

ECYW7001 Professional Practice 1:
Theory, Policy and Practice of Youth Work
and Social Education

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Section 1

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff within the Ceredigion Behaviour and Prevention Service, for all of your support throughout my studies. Specifically, my line manager Dai Jones, for always being at the end of a team's call and for always being honest with me.

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Reports

Please see separately attached documents for fieldwork placement contract, Learning Mentor's final report, placement contract and professional development document.

Section 4

- Information sheet of the work placement identifying the aims, objectives, vision and background of the organisation

My first work placement will be in the Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) as a part of the children and young people skills mentor team based out of Canolfan yr Eos in Aberystwyth. This unit is a specialised placement for young people with social emotional mental health needs and who require specialised intervention in order to either reintegrate into mainstream education, or successfully gain qualifications to then move on to the next stage in their lives. I will work closely, whilst adhering to the COVID-19 restriction guidelines, with the partner unit Canolfan Aeron based in Aberaeron, where young people access specialised support for behavioural needs as well as social emotional and mental health support. Ordinarily, the two units work as one school, where staff swap between units and pupils move between sites to access resources such as the gym however, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, currently and for the duration of my placement, the movement between sites is prohibited and all cross communication and interaction will be virtual.

Ceredigion PRU core aims;

- To support our pupils physical and mental health, well-being and happiness by providing a nurturing environment and individual, specialist support
- To provide an engaging, motivational, inclusive and individualised curriculum for each pupil in our care, that will ensure continuous progress in all aspects of learning
- To develop our pupils key skills in Literacy, Numeracy and Digital competency
- To use a range of strategies that will enable our pupils to reintegrate into a mainstream setting, that will further develop their motivation to learn and achieve

- To support our pupil's individual social, emotional, behavioural, moral, spiritual and cultural development that will enable them to accept greater responsibility for their own actions.
- To identify and practice strategies and skills for learning and for life that will ensure independence and help our pupils make the right choices
- Provide our pupils with a range of opportunities to gain nationally recognised accreditation
- To ensure that our pupil's will contribute actively to society in a positive way

- A critical examination of the roles and responsibilities of the trainee youth worker whilst on placement. This section should also demonstrate the student's role in leading and managing an area of youth work practice

“Staff at the PRU forge an exceptionally strong working relationship with the pupils in their care. All staff know their pupils well and are aware of their backgrounds and difficulties, and what motivates and worries them. They recognise the challenges that individual pupils face and succeed in creating a highly caring environment for them across all sites. This means that many pupils participate actively in activities and persevere well in their lessons.” Estyn Report, February 2020.

Whilst on placement in the PRU, my roles and responsibilities have included the following;

- Plan, develop and deliver sports and wellbeing activities. This includes supporting one to one pupil well-being walks, plan games afternoons and tournaments, organise a sports week for both units to engage with.
- Promote and encourage good behaviour and attitude choices – present myself as a role model, leading by example with appropriate work dress, attitude towards diversity, difference and challenge whilst forming and maintaining positive professional relationships with both young people and staff members, both in and outside of the service.
- Manage myself, others and reflect on practice to inform planning – organise my time well, liaise with unit manager to ensure that planning meets standards and is developed using appropriate assessment methods. To be a reflective practitioner is to want to improve, to know that there is always something that can be done better or changed to improve or adjust the outcome. To lead and work within a team of people to provide support for vulnerable young people and members of the community.

- Create a safe and welcoming place for young people to attend – welcoming young people every day with a smile and positive attitude, despite whatever might have happened the day before and regardless of how the young person responds.
Remaining consistent and approachable, being perhaps the only constant person in that young person's life, enabling secure attachments to be formed.
- Support health and wellbeing opportunities – encouraging young people to engage with opportunities and pointing them in the right direction to find new opportunities. Providing motivation and encouragement, helping young people to develop self-confidence and a reason to care or try.
- Deliver topic specific and current affairs based assemblies that deal with or relate to day to day issues or things which have been highlighted through the week – to be relatable and share experiences with young people, for young people to be able to realise that it's normal to feel certain ways and provide personal accounts of how I dealt with similar situations or, having not experienced those situations, how I would approach it in their position. Showing empathy and sympathy, being honest whilst supportive.
- Support and deliver BTECH alternative qualification courses such as cookery and ANELA – alternative qualifications provide the opportunity for young people to gain life skills which they will be able to apply in day to day life as young adults and onwards. The cookery qualification provides young people with the skills to be independent and to provide for their families either now or in the future. BTECH cookery also opens up the chance for young people to experience foods, smells and textures they may not have encountered before. ANELA is a programme which deals with several parts of adult life which are seen to be the social norm. This looks into topics such as diversity, managing my money and personal identity. It provides young

people with the opportunity to reflect, to gain knowledge to feel empowered and then move forward to applying these skills in their day to day routines.

- Safeguarding of young people and ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed – providing young people with a safe and secure place to come. Following safeguarding protocol to make sure that any disclosures are recorded and passed on as necessary. Informing young people of the confidentiality guidelines so as not to misinform them and to empower them with the knowledge of what will happen following any disclosure or concerns raised.

Whilst on placement, I aim to develop my practice as a reflective practitioner and develop my skills to be able to apply them within the wider community. I want to learn from others and their experiences and be able to share my experiences with them in return. I plan to develop and deliver a sports activity in which young people can push themselves and challenge others to compete in. I believe that part of life is learning about how to deal with competition, both winning and losing and how to be supportive of others before, during and after competition, not just in the sporting world.

- A community profile

Aim

The aim of this document is to create a community profile which collates the thoughts, opinions and experiences of a group of children, young people and adults who live in an area in Ceredigion, Mid-West Wales.

Equality of opportunity and valuing diversity

Before involving young people in this community profile, I gained their consent to share information and use it to create this document. Throughout the process of collecting data, I prioritised making sure that I was treating people with respect and encouraged others to do the same whilst presenting myself professionally and as a good role model to other members of the community. I was aware that I may come into contact or be confronted with a situation which could be perceived as antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour can be defined as *“behaviours resulting from an individual’s inability to respect the laws...”* and includes examples such as *“fires, theft, crime and other delinquent acts which conform to social norms”* (Farrington 2005).

Methods, subjects and context

This profile used information collected from 8 young people aged between 11 and 16 who attend a specialised education provision within Ceredigion, as well as the parents and carers who look after these young people, and the staff who support in this setting and all across the county. The data was collected by the completion of online voluntary surveys which were sent out via Microsoft Teams and were anonymous and safeguarded appropriately. The surveys were posted in a communal Microsoft Teams virtual group for staff and for young people and the parents and carers were emailed the document to offer them the opportunity to engage in the data collection and opportunity to share their views and opinions.

Geography

Aberystwyth is situated in Cardigan Bay on the west coast of Wales. It is 55 miles to Swansea, 60 miles to Shrewsbury and 76 miles from Cardiff; isolated in its rural seaside setting. Between 2001 and 2011, the population decreased from 15,935 to 13,040 according to the Census 2001 and 2011 data (Office for National Statistics).

