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**Placement 3: The Impact of People, Places and Spaces (ECYW6008)**

**Level 6 Professional Journal**

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This is a professional portfolio, discussing and reflecting on this Level 6 student's knowledge of their placement and their experience on placement. The three parts of the portfolio are the Community Profile, the SWOT Analysis, and the Summary of Learning and Development. Each of these parts explore a different aspect of the placement the student completed. The placement was in two parts; the majority of the placement was completed with Pembrokeshire Youth Service's Children and Young People's Rights Office, and the other hours were completed in my volunteer role as a leader of the 5:55 Youth club, located in The Mount community in Milford Haven.

### **Community Profile:**

This is a community profile on the area and history of Milford Haven, where both of the student's placements were fully and partially based. A community profile is useful for a professional practitioner to complete because it makes sure that they are familiar and aware of the positive and negative sides to where they are working and what challenges the young people may be facing. This knowledge has been essential, especially being in a youth club in The Mount community, as it is a location that is widely known in the county for violence, substance use, and deprivation, which is something that we, as youth workers, see a surface level of week to week.

\*Community Profile completed with Canva

### **SWOT Analysis:**

| <b>Strengths (Internal factor)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Weaknesses (Internal factor)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Young leaders</li><li>• Giving young people responsibility</li><li>• Community rooted</li><li>• Good amount of space, colourful, able to decorate</li><li>• 5:55 is a safe space for many of the young people who attend.</li></ul>                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of funding</li><li>• Lack of communication between volunteers</li><li>• Only 1 hour a week (limited time) - possible lack of support</li><li>• Lack of qualified Youth Workers/trained staff</li></ul>                                                          |
| <b>Opportunities (External factor)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Threats (External factor)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looking for new sources of funding</li><li>• Implement debrief process</li><li>• Look for how to open the provision for more hours</li><li>• Looking to network between youth workers and between projects</li><li>• Looking for training sessions for volunteers</li><li>• Looking for opportunities for fundraising</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of time</li><li>• Lack of funding</li><li>• Seasonal</li><li>• Feeding Young People</li><li>• Community infighting</li><li>• Decreasing amounts of young people</li><li>• Other activities competing</li><li>• Lack of volunteers, staffing = closing</li></ul> |

This is a SWOT analysis which will be analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the 5:55 club, a youth club (ages 10-14) based on The Mount in Milford Haven. The SWOT analysis is important because it helps the youth worker to research, discover and understand more about the location and the club that they will be working in and with. This research also gives the youth worker insight into what issues that their young people may have faced and/or may currently be facing in their everyday lives.

**Strengths:**

One strength of the 5:55 club is that it gives the older young people the chance to become young leaders, giving them responsibility and ownership in their community. This means that the young people do not automatically have to leave the club when they become older than the age group, and it means that the youth workers can keep connecting and building their relationships with the young people. Another strength of the club is that it is rooted in the community of The Mount. This area in Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire is well-known as a 'rough' and deprived area, associated with substance use, criminal activity and violence. One issue that the club has come into several times is where young people bring disagreements between families into the club, attempting to cause division. The fact that this youth club is rooted in this community means that there is a stable, consistent support for the young people on the estate, and with trusted adults who promote values of kindness, unity, grace and forgiveness.

Another strength of the club is that we have a great amount of space to use in The Mount Community Centre that is bright and fairly colourful, and that we are able to decorate to an extent, even though the space is not the club's and the centre is used by many different groups for the estate. Although the space is small, especially if we have twenty or more young people, it's a great amount of space for the regular group of about eight to fourteen young people that the club currently has and it can hold more too.

**Weaknesses:**

One weakness of the 5:55 club is that the club only officially opens for one hour a week, which is not enough time for the youth workers or trusted adults to 'build meaningful relationships' (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019) with the young people who attend. For some of the young people, the 5:55 club may be the only place they feel safe that they attend regularly, as they may not feel safe at school or at home, which is why it would also be a great opportunity to open for more hours.

Another weakness that has been highlighted is that there is a lack of communication between the volunteers who run the group, which is why it would be another opportunity to implement more of a set briefing and debriefing time at the beginning and at the end of club, so that communication is easier and the team are given time to connect and share their thoughts about the session.

Another weakness of the club is that there is a lack of qualified youth workers, especially with the new legislation that every person in a youth work setting should have a youth work qualification or be working towards one. The club only has one, sometimes two fully qualified youth workers, and myself on placement who is a Level 6 student. Additionally, all of the workers on the team are volunteers, which does not provide much stability regarding the future of the club.

### **Opportunities:**

Within the club at 5:55 and within the local area, there could be some exciting opportunities. One opportunity could be is investigating new sources of funding to keep the club running, looking at ways to fundraise and seeking for grants. This could be a

particularly exciting opportunity, as finding and creating ways to fundraise is something that can be very young people led and a way to give the young people responsibility and ownership in the club.

