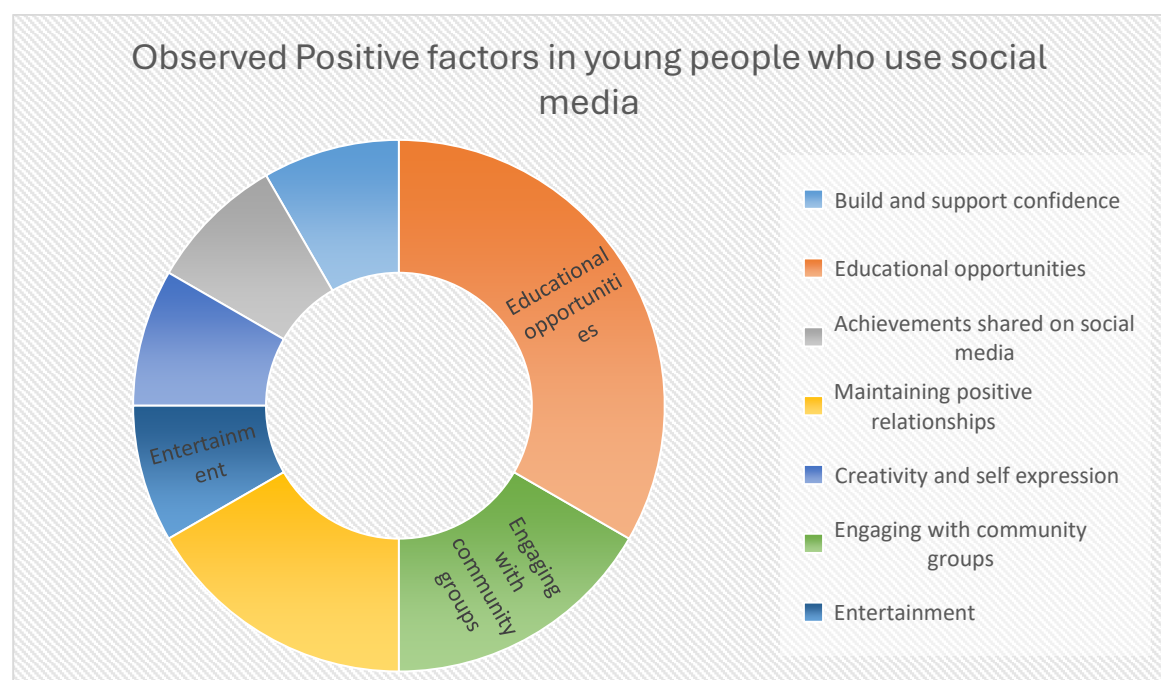


While this chart shows some similarities with the known effects of social media, this one also includes a couple more that have been observed by the participants.

Cyberbullying (24/7) and Emotional and psychological effects still appear to be the main issues; however, this chart also shows that inappropriate content is also amongst the bigger concerns.

Observed Positive Effects

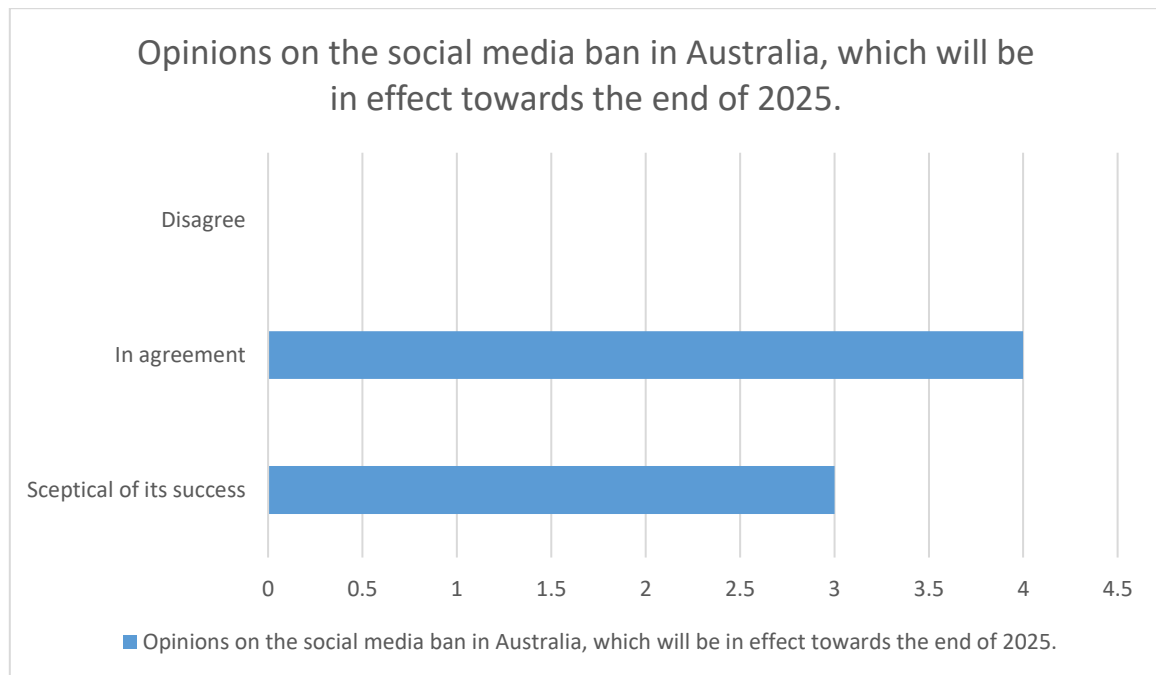
The participants were also asked if they would be willing to discuss the positive factors experienced by young people using social media, that they had observed in practice, the below chart shows the findings: -



Again, while some of the effects are ones that are already known, there are a couple of new ones that have appeared on the list. However, the issues appear to outweigh the positive factors.

