

Meeting of:	Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 08 December 2022
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Learning and Culture
Report Title:	Youth Service Update 2021-2022
Purpose of Report:	To update members of the progress made by the Youth Service this year.
Report Owner:	Paula Ham, Director of Learning and Skills
Responsible Officer:	Rhys Jones and Tara Reddy – Youth Service Managers
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Councillor Rhiannon Birch Morwen Hudson, Head of Standards and Provision Martin Dacey, Lead Officer for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing
Policy Framework:	The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Service achieved the Silver Youth Work Quality Mark, a progression from achieving the renewal of Bronze award last year. • The Youth Service adapted significantly in response to the Covid pandemic and implemented ‘new ways of working’ post COVID, focusing on new innovative approaches to service delivery. • An emphasis has been placed on developing a new youth led forum. • The Youth Service ensured European Social Fund (ESF) programmes Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) both continue to operate across the Vale, supporting young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Closure plans are underway for December 2022. • The Vale of Glamorgan has performed well in terms of delivery of accredited outcomes to ensure young people engaged effectively with the Youth Service. • The Pupil Engagement Team was established to support schools with young people who are unable to maintain full time educational provision in a mainstream school setting. The functions relating to the Education other than at School (EOTAS) framework now resides within the remit of the Youth Service. 	

- The Targeted team have undergone a re-shape as a consequence of the loss of ESF funding. This will ensure we are still able to deliver on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) for NEET prevention.

Recommendations

1. That Members consider the progress made by the Youth Service in the last 12 months and recognise the on-going developments and achievements of the service.
2. That Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) receives a further progress update report in 12 months (November 2023) about on-going delivery, alongside awareness of grants and potential risks.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The Council has a strategic responsibility for implementing the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework to reduce the number of young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEETs). This is impacted by projects including the ESF funded I2A and I2W, Youth Homelessness, Post16 Destination data, in all of which the Youth Service plays a key role.
2. To ensure that Members of the Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) continue to have oversight of the Youth Service.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Youth Service delivers services for young people (11–25-year-olds) in the Vale of Glamorgan. This has been embedded via a range of open-access and targeted interventions with a youth-led focus on the needs of young people in each area of the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.2 This report seeks to make elected members aware of the progress made in the Vale of Glamorgan and milestones achieved for those vulnerable young people in our communities.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The annual statistical release from National Audit Statistics reports that the number of young people registered and engaged with the Youth Service as a percentage of the youth population for the Vale of Glamorgan for 2021/22 was 6.5%. This represents a 2.5% increase on last year but still reflects the significant impact of the Covid pandemic. The number of young people receiving a national accreditation as a result of involvement with the service in 2021/22 was 10% which is a 7% increase on the previous year, and 4% higher than the national average.
- 2.2 The service succeeded in achieving the Silver Quality Mark for Youth Work (Assessor Report attached at Appendix A). The Silver Level of the Quality Mark focuses on ensuring that youth work recognises and promotes inclusive practice,

celebrates equality and diversity, ensures that provision is planned to meet young people's needs, ensures that activities make an impact on young people and their outcomes and is delivered by an appropriately experienced and qualified workforce who involve young people in decision-making.