Another opportunity for the club would be to look at how to open the club for more hours a week and in addition to that, how to network with other local clubs and youth workers. This would give the young people in the local area more time to build strong relationships with the workers in the club and it would also give them a space where they feel belonging and safe for a longer time during the week. It would give them more time to safely socialise and give them activities, etc, to enjoy together.

Another opportunity within the club to combat the communication issues is to implement a briefing and debrief process at the beginning and at the end of club. This would hopefully create the space for the club to run more smoothly with more understanding between the volunteers.

### **Threats:**

A threat to the 5:55 club is the lack of funding, especially as the charity who were supporting the club financially has pulled their funding for the local area. A lot of youth work provisions are providing cheap and/or free meals for young people and with the cost-of-living crisis, many families are needing that break where they know that their child/children are being fed at least one good meal. However, without funding, providing any kind of food or meal becomes impossible. Providing food for the young people is

not something that the 5:55 club does, as this is not really a possibility due to the lack of hours that the club is open.

Another threat to the club continuing is that other clubs and activities might be happening at the same time and as a result, the number of young people who attend club regularly decreases. The number of young people also decreases for no apparent reason, which happens sometimes, at the decision of the young people as participation in any type of youth work provision is voluntary. However, this is a threat to the continuation of any youth club as the club might become no longer viable to continue if there are not enough young people attending to keep it running.

Another threat to the club's continuation is that within the community that the club is based in, there is a lot of community infighting and family history. One example of this is a fight between two young people that happened, because of a feud between their mothers, passed on to the older sisters, then to the younger sisters at club. As youth workers, we endeavour to not let it get that far but unfortunately, because of the nature of some of the situations, there is not much we can do in terms of restorative practice or similar, but to encourage the young people to have forgiveness and to have grace for one another.

In conclusion, there are many positive things, such as the opportunities and strengths as discussed above, about the club but there are also several negative leaning things, such as the weaknesses and threats discussed above, about the club and these are mostly due to where the club is located, the estate and how the

community works as well as the violence, substance use and deprivation that is prevalent in the community. However, having said this, the 5:55 club brings opportunities and a safe space of belonging and fun that, particularly the young people on the estate, would not have access to otherwise. The United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child Article 29 says that every child has the right to be the best they can be, and Article 31 says that every child has the right to play and relax, as well as Article 32, 33, and 36 says that every child has the right to be protected from dangerous things and things that could harm them (UNICEF, 1989). These are all things that we, as their youth workers, are trying to do every week by giving them a safe space to come to and have fun, as well as looking out for them and reporting anything that could be potentially harmful or is already harmful.

### **Reference List:**

UNICEF. (1989). *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. UNICEF.

### **Summary of Learning and Development:**

This Level 6 placement has been split between two placements; with the majority of the hours being completed with Pembrokeshire Youth Service's Children and Young People's Rights Office (Pembrokeshire Youth, 2026), and the other hours being with the 5:55 Club within The Mount community in Milford Haven, located at The Mount Community Centre, where I continue to volunteer. With this being the case, both placements have been able to aid me in growing and developing a variety of skills.

With my placement with the Children and Young People's Rights Office (Pembrokeshire Youth, 2026), as part of my development through this placement has been learning how political topics and discussion affect youth work and how it is. This includes how young people's voices can be used to improve issues and be involved with political conversations, geared towards change (Bowden, 2024). This has also given me inspiration for the direction of my dissertation, which is focusing on the use and empowerment of young people's voices on issues of society and politics that affect them and how they can use their voice in an individual way that feels comfortable for them to express their views, beliefs, and opinions.

Another part of my development is my confidence. I have been becoming more confident in working with young people and building relationships with young people. I have also been becoming more confident in delivering and facilitating activities with young people. My confidence has improved but still gets better and sometimes the

nerves are overwhelming, which occasionally disturb my practice. However, this happens a lot less now than when I started this course. Through being given leadership opportunities in the 5:55 club, I also have more confidence holding a room and being in charge. Additionally, through certain situations that have happened in the club, the belief in my abilities to be a youth leader and a youth worker who is able to handle difficult situations and without getting outwardly anxious, flustered, or emotional. This is an improvement as one thing I have consistently struggled with is not believing in my abilities, but throughout this placement and this year, I have learned to trust in the knowledge that I have and my ability to handle any situation with a youth worker stance and mindset.

Another skill I have been trying to improve is management. This is a skill that I need to develop the most. Both personally and as a practitioner or facilitator, I am not naturally a leader and therefore I do not naturally have access to the leadership skills for a management position. However, I do think that as part of this placement that I have started to learn and practice leadership and management skills that I will be able to continue to develop in the future.

Additionally, through this placement, I think I have improved my observation and taking action in safeguarding policies and procedures. I have previously engaged in several different safeguarding training courses. However, this placement has allowed me to be more involved in safeguarding ourselves as professionals and volunteers, and

the young people more than anything I have been involved with before. Similarly, I think that through doing these two placements that I have been able to improve my overall observation skills and therefore, also my knowledge of young people, including their relationships with other young people as well as the youth workers and volunteers, and sometimes even members of the community.