Australia's Movement

Australia has approved a social media ban for anyone under the age of 16, this new legislation is due to take effect at the end of November 2025, the participants were asked what their opinions on this movement were, the graph below shows their opinions: -



While all participants were in agreement with the move in Australia, three of them were sceptical of its success, with P2 suggesting “Sounds like a very positive move and whilst I appreciate this, I also know there will be other VPN’s (Virtual Private Network) used to get around it – but as a strategic move I think it is a much better way forward and will also support parents”.

P4 said “I like it, good move forward, should see a change in behaviour in schools and society”. While P6 added “I approve. Young brains should be allowed to mature a little more before being blitzed by social media”.

Participants own workplace policy.

The participants were asked if they had their own workplace policy about working with and supporting young people. Two of the participants did not share this information, while five participants said that they did have policies in place.

P1 shared the following- "Educating cohort to be mindful of their social media usage, report anything which isn't appropriate, importance of consent with regards to photos / videos". While P5 said "As I work for the local authority young people do not have access to Wi-Fi within the settings, however there are computers with restricted access and young people are always observed when using these".

Youth Work strategies used in practice.

The participants were asked whether they applied a Youth Work approach or interventions in their practice. All seven participants agreed that they used a Youth Work approach and interventions.

P1 shared that they "Discuss what they already know, and what they mostly research. Who they find influential. We support education so young people can make informed decisions".

P4 added "Yes – more up to date with trends and issues, trusted person for young people to speak to, will open up and can explore more on these issues.

The skills a youth worker gives to young people the willingness to speak up and open up with any issues in a non-formative environment".

While P7 said "Yes, I do believe it is effective as we as youth workers can and will use phrases and jargon that young people know and are able to relate to them in an informal way".

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the findings of the study: *social media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work Perspective*. The focus will be on the analysis of interview data collected from participants involved in the research project.

This research allows for much needed conversation surrounding young people and their use of social media along with the affects it has on them. This research project considers how a Youth Worker can support young people by promoting healthy use of social media, to ensure they are safe and to maintain their wellbeing while using the various platforms. As stated in the CLD Standards Council Scotland (2019), a youth workers values support commitment to the interest, health and wellbeing of the young people that they work with.

When the author first decided to engage in this research, she believed that the research would mainly focus on the negative aspects of social media, while there has been a lot of negative feedback, there has also been some very positive feedback, which describes how, when used effectively, social media can be an asset to young people and their everyday life.

Youth Work in practice

In becoming more familiar with each participant, and by acknowledging each opinion regarding a Youth Work approach, it is quite evident that despite the participants having different job roles, they all agree that a Youth Work approach is a favourable way to approach young people with the topic of social media. In promoting a Youth Work approach, young people can access support when building positive and meaningful relationships via social media, where they are

less likely to be isolated within their social network but rather be resilient and confident. This supports the Youth Work strategy for Wales by building safe spaces online where young people can feel safe, listened to and valued, without fear of having any negative experiences while using social media. (WG, 2019, p.12). It can also mean that young people would be able to access support should they have a negative experience while using social media, allowing them to speak to a trusted Youth Worker who can sign post them if they do not have enough information. As Rose (2021) explained, an authentic Youth Work intervention, where it concerns the Welsh Government, can indeed promote positive progress, as discussed in chapter two. The Welsh Government have already acknowledged that young people using social media is of great concern, when Public Health Wales [PHW] (2023) reported 48% of primary age children were using social media.

The more common age groups that the participants worked with were ages 13-15 years, closely followed by 11-12 years, which is the main age focus where social media is concerned. As Weir (2023) explains, the brain of an adolescent is still developing, meaning that they will likely say and do things on social media for 'likes'. The part of the brain, however, that exercises self-control is far from fully developed, meaning young people could make poor decisions without appropriate intervention and education. This is more reason for Youth Workers to support with such issues.

Social Media Patterns and Platform Preferences

It was clear to see from the data collected that the preferred social media networks amongst young people are Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat, with all

participants agreeing that they seemed to be popular platforms. The NSPCC (2025) also discuss the same social media platforms as being the most popular amongst young people, because they can connect with friends and family and view content that they can learn from, or they find interesting. The NSPCC (2025) go on to say that social media is not always positive, however. Young people often have access to inappropriate content, as well as the opportunity to engage with people they do not know and share or over share information.

When asked if any age groups preferred certain platforms, the more popular seemed to be Tik Tok and Snapchat, which is used by all age groups.