- 2.3** Youth workers and youth teams were nominated in 5 categories of this year's Vale Staff Awards with Donna Parker winning her category of 'Our Hero' for Learning and Skills.
- 2.4** The Universal Service supports young people through open-access opportunities and projects including youth clubs, participation groups and our mobile provision. The Universal Service was significantly affected by the pandemic and as such, the team responded quickly to the changing restrictions to continue offering provision. With restrictions now lifted provisions have returned to centres and are running a varied weekly programme of youth club sessions and mobile provision activities. In addition, projects such as 'Gloves in the Gym' (supporting young people with confidence and self-esteem through physical fitness), 'I Am Me' (Wellbeing group for LGBTQ young people and allies) and 'Youthy 18 plus' (specialist older youth club) continue to develop. A new project, Hive Guys working with young people to develop skills and improve wellbeing at a community garden has also proved successful. The team have developed wellbeing afterschool clubs in four schools across the Vale. Focussing on young people (YP) in years 7 and 8 the clubs are also used by the targeted teams to offer group activities. This has had a positive impact on the YP's social skills and they have gained the experience and confidence to participate in social activities. The team have delivered 332 open access session so far, this financial year.
- 2.5** Successful school holiday provisions have been delivered throughout the year. The service also worked with the play team to support activities for the Summer of Fun initiative. Summer of Fun funding supported the service to deliver three large scale events that proved popular following restrictions where such events were unable to be delivered. Activities were also provided to our targeted groups where young people who would not usually have these types of opportunities or have never experienced these types of activities before, were prioritised. Some of the young people that attended experience anxiety and were supported to try activities that helped improve their confidence and self-esteem. The young people were able to engage with fun and positive activities. Most of our young people in the targeted projects are struggling with their emotional and physical health and these activities were able to support them positively.
- 2.6** Following recent reviews of the current participation structure it was identified that more resource was required to improve existing projects and to develop further opportunities. A Senior Youth Engagement Worker with specific responsibility for youth participation has been temporarily employed to take this work forward. This review has been the catalyst for our participation policy development which will ensure that all staff have the tools needed to embed a rights-based practice and young people's voice is at the centre of effective youth work. We are committed to ensuring that young people in the Vale of Glamorgan are involved in all aspects of our service delivery. We view it as essential that

they are provided with a variety of opportunities to have their voices heard and their opinions considered. We want to place all young people at the heart of our decision-making and have an opportunity to get involved in a way that suits them. This is particularly the case with young people who are from backgrounds where protected characteristics are a factor. A key development in the strategy is a new Vale-wide participation forum that will feed into the Youth Cabinet. The group has started to meet, and work continues to engage more young people in the project.

- 2.7** The Universal Service also supports Penarth Youth Action (PYA) and Llantwit Youth Council (LYC) offering young people opportunities to have a voice and work on community issues. Her Voice Wales is our Girls Rights group. The group has been working on a campaign #WEDONTFEELSAFE which they are hoping to discuss with key politicians at varying levels to progress the work. The group are also linking in Safer Vale and are in discussions about teaming up with Safe Spaces in Cardiff to see if this can be rolled out in the Vale. One member recently took over the First Minister Role for a day as part of National Day of the Girl.
- 2.8** The Youth Service (YS) also facilitates the Rights Ambassadors project that teaches young people about children's rights and delivers workshops to children, young people, and adults across the Vale. The project supports primary and secondary schools with the Super and Student Ambassadors schemes from the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Support is also given to school councils, for example, signposting of resources and training for teachers and governors, and a regular School Council Network is facilitated
- 2.9** The YS has continued its working partnership with the Urdd to deliver Welsh language youth provision across the county. This has been delivered through a part time worker however this year additional funding for Welsh Youth Work from Welsh Government has meant we are able to increase the contract to support a full-time worker, increasing the opportunities for Bilingual youth activities for the next three years 2022-25.
- 2.10** The youth homelessness project supported 42 young people at risk of homelessness in 2021/22, all but 4 are entitled to free school meals and live-in areas of significant socio-economic deprivation. The homelessness coordinator works closely with Vale Housing and Llamau Emphasis Project, identifying those most vulnerable YP and ensuring support is in place. The team have focused on schools-based learners to promote better attendance and attainment, whilst continuing with the distribution of wellbeing parcels, fitness packs, family food and cooking projects, supporting females with sanitary products, providing families with bedding and home basics.
- 2.11** The Wellbeing Service is funded by Families First and has been operational since April 2018. The service provides mentoring support to young people referred through the Families First Advice Line who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Its main aims are to improve social and emotional wellbeing, increase confidence and resilience, build capacity to consider risk and make reasoned decisions, develop positive attitudes, behaviour, and aspirations. The

Wellbeing Service received 162 referrals in 2021/22 fiscal year whilst already receiving 90 new referrals this year 2022/23. Mentoring interventions have been delivered face-to-face, one-to-one and groups during the school term, in the community through outdoor sessions, wellbeing walks and meeting at cafes.

