

The impact Covid-19 has had on Youth Work within Rural areas in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire

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ECEG7002Q

MA YOUTH WORK & SOCIAL EDUCATION

Yr Athrofa: Education and Humanities

DECLARATION FORM



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Name of the Programme of Study: MA YOUTH WORK & SOCIAL EDUCATION

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DECLARATION

I certify that the whole of this work is the result of my individual effort, and that all sources have been acknowledged.

Signed: *RT Lewis* (Student)

Date: 22.09.2023

DECLARATION

I am satisfied that this work is the result of the Student's effort.

Signed:

Date:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have supported me throughout the study. Firstly, I'd like to express my gratitude to Darren O'Connor my dissertation supervisor who has offered support and guidance throughout the study. Thank you to all my lecturers at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David; Darrell Williams, Angharad Lewis & Nichola Welton who have supported and guided me through my learning during my MA Youth Work & Social Education course over the last three years.

Thank you also to all participants that have supported me through the study and securing that I receive all data and information that was need. My last thanks go to my friends and family who have offered encouragement and support throughout.

ABSTRACT

Youth Work is an important aspect of a Young Persons' life, which can support their personal, social, and educational development to explore and adopt many values, ideas and beliefs and to enable them to share their voice, influence and place in society. This dissertation investigates the impact Covid-19 has had on Youth Work, specifically within three rural areas in three Counties in Wales. In line with previous research from UK Youth (2020) who administered an online survey that focused on the needs of the Youth Sector and Young People in the wake of Covid-19, and potential long term impact, the study explores the difference between opportunities for young people pre-covid, during peak covid and since covid, and what impact it has had on Youth Work, but also identify what impact it has had on Young People in general. As covid-19 is so fresh in the minds of everyone and still on-going, currently there is little written on this subject.

The study was conducted through two different online questionnaires, one specifically for four well known youth services within the three Counties, and the following questionnaire was conducted by members & young people from those Youth services within the three counties. Following on from the online questionnaire, work groups were set up which was an opportunity to gather more information and data which could identify some recommendations if Youth Work could do more for Young People.

Covid-19 had a significant impact in youth work across Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Ceredigion. Although the pandemic demonstrated the resilience and creativity of youth workers and highlight the continued importance of youth work

in Wales, the multiple challenges experienced by young people, including school closures and mental health concerns have had a profound impact on their overall well-being. Youth workers also were hit by Covid-19 as they had to shift their activities to online platforms, needing to learn quickly to adapt to new ways of interacting with young people online, leading to mixed experiences for both the young people and youth workers,

The recommendations set out a vision to challenge the situation regarding Mental Health supporting that these services should be made available to all young people in every school. Additionally calling for policymakers and funders to invest in youth work.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim and purpose of this study is to explore if Covid-19 has had any impact on youth work within local services and youth Organisations within three large rural-areas in West Wales.

Numerous viral infections have risen in the last decades, and one such example is the coronavirus (covid-19), identified in Wuhan, China which was isolated on January 7th 2020 according to Hidalgo, Rodriguez-Vega, & Perez-Fernandez (2021) with Fonseca, Greer & Peralta-Santos (2021) showing that the Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented and turbulent mixtures of political, social, economic and epidemiological forces which has caused the world to pause and think about how and why some Countries have fared worse than other Countries in addressing the threat of Covid-19.

UK Youth (2022) which is a National charity committed to improve young people's lives undertook a rapid assessment of the impact that Covid-19 would have on the Youth sector and young people. Results from that assessment highlighted a big impact on Young people's lives mainly their mental health, increased loneliness and isolation, lack of space safe and higher risk for engaging in gangs, substance misuse, carrying weapons or other harmful practices. While Local Gov (2022) state that 17% of Youth Organisations faces closure as a result of Covid-19 while 88% anticipate reducing services for young people.

De St Croix (2016) emphasises that Youth Workers work professionally with young people to create and claim spaces for conversation, fun, challenge, relationships, and

collective learning. Further research that focuses on the impact on Youth Work in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire would provide a beneficial insight in to the impact that Covid-19 has had, and where Youth Work finds it's place within these rural-areas.

The Objectives of this research are to:

- Explore and evaluate the Youth Work that were provided for young people pre-covid, during peak Covid and since Covid in these areas.
- Identify the support that was given to Youth work pre-covid, and if that has changed in any way during & since covid in these areas.
- Explore and identify if covid-19 has had an impact on youth work in a positive or negative way – what has happened?
- Identify and examine the impact covid-19 has had on young people within the Youth Work set up – how they feel?
- Identify recommendations on how Youth Work can support Young People any further in these three rural-areas.

Local Services and Youth workers will be central to this research process, with young people also having the opportunity to input. All participants views will help identify if any recommendations will arise from the process.

Youth work is to enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential

according to the National Occupational Standards (2019) while the Welsh Government's Youth Work Strategy for Wales explains that Youth Work starts at whatever point young people are in their lives, recognises and seeks to develop and realise their potential, and is committed to equality and inclusion.

It is obvious that Youth work plays a vital role in supporting the holistic development and empowerment of young individuals, providing them with opportunities for personal growth, community engagement, and the acquisition of essential life skills. However, as Bynner et al (2022) spell out, the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected all corners of society, in the UK and globally. Its longer-term impacts are still unfolding and its legacy will be with us for years to come.

The virus's rapid spread and its devastating health consequences have prompted governments around the world to implement strict measures to control its transmission. These measures, including lockdowns, social distancing, and school closures, have had profound impacts on various sectors, including education, healthcare, and the economy. However, one sector that has been significantly affected is youth work. From 20-27 March 2020, UK Youth (2022) administered an online survey that focused on the needs of the youth sector and young people in the wake of COVID-19, and potential long-term impact. Within the survey it was found that most respondents (88%) indicated they are likely or very likely to reduce service provision to young people. The pandemic has disrupted traditional methods of engagement, limited face-to-face interactions, and exacerbated existing inequalities. NHS Confederation (2022) shows that research conducted by public bodies has shown that

COVID-19 has had a greater impact, both directly and indirectly, on people who share certain protected characteristics (such as belonging to particular ethnicities or age categories or having a disability) all of which must have had a profound impact on the well-being and development of young people.

According to the UK Governments' Department for Environment (2021) wherever possible, the Rural Urban Classification is used to distinguish rural and urban areas and the classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population. They also add that in 2011 in England 43.7 million people (82.4% of the population) lived in urban areas (settlements of more than 10,000 people). While 9.3 million people lived in rural areas (17.6% of the population) with Rural areas make up 85% of the land area. In Wales, there are twenty two local authorities with the Welsh Assembly Government (2008) including nine of those twenty two authorities as Rural Authorities as all have a population density below the Wales average of 140 persons per square kilometre. That is Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Monmouthshire. Three of which will be looked at further during this research. It is also worth noting that around 85% of Welsh land is used for agriculture or forestry or is common land while nearly 65% of the Welsh population live in settlements of at least 10,000 people.

A report by the National Youth Agency (2021) looking into young people and rural youth services show that for many young people, especially for those who live in rural communities, can experience difficulties in terms of lack of facilities, such as club, leisure centres and cinemas, with this being exacerbated by a lack of transport options

and hidden, rural poverty. With Council of Europe (2023) declaring that young people living in rural areas generally have access to fewer services and do not have the same opportunities to get involved in youth work and non-formal learning as their peers living in urban areas. However, Mastrotheodoros (2020) recognised that Covid-19 contributed to already existing inequalities and disadvantages young people were exposed to, especially good-quality education, income, access to health care and access to other supporting services such as youth work. It is very interesting to see Jentsch (2017) noting that many rural areas (for example in Scotland) are now growing faster than Urban districts, while many others experience decline.

As an individual from a rural village on the border of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire with only around 300 population, who was also raised and attending various youth groups when growing up – I saw the effect Covid-19 had on the village I lived in, throughout the local community around and also close youth organisations who had to shut their doors for face to face meetings, change the way they were run and how they also tried to get involved within the local community during the pandemic. From my personal experience, I have either been involved in the work the local youth groups do in and around their community or have heard and seen the great work that they do to from giving opportunities to young people in the community, to raising worthwhile funds to local charities.

Qualitative research was the chosen research methodology as the study is concerned with people's feelings, views, opinions and these represented in their own words (Greener, 2011). The study will examine the unique characteristics of local services and Youth Organisations perceptions on youth work within three rural areas. It will

provide an overview of the importance of youth work especially in rural contexts and the specific needs it addresses and the many existing issues and barriers that youth work faces, and that even before Covid-19. This between evaluating the youth work that were provided for young people and identifying the support that was given pre-covid, during covid and since covid. It will also look to examine if Covid-19 has had any impact on youth work – that in a positive or negative way or even how it has influenced young people in general. By completing this study, it is hopeful that recommendations are found that can support Young People in these rural-areas and afar.

The study will involve staff and young people who are members or associated to youth organisations that are important within the three rural Counties as well as the three local authorities' youth services. Urdd Gobaith Cymru (2023) is a National Voluntary Youth Organisation with over 55,000 members between the ages of 8 – 25 years old. Since 1922, they have provided opportunities through the medium of Welsh for children and young people in Wales to enable them to make positive contributions to their communities. The Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (2023) is a voluntary youth organisation operating bilingually throughout rural Wales. Over 5,000 young people aged between 10 and 28 years are currently members of the organisation, all of which are members of a network of 157 YFC Clubs and twelve County Federations.

The third Youth Organisation is Scouts Cymru who offers over 14,000 young people and 5000 volunteers across Wales the opportunity to develop skills for life. We're a part of a worldwide family of Scouts and work to support our members in devolved

matters and across the nation. They also mention that Scouting is open to all, all races, genders, abilities, and faiths are welcome here.

Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, and Pembrokeshire County Councils all have a youth service, which are involved with children and young people aged between 11 and 25 years and is delivered in a variety of settings including youth clubs, residential settings, in information, advice and counselling centres, on the streets and in various public locations where young people meet and through special issue-based projects according to the WLGA (2023).

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted youth work in rural areas, impacting the support, opportunities, and connections available to young people. This dissertation will explore the unique challenges faced by youth work in rural contexts, the immediate and long-term consequences of the pandemic, and the strategies employed to adapt to the new circumstances. By examining these aspects, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on youth work with Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion and provide insights into the measures required to ensure the continued well-being and development of young people in rural areas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of the research will be on identifying local services and youth organisations perceptions of Youth work within three rural-areas and the impact Covid-19 has had on the way they work day to day. To identify all appropriate literature, it is important to consider the meaning of the key words in the context of the research question. The research searched for the following key words.

- **Local Youth Services**
- **Youth Organisations**
- **Young People**
- **Rural Areas/Communities**
- **Wales / UK**

Local Youth Service

Local Youth Services are attached to all Councils in the UK. The Local Government Association (2022) vision for local youth services is for all young people to enjoy their lives, reach their full potential and make a good transition to adulthood. They also note that they should be able to achieve their ambitions, develop positive relationship and make worthwhile contributions to their communities.

The National Youth Agency (2021) explains that Youth services support young people through adolescence, from ages 8 to 25, but are predominantly funded for youth provision from 11 or 13 to 18 years of age. Uniformed organisations typically include children from age 6, or younger. However, they go on to state that investment in – and young people’s access to – youth services has fallen across the whole country, at

the same time as the needs of young people have increased. YMCA (2022) supports this as they state that young people have suffered as a direct result of funding cuts across England and Wales, with youth services such as youth club and youth workers have been cut by 69% since 2010/11. This, with more than 4500 youth work jobs being cut and 750 youth centres closed. This supports the needs of research on this topic, in which we can identify the challenges that the three local rural-areas face, and if investment and access has been damaged even further since covid-19.