Ukom (2025) conducted research which also suggests that the priority platforms amongst 15- 24-year-olds are Tik Tok which is closely followed by Snapchat, Ukom (2025) only gathered quantitative data, therefore, there is no explanation provided as to why these platforms are more common. However, Vogels et al (2022) agree and suggest that this is due to the unique features these platforms provide along with the social demands and preferences of today's society.

When the participants were asked if the age restrictions surrounding social media was enough, the majority were very clear in saying that the age restrictions were not enough and that it was too easy for young people to give false information to gain access to platforms. One participant even questioned how this could be changed.

As highlighted in chapter two, Maskell (2020) admits not allowing her own children to have mobile phones until they were 13 and 14 years of age, simply to protect them from social media, while she tries to make sense of the world that surrounds social media she is very sure that it is more of a risk to young people

because of the harm that it can cause to their mental health and wellbeing, and because of the content that many young people see, that is not age appropriate. Maskell (2020) goes on to say “self-harm is the new eating disorder”, suggesting that this is due to the pressures and algorithms that social media present. This relates back to chapter two where Montag et al (2024) discuss how harmful social media can be to a young person’s wellbeing. However, Adam (2021) argues, and suggests that anyone born after 1980 is classed as a “digital native”, and as such, is unable to function without technology and social media. Adam (2021) explains that young people rely on social media, and while referring to Erikson’s (1995) stages of identity model, explains that a young person’s needs have evolved, explaining that often young people use social media to explore who they are, along with their values, beliefs and goals. This relates back to chapter two, with Allen et al (2014) discussing Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) suggesting that social media is in fact a positive aspect of a young person’s life.

When the participants were asked if they thought social media was a positive aspect of a young person’s life, the majority were undecided, with two of them deciding that it has more of a negative impact, with this in mind and given that they thought the restrictions were too lenient, the author understands that the overall opinion from the participants is that of a negative one.

The Effects surrounding social media

Participants identified cyberbullying, emotional and psychological effects, and inappropriate content as the primary effects of negative social media usage, amongst young people. P1 said “cyberbullying has been known to start because young people often post content online, not knowing that they no longer have

control over what happens to the content once it has been posted. However, TikTok is a known platform for cyberbullying". P5 said "because of cyberbullying, we have been known to contact parents/ guardians and schools to find a positive solution to move forward".

Online bullying has been made easy for young people, however, when young people do not fully understand the risks behind posting such content online, it would be an advantage for them to be able to access Youth Work intervention. In accordance with CLD Standards Council Scotland (2019), a Youth Work Practitioner has the skill set to be able to informally educate young people on the issues that affect their lives. Social media is a big part in many young people's lives; therefore, they should be able to access educational opportunities to understand healthy use of social media. As the UNCRC (no date) state in article 28, every child and young person has a right to education, while article 29 says how important it is for education to promote the understanding of respect for another person's rights and culture.

Adam (2021) explains how bullying has become easier than ever through social media platforms, suggesting that young people become so caught up in peer pressure and technology that they feel the need to carry out what can often be harmful acts towards others. They can do this through platforms that allow them to become anonymous. This relates back to chapter two where Ehmke (2025) discusses the increase in cyberbullying.

The NSPCC (2022) highlight how professionals can educate young people with informal conversations surrounding cyberbullying and its harmful effects. They also explain how professionals can look out for signs of bullying, and how they can approach such matters if they arise.

When considering emotional and psychological effects, cyberbullying is one of the main causes. However, P5 reports “We have conducted several sessions on body image and unrealistic ideas of real life, in addition to having to address misogynistic behaviour after listening/ watching influencers opinions/views/ and expectations”. While P7 said “Impact on mental health including anxiety and depression, Body dysmorphia, Inappropriate behaviour, Physical health problems including intentionally hurting themselves are amongst the psychological effects”. As explained by Adam (2021) who understands that other contributing factors include algorithms conducted by the content a young person chooses to view, feeling inadequate when comparing themselves to others, the pressures of always appearing perfect. All of these can potentially leave a young person feeling worthless, they can cause eating disorders and in extreme cases can leave young people with suicidal ideation, which can lead to suicide without appropriate support in place. Adam (2021) echoes the NSPCC (2022) by suggesting that parents and professionals become familiar in knowing what signs to look out for and knowing the steps to take when a young person’s wellbeing seems to be at jeopardy. Adam (2021) also suggests becoming familiar with the social network platforms more popular amongst young people, so that conversations surrounding social media becomes more natural. Jeffs and Smith (2010) regard this as “an empowering approach to work with young people”, whereby a Youth Worker must go on a journey of self-education, before they are capable of empowering young people, by first learning about the subject before they can begin sharing and discussing their knowledge.

The National Youth Council of Ireland (no date) explain the seriousness of young people gaining access to inappropriate content while using social media,

suggesting that conducting open conversations about social media and the risks that it can present can reduce the chances of this happening. The National Youth Council of Ireland (no date) go on to suggest ways of recognising harmful content along with how this can be prevented. Reid and Westergaard (2011) suggest that Youth Workers demonstrate skills that will support young people when they require help, describing it as “empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard”.

Australia's ban on social media

BBC (2024) explain that a social media ban is being explored for all young people under the age of 16 years, as a means of safeguarding young people. They suggest that the public would welcome a new or revised Act of Parliament which would ensure that tech firms would have a duty of care to its users. This follows the same move that has been carried out recently in Australia, which prohibits the use of social media by anyone under the age of 16 years.