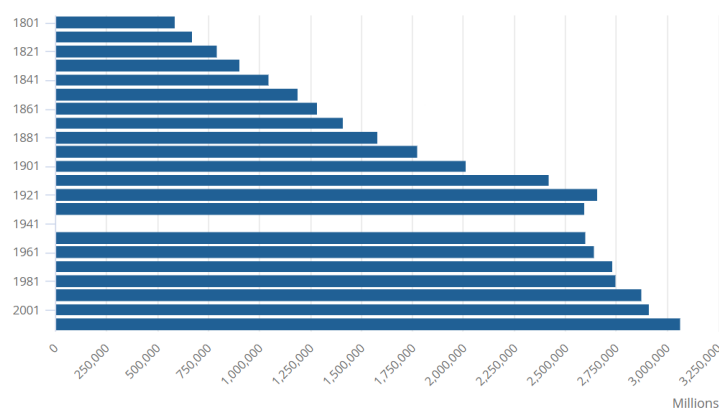
The wider community

Without the most recent census data, we have to establish a wider community overview from the census 2011 data as recorded on the (Office for National Statistics) website.

In March 2011, the population in Wales was recorded as 3.1 million with a slightly unequal split of men to women, 0.1 million more women than men. At the same time, 18% of the population were aged 65 and over and there were 178,000 children under the age of five, 11,000 more than there were in 2001.

Figure 1 below shows a visual representation of the population increase in Wales over the last 210 years and was sourced from the Office of National Statistics website.

Figure 1 Residents, 1801-2011, Wales



Source: Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/2011censuspopulationandhouseholdestimatesforwales/2012-07-16>

Ceredigion is not a vastly diverse county, with 70717 out of 75922 residents classified as White; English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. Figure 2 below is a visual representation of the diversity of ethnicity documented in the March 2011 Census in Ceredigion and was sourced from (UK Census Data)

Ceredigion: Ethnic Group

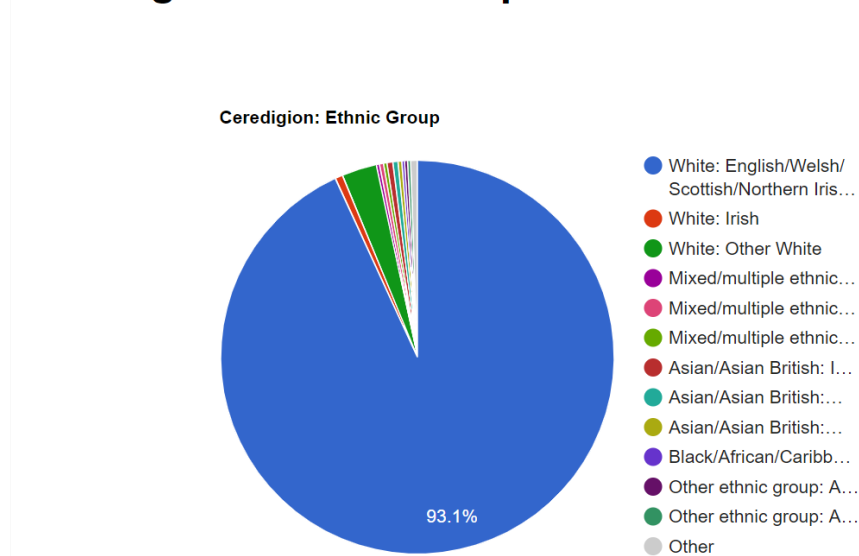


Figure 2 – source UK Census Data

Previous youth work within the community

At the time of this study, the youth work within Aberystwyth has suffered hugely due to the ongoing limitations of the Covid-19 global pandemic. Youth Workers and outreach support services are challenged by the lack of face to face contact and the closure of youth clubs, sports centres and schools. The impact of this extended period of minimised support is yet to be seen but is predicted to be extensive. Youth work in Aberystwyth has had to adapt quickly and services have been seen to go completely online whilst support staff work from home throughout isolation and lockdown.

Ceredigion County Council quickly saw the need for an emergency childcare hub where parents and carers who were keyworkers, could bring their children for the day whilst they worked to fight against the pandemic from the frontline. Here, we saw the youth workers,

teaching assistants and support staff from across Aberystwyth, offer to support the running and management of the hubs throughout the duration of lockdown until the reopening of schools and childcare placements.

This provision would prove to be invaluable, ensuring that not only the children of frontline workers were looked after and had somewhere safe to come day to day, but also ensuring that the most vulnerable children and young people within the county were seen, engaged and empowered.

Youth work within this provision looked very different day to day depending on the nature of the young people attending. Opportunities to create crafts and express themselves with art and music, sports and physical activity, quiet reflection and reading spaces and face to face emotional health and well-being support time.

Joined up working

The young people and people around the family who engaged with this paper, work with a variety of different services and agencies. The table below shows the group's involvement with multiple services and agencies.

Table 1.

Agency	Number of the group involved	KS3	KS4
Ed. Psychologist			
YJPS			
Dual Registered with mainstream provision	4	3	1
CAMHS	1	1	
School Counselling Service	1		1

Voluntary Sector youthwork			
Youth work sessions within school			
Barod- Drugs counselling service	3		3
Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training (Alternative Provision)	4		4
Accessing Hafan Haul (online LA nurture group)			
Beudy Bach (Alternative provision)	3	1	2
Single registered PRU			4
Ieuenctid Ceredigion Youth (Alternative Provision)	5	2	3
Careers Wales	5		5
Social Worker	4	2	2
School nurse			
Iechyd da			
Team Around the Family	1	1	

Relationships and success of the supporting agencies have not always been positive.

Although now, the majority are engaging with the support offered, some families and individuals have found it challenging to allow the input of others in their personal lives. Some of the young people act out against support as a result of their previous childhood trauma and/or negative experiences of support workers. Currently, out of the young people who took part in the survey, 3 young people are accessing drug abuse support from Barod.

In relation to the Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) where I engaged with my work placement, of people who completed the survey 90% of them said that they were happy with the support that they received from the service and felt that the level they received was satisfactory and would not request any more or any less communication from the prevention service.

Facilities and infrastructure

There are two main high schools in the Aberystwyth area, one comprehensive setting taught mostly in English and the other a more middle class secondary school taught through the medium of Welsh. Across the Aberystwyth area, there are 11 primary schools, comprising of small village schools where classes are made up of mixed aged children and 3 larger primary schools with 2 form entry year groups.

The Ceredigion PRU is a specialist behaviour service which is located across two sites, one in Penparcau, Aberystwyth and the other in the centre of Aberaeron. This provision provides bespoke specialised education and well-being packages for children and young people who have social emotional and mental health and/or behavioural challenges. A highly specialised provision which is accessed by children and young people from all across Ceredigion, some pupils accessing the Aberystwyth unit all the way from Newcastle Emlyn.

Aberystwyth has recently seen the development of the Advancing Aberystwyth project, a business led organisation which was set up to develop the business improvement district for Aberystwyth, with the primary aim of making sure that Aberystwyth is a town which “truly is a special place to live, work and visit”. The project has seen the development of small business loyalty cards as well as the development and construction of a family friendly skate park and giant promenade sand pit.

Bilingualism and heritage

Out of the group of people who voluntarily engaged with this community profile, 25% said they were none Welsh speakers, 25% said they were fluent Welsh speakers and 50% said that they could speak and understand a little Welsh language but not enough to feel confident to use daily. Over 75% of people involved said they would class English as their first language despite classifying themselves as Welsh.

The efficacy of community profiling

After conducting the surveys and speaking with the young people who chose to engage with the community profile project, it gave me a greater understanding of the need to speak to people and gain knowledge and information from their perspective and experience.

The survey's showed that there is a mixed opinion as to whether the Pupil Referral Unit has a positive or negative link with the community. The staff clearly try to establish, develop and maintain positive relationships with the local community however, the young people who access the support and the families around the young people, still feel that there is a stigma surrounding access or having a child who accesses, specialist PRU intervention.