According to Carmarthenshire County Council youth service (2023), they provide support and opportunities to access employment, education, and training. While the Ceredigion County Council youth service (2023) is a service that is dedicated to supporting young people's personal, social, and educational development through specialised support and open access provision, encouraging all young people to reach their fullest potential in order to make informed choices to lead meaningful lives. Pembrokeshire County Council youth service (2023) states that their aim is to provide young people aged 11-25 with universal access to opportunities, activities and youth clubs within the community, based on a voluntary relationship.

Youth Organisations:

Moxon, D. and Bacalso, C. (2018) show us that youth organisations are generally understood to be youth-led, non-profit, voluntary non-governmental associations, and under some circumstances, can instead be part of the state apparatus or be youth worker-led. They are mostly established to further the political, social, cultural, or economic goals of their members. With Frederickson & London (2000) inform that community-based organizations enable members of our society to improve human

well-being and advocate on behalf of those whose needs are not well met by other types of institutions.

Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) (2022) is the representative body for all youth work across Wales, helping to support and give a voice to youth work. They currently work with over 250,000 young people and hundreds of youth agencies and organisations in Wales. These agencies and organisations include the Urdd (2023) who aims to provide the opportunity, through the medium of Welsh, for children and young people in Wales to become fully rounded individuals and enable them to make a positive contribution to the community. An agency that they also work with is Ty Hafan (2023), one of the UK's leading paediatric palliative care charities and offers children and support for their families through Wales. Youth Scotland (2023) clearly states that Youth Organisations can be beneficial to youth work practice, to build young peoples' self-esteem and self-confidence, and create and encourage positive group atmosphere.

UK Youth Action (2023) is an agency who seek to influence policies to ensure that they are more youth friendly and therefore young people have better opportunities in life and have greater voice in their community, while also being passionate about offering young people tailored opportunities which motivate, educate, and make productive use of their time. According to Williamson et al (2005), one of the strongest trends in UK Youth Action in recent years is the rise of youth advocacy and projects led by young people within youth non-profit organisations, which has emerged from a growing appreciation that young people have a right to be listened to and taken seriously and to shape their own activities.

Young people

By re-searching further afield, Unicef (2022) explains that there are 1.8 billion young people in the world before asking the question; Imagine what our world could look like if every single one of these young people were supported and empowered to fulfil their potential? Before conceding that right now far too many don't get to realize their goals or are unable to contribute to their communities.

Back here in Wales, after the Senedd election in 2021, in which many young people aged 16 and over voted, the Welsh Government (WG) (2021) published "Welsh Government Programme for government" which is a document that explains to everyone in Wales what the WG will do during the 5 years they are in government, to deliver on the promises they made in the election. It contains many ideas and commitments to support children and young people across Wales. The document shows that the Welsh Government are taking this area seriously, but also more research could identify if these areas are being worked on in these three areas.

Furthermore, Youth Work in Wales' (2018) documents' main objective is to set out the key principles which underpin youth work and to provide an overview of its nature, purposes, and delivery. The content of the document applies specifically to youth work in Wales but is likely to be consistent with youth work principles, purposes, and practice in other parts of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland.

CWVYS (2022) is the independent representative body for the voluntary youth work sector in Wales. They have produced a document alongside other representatives of

the voluntary and local authority youth work sectors in Wales which is a guide to youth work in Wales; principles and purposes. Included in the document is the five pillars of youth work in Wales:

1. **Educative:** enabling young people to gain the skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values needed for their own personal development and fulfilment and as a means of contributing to society as members of groups and communities, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.
2. **Expressive:** Encouraging and enabling young people to express their understanding and knowledge and their ideas, opinions, emotions and aspirations through a broad range of creative and often challenging opportunities.
3. **Participative:** Encouraging and supporting young people to become partners in, and share responsibility for, the opportunities, learning processes and decision-making structures which affect their own and other people's lives and environments.
4. **Inclusive:** Enabling young people to develop knowledge, understanding and positive attitudes and behaviour in relation to:
 - a) racial, social, and cultural identity and diversity;
 - b) heritage;
 - c) languages and the value of one's own and other languages;
 - d) citizenship;
 - e) respect for other people's choices.
5. **Empowering:** Equipping young people with the understanding and skills to enable them to exercise their rights including:
 - a) recognising that all young people have rights and that this implies respecting the rights of others;

- b) supporting young people to carry out their responsibilities as citizens and members of their communities;
- c) encouraging young people to engage with the personal, social and political issues which affect their lives and the lives of others and to develop qualities of leadership.

Rural areas/communities:

Leigh Middleton, the CEO of National Youth Agency states in the National Youth Agency (2021) report that it is the rural areas that may experience a slower revival from Covid-19, with the capacity of youth services at its lowest base of support for a decade. There is little or no co-ordinated provision in many rural areas to tackle inequalities and put young people at the heart of Covid-recovery.

Muilu and Rusanen (2004) explain that many of those who consider the definition of rural areas end up by concluding that it is scarcely possible to achieve any universally applicable, exact, and unambiguous definition, although all definitions continue to have grey areas in which the outcome is affected by the major historical and structural differences between areas, countries, and continents, differences in statistical practices, and differences in national rural policies, which are influenced in turn by global economic and political fluctuations and changes in government.

Harries and Nimmo and Holland (2013) states that although Community means something different to everyone depending on their perspectives, they see a community as a group of people living in one locality or a group of people having cultural, religious, ethnic, or other characteristics in common. Smith (2001, 2002, 2013) notes that Community can be approached as a value, that it may be used as

several elements such as commitment, solidarity, trust, and mutuality. Researching even further in to these rural areas and communities can give a greater discovery and understanding in what these areas and communities have to offer for young people.

Wales/UK:

Duffy (2022) explores the first results of the census 2021 which shows that the population of Wales has reached record levels although it is growing more slowly than in England or any of its regions. It goes on to show the population and change since the Census 2011, with Ceredigion population being 71,500 a decrease of 5.8%, Carmarthenshire 187,900 with an increase of 2.2% and Pembrokeshire 123,400 with an increase of 0.8%. As our focus will be on if Covid-19 has had any impact on youth work within local services and youth Organisations within these rural-areas, population of the three areas could also be considered in the focus, and whether the population has had or does have an effect in any way.

UK Youth (2022) notes that the youth sector in England have a £2bn annual sector expenditure, with around 70,000 paid employees working within youth work. The Welsh Government (2022) notes that at March 2022 there were around 801 full-time equivalent youth work management and delivery staff working in local authorities in Wales, which is an increase of 6% compared with the previous year.

With our focus mainly on the barriers that are presented to youth work across the three Counties, it will be key to look at a cross section of the local community, underlining the positives that youth work have but also emphasizing the solutions to all challenges that youth work face across the Counties. From researching other

literature, there are existing issues and barriers that youth work faces already. Below are some barriers that youth work and rural areas/communities may face:

- investment in – and young people's access to – youth services has fallen across the whole country.
- Rural areas – not easy to access due to geographical nature.
- Choices of services – not suitable for everyone
- Lack of public transport
- Poverty / lack of money

3. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The researchers position regarding the ontology within this research question is that reality should be accepted as being debated but also interpreted. While the epistemology stance of the researcher is that the knowledge should be explored and examined; this by using the best methods and tools to focus on the nature and limitations on this research topic.

Cresswell & Plano Clark (2011) puts forward that mixed method is a research approach whereby researchers collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study. While Emerald Publishing debates that mixing data sets can give a better understanding of the problem and yield more complete evidence – the investigator gains both depth and breadth. Therefore, the pragmatic approach of a mixed methods research will be used for this piece of research, which supports the ontological view.

At centre of this research will be youth workers that work at local services level and youth workers who work and volunteer at youth clubs which are located within the research rural areas. Including these workers in the research will give them an opportunity to shape the path of the research alongside exploring the impact covid-19 has had on their work with young people. Although youth workers will be a key aspect of this research, the researcher feels that the research should include the young people themselves too, which will give the research their own perspective on how covid-19 has had an impact on them personally whether it be a lack of opportunities and support or even their own mental health. Young Minds (2022) survey in January

2021 showing that 67% of young people believed that the Pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health.

UK Research and Innovation (2019) firmly believe that research and innovation should be responsive to the knowledge, priorities, and values of society and open to participation by people from all backgrounds. However, Kirby (2004) openly stating that it is important to involve young people in deciding how they will be involved, and to ensure their participation is not token or manipulated by adults. This literature supports the aim of the researcher to work with the Youth workers as well as young people to involve them for this important research topic.

In order collect evidence for this research, the researcher will use the following methods for collecting all data, to make sure not to rely too much on any literature review that may also be used as part of the research.

Questionnaires

McNabb (2020) explain that questionnaires have many advantages for researchers, with the greatest of these is the considerable flexibility of the questionnaire, which can be custom designed to meet the objectives of almost any type of research project. In this instance the researcher will create a questionnaire to explore the Youth Work that were provided for young people pre-covid, during peak Covid and since Covid.

This questionnaire will be carried out by the three Local Services' Youth services:

- Carmarthenshire County Council – Youth Service
- Ceredigion County Council – Youth Service

- Pembrokeshire County Council – Youth Service

Further to these three Local Services' Youth services, the questionnaire will be carried out by the following volunteering Youth Organisation that are based in the three areas:

- Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Urdd) – Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion
- Young Farmers Clubs (YFC) – Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion
- Scouts – Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion

CWVYS (2022) explains that the Urdd's aim is to provide the opportunity, through the medium of Welsh for the children and young people (CYP) in Wales between 8-25 years old to become fully rounded individuals, developing personal and social skills that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the community while the YFC is a rural bilingual youth organisation, operating for young people aged between 10-28 years old which seeks to meet the needs of rural young people through a variety of educational, training and social programmes that encourage personal development, social interaction, community involvement and concern for the environment. Scouts also give young people across Wales between 6-25 years old the opportunity to enjoy fun and adventure, while developing the skills they need to succeed now, and in the future. While the association of voluntary services aims to support voluntary and community action by helping on things such as new projects to get off the ground and helping groups keep up to date with legislation and current issues for the sector. (PAVS (2022)).

The above literature clarifies why these organisations have been chosen to participate in this research, as they are organisation for young people but more importantly, they are organisation that give opportunities to young people across the year, every year to seek the needs and develop their lives.

Working groups

Following obtaining the answers and data from these organisations, a working group of youth workers which will be made from the above Local services and Youth Groups will be identified and invited to participate in the rest of the research. A working group usually accomplish more than people who work alone because the individual members of the group can pool resources and information to achieve goals and reach decisions (Steinberg 2017) and in the instance collecting various information from different groups could be key to this research.

Furthermore, an additional questionnaire will be shared with young people that are involved in the Youth service and the local groups, which will give the researcher additional data, and to have an opportunity to collect the insight into what the young people thought were before, during and following the Covid-19 pandemic, and how they have managed over this difficult period. A small working group will also be made from young people from the youth service and local group which will meet to discuss their thoughts on youth work in their area, and what has changed and even improved or gone worse over the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Using the questionnaires, the researcher will critically analyse the data received, before identifying the members that will make up the working group of 15 Youth

Workers. This working group will have some similar answers in their questionnaires but dissimilar things too. Having different perspectives will also encourage discussion. The working group of youth workers will be as follows:

- 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire CC, Carmarthenshire CC, Ceredigion CC
- 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire Urdd, Carmarthenshire Urdd, Ceredigion Urdd
- 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire YFC, Carmarthenshire YFC, Ceredigion YFC
- 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire Scouts, Carmarthenshire Scouts, Ceredigion Scouts

Following collecting the data and critically analysing what was received from the young people that appertain from the youth service and youth groups, members will be identified and invited to form a young people working group. A working group usually must make decisions or carry out a task, who are individuals that are invited to join such a group because they have some particular experience or skills to offer (Petrie 2011). This working group will be planned by the young people, and by using the data received, these data can be used to start the communication within the working group. Although the researcher will also be a part of the group and can support the group, as Westergaard (2009) show that providing support to young people in a group context can have advantages over one-to-one interactions, with an additional resource to be had in the shape of the group itself, by sharing feelings, thoughts, ideas and experiences with each other, young people can often be helped to

find solutions to the problem they face and their decision they need to make. The working group of young people will be as follows (18 young people):

- YFC - 6 young people (2 from each) – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire
- Urdd – 6 young people (2 from each) – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire
- Scouts – 6 young people (2 from each) – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire

In both the focus groups the researcher will work hard to encourage group discussion so that the opinions of one participant can be shared with the others and then will hopefully evoke some reactions and interactions (Greenbaum 1999).