With Australia's ban due to take effect towards the end of 2025, the author asked all participants if they thought this was a good move. Four participants strongly agreed, with the move believing that it will promote a young person's well-being with P1 saying “I like it, good move forward, should see a change in behaviour in schools and society”. Two participants thought the move is a great idea in theory but wonders if it will work. P1 said “It won't stop young people lying about their age to access media” while P5 questions the move “Great, however, will parents and young people still find a way around this?”. Reverting to chapter two, Nogrady (2024) discussed reservations about the movement, suggesting that for many young people it could do more harm than good.

Allyn (2024) discussed ways in which age recognition might work, suggesting that one option that is being trialled is hand gestures towards a camera which is said to recognise a person's age.

Flew (2025) discusses the main issues that critics have noted with the social media ban in Australia, with the first one being an issue surrounding the rights of all young people who currently use and rely on social media, suggesting that the new framework is possibly in breach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC] amongst other legal framework.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

. To conclude, the author has discovered that the main issues surrounding social media are cyberbullying, emotional and psychological effects and inappropriate content, along with young people accessing social media platforms under the legal age of 13 due to there being insufficient restrictions.

To reiterate, the main purpose of this research is- *social media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work Perspective*.

It has become very clear throughout this research that there are major concerns surrounding social media and the impact it is having on young people, from a Youth Workers perspective it is very clear that in order for Youth Workers to support young people and be able to provide young people with appropriate guidance, they must first be able to show a good level of understanding where social media is concerned.

The author believes that by familiarising themselves with social media platforms, they will be able to conduct conversations surrounding healthy use of social media.

Refer to chapter 5, where Adam (2021) understands the importance of exploring the platforms that young people use.

The author believes that for a Youth Worker to have a good understanding of social media, they must understand it's purpose, they should have knowledge on the various platforms used by young people and the many reasons why young people use them. As discussed by Paljug (2025) it is good to understand algorithms and how they personalise content according to the individuals' preferences. A Youth Worker should know how to advise young people on how to use social media safely while being responsible, and how to respect other social media users along with their privacy.

However, as discussed in chapter 5, the NSPCC (2022) and Adam (2021) agree that further training surrounding this could provide Youth Workers with the skills and knowledge to recognise signs that young people could already be facing issues.

Training could also provide Youth Workers with the knowledge of knowing what to do if young people are faced with serious social media issues or where to sign post young people if they do not have the expertise to advise themselves.

If young people know that they can disclose any issues that they may be facing on social media, to a Youth Worker that they have established a good relationship with, they will be less likely to turn to risky behaviours that might include suicidal ideation or eating disorders. Furthermore, the author believes that with the relevant training, a Youth Worker could provide young people with informal educative opportunities surrounding social media, whereby they can have honest conversations about the risks surrounding social media, giving young people the opportunity to share information with Youth Workers, which allows room to reflect as well as collaborate.

While the author does not believe that age restrictions will totally stop young people from accessing social media, the author believes that should the Government wish to make the legal age 16 instead of 13, then a national insurance number could be used, a national insurance number is only issued to someone 16 years and over, it could also potentially put an end to people setting up fake social media accounts.

However, the author believes that if further restrictions were to be put in place, this could potentially cause more harm than good, in particular for young people who have come to rely on social media as a means of staying in contact with family or friends that they don't see often, or even in the event that they have made friends with people via social media because they share a common interest. This links back

to chapter 5 where Flew (2025) understands that to remove these privileges altogether for young people, could be breaching the rights of all young people.

While conducting research for this dissertation, the author has realised that her opinion of young people using social media has changed significantly, the author notes that she now considers the way that young people would feel to have something that is so important to them, taken away. The author does however understand that as with all aspects of life, young people need to be educated properly on the risks that social media can bring, which in turn will reduce the risk of harm when using these platforms.

It has also been mentioned that schools should not allow mobile phones to be used on the premises, the author agrees with this and believes that carrying this policy in all schools will put an end to young people feeling the need to access social media while in class, along with stopping young people from filming fights for example, that may break out at break time.

Recommendations

Moving forward, the author knows that further research could explore better training opportunities for Youth Workers along with other professionals, to ensure that young people receive the support that is clearly needed, in relation to social media use. The research would explore opportunities to introduce professionals to various social media platforms, so that they can gain understanding of why young people are so eager to use them. The research could also explore how Youth Workers can promote social media in a healthy way moving forward, showing young people that social media does have benefits and can be fun, without the need to resort to

cyberbullying and the likes. Such training would also prepare Youth Workers on how best to conduct an open conversation with young people about social media and all the positive and negative aspects that it presents.

Giving Youth Workers the opportunity to work with young people regarding social media and the risks that it can present would be educational for young people, whereby they will leave the session with more understanding of how to stay safe and how to respect other social media users.

The author believes that further research could conduct better results, the opportunity to engage directly with young people through focus groups would have given different data, which would have been interesting to see if the data differed from that of the professionals. It would have been interesting to find out from young people using the various platforms, what their opinions of social media is.