It is clear however, that the ultimate aim of the service is to form and maintain strong positive relationships with the local community. All of the data collected showed that providing the young people with the opportunity and support required to build bridges with community members and establish long lasting positive bonds, was the goal.

- An in-depth SWOT analysis of the organisation

The PRU prides itself on providing a bespoke package for every young person who requires the specialised intervention, with the staff within the PRU providing a wide range of experience and skills which can be beneficial to the young people and the service put to best use wherever possible. Close work is done with numerous outside agencies to ensure a whole team approach and to create a strong and well-rounded support package is available. Regular links are made between the PRU, Youth Justice Prevention Service (YJPS), social services, school nurse and the drugs counselling service (BAROD). The school development plan prioritises the continuous development of the 6 areas of learning and experience (AOLE) with a high importance on sharing best practice and effective teaching and learning between units and staff, with a focus on well-being.

Within the school development plan, key areas for development are highlighted as the lack of engagement from learners and stakeholders in ICT and blended learning. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was particularly challenging to engage learners in remote learning and parents and carers found it equally challenging. This was seen at the start of the first lockdown, when all learning became remote and the attendance to virtual learning sessions across the PRU was exceptionally low. Lack of engagement was identified as being due to a combination of factors, including lack of knowledge, lack of experience and lack of/limited to access to appropriate equipment.

As part of the behaviour intervention service, the PRU has close links within the community, opening up opportunities for pupils and young people to engage in several non-academic experiences which they may not otherwise have. An example of this can be seen in the ICY (Ieuenctid Cambria Youth LTD) provision which is offered as part of bespoke packages. Other opportunities include the several training opportunities available to staff within the

PRU. These close links with the local community also enable the PRU to be able to facilitate the opportunities for work experience and placements for young people in KS4. Pupils have worked in local dog grooming centres in Aberaeron and volunteered on the Steam Railway in Aberystwyth. CPD is encouraged and supported whilst the opportunities to lead and develop specific programs and be involved in the development of the school are supported wholeheartedly by senior management and the governing body.

The biggest threat currently to the PRU, is the demand for spaces and the late application or lack of early intervention for young people. Prioritising young people over the age of 14 for places within the units, rather than creating a part timetable for early intervention in lower years, creates young people with more profound difficulties and larger gaps in learning and life experience. Part of this threat is the lack of funding, constraints on council and government funding control the amount of support we are able to offer to the community and rather than prioritising by need, often the spaces are decided on by who brings the most into the county e.g. the need to accept young people from out of county due to the monetary benefit of that, over supporting the most vulnerable young people from within county.

- A summary of your own learning and development, linked to your professional development plan and underpinned with reference to examples from your practice and appropriate literature such as National Occupational Standards for Youth Work

***Work in accordance with the 5 pillars of Youth Work in Wales (YWWRG 2018) –
educative, expressive, participative, inclusive, empowering***

When I started my placement, I needed to work to establish and build trusting working relationships with the young people and once these are established, and only then, would the intervention have chance of being successful or beneficial for the young person/people. One of the most important aspects of youth work is the “relationship the youth workers establish with young people” (H.Rodd and H.Stewart 2009) and studies have shown that the most effective youth work with the most positive outcomes “comes from the support provided, which was grounded in longer-term relationships” (H.Rodd and H.Stewart 2009). All children and young people accessing youth support and mentors, should feel safe in order to be able to establish these relationships and make progress physically and mentally; “all children’s needs for safe and supporting relationships” (E.Guetzloe 2010).

I have planned, developed and delivered expressive intervention sessions with supporting resources from established programs such as DEAL; Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening and Starving the Anxiety Gremlin. These expressive sessions allowed for young people to off load and prevent burn out in a safe and comfortable environment whilst feeling supported. Whilst these sessions have been timetabled into the day and planned for, the level of engagement is fully young person led. If the intervention was to highlight emotional difficulties or recall painful experiences, there was always another task available to the young person which would work on well-being and provide time for the young person to calm down. These emotional development based interventions also empower the young people

with knowledge and coping strategies which they will be able to apply throughout life if successful. The aim is to provide the young people with the opportunity to not only learn about their own emotional well-being, but to identify emotions in others and develop the emotional life skills required for independent adult life.

Inclusive youth work can be defined as “a youth group is where a young person will feel welcome, secure and comfortable and that they can celebrate their identity especially those aspects of their identity that make them different from others such as their culture or ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, gender, health including mental health, education, parental status, involvement in juvenile justice, being a young carer ect” (National Youth Council Ireland 2020). Throughout my placement practice, I have ensured that all organised and planned sessions are inclusive in several ways. This included having alternative equipment for sports and physical tasks, to enable those with physical weakness or disability to have the same opportunity as able bodied young people. As well as providing the same opportunities for engagement across both school sites, both Canolfan yr Eos and Canolfan Aeron so as not to favour one site or the other.

Work with young people and others

One of the key components of my role whilst working in the PRU mentor team, was to liaise between outside services who also work closely with the young people. These outside services include social services, youth justice prevention service and the school nurse just to name a few. It is important at this point to state that throughout my placement, all of this communication has been virtual due to the ongoing risk of Covid-19. An example of this collaborative approach in practice is organising and supporting weekly mainstream communication for a pupil within the unit who is on a temporary placement in the PRU and the long term plan is to reintegrate the pupil back into the mainstream setting. Every Friday

we have a virtual meeting with the pupil's head of year in order to maintain and continually develop the relationship between staff and pupil, and ensure that the young person still feels part of the school community in order to support the reintegration as much as possible. This weekly communication is something the young person looks forward to and engages with really well.

Throughout my time on placement, it has also been important for me to work on building positive professional relationships with the other adults who work to support young people within the service. We meet regularly, every fortnight, to share updates and ensure consistency in our approach across the county. This line of communication and sharing of best practice and resources, helps to ensure that the service provided across the county is as strong and effective as possible.

Facilitate learning and development of young people through planning and implementing learning activities in youth work

I have been working closely with the teacher in charge of Canolfan yr Eos to ensure the specialised pupil specific intervention plans meet the curriculum needs and areas for development. This was critical to making sure that the resources were adapted appropriately for each and every young person and were best suited to meet the areas of need. When adapting previous packages to fit the young person, it was important to make sure that the session was allowing for pupil input and self-reflection, therefore promoting some of the key principles of youth work such as empowering the young person and encouraging expression.

These interventions are decided on after data has been collected and assessments have been completed. The young people complete emotional literacy assessments, PASS assessments and cynnydd paperwork to identify the areas of strength and areas for development. The team around the young people then collate this information and work to develop pupil specific

packages which best approach and deal with the highlighted areas of concern, for example, confidence, self-awareness and readiness to learn.

Actively demonstrate commitment to inclusion, equity and young people's interests and health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing is built into everyday activities in Canolfan yr Eos. It begins with asking young people if they would like any tea or toast in the morning, completing check in and check out emotional wellbeing words, providing down time in the day for the young people to do something they enjoy such as a walk, football or a board game. The well-being time is pupil lead. The young people are given the opportunity to choose for themselves how they would like to spend their time and what it is they would like to do. Staff provide options for those young people unable to narrow down the choices, but ultimately, the decision is that of the young person. I have seen during my practice that this is sometimes the only bit of control or decision making the young person is given.

As a trusted adult in the unit, I was constantly role modelling good behaviour choices and promoting, leading and engaging with team activities, group work and whole unit activities. It was important to be constantly ready to adapt tasks so that they are accessible to all young people, and a recent example of this is a Tuesday afternoon fitness session in our gym. We planned for a spin class and showed the young people that they could use the iPads to select a spin class they thought was appropriate for their level of fitness or for the level of challenge they wanted, and then working with them to complete this. Spinning was something which the young people had identified as an activity they wanted to try, and so it was important for us to facilitate this opportunity as best as possible.