Contract

As ethics in qualitative research (2012) explains, ethical questions in the research relationship, the use of data and the interpretative and analytical processes have all become more significant as the landscape of qualitative research continues to change, and researchers face new issues when using new tools to produce knowledge. Data protection and GDPR are key elements of any ethical issues now days, and considering these is important in this research, especially working with young people. The researcher will make sure that no names will be mentioned during the researcher, so each participant will be identified as a Person and number e.g P1, p2, p3.

To address any potential issues during this research process, a lot of this will be made from the start of the process. A contract will be drawn by the researcher in partnership with the participants in order to underline everyone's roles within the research and also the working groups. This contract will also ensure that all participants are aware of the below:

- Researcher to let all participants know their name, organisation & reasons for collecting data
- Permission from participants, and that their involvement is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from any data collection or working group at anytime
- Researcher to always remain neutral and unbiased
- All data collection and working group information received will be kept confidential and anonymous.
- Researcher to make sure to protect the data they collect from people. Do not leave anything with personal information in a place that can easily be accessed by people who do not need to see the data.

This research is an important topic to the researcher especially as the United Nations (2022) showing that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unequivocal impact on young people. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) study found that 'the impact of the pandemic on young people [is] systematic, deep and disproportionate.' Twenty-three per cent of young people aged 18-24 who were working pre-pandemic are now unemployed, and those who are working have reported reductions in hours and income. "Students' perceptions of their future career prospects are bleak, with 40

per cent facing the future with uncertainty and 14 per cent with fear,” the report adds. Globally, young people are feeling more uncertain about what the future holds.

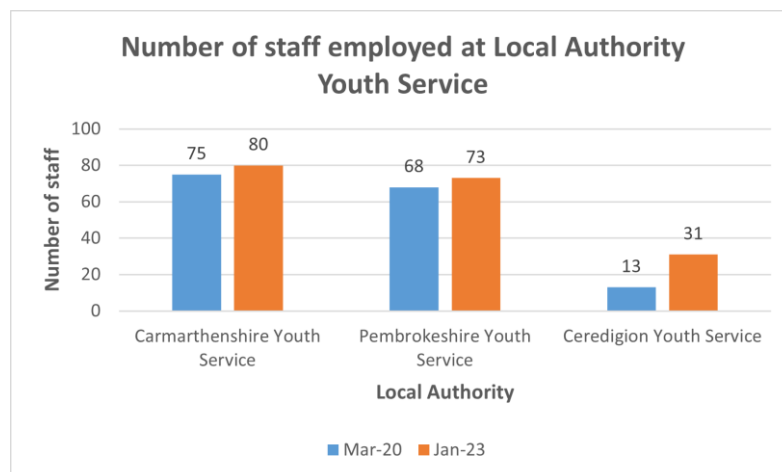
As the researcher has lived and taken part in many youth work activities between school, sports and other hobbies in this researched area, the researcher feels that this topic is very important. Through working alongside youth workers and the young people – the researcher feels there is scope to collect data, creating working groups but also to give youth workers and young people the opportunity to participate for their own experience but also to help their local community.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

This section presents the data gathered from the data collection stage of the research which was outlined during the previous section. The data has been collected through two different questionnaires; one questionnaire for the youth organisation members and one questionnaire completed by the youth organisations themselves with observations collected from groups made from workers and members from the researched services and organisations.

The data will be categorised into various themes which were discussed during the questionnaires and group discussions. As mentioned in the previous section no names will be mentioned during the research, so each participant will be identified as a person and number e.g Member1, m2, m3 & youth worker 1, yw2, yw3.

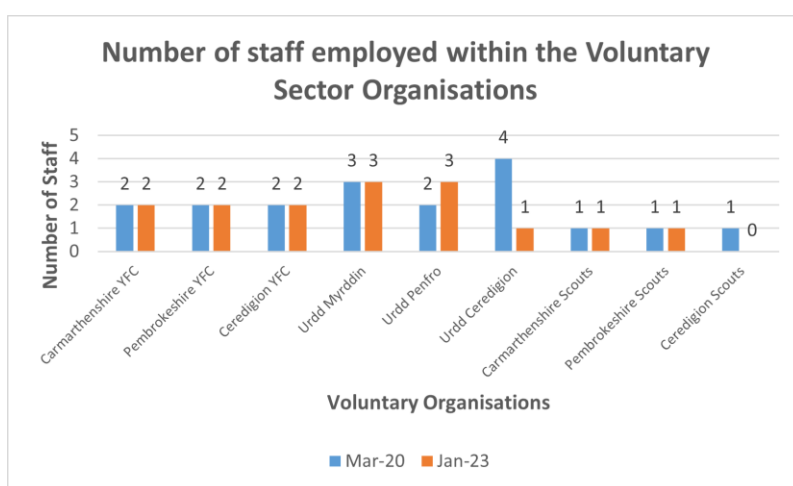
Staff



The local authority Youth Services in Ceredigion had seen an increase in recruiting youth workers compared to their numbers pre-covid. At March 2020 they employed 13 full time youth workers which included 9 youth workers who worked at the local authority overseeing young people in various communities and villages and 4 youth

support workers, who worked closer in schools to young people. By January 2023 they increased to employ 19 youth workers and 12 youth support workers, 6 full time and 6 part time specifically in schools across Ceredigion, stating that schools themselves have asked since schools re-opened face to face following Covid-19. Carmarthenshire Youth services have also seen an increase; with 75 full time youth workers in employment in March 2020 compared to 80 full time youth workers as of January 2023. Pembrokeshire Youth services employ 5 more staff in January 2023 compared to March 2020 increasing from 68 staff which included 25 full time and 43 part time to 73 staff members, with 31 full time staff overseeing youth work in various communities and villages and 42 part time staff working closely with young people in secondary and primary schools.

“During the pandemic it was hard to keep in touch with the vulnerable young people that we see as we were not allowed to have contact, only online or by telephone. The young people soon had enough of team calls! It has been difficult to build the relationships back up which is taking time” (yw1 – Youth Worker)



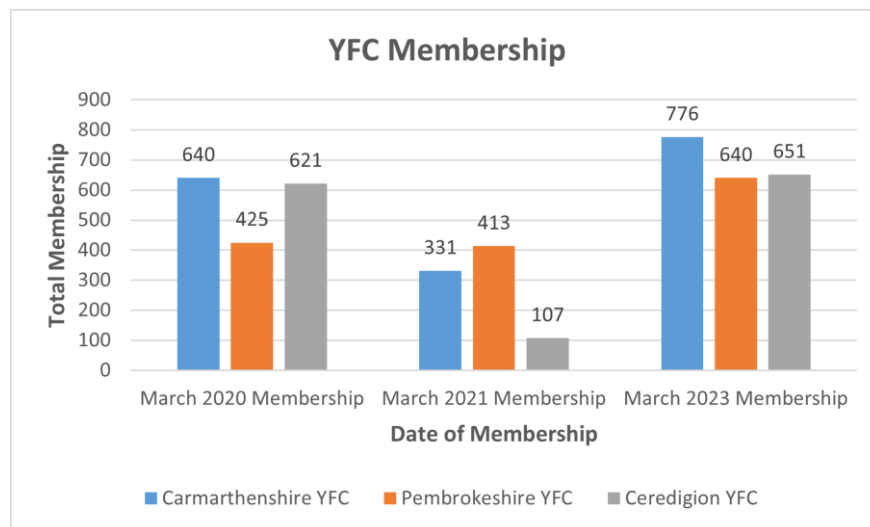
Meanwhile within Voluntary Sector Organisations, far fewer youth workers are employed. Carmarthenshire YFC, Ceredigion YFC & Pembrokeshire YFC employ 2 full time youth workers as of January 2023 which is the same number as they did pre-

covid as of March 2020. The Urdd Penfro (Pembrokeshire) employed 2 full time youth workers in March 2020, but as of January 2023 they have seen that number increase by one. Urdd Ceredigion have only one full time member of staff as of 2023, a decrease from 4 full time staff members they employed in March 2020. Urdd Myrddin (Carmarthenshire) have stayed the same throughout Covid-19 employing 3 full time members of staff from March 2020 up until January 2023.

Pembrokeshire & Carmarthenshire Scouts have an area commissioner each as of January 2023, as they did in March 2020; both whom overlook their designated Counties ensuring Scout Association rules and procedures are followed and that safe and enjoyable Scouting is provided. In spite that, Ceredigion has a vacancy for an area commissioner as of March 2023, although they did have this in place in March 2020. Nonetheless they are overseen by a regional commissioner in West Wales who also oversees Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire and line manage the Area Commissioners.

It is worth noting that all youth groups had members of staff sent on furlough over a period between March 2020 and October 2021.

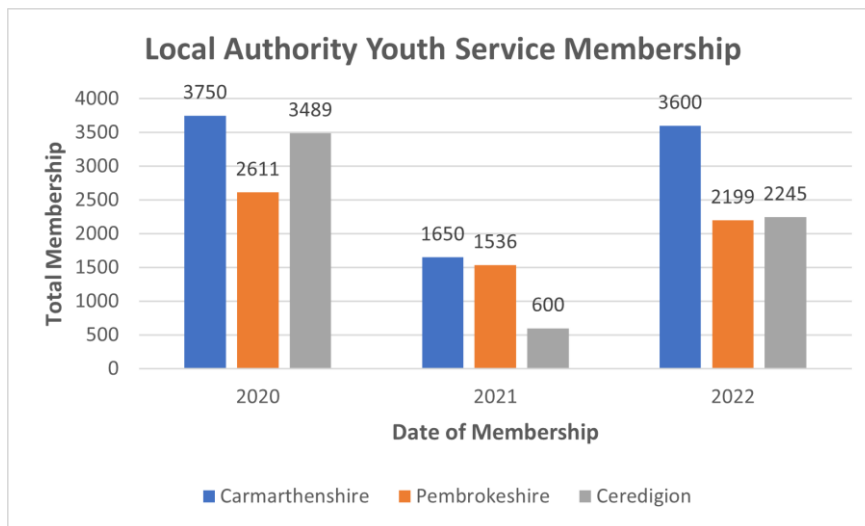
Membership



The YFC organisation saw a significant increase in their membership numbers in all three counties as of March 2023 compared to what their membership numbers were in March 2020.