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8. APPENDICES

<u>8.1.</u>	<u>Appendices 1 Ethics Form</u>	59
<u>8.2.</u>	<u>Appendices 2 Participant Letter, Consent Form, Questionnaire</u>	83

8.1. Appendices 1 Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title ‘Ethical Approval’ followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES

should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University’s insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications”. As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the “principal researcher”.

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity.

Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Anne-Marie Rees			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☒	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student
					☒

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Institute of Education and Humanities Centre for Childhood, Youth and Education
4	Campus:	UWTSD- Carmarthen
5	E-mail address:	2011166@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07850252248
For students:		
7	Student Number:	2011166
8	Programme of Study:	Youth Work and Social Education
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Angharad Lewis

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
Institute Research Committee		☐			
Other (write in) Alana Enoch		☒	28/11/2024		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☐
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☐
3	CLD Standards Council Scotland (2019)- National Occupational Standards for Youth Work Practice (NOS)	☐
4	BERA Guidelines- https://www.bera.ac.uk (British Educational Research Association, 2025).	
5	Code of Professional Conduct and Practice (Education workforce council, 2022).	

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution	N/A				
2	Contact person name	N/A				
3	Contact person e-mail address	N/A				
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☒
7	paid or voluntary capacity?	Employed	YES	☐	NO	☒
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☒
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☒

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☒
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Social Media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work Perspective.			
2	Proposed start date:	16 th December 2024	Proposed end date:	7 th May 2025	

	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>
3	Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of the research activity is to gain understanding of how social media can influence a young person's wellbeing. In doing so, attention will be paid to how much it can distract a young person from the life around them, with focus on the opinions of Youth Work professionals, along with teaching professionals and wider reading. The author will consider social, emotional and physical factors that may affect a young person's health and wellbeing when using social media on a regular basis. Murthy (2023) suggests that social media is a growing concern amongst young people suggesting that over the last ten years there is evidence to imply that there has been a decline in the wellbeing of many young people who use social media platforms. The author will also look at the positive factors that social media can bring to a young person's life, for example, how social media was a great way for young people to engage during the pandemic. Bekalu (2020) recognises that social media is positive in the way that it can provide individuals with a way of connecting with family and friends who may not live close by or whom may have busy lives that leave them with little time to socialise. In exploring <i>how the effects of social media can influence a young person's wellbeing</i>, the author can gain knowledge on the challenges that young people face in an ever-changing world that depends greatly on internet access and the many social media platforms that are available. Whilst doing this, the author will explore age restrictions on social media platforms and consider if this is acceptable or if the age restriction should be raised with more of an emphasis on checking that a person is who they say they are. BBC (2024) explain that a possible social media ban is being explored for all young people under the age of 16 years, as a means of safeguarding young people. They suggest that the public would welcome a new or revised Act of Parliament which would

	ensure that tech firms would have a duty of care to its users. This follows the same move that has been carried out recently in Australia, which prohibits the use of social media by anyone under the age of 16 years. (this box should expand as you type)
4	Research Question Social Media and Youth Wellbeing: Insights for Youth Workers. (this box should expand as you type)
5	Aims of Research Activity The aim of this research activity is to explore both positive and negative factors that social media contributes to a young person's life, with a focus on how Youth Workers can promote healthy ways in which young people can use social media. Zsila and Reyes (2023) Understand that while social media can be positive in the sense that it can help people to connect and stay in contact, it can help young people discover others with similar interests. They also discuss how social media provided support for so many throughout the pandemic. They do however go on to discuss how it can also have very different outcomes for many with negative impacts such as dissatisfaction with body image, it can contribute towards addiction and can be the source of cyberbullying amongst young people, to name a few. The author will also consider appropriate ways to support young people who may be affected by negative social media experiences. As stated in the CLD Standards Council Scotland (2019), a youth workers values support commitment to the interest, health and wellbeing of the young people that they work with. The reason for this research project being participatory with professionals that work with young people daily is so that the author can gain a clear understanding of the issues that surround young people when they use social media, along with the beneficial factors where young people utilise it in a positive manner.

	Sapin (2013) discusses Hart's ladder of participation (1992), whereby it allows Youth Workers to explore opportunities to gain new knowledge as well as re visit knowledge that is already known, to enhance our methods of working with young people. Gaining information will allow the author to carry out a NAOMIE, which is a model used to identify and explore any needs, aims and objectives, as explained by Wood (2000). There would be a focus on how Youth Workers can promote social media in a positive manner, and where it is necessary, provide support to young people who are experiencing or have experienced social media platforms in a negative light. The author believes that by gaining information from other professionals, this could pave the way for Youth Workers to affectively support young people to build positive and meaningful relationships via social media, where they are less likely to be isolated within their social network but rather be resilient and confident. This supports the Youth Work strategy for Wales by building safe spaces online where young people can feel safe, listened to and valued, without fear of having any negative experiences while using social media. (WG, 2019, p.12). (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity To be able to achieve the intended aim of this research project, the author intends to engage with Youth Workers from Pembrokeshire Youth Service (a local authority Youth Service) along with teachers working at Greenhill school (a Comprehensive School in West Wales) to gain different opinions on social media and the effects that this can have on young people. This research can establish healthy ways with young people and with young people in mind, to be able to promote healthy use of social media. While considering the rights of the young person, it would not be fair for the author to seek information that may cause harm to the young person, for this reason the author has decided to conduct research via the professionals working with them, however any findings in this research will be used to promote a more positive experience for young people using social media. Part of its aim is to gain an understanding of the bigger issues surrounding social media. Mclean Hospital (2025) have shared research results which suggest that the younger a person is when they start to use social media, the more negatively this can impact on their mental health, they go on to explain that this is more relatable for females than males, while males become more physically aggressive, girls will use social media as a means of showing everyone what they have been doing with friends, in particular if one friend has been left out.