Plan and implement strategy and youth work activities for young people

I feel that I have met several hurdles during my time on placement. Covid has added several restrictions to support and implementing youth work strategies into activities for young people. First and foremost, the inability to move between sites or access outdoor areas until very recently, has prevented me from implementing many of the strategies I would have in normal circumstances, such as taking young people to nature parks or having the opportunity to engage in many outdoor education opportunities. This being said, I have endeavoured to best provide opportunities for young people to engage in alternative opportunities, whilst trying my best to offer different options to the young people, and give them the power to decide and make choices whilst supporting the development and want to make good or better choices.

Several online opportunities arose during the Covid-19 restrictions such as learning sign language with Ceredigion Actif over the Easter Holidays and engagement opportunities with Tir Coed. Whilst restrictions made it hard for me to support this engagement, it was important for me to communicate these opportunities to young people and their families and encourage them to take advantage of the chance to gain experience and learn new skills.

Work with communities

HSBC managing money morning – I organised for a HSBC representative to run a managing money session for pupils aged 15 and older in preparation for leaving school and perhaps getting their first jobs. I felt that this was an important opportunity for the young people as many of them had shown that they had little to no knowledge of how to save money or plan for the future and several of the young people I was working with, were very close to leaving school and moving on to the next stage in their lives as independent young adults.

PC Hannah – several sessions were organised in which PC Hannah delivered a drugs and trafficking awareness session as well as a safer internet session. These sessions were based on

issues, which had arisen within the local community and were of concern across the area. The group of trusted adults working around the young people in the unit, felt it was important that the delivery of this message come from a person of authority, such as a police officer, not only to reiterate the importance of the message, but also to help build positive relationships with the police as many of the young people's previous experiences with the police had been negative.

Without the restrictions involved with the global Covid-19 pandemic, we would usually engage the young people in several opportunities to develop relationships within the community such as fundraising opportunities and inviting local people to PRU concerts and art exhibitions. Whilst we were unable to include the local community in many of the projects within my time on placement, we as a team did endeavour to provide these opportunities in alternative ways as much as possible. For example, we held an online Macmillan Coffee Morning in which we all baked or bought in cakes and had a zoom call which was open to the parents and carers of the young people.

- Detailed appendices to include 10 reflective journals, an original risk assessment of the work setting, and all relevant supporting evidence, for example minutes of meetings, session plans, posters created by students

Workplace Reflective Journal

1. Lego intervention

Today I worked with a young person (I shall refer to this young person as YP1) to create some Lego intervention packs. YP1 has been engaging in Lego intervention with me for the last couple of weeks as it was agreed that this intervention best suited the needs of YP1 whilst including something that they enjoyed and would engage with.

YP1 has some significant difficulty in communication skills, following instructions, asking for support and social skills. They have been isolating themselves away from everyone and has not left their bedroom for the last 18 months, following an incident in the previous secondary school a couple of years ago. Since then, YP1 has refused to attend any school placements, youth clubs or engage with support services. *“Studies suggest overall population prevalence rates for child and adolescent mental health disorders ranging upwards from a minimum of 12 per cent”. “Only a small proportion of these children and young people receive any form of specialist help. Estimates of the numbers with disorders who do receive help have ranged from 10 per cent to 21 per cent. Reasons for this include the fact that appropriate professional help is not widely enough available, and that there is a lack of suitable resources”.* (Davis, Day, Cox and Cutler, 2000). They have communicated only via social media and gaming networks to “friends” which live anywhere in the world and represent themselves with bitmoji creations.

YP1 would identify themselves as having no friends and no social group. YP1 believes that they have no admirable characteristics and that they are unable to make friends. When asked

how best specialist staff could support YP1, they were unable to identify any areas of strength or weakness and does not know what works best for them.

We initially tried to engage the young person in a part timetable, attending for just mornings, only afternoons or shortened days, but the young person kept on arriving every day at the same time and would insist that they wanted to stay for full days “like the other pupils”. Staff identified that the young person has such a rigid mind-set that they believed that they either went to school or did not go, and that the part timetable was stressful and anxiety inducing whereas full days were not. We then cancelled the part timetable and YP1 was registered as a full-time placement pupil, at their request.

I began working with this young person several weeks ago and have slowly built up the intervention as the trusting relationship has grown. It is shown in the Trauma Recovery Model, that a trusting relationship is key to any recovery or development of a young person and it is a key factor of the Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit ethos.

For the first few sessions of intervention, YP1 and I have taken it in turns to take on roles in the intervention; builder, distributor, instruction reader. The aim of this intervention is to develop listening skills, explanation skills and identification skills. All of which this young person found particularly challenging at first, as a result of their complex needs and life experience so far. We wanted to engage the young person without overwhelming them, this was the first time in over 18 months that YP1 has accessed any support of any form, so the slow and low-pressure approach was most appropriate.

We have since worked up to a point where the relationship is now established between youth worker and young person, and the next step in the intervention was for the young person to create some new packs for future interventions. I discussed with the young person that I felt

they would be the ideal role model for a younger KS3 pupil and that I felt they had developed enough skills to be able to support and encourage younger peers accessing similar support.

This was something that at first, YP1 disagreed with. The young person thought that he wasn't good enough to support his peers and had very little confidence or self-belief. I encouraged the young person that I thought they had made a lot of progress, and reminded them about how challenging they had initially found the intervention and how well they were now able to engage in the process. The young person then agreed to the challenge of creating packs to deliver to key stage 3 pupils in the setting.

2. Lego intervention continued

I felt that the approach I have taken with this young person has been quite time consuming and heavy on adult led support. However, I feel that this has been necessary because the young person didn't believe that they could achieve anything or had any likeable or admirable skills. The most important part of this intervention was to develop the young person's self-confidence as this would lead on to much more progression within the individual.

Moving forward, if I was to deliver this intervention again, I would make sure that the intervention packs were to create items of interest to the young person. This was a challenge I faced whilst working with YP1 as they voiced their dislike to the animal theme of the packs and said that they had already created all of the vehicle options in their own time at home. Whilst the young person enjoyed Lego and had shared this as something they enjoy, it quickly became clear that the things they were building at home were much more complex and challenging than the packs we had available to us in the unit, and this low-level of challenge led the young person to become disengaged.

However, the level of challenge needed to be fairly low as the most difficult part of the intervention was the listening and following instructions; which was ultimately the area of development most important for this to be successful. I feel that the intervention has been successful, despite being lengthy and very heavily adult led, as the young person came away from the intervention having reached the success criteria. YP1 successfully created a new Lego intervention pack; developed, edited and published written instructions and was able to deliver his own intervention to a pupil in key stage 3. As an initial aim, this was something that YP1 had felt would be unachievable and yet, after a full half term of intervention, was able to complete to a high level. The look of pride and accomplishment on the face of the young person once they had successfully completed the delivery of their pack, was unmistakable. YP1 said that they “felt proud” of what they had accomplished and even said that their peer could “work on their listening skills and try harder to follow instructions”. The fact that YP1 was able to identify areas of development in others now, meant that they were able to accept their own areas of development and that their self-confidence had grown, as they would have never previously have aired this thought aloud.