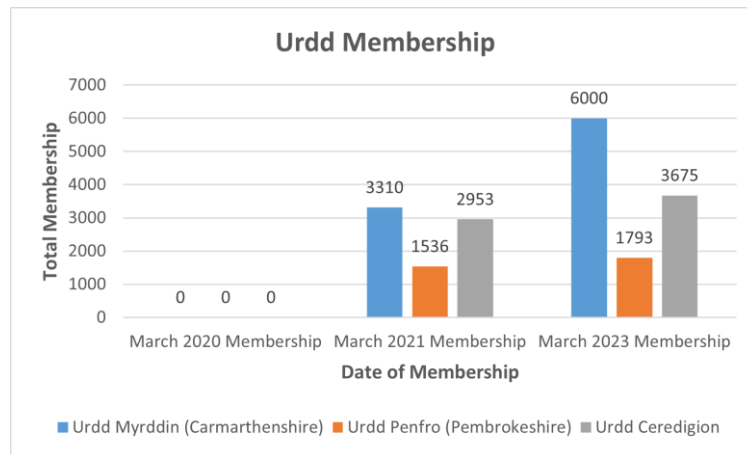
However, in all three counties, their numbers dropped between 2020-2021, this being mostly during the Covid-19 lockdown & further restrictions. Carmarthenshire YFC increased from 640 in March 2020 to 776 members by March 2023, although in March 2021 it had dropped to only 331 members. Ceredigion YFC increased their number by 50 individuals from 621 (March 20) to 671 in March 2023, but they saw a significant decrease in their membership number by March 2021 down to only 107 members. While Pembrokeshire YFC saw an enormous increase from 425 members to 640 members by March 2023, they too had a decrease by March 2021. However, they only saw a decrease of 12 members compared to their number in 2020.

“YFC face to face stopped. Everything went online – we didn't see much of people and many of my friends were also in YFC. I was itching to go back to the Club face to face after Covid Lockdown” (m1 – YFC Member)



Ceredigion Council youth service work countywide, which involves each market town including schools and several rural communities and villages. They worked with 3489 young people as of March 2020 but that number decreased to 2245 young people as of January 2023. The number had significantly decreased to 600 young people individuals by 2020. Carmarthenshire Council youth service also work countywide, specifically in market towns and rural villages including 7 youth clubs on a weekly basis. 3750 young people were seen as of March 2020, but that number had decreased slightly to 3600 young people as of March 2023. They saw a decrease to 1650 young people in March 2021. Pembrokeshire Council youth Service noted that they worked with 19 youth groups which includes local community groups and some schools. 2611 young people attended or were seen in March 2020, but as of March 2023 this number had decreased to 2199. The number decreased to 1536 by March 2021 too.

“Similarly, to all local authority youth services in Wales, the support has been far more targeted due to an array of factors, which has inevitably reduced the capacity and resources available to maintain and promote universal provision and early help”
(yw2 – Youth worker)



A spokesman from Urdd Gobaith Cymru noted that over Covid-19 they had changed their membership system, which meant that they don't have their up-to-date membership figures per county before March 2020. It was noted that over Wales they had around 55,000 members in March 2020, compared to 28,981 members in March 2021 & 38,521 as of March 2023.

However Urdd Ceredigion had 2953 members in March 2021 & by March 2023 had an increase to 3675 members. In March 2021 Urdd Myrddin recorded 3310 members, however that number increased significantly to 6000 members by March 2023. Urdd Penfro also saw an increase from March 2021 to March 2023, from 1536 to 1793.



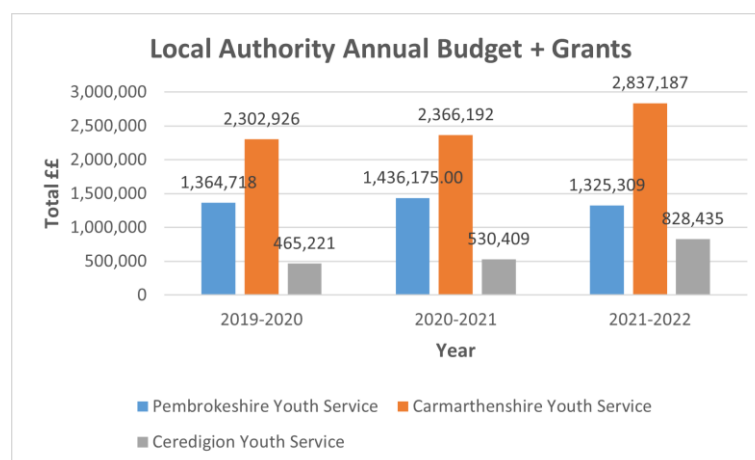
Scouts Pembrokeshire and Scouts Ceredigion have both seen a decrease in their membership since March 2020, although one youth worker from the Scouts organisation noted:

“We saw a fair drop in both adults and children, but we seem to have recovered to pre pandemic levels now” (yw3 – Youth Worker)

Pembrokeshire Scouts had 554 members in 2020, which decreased to 391 members by 2021 before increasing to 460 members in 2022. Ceredigion Scouts also decreased from 386 in 2020 to 258 members in 2021 and by 2022 had reached 299 members. However as mentioned, Carmarthenshire Scouts has seen their membership increased from what it was in 2020. In March 2020 they had 363 members, and by March 2022 they had increased to 413 members.

Finance

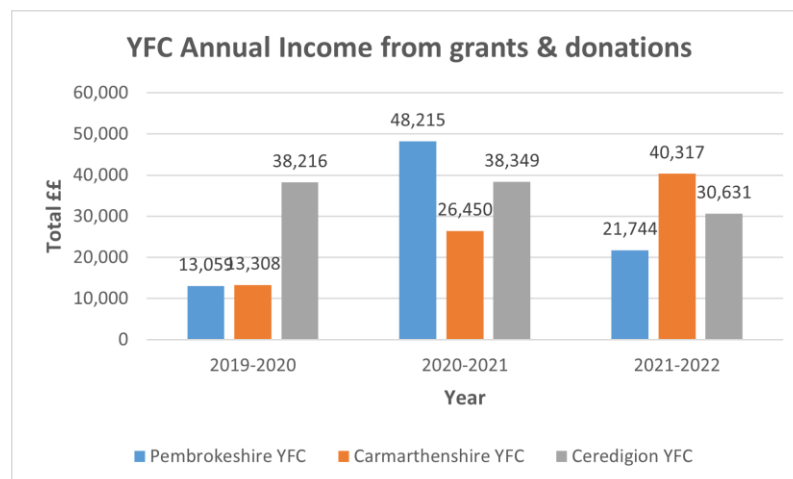
One of the questions within the questionnaire to the youth groups organisations and local authority services asked how much financial support they received during the year before March 2020 and since then as of March 2023.



The local authority youth service received most of its money through the local authority core budget, as well as from grants from the Welsh Government for young people.

Pembrokeshire youth service received nearly £40,000 less in 2021-2022 than how much they received back in 2019-2020, although this number increased to £1,436,175 in 2020-2021. This is a complete opposite to Carmarthenshire youth service who received over 2.8 million compared to the 2.3 million they were receiving in 2019-20. While in Ceredigion, their youth service received just under £500,000 for the 2019-20 year, which then increased to £530,000 in 2020-2021 and in 2021-2022 received over £800,000.

“The core funding is distributed to local authorities on the basis of needs-based formula – this funding supports staff with youth work management and delivery as well as administrative and expenditure such as rent or maintenance services.” (yw4 – Youth Worker)

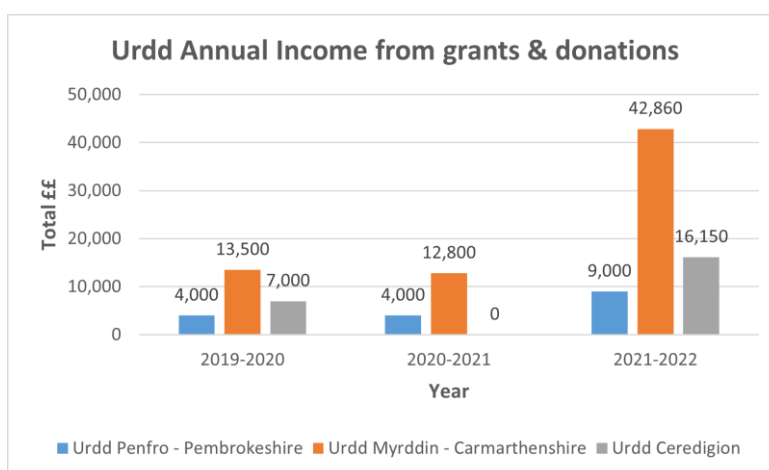


The YFC counties receive their money mostly through donations from their local authority, donations from community councils within their counties, membership subscriptions and also a Welsh Language grant which is received from the Welsh Government.

“The Welsh language grant is to support a variety of organisations to facilitate the use of the Welsh Language. All 12 YFC Counties receive this grant, and the money is calculated depending on the number of memberships each County have.” (yw5 – Youth Worker)

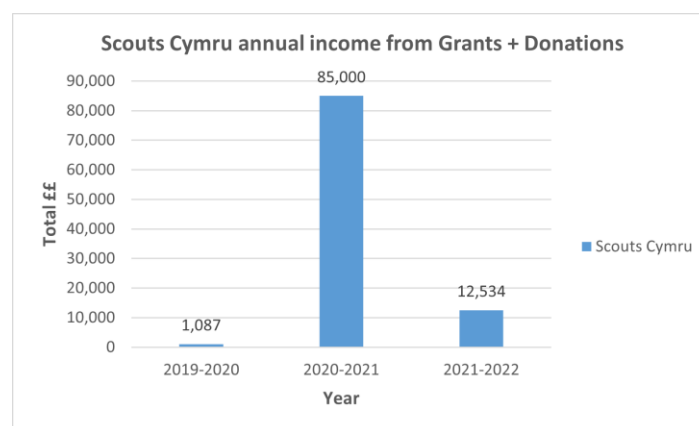
Carmarthenshire YFC received £13,308 from grants & donations in 2019-2020, but this sum doubled by 2020-2021 mainly due to Covid rate relief grant, and increased even more significantly by 2021-2022, mainly due to sponsorship, various smaller grants, and a donation from the local authority Council. Pembrokeshire YFC also made significantly increase in their annual income from grants & donations from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 with the Covid job retention & rates relief a big factor in this, while facing a decrease by 2021-2022 to £21,744. Ceredigion YFC’s income from grants & donation remained the same from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 but saw a decrease by 2021-2022.

“We were very thankful to receive money from the Covid Job retention & rates relief as these were the only significant income coming in, especially when all other competitions and fund-raising events (which really does help with our income) were cancelled because of lockdown and covid-19” (yw6 – Youth worker).



The Urdd receive most of their money on a county level from their local authority donations and further grants for training towards youth and sport.

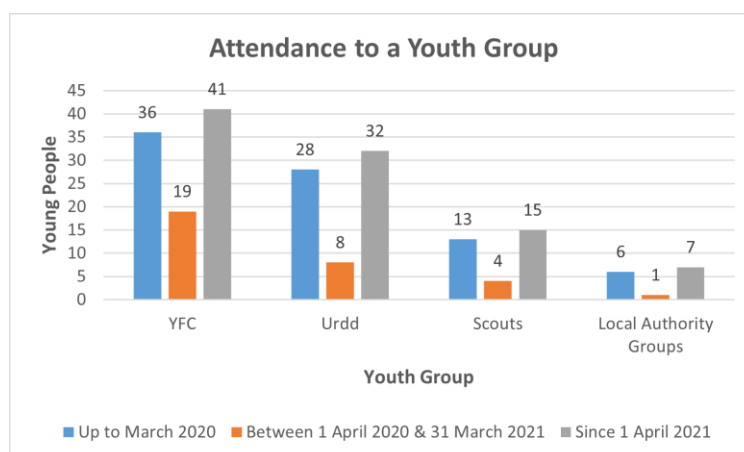
Urdd Penfro received £4000 in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. However, their income increased the following year in 2021-2022 to £9,000. Whereas Urdd Myrddin saw a decrease in 2020-2021 from 2019-2020 of about £700, but their income from grants and donations trebled in 2021-2022 to £42,860. This was explained as a grant received for some new sports officers. Urdd Ceredigion received £7000 from their local authority council in 2019-2020 but didn't receive any in 2020-2021. Despite this, £16,150 was received in 2021-2022 which could be an income for 2020-2021 too.