	The author hopes to gain knowledge from both a positive and negative view, to enable her to determine if social media platforms are useful and helpful to young people. Where possible, the author would also like to consider how Youth Workers can better support young people when they have had negative experiences of social media, whereby they feel confident in seeking support, to improve their wellbeing. The author also intends to research Welsh Government guidelines available to young people, along with the Online Safety Act (2023) and various journals surrounding the use of social media by young people. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	The author intends to use a qualitative approach to her research, conducting questionnaires for professionals from both the Pembrokeshire Youth Service- a local Authority Youth Service and Greenhill Comprehensive School in West Wales, to establish the impacts of social media on a young person's wellbeing. The author has taken into consideration, for the purpose of safeguarding, that to aim a questionnaire at professional Youth Workers that are working with young people and will understand the influences of social media on young people, will conduct a better outcome for the purpose of this dissertation. It will aim to protect young people from further harm, because the author will not be in direct contact with them, however the professionals will be act as advocates on their behalf, sharing negative and positive experiences. The author believes this will provide a good opinion on how social media affects young people and if social media is necessary for young people, because it will be taking on the views and opinions of the young people along with the professionals working closest to young people. They will have a good understanding of the negative and positive impacts that young people face when using social media. A questionnaire of around 10 questions will be sent to between 5- 8 Youth Workers and school-based professionals, to determine the effects of social media. This will allow the author to consider ways in which Youth Work professionals can support young people

	with social media and promote a safer and healthier way for young people to use social media. NSPCC (2024) explain that social media can often provide young people with opportunity to access harmful content, there is also the worry of young people being exposed to risks of online abuse. However, The National Centre for Biotechnology Information (date unknown) argues that social media can have a positive impact on young people, for some it can give them a sense of belonging, while for others it's a means of staying connected to family, in particular for young people in care. There are many arguments surrounding the use of social media, which is what interests the author, and engaging with the professionals who work with young people on a daily basis, will help determine an outcome as to whether social media is a necessary means of communication. The questionnaire will provide an opportunity for the professionals completing it to provide an e-mail address, should they be willing to answer further questions if they provide answers that open up conversation. This will only be done if the author finds an answer particularly interesting, and wishes for the professional to elaborate further, in the interest of the dissertation. Professionals do not have to provide their e-mail address, this will only be used if the author decides that further conversation would benefit the dissertation, in which case a Teams meeting will be set up for the author and the professional at a time that suits both. In the event that a Teams meeting is conducted for further conversation, a voice recorder will be used to ensure that accurate information is recorded. Any recordings that are made will be kept confidential and will be secured with a password. The recordings and any other data will be discarded once the author has received her grade. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	Online. (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned

	societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <u>NOT</u> publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☒	☐
14	A healthier Wales	☒	☐
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☒	☐
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		

	The author believes that in carrying out this research, it will support a more resilient and healthier generation of young people in Wales whereby they can access support, if the world of social media becomes challenging for them. The author intends to publicise any findings by reporting back to the Youth Service who have been assisting with the research for this dissertation, the author will then approach the Youth Service and request to share these findings further. The author believes that this research could promote young people in being more responsible online, whereby young people can seek advice from Youth Workers to gain knowledge on how to stay safe online. The author intends to consider the UNCRC along with the Online Safety Act (2023) whilst conducting this research. In line with the UNCRC the author will consider the 7 core aims that have been set out for children and young people, this means that they are entitled to having a flying start in life, have access to a good level of education, have the best possible health for them and are free from abuse or harm, have access to sporting opportunities and they have the right to play, it means that they are respected and listened to, they live in a safe home with a good and supporting community surrounding them, it also means that poverty does not put them at a disadvantage. The author would also like to consider The Future Generations Act (2023) which notes 7 national wellbeing goals to ensure a better future for the young people living in Wales. (this box should expand as you type)
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SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒

7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	Details of any other primary data collection method:	☐	☒
	(this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO

1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.		
	Details of any other participant groups:	☐	☒
	(this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source	
	Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	Between 4 and 8 (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be?	Qualified Youth Workers already working in the Pembrokeshire youth service (a local Authority Youth Service), along with qualified teachers working at Greenhill Comprehensive School in West Wales.