3. Virtual sports challenge

Initially, I had planned to organise a sports day for the two units in the PRU to access together. This had been discussed with the head teacher as it was a topic which had been raised by pupils during student council, as something they would like to do that, they feel they miss out on, compared to young people who access fulltime mainstream education. A PRU sports day was planned for the week before the Easter holidays, in hope that by then, COVID-19 restrictions and the roll out of the vaccination programme, would enable the two provision units to merge safely in an outside space.

As the time got closer, it became apparent that this was still unachievable, the COVID-19 guidelines still prevented us from being able to leave school site or to mix between units. As a result, I raised the idea with student council, as to whether they felt a virtual sports day would be something they liked as an alternative. The feedback from the 9 young people in the student council meeting was that they would enjoy this as long as it was still competitive, one unit versus the other.

During the meeting, I asked the young people what kind of activities they would like to see as part of a sports day event. The young people listed some traditional sports day events such as, relay races, egg and spoon race, tug of war but they also mentioned some fitness and conditioning exercises such as squats, push ups and hurdle jumps.

I took this information away and began to plan the Ceredigion PRU Virtual Sports day. After some consultation with the head teacher, we agreed to adapt this from being just throughout one day, to across a two-week period, so that the year 11 pupils who were about to sit their GCSE examinations, could dip in and out of challenges as and when they could. This led me to create the Ceredigion PRU Virtual Sports Fortnight. A two-week period which would include a selection of 10 sports and fitness challenges which could be adapted to suit all needs and were easy to pick up and put down around busy timetables. I made sure to include the sports challenges the young people had identified as being what they most wanted to do, as well as making sure that it could remain competitive and challenging. It was important to make sure that the voices of the pupils in the student council were heard and accounted for. They needed to feel like this was their event and we had just done the hard work organising it.

Once the sports timetable was created, see attached copy in appendix, I emailed our other site to explain to the staff what I had put together and how we would be delivering the challenges

in our unit. Each unit would have 1 week of equipment which would be swapped, sanitised and left over the weekend, to ensure it was safe for the other unit to use the following week. I created a results table which I also shared with the other unit. This meant that everyone would be working from the same document and built in the competitive edge that the pupils had requested. Staff were asked to take photographic evidence of the young people partaking in the sports challenges for their evidence files and wellbeing journals. Staff made sure to explain to students that all of the challenges were optional, but that there would be prizes for the winner and that both units would be competing against each other for the overall victory.

4. Starving the Anxiety Gremlin – intervention development and delivery

The teacher in charge of Eos asked me to work closely with a young person who was struggling to cope with their anxiety. I was asked to look into and decide upon an appropriate intervention package to deliver with this young person. Having spoken to the local educational psychologist, the recommendation was to work through a package called *The Homunculi approach to social and emotional wellbeing* by Anne Greig and Tommy Mackay. However, after getting to know the young person over a period of time, I felt that the Homunculi package was too far-fetched and too removed from reality for the young person to get as much from it as required. I therefore decided upon the *Starving the Anxiety Gremlin A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People* by Kate Collins-Donnelly. Both packages were based on cognitive behavioural therapy approaches to supporting and developing coping mechanisms for anxiety disorders and social anxiety. “*The Homunculi approach to social and emotional wellbeing. A flexible CBT programme for young people on the autism spectrum or with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Anne Greig and Tommy Mackay (foreword by Rita Jordan) 2013 ‘Metacognition means ‘thinking about your own thinking’. By calling on an imaginary character who could think in a different way from my own usual way of thinking I was able to get a fresh perspective – to see*

things from a different point of view, through the eyes of someone who was good at doing the things that for me were difficult". Although I thought the Homunculi approach was too heavily based on fictional imaginary characters; as the young person in question also demonstrated autistic traits and struggled with non-logical thinking, after some discussion with the teacher in charge, the Anxiety Gremlin struck the perfect balance between realities and assigning personal difficulties into a character.

Over a period of 4 weeks initially, we began working through what anxiety looks like for different people and worked up to a self-assessment quiz which highlighted key triggers and reactions for the young person. After completing this assessment, it was obvious that the young person had unlocked some uncomfortable thoughts and memories and needed time to unwind so we ended the session early and went to play football outside.

The following week, we began the creation of our own anxiety gremlins. This intervention is run one to one as in a small group, it becomes more difficult for the young people to open up and often it becomes easier for them to deflect their anxieties onto others. However, in order to support the young person and to continue to develop a trusting relationship, I felt it was important for me to engage in the same task, to show I would never expect them to engage in something I wouldn't be prepared to engage in, and to show my own vulnerability in hope to reassure the young person that it is not only them who feels anxious about things.

The intervention process worked well for both myself and the young person. Upon reflection, it is clear to see that the young person has made huge progress in various areas, the prime example is that they were able to identify their triggers and personal anxiety responses; something that they would have found far too stressful previously and would have shut down rather than engage with.

5. Wellbeing walks

We have been given permission from Gold Command, the chief members of the council decision panel, to begin taking young people out on one to one, socially distanced wellbeing walks at appropriate times of the day. This involves one young person partnering with one member of support staff, both wearing face masks and going out in the fresh air for a walk in the local area.

The benefits of this include, a chance for the young person to engage in one-to-one conversation with the member of staff, away from their peers. It is also a good chance to build trusting relationships and for the young person to feel safe and trusted with the member of staff. There is also the benefit of releasing endorphins during exercise which make everyone feel better.

When we went out this week, I took a young person who has refused to attend his specialised provision since before Christmas, as a result of intense anxiety and parental concerns regarding the Corona virus threat in Wales. This young person was experiencing extreme school phobia as a result of being home schooled following persistent school refusal for the last 3 years, and after this extended Christmas, found it extremely difficult to come back into his provision.

On his arrival into the provision, staff calmly welcomed him and reminded him how much we enjoy seeing him here on site. I then asked the young person if they would like to come out for a walk with me. The young person agreed.

From working closely with this young person prior to his non-attendance, I knew that he had a working Labrador called Boris. In order to reassure the young person that I had not forgotten, and in hope of continuing to build on the positive relationship we had developed previously, the first thing I asked the young person was “how was Boris?” This immediately

helped the young person to open up and he engaged in a lengthy conversation with me about how Boris was and everything that he had been up to during lockdown and whilst he had not been in school.

It was lovely to see that the wellbeing walk helped the young person to settle back into the unit and that he was able to, in a low-pressure situation, continue to build on the positive experiences he had had in Canolfan yr Eos previously.

Following the wellbeing walk, the young person was then able to fully access his first face to face lessons in months; this was a huge success.

When reflecting on this practice, it was beneficial for me to see how much a wellbeing walk was able to help this young person control their anxiety and helped to settle them into a positive mental state in order to be able to access their learning. The opportunity to have time to take a breath, re-centre and gain control of their emotions, makes an enormous difference on the success of the day. Trauma Recovery Model (Johnny Matthew) “building safe and secure relationships, feeling safe allows for the development and progress socially and academically”.

Moving forward, I think this kind of approach, allowing for wellbeing time on arrival before the young person is expected to engage, is an approach which could work for more pupils than just this one. This approach alleviates some of the anxious thoughts and fears of meeting expectations that young people often arrive with. These young people need to feel wanted, cared for and safe in order to be able to achieve. The trauma recovery model highlights the importance of feeling safe in order for the young person to progress in any other way or meet any other form of expectation.

6. Gardening project

A new young person has recently started accessing our provision following a challenging few months in a large mainstream secondary school. Throughout the time in that placement, the young person had been victim to bullying both by pupils and adults. The young person comes from a well-known local family who have a history of challenging behaviours, difficult family relationships and public outbursts, and as a result, unfortunately a lot of people have a preconception of the young person and he was made to feel like he had a reputation to live up to and that he was already labelled as “just another Surname”.