Apart from the one County who received a Covid rates relief grant, all other County scouts noted that they don't receive grants and donations as such but that Scouts Cymru itself are benefiting from receiving this, which then is distributed to members through various activities and events. Members also pay membership subscriptions which also supports Clubs to run for their members.

Scouts Cymru received £1087 from grants and donations in 2019-2020. However, this number was significantly increased by 2020-2021 which notably came from grants such as the Covid job retention and relief rates. This number then decreased by 2021-2022 to £12,534.

Activities



Above are the results from a questionnaire that 73 young people from various youth groups answered, regarding if they attended any youth group up to March 2020; when Wales and the rest of the UK were locked down due to Covid-19, between 1 April 2020 & 31 March 2021 right in the middle of the pandemic and also since 1 April 2021, since everything started to re-open, with family & friends able to socialise a bit more. The findings from the questionnaire suggests that more young people are now attending a youth group/s than what was attending pre-covid.

*“I and many of my friends missed out on several opportunities and experiences – we will never get that time back. That first meeting face to face after Covid was great”
(m2 – Scouts member)*

Out of the 73 young people who completed the young people questionnaire, 41 of them are now members in a YFC club, compared to 36 before March 2020. The number had decreased to 19 during 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, although it was noted that the YFC clubs were meeting virtually; with some meeting every fortnight, and some once a month. Many explained that their County YFC held various virtual competitions such as public speaking, stock judging, arts and crafts and cooking competitions.

“I wasn’t a very sociable person pre-covid and didn’t attend any youth groups like many of my school friends. But I saw my local YFC Club meeting up virtually on a fortnightly basis & also taking part in various virtual competitions with the County YFC. I have joined them since Covid-19 and have made new friends.” (m3 – YFC member)

From the findings of the questionnaire, the Urdd gained 4 members from the 28 who mentioned that they attended pre-covid too, with that number increasing to 32. That number of 28 had decreased significantly to 8 between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. The Urdd organised some virtual competitions such as the Eisteddfod T which included competitions such as singing, arts and crafts and various TikTok videos.

“I didn’t join the Urdd over the lockdown period and many months later. Between being on my screen for school and family quizzes, I had enough of meeting with people virtually.” (m4 – Urdd member)

The Scouts had gained 2 members, compared to their number pre-covid, with 15 of the respondents stating that they attend a Scouts club compared to 13 up to March 2020. Although that number decreased to 4 between April 2020 and March 2021.

“All clubs decided not to meet virtually for the first two months following lockdown, but most groups managed to meet virtually following that with some meeting twice a month and some once a month. The more time spent virtually, numbers started to decline each time they met.” (yw3 – Youth worker)

6 had responded that they were a part of a local authority group in their local community pre-covid although this number had decreased to 1 between April 2020 and March 2021. However, 7 respondents had stated that they were part of a Local Authority group since April 2021, an increase of 1 since March 2020.

“During the lockdown periods it was hard to keep in touch with the vulnerable young people that we deal with on a weekly basis, as we were not allowed to have contact with them apart from online meeting or over the phone. The young people soon had enough of team calls”. (yw4 – Youth worker)

Mental Health

During the two questionnaires to the Youth Groups and to the young people who were members of these groups at least 25% commented including the words “Mental Health”, which also was discussed even further during some follow up conversations in groups.

“I was a confident young person, very sociable and enjoyed attending various youth groups. Since Covid-19 I have been suffering a lot more with anxiety and panic attacks which hasn’t help my mental health at all. Covid-19 had a big impact on my personal life.” (m5 – Young person)

All youth workers noted that they had either heard or knew of a few young people who have been suffering with mental health since Covid-19 or with mental health pre-covid, which has had a detrimental effect for them since Covid-19.

“We have seen a significant increase in the primary issue or barrier to young people’s engagement being higher levels of anxiety and poor mental health, so this has become a real focus of the Covid recovery work alongside stakeholders such as schools, health board, social care & housing.” (yw7 – Youth Worker)

“In 2022/2023 we have seen the re-balancing of provision where: 530 children and young people have been open to support with 300 secondary-aged pupils receiving weekly focused support.” (yw2 – Youth worker)

Further discussions showed that all the young people who were apart of the group discussions had either a mental health problem, had someone in their family or had a friend that was suffering from mental health.

“No opportunities to socialise face to face with friends, with school closed except virtual, the same with youth groups and so on – Covid-19 had a massive impact on me and many of my other friends. Although I was quite sociable and enjoyed seeing friends, I didn’t have much confidence to go back to normal life for many weeks.” (m6

– Young person)

5. DISCUSSION & INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The data presented in the previous section established key themes, which are as follows: Staff, Membership, Finance, Activities and Mental Health. This section will establish a discussion for each theme which has been gathered from findings gathered through two questionnaires; one completed by youth groups and its staff, and one completed by members of the youth groups as well as discussion groups which were made from the staff in those youth groups and another discussion group which included young people. Furthermore, this section is intended to accomplish the aim of the study, which is to investigate if Covid-19 has had an impact on youth work in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Ceredigion.

Staff

The literature around staff or known more like a youth worker around youth work setting varies in terms of explanation but as Harrison & Wise (2005) states, the purpose of youth work is to facilitate and support young people's growth through dependence to interdependence, by encouraging their personal and social development and enabling them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society.

The research gathered identified that local authority youth services have increased their pool of youth workers, who oversee and work closely with young people in various communities and villages as well as young people in secondary and primary schools. Findings also suggest that youth workers within the local authority services found it hard to keep in touch with vulnerable young people, but it had also been difficult to build the relationships with young people back from how it was pre-covid.

Jeffs & Smith (2010) explains that our ability to build and sustain appropriate, effective, and valuable relationships with young people is at the heart of youth work practice. Increasing the number of youth workers essentially suggests that there is a need for these youth workers in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion local authority youth services.

Furthermore, voluntary organizations have far fewer staff. According To Handy (1990) voluntary organizations fall in to five categories which are service providers, groups concerned with research and advocacy, self-help groups that give support and assistance, charity groups and intermediary bodies such as the councils for voluntary service. It is evident that in terms of staffing, voluntary organizations who have been a part of the research haven't been affected as much, albeit one organization and area which has seen their staff numbers decrease significantly since pre-covid.

Membership

Join it (2023) explains that the purpose of a membership organization is to gather like-minded individuals to engage with or further interest in a shared activity, industry, profession, or mission. Membership in this topic is the number of young people who have participated in youth work within voluntary organizations and the local authority youth service. Davies & Batsleer (2010) notes that young people who participate in youth work have the right to participate in the decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard.

The data from the research identified that all three local authority counties saw a significant decrease in the number of young people they had worked with between

March 2020; when the UK was locked down because of Covid-19 until the same period in 2021. Furthermore, the YFC, Urdd and the Scouts in all three counties also saw a decrease in their membership number during the same period.

This may go hand in hand with the finding from UK Youth (2022) who conducted an online survey between 20-27 March 2020 focusing on what impact Covid-19 may bring to the youth sector. They found that 88% of respondents indicated that they are likely or very likely to reduce service provision to young people. Various discussions during the collection of data within the working groups mentioned that everything stopped face to face, and as well as schools, many groups had turned to meeting virtually.

With young people turning to meeting virtually, and using more and more technology, there can be some positives but also many negatives as Sokaski (2019) mentions. Although that there is an array of positives to using online technologies to support children and young people's social, emotional, and educational development in a variety of different ways, this does not go without saying within their social communities' children and young people are certainly exposed to a wider range of people, material, and risks.

Although numbers significantly dropped over the 2020-2021 period, those numbers rose remarkably from 2021 onwards with face-to-face meetings notably supporting this factor, with many young people itching to go back and see their friends. The Chairman of the Global Mobilization Board and Secretary General, World Organization of the Scout Movement, Ahmad Alhendawi (2023) mentions that we

have an opportunity to learn lessons and build a society that prioritizes future generations, but also an opportunity to invest in young people and empower them to lead and shape their own futures.

Finance

According to the YMCA (2020) who examined local authority expenditure on youth services in England & Wales; local authorities in England and Wales combined spent £1.41bn in real terms on youth services in 2010/11 compared to £429m by 2018/19 which equates to a cut of £978m or a 70% reduction in funding over the eight-year period. The Welsh Government (2021) however notes that their spend for youth work provision in Wales in 2019/20 increased by 22% compared 2018/19 from £29.6m to 37.5m.

All three local authorities noted that their annual budget and grants had increased during the 2020/21 year compared to 2019/20 which also goes side by side with the Welsh Government (2021a) youth work in Wales stats which show an increase of 2% for the total spend across Wales in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. Interestingly, two local authority counties received over £300,000 more in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 but one county received just over £100,000 less which contradicts the fact that the Welsh Government had spent £42.5m which was an increase of 12% on youth work provision for 2021/22 compared to the previous year.

The Council of Europe (2023) notes that youth organisations are generally understood to be youth-led, non-profit, voluntary non-governmental associations, and under some circumstances, can instead be part of the state apparatus or be youth worker-led. All

three of the youth organization who took part in this research receive their money through similar aspects; Donations from local authority or local community councils, membership subscriptions and various grants that are available from year to year, which suggests that their income can vary from year to year which does show from the data collected. All organizations' incomes are very different to each other, and the amount they receive also are different. An obvious financial support that was received from March 2020 for all the youth organizations was the Covid job retention and rates relief. Re-search also identified that the YFC Counties receive a Welsh Language Grant on a yearly basis, calculated on the number of memberships each County has, and it is a significant support for their income year on year.

In June 2023, Jeremy Miles the Education and Welsh Language Minister Welsh Government (2023) announced 18 organizations across Wales, will receive more than £1 million in extra funding through the Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organization Grant for 2023-25, bringing the total allocated since the grant began in April 2022 to more than £2.9 million. This was done due to the increased demand for services, higher operational costs and a shift in the support needed by young people because of the cost-of-living crisis.

Activities

It was recognized throughout the data collection stage that Covid-19 had a major impact for all within the youth work sector, from the youth workers to the children and young people themselves. On 23 March 2020, Boris Johnson (2020) announced the first lockdown in the UK, stating that everyone should stay home, while

immediately closing all non-essential shops, all gatherings, and social events, which meant that all youth groups were closed and stopped meeting face to face.

Membership numbers were significantly down in all youth organizations and local authority within Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Ceredigion including young people the local authority's youth service worked with during the lockdown period between April 20 and March 21. Furthermore, a youth worker explained how hard it was to keep in touch with the vulnerable young people that they dealt with on a weekly basis, Youth Endowment Fund (2020) also explains that Covid-19 changed the delivery context that youth work organizations are operating in. The rapidly evolving restrictions made it harder to plan and prepare. Contact with young people is interrupted, information on families becomes outdated and young people's needs become increasingly hidden, making it harder for organizations to engage those most likely to benefit from their services in the most effective way.

Interestingly, data collected from a questionnaire in which 73 young people completed showed an increase in participation for all three-youth organization and local authority youth groups as of 1 April 2021. Various comments suggested that many young people soon had enough of meeting virtually after a few months especially between school lessons and family quizzes. However, seeing virtual competitions and events virtually had helped a few to start attending a youth group that they didn't attend pre-covid.

Mental Health

One of the most obvious topics that has been identified from this research and especially from the data collected is mental health. 25% of the respondents who participated in this research mentioned the words mental health, which goes with Mind (2023) who states that 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 8 young people experiences mental health problems or illness at some point during their lifetime. While Kinsella & Kinsella (2006) mentions that while newspapers, magazines, radio and television documentaries and soap operas all regularly feature mental health as a theme, and despite the media exposure and the tireless promotion of major charities and awareness-raising bodies, mental health issues continue to be widely misunderstood, mythologized, and stereotyped.