		<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	How will you identify the participants?	The author will engage with Pembrokeshire Youth Service and with Greenhill school and request approval <i>and consent</i> to send questionnaires via e-mail to qualified professionals within the teams. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐
		No	☒
2	Risks to participants		

	For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information	
	Risk to participants: While the questionnaire will not be based on the participants personal experience of social media, it may cause distress when discussing negative impacts that they may have witnessed, from a professional point of view. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> The nature of the questionnaire will be explained within the introductory letter. The letter will also explain that participants do not have to answer all questions in the questionnaire, and they can decide at any time not to participate should they change their mind. The letter will also explain that answers will be kept confidential and will be destroyed once the author has received a final mark for the dissertation. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	Young Minds- https://www.youngminds.org.uk offers support to young people as well as parents and professionals on social media and mental health. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: <i>. The risk to the investigator may include being affected by the content within the</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i>

	questionnaire answers. The investigator may also be affected by any conversations following on from the questionnaire. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	The investigator will attend regular supervision meetings with their allocated supervisor where they can discuss any concerns or potential risk. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: <i>Data Protection</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> The data protection Act will be abided by as well as university procedures for data protection. Ethical approval will be secured before any research commences. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☒	☐	☐

8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write “Pending”; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.	001846192335
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SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Feedback will be offered to participants <i>if they should require</i>. The feedback will be typed and forwarded to the participants along with a letter of thanks for their participation. This will be done within 4 weeks of the end date for the research. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	The questionnaire process will be explained in the forwarding cover letter, along with a consenting letter where the participants will need to give consent ahead of the questionnaire being given. The letter will note that the participants can withdraw at any time from the process. The participants will also be reminded ahead of the questionnaire that they can withdraw should they wish to do so. <i>Participants will also be made aware that the questionnaires will be kept anonymous and confidential.</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Any information provided in the interviews will be kept anonymous and confidential, this will be done by not using any names, instead using a letter or number when

	referring to the participant. This will also be done when discussing information that may be provided regarding young people, unless the participant states that it is to be kept strictly confidential, in which case, the information will not be used in any outputs. The school and local authority will not be named at any time throughout this dissertation, as a means of protecting their confidentiality. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,	☐	☒

	(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),		
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	(this box should expand as you type)		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All questionnaires will be held on record until a final grade has been awarded to the author, once the grade has been awarded, all questionnaires will be destroyed by the author to ensure confidentiality is adhered to.		

	All data will be stored on the cloud, the author has considered it's two factor authentication, encryption and back up facilities and believes this will be the safest way to hold the data until it has been destroyed. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Anne-Marie Rees- Researcher Alana Enoch- Supervisor		

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Anne-Marie Rees- Researcher only. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	To be kept until results have been given and the work has gone through the exam board. This will be password protected. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (<i>Most relevant to academic staff</i>)		
	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.
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	In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/	
1	Signature of applicant: 	Date: 01/12/2024

• For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview

	schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
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RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES

should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

Appendices 2- Participant letter, Consent form, Questionnaire



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
 UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr:

Participant Identification

Number:

**TAFLEN WYBODAETH I
 GYFRANOGWYR**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION
 SHEET**

**Social Media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A
 Youth Work Perspective.**

Dear Participant:

**My name is Anne-Marie Rees and I am a level 6 Youth Work and Social Education
 student at the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David in Carmarthen**

**I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. This project will gain a
 better understanding of the effects that social media has on a young person's wellbeing.**

***Attached to this letter is a short questionnaire developed by myself which will assess the impacts that social media has on a young person's health. I believe your opinions will be extremely helpful to me.**

Through your participation in the questionnaire, I hope to ascertain how Youth Workers can better support young people with healthy use of social media, while taking into consideration the age restrictions on each platform.

All questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential to the researchers involved and at NO time will individual questionnaires be released to the general public. This gives you a chance to express your views in a confidential and anonymous forum and still be able to make a difference. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary so you can withdraw from the questionnaire at any stage.

The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete, but there is no time constraint. There are also no right or wrong answers. Attached to this letter along with the questionnaire is a consent form where you can leave feedback if you wish. We understand that your time is at a premium, but your opinions are very valuable to us. Please return the questionnaire by Thursday 10th of April.

After careful and precise analysis of the data obtained from this questionnaire, I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the findings at your request. The results of this questionnaire will hopefully enhance my understanding of how a Youth Worker can better support young people and their use of social media and will be stored securely on

the cloud. The results of the research will be fed back to the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation. If any questions do arise, feel free to contact me at your convenience.

ENW A CHYFEIRIAD YR YMCHWILYDD	NAME & ADDRESS OF RESEARCHER
Anne-Marie Rees 2011166@student.uwtsd.ac.uk	Anne-Marie Rees 2011166@student.uwtsd.ac.uk



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David**Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr:****Participant Identification****Number:****FFURFLEN GANIATÂD****PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM****CYFRANOGIAD****Social Media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A****Youth Work Perspective.****Enw'r Ymchwilydd / Name of Researcher: Anne-Marie Rees****Rhowch flaenlythrennau yn y blwch / Please initial box**