Throughout my time on placement, I have been able to use and develop my active listening skills, and I have begun to learn about proactive reaction and how to act in specific situations and how proactive responses to young people can help in practice, including safeguarding circumstances and situations that occur because of group dynamics. Linked to this, I have also been able to grow and develop in my communication skills and how to communicate more clearly, efficiently, and effectively with other youth workers, colleagues, and with young people (Rice, 2021). Another skill within this is that I have learned how to engage young people better, even within giving instructions for different activities. Additionally, these different placements have taught me how to communicate in a variety of locations and different young people.

This placement has been a major opportunity for me to plan a variety of activities, including games, icebreaker activities, crafts and creative activities, consultation with young people, team challenges, and encouraging short talks. Being able to plan a range of these different activities within both of the placements have been such a great opportunity to continue to grow and develop my leadership skills, my creativity and my

ability to plan new, different, and engaging activities for young people to engage with (NCYI, 2026).

After planning and facilitating a consultation about public transport with Pembrokeshire Youth Assembly with the Children and Young People's Rights Office team, I know that there are areas and skills that I need to develop more but I also feel that I have improved in my facilitation skills and being able to be in charge and in front of a room to lead an activity. Although there are many several skills that I need to improve on and continue to develop going forward, I was able to mostly hold the room and communicate efficiently for the majority of the activity, and I think that this has been a great opportunity to develop and take a step forward in my leadership skills.

Additionally, I do feel that one area where I could have improved most is actually in using my own voice to advocate for myself and to have used my placement with the youth service, more to my advantage. As an introverted and mostly shy person myself, I struggle to begin conversations, and I am often the quietest person in the room, which was the case being in this placement. Reflecting on the placement, I do believe that there could have been more opportunity to be involved with activities with the young people and to have improved my practice even more. In reflecting on some events and activities I attended, I realise that there were moments where I was asked to help with food and refreshments, where I could have also been helpful in interacting with the young people and helping them engage with the activities in front of them. In addition, I

also believe that these situations did affect and decrease my confidence, in myself and in my abilities, in several situations and aspects as a part of the placement. Since, I have been working on and have been able to start to gradually improve this again.

Furthermore, through this placement with the Pembrokeshire Youth Service's Children and Young People's Rights Office, I had the opportunity to work with the Young Voices for Choices forum. This is a youth forum for young people with disabilities and additional learning needs to come together and discuss issues that affect them daily, as well as organising events for themselves and for the public, and collaborating with other groups and young people on youth projects that the Children and Young People's Rights Office run and support. This was insightful for me and renewed my passion for working with young people with disabilities and additional learning needs, after being given the opportunity in the last academic year to be placed in Canolfan Elfed, a school and inclusion centre within Queen Elizabeth High School in Johnstown, Carmarthen, specifically for secondary school aged young people (eleven to nineteen years old) to be educated in an environment that works for them. Towards the end of my placement with the Children and Young People's Rights Office, I attended a session with the Pembrokeshire Youth Assembly, who had invited young people from different groups across the county, to come and engage in a session which included a visit from Rocio Cifuentes, the Children's Commissioner for Wales (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2026). There were activities that every young person was involved with before the Children's Commissioner arrived and while she was there as well. During this session, one of the young people from the Young Voices for Choices forum attended

and I had the opportunity to work with her, one to one, and the Children and Young People's Rights Office staff told me that I have an obvious strength in working with and supporting young people with additional learning needs and disabilities.

In conclusion, this placement with Pembrokeshire Youth Service's Children and Young People's Rights Office and with the 5:55 club on The Mount Estate have taught me a lot about youth work practice, and how I can improve my practice to support the young people better. The placement, although it has challenged me in a variety of ways, has also refreshed my passion, love and heart for working with young people, as well as learning how to improve my practice as a youth worker, using the head, heart and hands framework (Accelerated Reform Fund, 2024, pg.5) more to my advantage and the benefit of the young people.

### **Reference List:**

Accelerated Reform Fund. (July 2024, pg.5). *Exploring and understanding Head, Heart and Hands Leadership*. Social Care Institute for Excellence. [PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Bowden, H. (May 2024, accessed March 2026). *Young People Care About Political Issues*. Youthscape. <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/news/young-people-care-about-political-issues>

Children's Commissioner for Wales. (Accessed March 2026). *The Commissioner*.

Children's Commissioner for Wales. <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/about-us/the-commissioner-rocio-cifuentes/>

NCYI. (Accessed March 2026). *Why is Creativity Important and What does it contribute?* National Youth Council of Ireland. <https://www.youth.ie/articles/why-is-creativity-important-and-what-does-it-contribute/>

Pembrokeshire Youth. (Accessed March 2026). *Children and Young People's Rights Office*. Pembrokeshire County Council.  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/pembrokeshire-youth/cypro>

Rice, J. (2021). *Positive Communication with Young People Matters*. Professional Youth Workers (powered by YIPA). <https://training.yipa.org/quick-takes-blog/positive-communication-with-young-people-matters/>