

Information Sheet

YMCA

Introduction

This document will assess the functions of the YMCA in Swansea.

It will discuss what they do as an organisation, including their goals, needs and what my role as a volunteer will be within the organisation.

History

The YMCA was established in 1857 where it was formally known as the “Young Men’s Association” and in 1868 adopted the new name as “YMCA”.

From the period of 1868 the YMCA has seen many different historical achievements especially in 1870 where their first building, library and reading rooms were established at Herbert Palace. In 1924 the YMCA participated in the Paris Olympics where the YMCA Swansea won the British gymnastics championship for the first time ever.

The YMCA have a long and amazing history.

(Our History | YMCA Swansea (no date). <https://ymcaswansea.org.uk/who-we-are/our-history/>.)

What they do

The YMCA state “Transforming communities, so that young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive”

Their aim is to tackle poverty, improve health and well-being, promote equality & diversity and improve the quality of life for children, young people and communities within Swansea and surrounding area (ymcaswansea.org.uk, **what we do**)

The YMCA also has a regional focus not only covering Swansea but also covering Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Neath & Port Talbot. They also work with like-minded organisations across Wales so that they may deliver their services on a wider form.

They stand up for what is right, they support the needs of young people and communities by seeking out opportunities to make transformative impacts on young lives and communities, they offer people a safe space where they feel secure and they aim to inspire each person to nurture their body, mind and spirit.

Who they support

The YMCA support a large community of different people with a whole variety of different needs such as:

- Family and Youth work
- Health and Wellbeing
- Training and Education
- Young Carers Service
- LGBTQ+ Youth Service
- Y-Talent
- Environmental
- Welsh Youth Parliament
- Dethatched Youth Work
- Y-HUB
- Support and Advice
- Housing

The YMCA also offer a range of different fitness-based activities, allowing for young people to build upon their physical and mental health. This is done through their well-being and fitness activities. They also cater these activities so that young people with physical disabilities can get involved, and example of this is the gentle chair yoga sessions that they offer.

My Role

Given how the YMCA has such a vast range of different programmes I will be able to get involved in a number of different specific areas.

But for the start I will be putting my focus into the young carers support programme that the YMCA run on a Wednesday and a Saturday. After attending a meeting with the project leader for the young carers programme I was informed of all the different roles that I can take on within the project, these roles include one-to-one sessions, group based sessions, residentials and outside activities.

There was so much there to discuss and with some many different opportunities it was very difficult to decide what role I actually wanted to take on, so I have decided to take the (give it a go) approach so that I can develop my skills all across the board by engaging in a variety of different sessions.

I most look forward to engaging in the one-to-one sessions, as I feel like these are effective for young people to build relationships with their young workers. I will have the opportunity to do one-to-one sessions playing video games, board games and coming up with my own sessions, such as arts and crafts, or even watching a movie.

By using experiential learning techniques in my one-to-one sessions, I hope to help the young people develop a sense of confidence in their abilities.

As I come from a young carers background myself, I believe that this role will be natural to me.

So, to conclude while I am at the YMCA I will be basing my practice around the support of young carers, helping them with their needs and providing a safe space where they can relax from their day-to-day activities.