1	Cadarnhaf fy mod wedi darllen a deall y daflen wybodaeth dyddiedig 26/03/2025 ar gyfer yr astudiaeth uchod. Rwyf wedi cael y cyfle i ystyried y wybodaeth, gofyn cwestiynau, ac rwyf wedi cael ateb boddhaol i'r rhain.	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 26/03/2025 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
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2	Deallaf fy mod yn cymryd rhan o'm gwirfodd a bod croeso i mi dynnu'n ôl ar unrhyw adeg, heb roi rheswm.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	
3	Deallaf y gellir defnyddio unrhyw wybodaeth a roddir gennyf mewn adroddiadau, erthyglau neu gyflwyniadau gan y tîm ymchwil.	I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the research team.	
4	Deallaf na fydd fy enw'n ymddangos mewn unrhyw adroddiadau, erthyglau neu gyflwyniadau.	I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations.	
5	Cytunaf i gymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth uchod.	I agree to take part in the above study.	
Enw'r Cyfranogwr <i>Name of Participant</i>			
Llofnod Rhiant/Gwarcheidwad os yw'r Cyfranogwr o dan 18 oed			

<i>Parent/Guardian signature if Participant is under 18</i>		
Llofnod Cyfranogwr <i>Participant Signature</i>		
Ymchwilydd <i>Researcher</i>	Anne-Marie Rees	Llofnodwyd Signature ARees

Cewch wrthod cymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth hon. Cewch ddod â'ch cyfranogiad yn yr astudiaeth hon i ben unrhyw bryd. Os penderfynwch barhau'n ddienw, bydd sicrhau hynny'n flaenoriaeth a chymerir pob cam ymarferol i guddio pwy ydych. Bydd deunyddiau a grëir yn sgil y cyfweiliad hwn neu unrhyw gyfweiliad arall yn aros yn gyfrinachol.	You may decline to participate in this study. You may end your participation in this study at any time. If you decide to remain anonymous, maintaining your anonymity will be a priority and every practical precaution will be taken to disguise your identity. All materials generated from this, or any interview will remain confidential.
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Ar ôl llenwi'r ffurflen, dychwelwch hi i gyfeiriad e- bost yr ymchwil fel y nodir	When completed please return to the researchers e-mail address as provided
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isod, erbyn 3ydd o Ebrill 2025. Bydd y copi hwn yn cael ei gadw ar ffeil y tim ymchwil:	below, by Thursday 10th of April 2025. This copy will be kept on the file of the research team at:
ENW A CHYFEIRIAD YR YMCHWILYDD Anne-Marie Rees 2011166@student.uwtsd.ac.uk	NAME & ADDRESS OF RESEARCHER Anne-Marie Rees 2011166@student.uwtsd.ac.uk



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David**Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr:****Participant Identification****Number:****Holiadur****Questionnaire**

Social Media and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of young people: A Youth Work Perspective.

Please provide your job title and a brief overview of your role-

1	What age group/'s do you typically work with? - 11- 12 years ☐ - 13-15 years ☐ - 16- 18 years ☐
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	- 19-25 years ☐
2	In your professional opinion, does social media have a positive effect on young people? Please explain your answer. 2a. Can you please list some examples of the positive effects? 2b. Do you have any examples/ case studies from your own practice to share?
3	What social media platforms have you observed to be most popular/used amongst young people? - Facebook ☐ - Instagram ☐ - TikTok ☐ - WhatsApp ☐ - Snapchat ☐ - Messenger ☐ - Other ☐ Please state- _____

	3a. Have you observed any specific trends and/ or age groups using particular platforms?
4	Do you think that age restrictions for social media platforms are respectable or too lenient? Please explain your answer. Many platforms have an age limit, do you think there is enough safeguarding around this? • Facebook- has an age restriction of 13 years of age. • Instagram- has an age restriction of 13 years of age. • TikTok- has an age restriction of 13 years of age, with further restrictions for young people under the age of 18 years. • WhatsApp- has an age restriction of 13 years of age, down from 16 years of age, since April 2024. • Snapchat- has an age restriction of 13 years of age, with some services that require young people to be 18 years of age. • Messenger- has an age restriction of 13 years of age.
5	In your professional opinion, do you believe social media has a negative effect on young people? Please explain your answer.

	5a. Can you please list examples of negative effects? 5b. Do you have any examples/ case studies from your own practice to share?
6	Have you experienced issues surrounding young people's mental health and wellbeing, while using social media, if so, what were these issues?
7	Have you experienced positive feedback from young people, in relation to them using social media? If so, please provide examples.
8	Have you experienced negative feedback from young people, in relation to them using social media? If so, please provide examples.
9	What is your understanding of social media trends and algorithms?
10	Australia has approved a social media ban for anyone under the age of 16, this new legislation is due to take effect at the end of November 2025, once social media platforms have had the opportunity to consider how they will conduct this move. What are your opinions on this?

11	Have you observed changes in young people's behaviour and the way that they engage, when they have spent long periods of time using social media?
12	Does your organisation have a social media use policy for working with and supporting young people? 12a. If so, what does this look like in practice?
13	Do you use a Youth Work approach or interventions that you find beneficial in informally educating young people, when considering social media? 13a. If so, what are they? 13b. Do you believe a Youth Work approach is effective when discussing social media with young people and why?

	If you are happy to be contacted in relation to any of your answers, please leave your name, contact number and/ or e-mail address here:

ENW A CHYFEIRIAD YR YMCHWILYDD Anne-Marie Rees 2011166@student.uwtsd.ac.uk	NAME & ADDRESS OF RESEARCHER Anne-Marie Rees 2011166@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
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