Following a sequence of events, including safeguarding concerns and extreme risk-taking behaviour, it was deemed necessary for the young person to take a break out of mainstream education to access some specialist support provision in which they would be able to access bespoke intervention to help develop the necessary skills to cope better in the mainstream setting; with the focus being to ultimately get the young person back into mainstream education for some part of his time

Whilst slowly building the trust with the young person, and developing connections with staff, the young person showed a clear interest in the garden area we have. The young person was asked if they would be interested in taking some leadership over the development of the garden area and was asked if they would like to be the Eco Schools pupil representative.

The responsibility of this role and being given an opportunity to take ownership over this project was overwhelming for the young person. They repeatedly asked every member of staff why they had been chosen and why we trusted him to do it well. This sort of responsibility had clearly never been given to the young person before, and they were thrilled to have the chance to show us how well he could achieve and what he could create. *Betty L*

Milton and Dale B Harris define responsibility as *“the habit of choosing, and accepting the consequences of the choice of behaviour”* *The Elementary School Journal* 1954.

“A new study indicates that people who garden every day have wellbeing scores 6.6 per cent higher and stress levels 4.2 per cent lower than people who do not garden at all” Sara Rigby, Online assistant, BBC Science Focus.

With the new curriculum in Wales, there is an emphasis on wellbeing and mental health being built into every lesson as much as possible and it is an area of learning which is very high on the agenda in the PRU. The garden project will not only be accessed by this young person, but hopefully will be able to give back to the local community.

Whilst working with this young person, there have been some really positive changes in their behaviour whilst engaging in this project. To see them go from struggling to manage their emotional outbursts, to choosing to spend free time working on the garden was amazing. The response from the young person was always positive. They enjoyed chatting to staff about ideas they had had and spending break and lunch times drawing designs for planters.

7. School council/student voice

The development and implementation of student council and the student voice in the school or youth work setting creates the opportunity for pupils and young people to experience *“the feeling of ownership...through the participation of planning learning activities”* (TH Leren 2006).

My experience of the student council within the PRU setting is a very positive one. Students were given the opportunity in the week leading up to the meeting to be able to raise things that they wanted to be addressed on the agenda and then were invited to the virtual meeting

so that they were there to have their say and also to provide an opportunity for pupils across both units to communicate together. Prior to the regulations preventing the movement between sites, pupils would have physically all been in one place to engage in the meeting, but for the entirety of my placement, these student council meetings have been held via Microsoft Teams.

The formality of the meeting worked well. From the creation and sharing of the agenda prior to the meeting, to the formal working through last time's minutes and minute taking and feedback. This format worked because the young people realised how seriously their ideas were taken and that the adults in the room cared about what they had to bring to the table. Pupil feedback on student council was very positive. One year 9 pupil said "I like that people listen to me without laughing and make me feel important enough to have some control over things in school". Another young person, aged 16 said "I asked for squash at break time and then the next week, I was able to refill my bottle when I finished. It made me feel good".

"A school council can provide a meaningful way in which pupils can voice their opinions and have their views taken into account in decisions which impact upon them. Experience from schools here and further afield shows that a school council that is supported and nurtured helps to improve many aspects of school life" (Department of Education, 2021).

Moving forward, I will make a conscious effort to provide opportunities for young people to be involved in the planning and development stages of youth work projects. I would like to start a new program by providing the young people with idea sheets that they could fill in with things they would like to see/do/work on so that they gain that importance sense of ownership over the project. I believe that this feeling of ownership helps to minimise the "drop out" rate in youth work projects. If the young people feel important and as a though they are valued as an integral member of the team, they are more likely to see the project

through to the end. This is a theory supported by (TH.Leren 2006) in his paper “The importance of Student Voice”.

8. ICY – Alternative curriculum

During my placement, I have supported a one day a week alternative curriculum provision, I.C.Y, in Cribyn. This provision consists of a day off site for 3 young people where they engage with outdoor activities and education. The day of site offers the opportunity for a less pressured day, and provides young people with the opportunity to engage in some outdoor pursuit activities which they may not necessarily get elsewhere. Activities are led by two professional outdoor pursuits’ leaders who are experienced in organising and managing Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and have first-hand experience of working within the outdoor sports and land based industry. Although there are several benefits for the young people from access to this provision, from what I saw during my time supporting, the opportunity to engage with men who have a lot of very real and hands on life experience is massive for the young people. Several of them do not have consistent, if any, positive male role models in their life and ICY being led by 2 ex-Army and forces strong male role models, lead to very different behavioural response from the young people. Young people who I had previously seen arguing with and challenging female members of staff, suddenly responded with “yes Sir” without prompting. On the other hand, young people who regularly had no issues or showed any defiance towards female members of staff, would arrive to the building and be swearing profoundly and “peacocking, showing off or acting out” as a result of their insecurities regarding male authority figures.

My role in supporting this provision is to provide a consistency across placements, which is essential for some of the young people. In order for them to best be able to maintain their

behaviour and regulate their choices, they need a familiar face of someone they already have an established relationship with, even if that is just for the start of the placement whilst they build their own attachments and relationships. It was the aim that once the relationships with course leaders were established, the support I was providing could slowly be withdrawn. It was important initially for me to establish clear boundaries and reinforce that the same expectations were in place in this setting as they were in the school setting. The social emotional needs of the young people accessing the provision meant that this continuity needed to be obvious and reinforced for some time before it was deemed safe and appropriate to withdraw mentor support.

If I was to support this provision again, I think it is important to involve the young people in the planning at the start of term, or when they join the provision, as much as possible. This would encourage positive engagement as it was on some occasions that the young people displayed anti-social and aggressive behaviour towards the team leaders because they were bored and there had been an issue where work had been lost and a young person was asked to recreate it. Although this alternative provision is an informal place of learning, the young people still work towards credits which account for a GCSE equivalent grade. However, from what I experienced, including the young people in the plan for the term, asking them what they really wanted to try or do, would have helped them to engage the young people in the written paperwork side of the accreditation.

9. Assembly on Wales

Today I lead an assembly on the topic of Wales. It was the topic of the week and as a none Welsh speaker, currently, and as someone who has chosen to move from England into Wales and start a family here, I felt that the message I had to give would be particularly impactful

for those pupils who find it frustrating and suffocating living and growing up in Ceredigion. It was an interesting session to lead as the pupils were asked initially to write their thoughts and feelings on post it notes about how they feel about growing up in Ceredigion. The young people are from a range of backgrounds and varying amounts of life experience, however they all wrote negative terms such as boring, cold and wet. By the end of the session, the young people were able to see that there are a lot of things to be grateful for living in Ceredigion. They agreed that we often take for granted how lucky we are to be surrounded by such natural beauty and to be able to have access to such wonderful outdoor sports and activities. The young people reflected on the negatives also included with living in the city which they see as “exciting, and full of opportunities”. They were able to reflect on the freedom they had during Covid-19 lockdown compared to those people living in blocks of flats with no gardens or outdoor space. They were able to recommend places of interest to visitors and share their favourite experiences of local hot spots such as beaches and small cafes they like.

Prior to leading this assembly, I was dubious as to whether I was the right person to deliver the topic. I was worried that as a none Welsh speaker and as someone who identifies as British or English rather than Welsh, the young people would consider that my opinion didn't count. However, whilst reflecting on the experience, I believe that my choice to be here and my enthusiasm shown about Wales had more of an effect than if it had come from someone who has never left Ceredigion. The staff member who observed assembly agreed that even she saw it from a different perspective because of the way I had delivered it and the “outsiders” opinion I had highlighted.