- 2.12** The team continue to deliver Mental Health First Aid training to professionals and teaching staff and have trained 9 professionals so far this year 2022/23.
- 2.13** The I2A Programme continues to be successful across secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. The project works with those who are identified as at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). As a result of the interventions, the project is well on track.
- 2.14** The success of I2A was further exemplified by Nigel Bowie (one of our I2A staff) receiving recognition for his effective work and contribution in 'youth work in schools' at the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru.
- 2.15** The I2W Programme also continues to be successful, and the Vale is the highest performing local authority in the regional operation for those young people identified as not in education, employment, or training (NEET). As a result of the interventions the project is well above target.
- 2.16** All ESF projects are due to finish on 31st December 2022, we have reshaped the targeted service to develop a pre-16 NEET programme within schools as shared prosperity and other grants have not been confirmed. Post 16 NEET will now fall under the Communities for Work Plus (C4W+) model which has recently increased size and had additional grant for the Youth Guarantee.
- 2.17** The percentage of year 11 leavers who were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) increased from 0.90% in 2020 to 1.00% in 2021 which equates to 16 young people. The percentage of young people who left year 12 and who were categorised as NEET reduced from 0.60% in 2020 to 0.40% in 2021, equating to three young people. The percentage of young people NEET who left school in year 13 also decreased, from 3.11% in 2020 to 2.25% in 2021, equating to 17 young people within year 13 leavers. The reason for the increase for year 11 leavers is due to young people facing significant barriers to engagement and therefore were not ready to enter education, training, or employment. Feedback was also received during the destination survey, that young people who had completed their GCSE studies through Covid appeared to be less inclined to return to further education and were aiming to secure employment instead.
- 2.18** Key data in terms of I2A:
- Number of enrolments: 366 enrolled = 106% against target
 - Further Education or Training Outcomes: 29 = 97% against target
 - Qualification outcomes: 173 claimed = 175% over target
 - Entered Employment: 184 claimed = 119% over target
- 2.19** The cost of a young person becoming NEET can vary from £76,163 to £2.3 million in their lifetime based on research undertaken by York University. If the lower figure of £76,000 is considered, through the financial investment in I2A in the

Vale of Glamorgan of £1.35m those leaving with at least one outcome has created a lifetime saving of £25.65 million.

2.20 Key data in terms of I2W:

- Number of enrolments: 611 enrolled = 93% against target
- Further Education or Training Outcomes: 188 = 134% against target
- Qualification outcomes: 182 claimed = 103% against target
- Reduced risk of NEET outcomes: 354 claimed = 106% against target

2.21 When considering the aforementioned research, a YP could cost £76,163 to £2.3 million in their lifetime (<https://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/pdf/NEET.pdf>). Based on the lower figure of £76,000, through the financial investment in I2W in the Vale of Glamorgan of £680,521.00 and supporting young people to evidence outcomes, those leaving with at least one outcome has created a lifetime saving of £19.7 million.

2.22 In response to the trends in figures over the past five years of NEET data, further work is being implemented within the Youth Service to provide support to young people and enhance the tracking being undertaken. This has included attending GCSE and A-Level results days in schools, implementing an annual cycle for NEETs support and tracking with schools heavily involved in this process.

2.23 The Pupil Engagement team has developed a new academic year brochure for schools which includes alternative education providers who are able to work directly with those most vulnerable students. These YP may require a bespoke offer of education if their needs are not able to be met within the mainstream setting.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

3.1 Reducing the percentage of young people from becoming NEET is set out in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy. It helps support the national and local indicator of percentage of young people in education, employment, or training, under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

3.2 The variety of provision continues to develop a wide range of offers from alternative education providers, vocational learning with progression routes, tailored support, and information and guidance. This should help learners explore their interests and realise their potential. We are pleased to be offering a wide range of subject pathways through our partners that will help inspire young people to fulfil their potential.