The impact covid-19 would have on young people was noted in the UK Youth (2022) online survey research, with feedback from the UK youth movement ranking an increase on mental health or well-being concerns on top of their agenda. While Aggleton, Dennison & Warwick (2010) notes that although many children and young people report being happy and satisfied with their lives, the prevalence of conduct disorders and poor mental health among some young people has been an issue of public and policy concern.

Identified from the data collection, it is clear that covid-19 has had a detrimental effect on young people's mental health, contributing to increased levels of anxiety and panic attacks, while also effecting their confidence to not only going back to face people again, but to also communicate with their friends and within their youth groups.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter will draw the study to a conclusion by establishing what impact Covid-19 has had on Youth Work within Rural areas in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire. The chapter will view the main findings of the research, before establishing a conclusion and if further research is needed. Furthermore, a set of recommendations will be set for future on-goings.

Summary

The results established many findings, especially within five main topics which included staff, membership, finances, activities, and mental health. These topics are equally important as each other as they all play a role within an organization, and clearly contribute to the service young people receive.

It was clear from the data that all three of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion local authority youth services had increased their pool of youth workers, which goes hand in hand with a statement by Leigh Middleton, Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency (2022) who noted that more youth workers were needed, not less by explaining that it's time to celebrate the vital role youth workers play in young people's lives. This statement by Leigh Middleton was following a call from a new film by Football Beyond Borders in partnership with the National Youth Agency calling for 10,000 more youth workers back in November 2022.

A youth worker was clear during the research that since Covid-19, it has been hard to build those relationships back with the young people, after not being able to see them over a period during lockdown. Open Learn (2006) tells us that the way we spend our

time with young people is important in developing our relationships with them. All youth organisations noted that a member of their staff was furloughed during a period over Covid-19, which Hazlegreaves (2020) explains was a scheme drawn out by the government to serve several purposes such as help for employees unable to work and financial relief for companies.

Membership numbers decreased considerably for all youth organisations that were a part of this research, as well as the number of young people the local authority youth services worked with during the period from April 2020 to 2021 compared to what the number was pre-covid. Importantly, these numbers had increased significantly, once youth groups had the go-ahead to start meeting face to face once more.

The data collected as part of this study shows that financial support for all the three Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion local authority youth services had increased year on year since the 2019-20 period, including the 2020-21 which was during the first of many covid-19 lockdowns, and had also increased for the 2021-22. According to a staff member in one of the local authorities, most of this is received based on needs-based formula which supports funding to support staff with youth work management and delivery as well as administrative and expenditure.

Unsurprisingly based on the drop in membership and number of young people worked with, a decrease was had in the number of activities young people in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion did during the period between April 2020 and March 2021; Several young people who were part of this research explained that due to being

in front of their screens for school purposes as well as seeing their families regularly, they had enough of meeting with more people virtually.

Mental health is a significant problem according to participants who were a part of the study. Pilgrim (2009) explains that mental health is used positively to indicate a state of psychological wellbeing, negatively to indicate its opposite (mental health problems). 25% of the respondents who participated in the research mentioned the word mental health. Anxiety & panic attacks were the main contributors as well as lack of confidence and communication issues.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is clear that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on youth work in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

The restrictions on social gatherings, closure of schools, and youth centres forced youth workers to shift their activities to online platforms. This change from the normal approach posed several challenges to youth workers accustomed to face-to-face engagement. Youth workers also had to quickly adapt to new ways of interacting with young people online, leading to mixed experiences for both the youth workers and young people.

Despite the challenges, the pandemic had a positive influence on youth workers' ability to reach young people in various ways. By moving online, youth workers were able to increase their reach beyond geographical boundaries. The virtual platform also

allowed for more inclusion, creating a safe and inclusive safe space for young people to connect with other young people who might be struggling.

The young people who relied on youth services were amongst those most impacted by the changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Firstly, the pandemic caused an upheaval in the education system, leading to a loss of face-to-face learning and creating inequalities between students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The major issues that has come clear in this research, is that Covid-19 had also affected young people's mental health, contributing to the increased levels of anxiety and panic attacks. The restriction of social activities and isolation from friends and extended family may have had a profound impact on young people's social and emotional wellbeing which is echoed in Singh et al' (2020) work looking in to the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents.

In conclusion, Covid-19 had a significant impact within youth work across Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion. Although the pandemic demonstrated the resilience and creativity of youth workers and highlight the continued importance of youth work in Wales, the multiple challenges experienced by young people, including school closures and mental health concerns have had a profound impact on their overall well-being. This was clear from reviewing the latest literature, and from collecting data and discussions with the young people and youth workers who participated in this study.

It is clear that there are various lessons learned during Covid-19 for youth workers and youth practice in general, and it is essential that youth workers require more

support than ever to ensure they have the best possible outreach and learning strategies.

The following sections are set out to challenge these negatives impacts through a set of recommendations.

Reflection on the process and limitations:

Reflecting on the first stages of the research, the researcher felt as though this would be a good study to carry out since he had lived in and around those areas and took part in many youth work or sport activities which was a place of interest. Throughout the work, the researcher gained knowledge on youth work in Wales, and the various ways youth work is carried out. It became clear early on in the research that the study would be a small study consisting on data from small numbers of individuals from various youth organisations in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. This was due to time constraints between the researcher and youth workers/young people participating. Although collecting data from various individuals in three different counties helped to gain various opinions and issues.

Although the study included a small number of data, the research was still of value as it highlighted the impact Covid-19 had on youth work in all three counties. The researcher would have benefitted even more by collecting data further back from 2019-2020 in some topics such as finance and membership numbers to fully understand if the problems that arose in this study had been impacted from other things in the past.

The following section will establish a set of recommendations that could challenge the negatives from the study.

Recommendations:

1. Mental Health Support Service: These services should be made available to all young people in every school, with organisations such as young Mind and Mind providing guidance to schools to assist young people with their mental health challenges.
2. Investing in Youth Work: It is vital that policymakers and funders recognize the significance of youth work in the aftermath of Covid-19. Investing in youth work is vital in ensuring young people continue to receive the necessary support in their development and in building stronger communities.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendices 1 - Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

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:	Rhodri Lewis			
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 Youth Work and Social Education MA
4	Campus:	Carmarthen
5	E-mail address:	10108445@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07891922210
For students:		

7	Student Number:	1100845
8	Programme of Study:	UWTSD – Youth Work and Social Education MA
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Angharad Lewis / Darren O'Connor

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)	☐		

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	<i>BERA</i>	☒

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	
2	Contact person name	
3	Contact person e-mail address	
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 paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary YES ☐ NO ☐
7		Employed YES ☐ NO ☐
8	Is the research being undertaken	If YES then the YES ☐ NO ☐

	within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	permission question below does not need to be answered.				
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:	The impact Covid-19 has had on Youth Work in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire?	
2	Proposed start date:	01.09.2022	Proposed end date: 01.03.2022
	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 Covid-19 had an impact on everyone's life from March 2020 and still does in some areas. With lockdowns being introduced, businesses were closed down, everyone told not to leave their houses apart from essentials, and schools were closed, turning to online teaching. This also meant that Youth Work was to stop, apart from meeting online. How did this work? Did this help young People? Did they take advantage of meeting online? UK Youth (2022) carried out a survey assessment regarding Youth work and Young People - Results from that assessment highlighted a big impact on young people's lives mainly their mental health, increased loneliness and isolation, lack of space safe and higher risk for engaging in gangs, substance misuse, carrying weapons or other harmful practices. While a Local Government (2022) paper showing that 17% of Youth Organisations faces closure as a result of Covid-19 while 88% anticipate reducing services for young people.		

	As I am from West Wales, and had various opportunities in a youth setting as a member of a youth Club and also had the opportunity to volunteer and work with Young people and within a Youth Club/Youth Work setting within Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion – it is a very important topic for me as I had great opportunities, and seeing if Covid-19 has had any impact on those opportunities to other young people will be of interest to me. Youth, UK. (2022) UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report. [ebook] London: UK Youth, p.2. Available at: <https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report-.pdf> [Accessed 18 November 2022]. Local.gov.uk. (2022) Re-thinking local: youth services. [online] Available at: <https://local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/re-thinking-local/re-thinking-local-children-and-young-people/re-thinking-local> [Accessed 18 November 2022].
4	Research Question The research questions or topic I have chosen to research in to is “The impact Covid-19 has had on Youth Work in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire?”. Youth work is a very important aspect of my life, as I had great opportunities within youth work when I was much younger, and I have also had the opportunity to volunteer and work within Youth Work. As I am from West Wales, and had various opportunities in a youth setting as a member of a youth Club and also had the opportunity to volunteer and work with Young people and within a Youth Club/Youth Work setting within Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion – it was the main reason why I have chosen to look at what impact Covid-19 has had on youth work within these Counties.
5	Aims of Research Activity The aim of the research is to investigate if covid-19 has had any impact on Youth Work in three rural based areas in West Wales. The research will be aimed at youth workers who have been working with young people before, during and since the covid-19 pandemic. The research will also be aimed at young people to get their perspective and their thoughts on youth work before, during and since covid. The research will also aim to find the positives and also negatives that have come out of the covid-19 pandemic and how these bonds with youth work and young people for the future.
6	Objectives of Research Activity To explore and Evaluate: • Youth Work that were provided for young people pre-covid, during peak Covid and since Covid in these areas. • If covid-19 has had an impact on youth work practice and how youth work is undertaken by youth workers. • Issues that have impacted upon young people as a result of the pandemic. • The impact covid-19 has had on young people accessing youth services and how they feel To identify: • the support that was given to Youth work pre-covid, in terms of any local government funding or local fundraising funding • If covid-19 has had an impact on youth work practice – How? In what way? • Recommendations on how Youth Work can support Young People any further in these three rural areas.

	To Examine: • If the support that was given to Youth work pre-covid, in terms of any local government funding or local fundraising funding has changed in any way during & since covid in these areas. • If there is anything that must happen/change to have a positive effect on Youth Work post Covid-19?
I	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 first methods that will be used during this research activity will be questionnaires, which will be carried out at first by the three Local Services' Youth services: • Carmarthenshire County Council – Youth Service • Ceredigion County Council – Youth Service • Pembrokeshire County Council – Youth Service This data will be collected from youth workers working with the Youth Service in these areas as well as the Youth Workers that work/volunteer within the Youth Service Youth Clubs. Data will also be collected from young people who will be willing to complete questionnaires from the Youth Clubs within the Youth Service. These questionnaires will be circulated to the Youth Workers via e-mail, followed by the Youth Workers circulating the questionnaires. It will be key to collect at least 10 questionnaires from each of the Youth Service Youth workers & also at least 15 questionnaires from each of the LA young People – this will give a broad answer pot for the research. Further to these three Local Services' Youth services, the questionnaire will be carried out by the following volunteering Youth Organisation that are based in the three areas: • Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Urdd) – Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion • Young Farmers Clubs (YFC) – Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion • Scouts – Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion This data will be collected from youth workers working in these areas as well as the Youth Workers that work/volunteer within the Youth Clubs. Data will also be collected from young people who will be willing to complete questionnaires from the Youth Clubs within the Youth Clubs. These questionnaires will be circulated to the Youth Service head office in these areas via e-mail, followed by the Youth Workers circulating the questionnaires to their local Clubs within their areas. It will be key to collect at least 10 questionnaires from each of the Youth workers & also at least 15 questionnaires from each of the young People – this will give a broad answer pot for the research. A small working group will also be made from young people from the youth service and local group which will meet to discuss their thoughts on youth work in their area, what changes have resulted, for better or for worse, following on from the Covid 19 pandemic. This working group will have some similar answers in their questionnaires but dissimilar things too. It would also be an opportunity to elaborate further and to be able to collect more detailed qualitative data. Having different perspectives will also encourage discussion. The working group of youth workers will be as follows: • 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire CC, Carmarthenshire CC, Ceredigion CC • 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire Urdd, Carmarthenshire Urdd, Ceredigion