If I was to deliver this kind of assembly again, I would perhaps try to engage the young people in creating a tourism leaflet or poster which they would use to encourage people to visit Ceredigion. I would then promote these via the PRU social media platforms and

encourage young people to share them within their local communities. It was very interesting to listen to the change in opinion the young people had by the end of the session. It felt really good to have made an impact and to have prompted different thoughts.

10. Pumpkin Carving

During October, pupils voiced that they would like to partake in a pumpkin carving competition as it was something that they had seen on social media and many of them had never had chance to try before. One of the young people I was working with was from a culture where this was not part of any celebration and they found it very interesting to learn about the history of the tradition and in return, they shared their experience of traditions which they did as part of their culture which we as staff, had never heard of before. It was humbling to see other young people taking such an interest in each other's differences and sharing experiences.

I organised the session so that one pupil partnered with one member of staff, chosen at random from a bowl of names and then this partnership would work together to create the final product. This encouraged team work and communication as it meant that peers weren't choosing each other and some young people were partnered with members of staff that they otherwise wouldn't have so much time to engage with.

In order to fairly judge the competition, I organised for the winner to be chosen by school governor who is removed from site and has no link to the young people. This allowed for fairness across the board and provided a life like experience of winning and losing.

The response from pupils was very positive. Everyone chose to engage and they were very proud of all the pumpkin creations. The competition was opened up across both PRU units to ensure that it was inclusive to all young people. The same format was applied across the units

and the governor selecting the winner was unaware of which pumpkin belonged to who, it was all anonymous to make it as fair as possible.

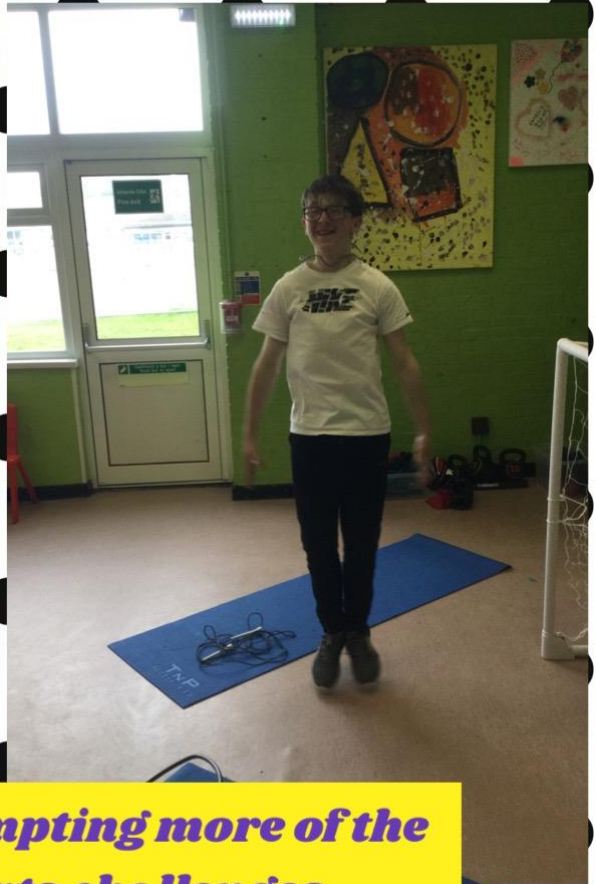
Upon reflection, this is a project which I would run again as it promoted several life skills in young people such as perseverance and team work whilst providing a creative and expressive opportunity. Pumpkin carving was an informal learning situation, pupils gained more from the task than they were aware of. I saw pupils who usually clash, come together to share resources and encourage each other not to give up.

Section 5

Appendices

General Risk Assessment





***Eos pupils attempting more of the
virtual sports challenges
30.04.21***





Virtual



**enjoying sports
day activities**



27/4/21



PIC•COLLAGE

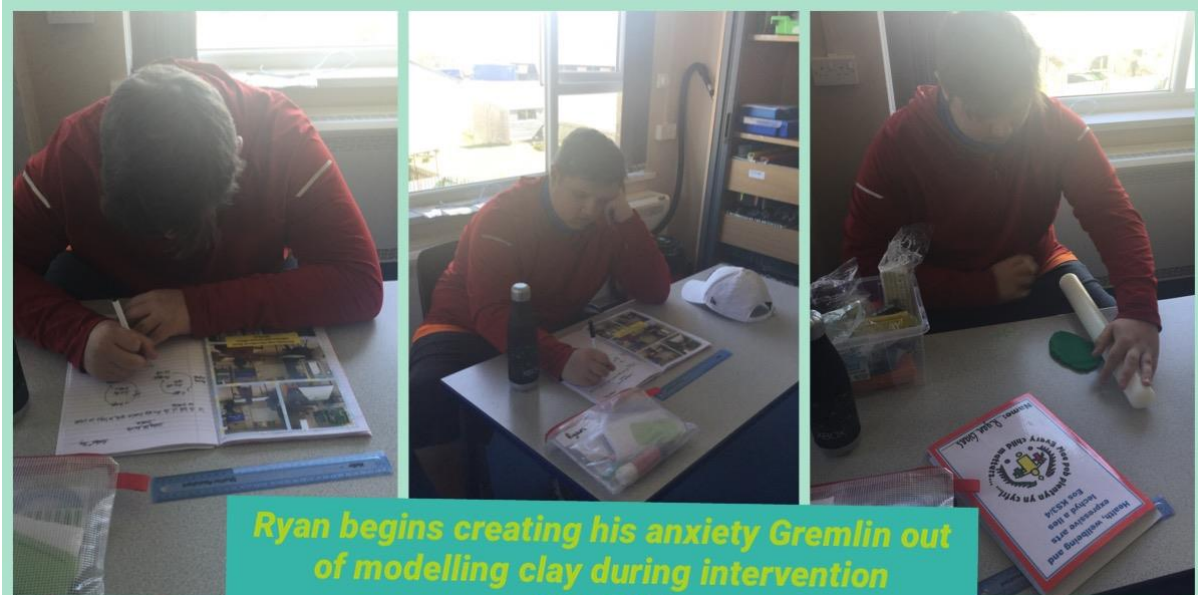




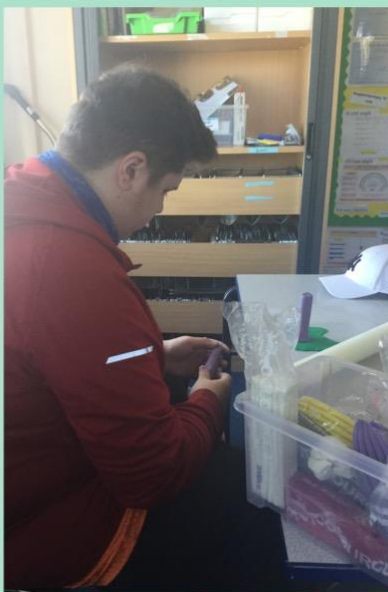
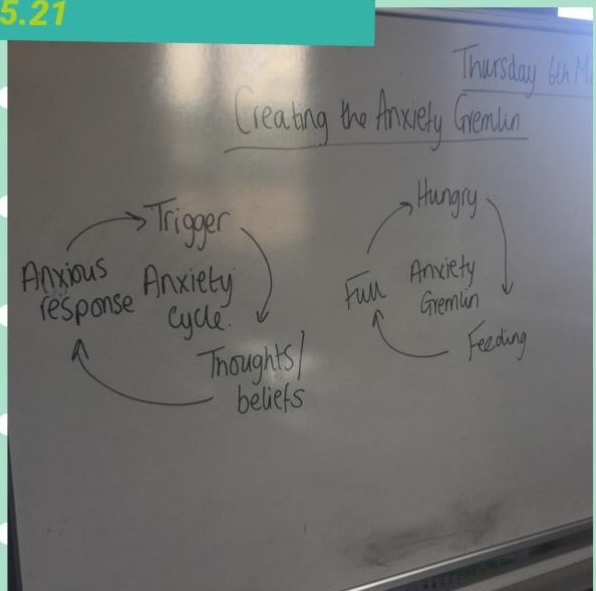
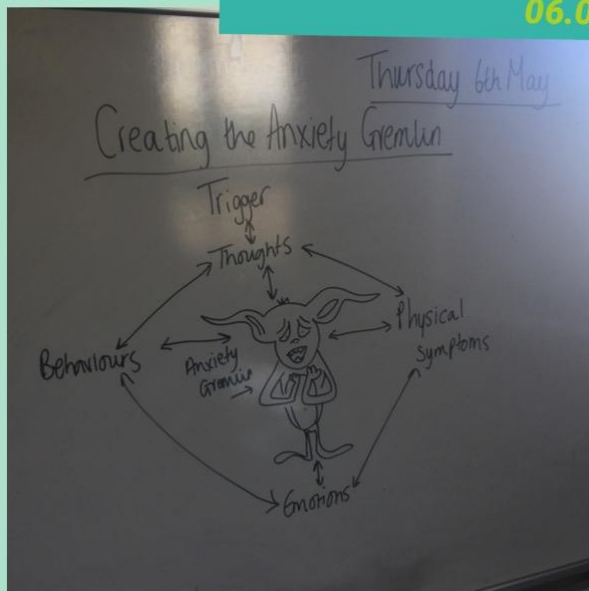
**finishing making
his anxiety gremlin
during intervention
06.05.2021**



PIC•COLLAGE



Ryan begins creating his anxiety Gremlin out of modelling clay during intervention
06.05.21







**continuing to
maintain the
Eco garden
30.04.21**





**Drawing
maps of the
school site
03.11.2020**



PIC•COLLAGE



AND DAY IN ICY
16/9/2020





delivering Lego Intervention to
after developing his own character and Lego
packs



23.03.2021



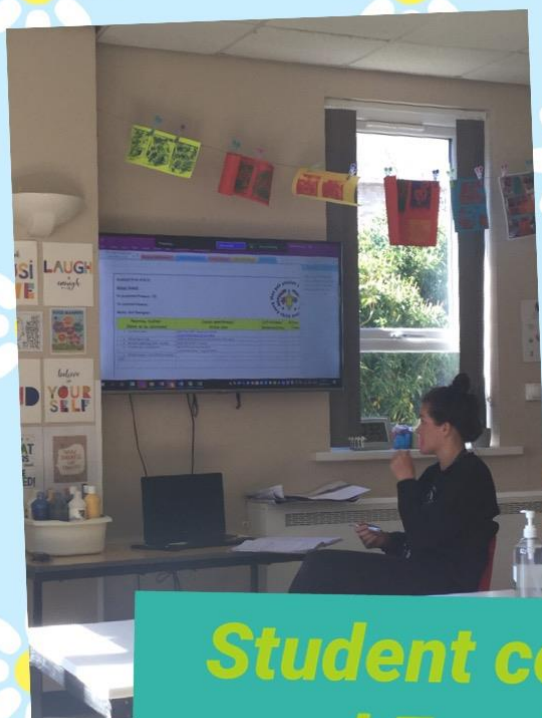
PIC•COLLAGE



🎃🎃🎃
**Staff and pupils
carving pumpkins
for the Eos vs
Aeron carving
competition**
🎃🎃🎃



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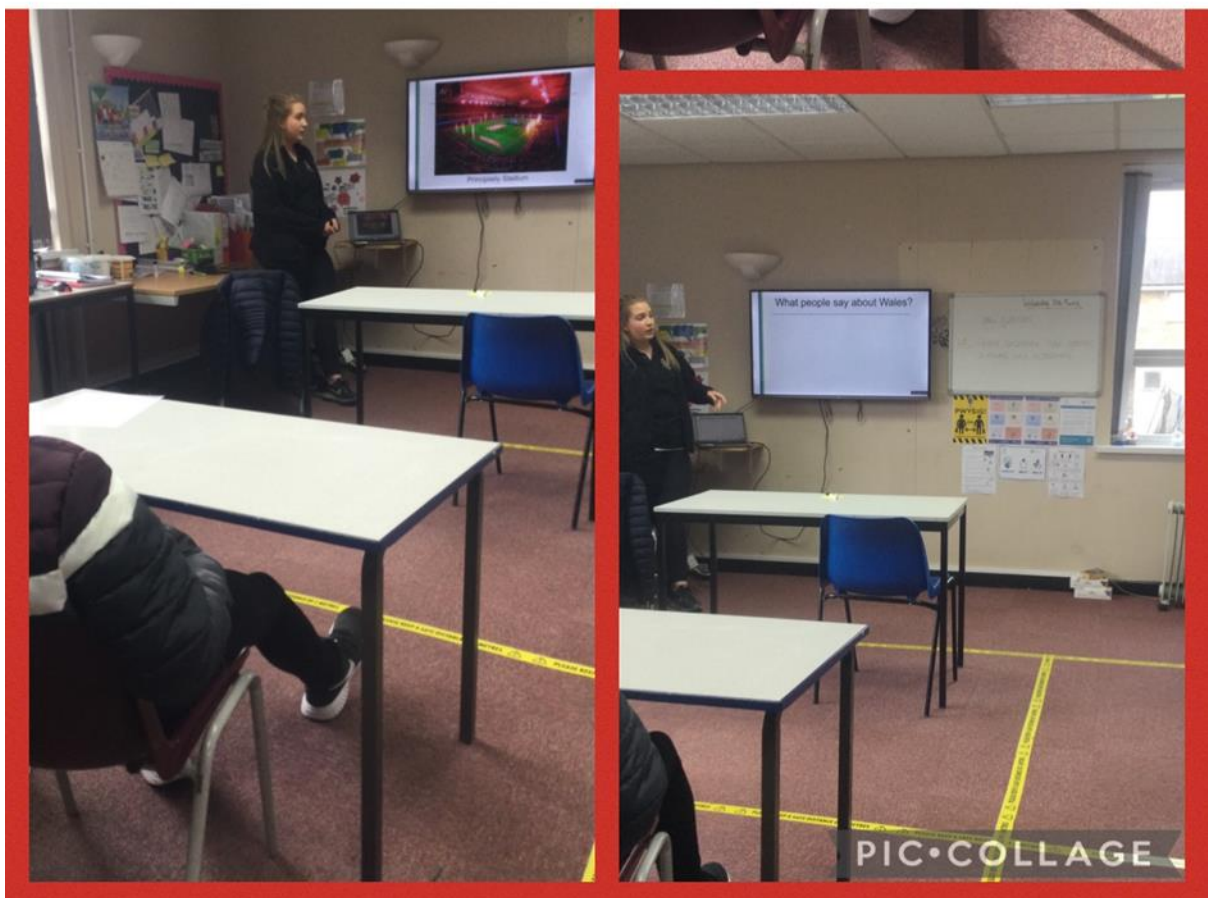


Student council Aeron and Eos 06.05.2021





Miss Sam conducts assembly on Welsh 11/03/2021



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