	Urdd • 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire YFC, Carmarthenshire YFC, Ceredigion YFC • 1 worker from each – Pembrokeshire Scouts, Carmarthenshire Scouts, Ceredigion Scouts Following a critical analysis of the data generated by the survey of young people, some of those young people will be invited to join a focus group. It is intended that this focus group be composed of young people from the participating organisations in the following way: The working group of young people will be as follows (18 young people): • YFC - 6 young people (2 from each) – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire • Urdd – 6 young people (2 from each) – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire • Scouts – 6 young people (2 from each) – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire The purpose of the focus group, will assist further in the research by looking further than what the questionnaires will give. These discussion will also look in to the answers from the questionnaires, and the young people will be able to elaborate further, which will give myself as a research even more answers and an opportunity to explore further in to the topic.
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	• Ceredigion • Pembrokeshire • Carmarthenshire
	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

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT 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.		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?
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:
	A Healthier Wales: This research will relate to this aim by identifying if Young People have had the opportunity they should to help with their mental well-being, and also if young people in these area have increased or decreased benefits of physical activity and if they have been enabled to have support to understand their behaviours and have a choice to benefit their health. A More Equal Wales: This research will touch on this aim by enabling to see if young people have been able to develop any skills and knowledge, and if they have been given equal opportunities to participate in various things such as decision making. A Wales of cohesive communities: Working in the communities can be important in Youth Work services – this research will be able to identify if youth work has had access to support communities. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: All three Counties in this research have very strong Welsh Language communities, with a lot of the research being done in the Welsh Language. A part of the research will also relate to the Welsh Language in terms of if the Covid-19 has had any impact on the language in any youth work setting.

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?	5 – Youth Organisations/local service (YFC, Urdd, Scouts, County Council, Association of Voluntary Services) 15 Youth Workers – Working Group 18 Young People – Working Group	
11	Who will the participants be?	Participants will be from Youth Organisations (YFC, Urdd, Scouts) & Local Services (County Councils & Voluntary Services)	
12	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified from the above Local service and Youth Organisations.	

	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			

	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			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

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?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	☒	No	☐
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: <i>Due to various differences in terms of age, gender, sexuality and many other characteristic – participants could feel uncomfortable sharing or showing their opinions on many things.</i> <i>Sensitive views / data could be found for the research – this could affect confidentiality with the participants.</i> <i>Research could identify risk or harm to participants, through the data and results.</i> <i>Participants may withdraw their consent to participate in the research before, during or even following the research.</i> <i>Participants may not be sure on what the research is for, and what is involved in the study.</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: <i>Secure right from the start that all participants will be treated fairly and sensitively along with dignity and freedom to express their views without anyone questioning those views.</i> <i>Secure from the start that all views / data that is collected will be kept for the eyes of the researcher only, and all views or data published will not have any of the participants name published.</i> <i>The researcher will consider how to balance maximising the benefits and minimising any risk or harm to participants.</i> <i>Participants will be notified at start of the research process that they participate voluntarily, and they can be able to withdraw from the research at any possible time.</i>				

		<i>Participants will be notified at the start of the research process what the study is all about, and what is required from them as participants.</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	
	N/A	
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>Participants may withdraw their consent to participate in the research before, during or even following the research.</i> <i>Participants may not be sure on what the research is for, and what is involved in the study.</i> <i>Conflict of interest – as an individual from the area – know a lot of people/ contacts from various areas.</i> <i>Damage to professional reputations</i> <i>Allegations from learners whilst undertaking the research including, but not limited to accusations of favouritism by learners who are not part of the selected participants.</i> <i>Breach of data</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> <i>Participants will be notified at start of the research process that they participate voluntarily, and they can be able to withdraw from the research at any possible time.</i> <i>Participants will be notified at the start of the research process what the study is all about, and what is required from them as participants.</i> <i>Researcher will notify all participants and notify that all data collected will be 100% that which was collected and nothing else to suit the investigator.</i> <i>Researcher will make sure that all findings are 100% from the research its self and not that of the opinions of the researcher.</i> <i>Participants will be notified at the start of the research process that all participants will be treated the same.</i> <i>Participants will be notified at the start of the research process that all data will be on a secured laptop with a password to admit the data.</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: <i>Reputational risk: damage to public perception or reputation in the eyes of funders, the research community and / or the general public.</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> <i>The investigator will do its up most to keep to the correct procedure and method for this research, which will</i>

		100% not damage any of the university or institutional public perception or reputation
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: n/a	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: n/a

	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.	001713359277		

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?
	This will be done when the working groups start – this can be used to start discussions etc.
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.
	This will be made at the start of the process – making sure everyone understands what is being done, and what is expected from them. A contract will be drawn at the start.
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.
	All data collection and working group information received will be kept confidential and anonymous. Researcher to make sure to protect the data they collect from people. Do not leave anything with personal information in a place that can easily be accessed by people who do not need to see the data. All participants will be anonymised throughout the study. The setting will be referred to

	as X in any further notes or data analysis. Case learners will be anonymised by using pseudonyms, e.g. learner A, learner B and learner C.. Any unique information within the data that may identify a pupil will be removed at source. All data will be stored confidentially and destroyed following the results of the module assignment being made available. Appropriate BERA (2018) and EWC guidelines will be followed at all times. UWTSD/APLP safeguarding principles will also be followed throughout the study. The assent of young people will be verbally confirmed prior to the observation and, subsequently, interview taking place. Young people will be made explicitly aware that they can withdraw from the research at any point, without incurring any negative treatment.
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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.	☐	x
	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),	☐	x
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	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 data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on the University Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All data transfers will be encrypted and password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project.		

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):		
	The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data		

	is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project.		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Researcher. Supervisor		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Researcher. Supervisor		
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.		
	All data will be encrypted and password protected as per school and University safeguarding policy and deleted straight after use. All data related to this research study will be securely stored on UWTSD Microsoft OneDrive cloud service, which is password protected with two factor authentication required to access the data. This data will not be shared with any individual. Once the required observations are complete, any video or voice recording will be destroyed immediately afterwards. Upon receiving the module mark for this assignment, any observational notes, interview notes, reflection notes and any other relevant material will be destroyed.		
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. (Most relevant to academic staff)		
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. 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:	<i>R Lewis</i>	Date: 02/12/2022

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.

Appendices 2 – Questionnaire to Youth Organisations / Local Authority

Covid-19 – Impact on Youth Work?

Dissertation: How has Covid-19 had an impact on Youth Work in Rural Areas in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire?

Results T&C:

- All results collected will only be used for the data collection.
- Your Organisation will be named in the results collected for the dissertation
- No Youth Groups / Businesses will be named from the data collected

1. **Pa Sir ydych chi'n gweithredu ynddo? / What County do you operate in?**

☐ Ceredigion

2. **Pa Sefydliad ydych chi'n gweithredu fel? / What Organisation do you operate with?**

☐ Gwasanaeth Ieuenctid y Cyngor Sir / County Council Youth Service

☐ Urdd

☐ CFFI / YFC

☐ Sgowts / Scouts

☐ Gwasanaeth Gwirfyddoli / Volunteer Associations

☐ Other

3. **Faint o staff oedd yn gweithio yn eich sefydliad i fyny i Mawrth 2020? / How many staff were working at your Organisation up until March 2020?**

4. **Faint o staff sydd yn gweithio yn eich sefydliad hyd at 31 Ionawr 2023? / How many staff are working at your Organisation from 31 January 2023?**

5. Pa oedran ydych chi'n ymwneud gyda'ch sefydliad? / What age does your organisation work with?

- ☐ 0 - 4
- ☐ 5 - 9
- ☐ 10 - 14
- ☐ 15 - 17
- ☐ 18 - 24
- ☐ 25 - 29

6. Enwch pob lleoliad yn eich Sir, lle oedd gyda chi grwp leuenctid gweithredol cyn 30 Mawrth 2020 (Nodwch os yn wyneb yn wyneb, arlein neu unrhyw ffordd arall) / Name all locations in your County, where you had an active Youth Group before 30 March 2020. (please note if face to face or online or any other way)

7. Gallwch chi nodi faint o bobl ifanc oedd yn mynychu/Aelod o'r grwpiau? yn ogystal a nodi faint o benyw/gwryw os yn bosib / Can you note how many young people attended/were members of each group? + how many were male/female if possible.

8. Enwch pob lleoliad oedd gyda chi grwp leuenctid gweithredol rhwng 1 Ebrill 2020 a 30 Mawrth 2021 (Nodwch os yn wyneb yn wyneb, arlein neu unrhyw ffordd arall) / Name all locations where you had an active Youth Group between 1 April 2020 & 30 March 2021 (please note if face to face or online or any other way)

9. Gallwch chi nodi faint o bobl ifanc oedd yn mynychu/Aelod o'r grwpiau? yn ogystal a nodi faint o benyw/gwryw os yn bosib / Can you note how many young people attended/were members of each group? + how many were male/female if possible.

10. Enwch pob lleoliad oedd gyda chi grwp leuenctid gweithredol ers 1 Ebrill 2021 (Nodwch os yn wyneb yn wyneb, arlein neu unrhyw ffordd arall) / Name all locations where you had an active Youth Group from 1 April 2021 (please note if face to face or online or any other way)

11. Gallwch chi nodi faint o bobl ifanc oedd yn mynychu/Aelod o'r grwpiau? yn ogystal a nodi faint o benyw/gwryw os yn bosib / Can you note how many young people attended/were members of each group? + how many were male/female if possible.

12. Cyn 30 Mawrth 2020 – pa chefnogaeth ariannol oeddech yn ei derbyn? Nodwch gan bwy / faint (amcangyfrif) / Before 30 March 2020 – What financial support were you receiving? Please note from who / how much (estimation)

13. Rhwng 1 Ebrill 2020 & 30 Mawrth 2021 – pa chefnogaeth ariannol oeddech yn ei derbyn? Nodwch gan bwy / faint (amcangyfrif) / Between 1 April 2020 & 30 March 2021 – What financial support were you receiving? Please note from who / how much (estimation)

14. 1 Ebrill 2021 ymlaen – pa chefnogaeth ariannol ydych wedi ei dderbyn? Nodwch gan bwy / faint (amcangyfrif) / From 1 April 2021 – What financial support have you received? Please note from who / how much (estimation)

15. Nodwch unrhyw sylw sydd gyda chi o ran unrhyw effaith mae Covid-19 wedi cael arnoch yn eich gwaith / Please note any remark you have on the impact Covid-19 has had on your work.

16. Bydddech chi'n hapus i mi gysylltu gyda chi os fydd angen unrhyw beth ychwanegol? / Would you be happy for me to contact you again if require any more information?

☐ Ie / Yes

☐ Na / No

Appendices 3 – Questionnaire to Young People

Covid-19: Impact on Youth Work

Dissertation: How has Covid-19 had an impact on Youth Work in Rural Areas in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire?

Results T&C:

- I will not require to collect your name or any contact details only your post code which will be used to collect the area this questionnaire was completed from.
- Although at end of the questionnaire, your e-mail address is required if you would be willing to be part of the study further.
- All results collected will be used for this work only
- The Organisations named will be used in the dissertation

Questions are based on your participation in youth service groups pre-covid, during peak covid and now.

1. Eich Oedran / Your Age

- ☐ 0 - 4
- ☐ 5 - 9
- ☐ 10 - 14
- ☐ 15 - 17
- ☐ 18 - 24
- ☐ 25-29

2. Nodwch eich Cod-Post / Note your Post-Code

3. Oeddwch chi'n rhan o unrhyw grwp ieuencid hyd at 31 Mawrth 2020 (e.e. Urdd, CFFI, Sgowts ayyb) / Where you a part of a Youth Group up until 31 March 2020 (e.g Urdd, YFC, Scouts etc)?

- ☐ Oeddw / Yes
- ☐ Na / No

4. Os na, pam? rheswm? unrhyw rhwystr? / If not, Why? any reason? barriers?

5. Os oeddwch yn rhan o grwp - nodwch pa grwp/iau. / If yes, please note what group/s.

6. Oeddwch chi'n rhan o unrhyw grwp ieuencid rhwng 1 Ebrill 2020 a 31 Mawrth 2021 (e.e. Urdd, CFFI, Sgowts ayyb) / Where you a part of a Youth Group between 1 April 2020 & 31 March 2021 (e.g Urdd, YFC, Scouts etc)?

- ☐ Oeddw / Yes
- ☐ Na / No

7. Os na, pam? rheswm? unrhyw rhwystr? / If not, Why? any reason? barriers?

8. Os oedddech yn rhan o grwp - nodwch pa grwp/iau. / If yes, please note what group/s.

9. Ydych chi' wedi bod yn rhan o unrhyw grwp ieuenctid ers 1 Ebrill 2021 (e.e. Urdd, CFFI, Sgowts ayyb) / Have you been a part of a Youth Group since 1 April 2021 (e.g Urdd, YFC, Scouts etc)?

☐ Ydw / Yes

☐ Na / No

10. Os na, pam? rheswm? unrhyw rhwystr? / If not, Why? any reason? barriers?

11. Os ydych - nodwch pa grwp/iau. / If yes, please note what group/s.

12. Nodwch unrhyw sylw sydd gyda chi o ran unrhyw effaith mae Covid-19 wedi cael arnoch yn bersonol? / Please note any remarks you have on the impact Covid-19 has had on you personally?

13. Rwy'n cytuno i gymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth ym mhellach / I agree to be part of the study further

☐ Ydw / yes

☐ Na / No

14. Os ydw, nodwch eich e-byst / If yes, note you e-mail address:

Appendices 4 – Questionnaire to Young People (2)

Covid-19: Impact on Youth Work

Dissertation: How has Covid-19 had an impact on Youth Work in Rural Areas in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire?

Results T&C:

- I will not require to collect your name or any contact details only your post code which will be used to collect the area this questionnaire was completed from.
- Although at end of the questionnaire, your e-mail address is required if you would be willing to be part of the study further.
- All results collected with be used for this work only
- The Organisations named will be used in the dissertation

Questions are based on your participation in youth service groups pre-covid, during peak covid and now.

1. **Ydych chi wedi sylweddoli unrhyw newid yn y maes Gwaith Ieuenctid ers Covid? da neu drwg.** Rhowch esiamp/au o unrhyw beth gallwch chi feddwl am neu rhowch NA os dyna'r ateb.

2. **Ydych chi'n gweld mwy neu lai o gyfleuon yn y maes Gwaith Ieuenctid ers Covid?** Rhowch esiamp/au o unrhyw beth gallwch chi feddwl am neu rhowch NA os dyna'r ateb.

3. **Mae lechyd Meddwl yn rhywbeth sydd i'w chlywed yn fwy ddiweddar - ydych chi'n meddwl bod Covid wedi cael effaith positif/negatif ar hyn?** Rhowch esiamp/au o unrhyw beth gallwch chi feddwl am neu rhowch NA os dyna'r ateb.

4. **Mae'r Cyfryngau Cymdeithasol yn rhywbeth sydd yn cael eu ddefnyddio'n fwy aml y dyddiau yma - ydych chi'n meddwl bod Covid wedi cael effaith positif/negatif ar hyn?** Rhowch esiamp/au o unrhyw beth gallwch chi feddwl am neu rhowch NA os dyna'r ateb.

5. **Nodwch unrhyw sylwad sydd gyda chi o ran yr effaith mae Covid wedi cael ar plant a phobl ifanc ac ar y Wlad/Byd yn gyfan gwbl.**

Appendices 5 – Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: How has Covid-19 had an impact on Youth Work within Rural areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire?

Name of Chief/Principal Investigator: Rhodri Lewis

**Please
initial box**

I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 01.09.22 Version 1 for the above research project.	
I confirm that I have understood the information sheet dated 01.09.22 Version 1 for the above research project and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without any adverse consequences (e.g. to medical care or legal rights, if relevant). I understand that if I withdraw, information about me that has already been obtained may be kept by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David	
I understand that data collected during the research project may be looked at by individuals from University of Wales Trinity Saint David or from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in the research project. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.	
I consent to the processing of my personal information such as name and email address for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be held in accordance with all applicable data protection legislation and in strict confidence, unless disclosure is required by law or professional obligation.	

I understand who will have access to personal information provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the research project.	
Please choose ONE: 1) I would like to be anonymous for the purposes of this research project.	
OR 2) I would like to be identified by my name for the purposes of this research project.	
I consent to being audio recorded for the purposes of the research project and I understand how it will be used in the research.	
I understand that anonymised excerpts and/or verbatim quotes from my interview may be used as part of the research publication	
I understand how the findings and results of the research project will be written up and published.	
I agree to take part in this research project.	

Name of participant (print)

Date

Signature

Rhodri Lewis

01.09.23

RLewis

Name of person taking consent
(print)

Date

Signature

_Principle Investigator_____
Role of person taking consent
(print)

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR RESEARCH

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP

Appendices 6 – Information Sheet



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (01.09.22)

How has Covid-19 had an impact on Youth Work within Rural areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire?

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others, if you wish.

Thank you for reading this.

1. What is the purpose of this research project?

This is a student research project aiming to look at impact that Covid-19 has had on Youth Work within Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire. This study will be done by collecting data from Youth Workers & Young People who participate in Youth Work. At end of the study, the data collected will examine if Covid-19 had had an impact, and explore if there is any recommendations on how Youth Work can support Young People any further.

2. Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited because you currently work as a Youth worker, work in a Youth work setting or you are a young person involved in youth work.

3. Do I have to take part?

No, your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, we will discuss the research project with you and ask you to sign a consent form. If you decide not to take part, you do not have to explain your reasons and it will not affect your legal rights.

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in the research project at any time, without giving a reason, even after signing the consent form.

4. What will taking part involve?

Your involvement includes answering a questionnaire with various questions via Microsoft forms. If happy, you will have an opportunity to explain your answers/opinions further in a working group. Audio recordings are required for working groups in order to be transcribed after they have taken place.

5. Will I be paid for taking part?

No.

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There will be no direct advantages or benefits to you from taking part. But, your contribution will help us understand how Covid-19 had an impact on Youth Work within Rural areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire?

7. What are the possible risks of taking part?

Possible risks of taking part may include feelings of discomfort surrounding the questions asked about Covid, or sharing your thoughts and opinions. Also, to minimise these feelings, you can opt out of the research at any time or chose to skip any questions which may cause distress or breach confidentiality.

8. Will my taking part in this research project be kept confidential?

All information collected from (or about) you during the research project will be kept confidential and any personal information you provide will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation. Please see 'What will happen to my Personal Data?' (below) for further information.

9. What will happen to my Personal Data?

Your personal data such as name and email address will be collected to identify you as a participant in the research project.

You will remain anonymous. Your personal data noted on PIS and Consent forms will be stored in a password protected file on a password protected device. University of Wales Trinity Saint David is the Data Controller and is committed to respecting and protecting your personal data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation.

10. What happens to the data at the end of the research project?

The data collected throughout this research will aim to help understand the role of S4C on television and the ways that a contemporary Wales is constructed in their programmes. The data will not be made publicly available. The data will be retained until the end of 2022 and then will be deleted in accordance with GDPR regulations.

11. Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Research Ethics Committee.

12. Further information and contact details

Should you have any questions relating to this research project, you may contact us during normal working hours:

Researcher: Rhodri Lewis

Email: 11009845@student.ac.uk

Thank you for considering to take part in this research project. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records.

Appendices 7 – Working Group – Youth Organisations Staff/Volunteers

Working Group 1: Youth Organisations

Agenda:

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Introductions**
- 3. Covid-19 - Young people / Financial support**
- 4. Conclusion**

Main answers from the discussions had

“During the pandemic it was hard to keep in touch with the vulnerable young people that we see as we were not allowed to have contact, only online or by telephone. The young people soon had enough of team calls! It has been difficult to build the relationships back up which is taking time” (yw1 – Youth Worker)

“Similarly, to all local authority youth services in Wales, the support has been far more targeted due to an array of factors, which has inevitably reduced the capacity and resources available to maintain and promote universal provision and early help” (yw2 – Youth worker)

“We saw a fair drop in both adults and children, but we seem to have recovered to pre pandemic levels now” (yw3 – Youth Worker)

“The core funding is distributed to local authorities on the basis of needs-based formula – this funding supports staff with youth work management and delivery as well as administrative and expenditure such as rent or maintenance services.” (yw4 – Youth Worker)

“The Welsh language grant is to support a variety of organisations to facilitate the use of the Welsh Language. All 12 YFC Counties receive this grant, and the money is calculated depending on the number of memberships each County have.” (yw5 – Youth Worker)

“We were very thankful to receive money from the Covid Job retention & rates relief as these were the only significant income coming in, especially when all other competitions and fund-raising events (which really does help with our income) were cancelled because of lockdown and covid-19” (yw6 – Youth worker).

“All clubs decided not to meet virtually for the first two months following lockdown, but most groups managed to meet virtually following that with some meeting twice a month and some once a month. The more time spent virtually, numbers started to decline each time they met.” (yw3 – Youth worker)

“During the lockdown periods it was hard to keep in touch with the vulnerable young people that we deal with on a weekly basis, as we were not allowed to have contact with them apart from online meeting or over the phone. The young people soon had enough of team calls”. (yw4 – Youth worker)

“We have seen a significant increase in the primary issue or barrier to young people’s engagement being higher levels of anxiety and poor mental health, so this has become a real focus of the Covid recovery work alongside stakeholders such as schools, health board, social care & housing.” (yw7 – Youth Worker)

“In 2022/2023 we have seen the re-balancing of provision where: 530 children and young people have been open to support with 300 secondary-aged pupils receiving weekly focused support.” (yw2 – Youth worker)

Appendices 6 – Working Group 2 – Young People

Working Group 2: Young People

Agenda:

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Introductions**
- 3. Covid-19 - Young people / Financial support**
- 4. Conclusion**

Main answers from the discussions had

“YFC face to face stopped. Everything went online – we didn't see much of people and many of my friends were also in YFC. I was itching to go back to the Club face to face after Covid Lockdown” (m1 – YFC Member)

“I and many of my friends missed out on several opportunities and experiences – we will never get that time back. That first meeting face to face after Covid was great” (m2 – Scouts member)

“I wasn't a very sociable person pre-covid and didn't attend any youth groups like many of my school friends. But I saw my local YFC Club meeting up virtually on a fortnightly basis & also taking part in various virtual competitions with the County YFC. I have joined them since Covid-19 and have made new friends.” (m3 – YFC member)

“I didn't join the Urdd over the lockdown period and many months later. Between being on my screen for school and family quizzes, I had enough of meeting with people virtually.” (m4 – Urdd member)

“I was a confident young person, very sociable and enjoyed attending various youth groups. Since Covid-19 I have been suffering a lot more with anxiety and panic attacks which hasn't help my mental health at all. Covid-19 had a big impact on my personal life.” (m5 – Young person)

“No opportunities to socialise face to face with friends, with school closed except virtual, the same with youth groups and so on – Covid-19 had a massive impact on me and many of my other friends. Although I was quite sociable and enjoyed seeing friends, I didn't have much confidence to go back to normal life for many weeks.” (m6 – Young person)