3.3 Improving standards of alternative education provision is important to the Youth Service and we need to ensure that provision is quality assured through regular

contracts management meetings with providers. The process ensures we monitor the progress of learners. Monitoring is undertaken to ensure both the Council and learners are receiving value for money and that provision has a positive impact on young people's education and wellbeing.

- 3.4** We work collaboratively with internal and external partners including agencies, education and training providers, Careers Wales, Urdd, Third Sector Partners, local businesses, Charities and Welsh Government, to help meet the wellbeing objective.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** Climate change and nature implications affect young people accessing employment or education. The Corporate Plan 2020-2025 Objectives including 'to support learning, employment, and sustainable economic growth, is relevant to the work in relation to climate change and economical use of natural resources.
- 4.2** Most meetings with partners, stakeholders and internal staff are held over Microsoft Teams to help minimise transport between meeting locations and impact on emissions.
- 4.3** By using digital management of information systems within the LA, we can move towards a paperless service. To support this work, the Youth Service are undertaking impact assessments to use digital methods for consent to reduce the carbon footprint further.
- 4.4** With the implementation of the wider electric pool car strategies from the Council, it is expected that these will be used, once available, along with carpooling with other staff when available to attend face-to-face meetings.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The Youth Service received £416,422.00 from Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant in 2021/22; however, they topped this with an additional £100,000.00 for wellbeing strategies and delivery.
- 5.2** Youth Service will receive £450,973.00 in 2022/23 and a further £454,573.00 in 2023/24 (both include an additional £40,000 each year to support Welsh provision £20,000 and activity focussed on equality and diversity £20,000). This funding is to be spent in partnership with the voluntary sector.
- 5.3** European Social Fund (ESF) is confirmed until 31st December 2022. ESF finances have increased since the start of the project in April 2016. As a result of two re-profiles, it has resulted in an increase from the total value of £1,760,638.43 to the new total value of £2,015,018 to support the NEETS agenda.

- 5.4 Consideration will need to be given to the Shared Prosperity, Community Renewal Fund or post 16 employability in general from January 2023 onwards as this will impact on the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework (YEPP) Agenda.
- 5.5 Families First Funding forms part of the wider Children and Communities Grant (CCG) and requires regular monitoring and performance reviews as part of results-based accountability (RBA) to ensure we continue to receive this to impact the wellbeing agenda.
- 5.6 The funding of the Youth Service is split between 49% grant funding and 51% core funding (this is a 4% rise on grant funding from prior year). The additional grant funding allocation from Welsh Government has resulted in a rise in provision but this is not guaranteed beyond the end of the current financial year which makes forward planning difficult. This is being utilised to enhance existing provision rather than creating projects which are not sustainable.

Employment

- 5.7 Grant funding makes up 50% of the youth service staffing costs (small rise of 1%) which increases risk as grants are not sustainable.
- 5.8 Recruitment into the service has been a challenge locally and is consistent with the national situation. Work with Human Resources and the legal team is ongoing to consider options to recruit youth workers and workforce development opportunities to encourage more volunteers and student placements into the service and training.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.9 The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service's use of the ONE management information service ensures we monitor equality of access to open access and targeted intervention opportunities being delivered. We work closely with the equalities team to identify training for staff and volunteers in order to develop their awareness of working with these vulnerable groups.

6. Background Papers

None.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Appendix A

Youth Work Quality Mark

Quality Mark self-assessment template for the Silver Level



Cyngor y
Gweithlu
Addysg
Education
Workforce
Council



Gwaith Ieuenctid • Gwaith Chwarae
Youth Work • Playwork

Name of organisation	Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service
Lead Assessor	Nicky Sturgess
Peer Assessors	Mick Conroy; Gareth Williams
Report date	20 th – 22 nd September 2022

Introduction

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service has applied for and achieved the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales at Silver Level. The organisation has demonstrated a Good Practice Grade against each of the Quality Mark indicators. The Assessment team recommends award of the Silver Quality Mark .

The Assessment Process

The assessment process involved a desk-based review of the organisation’s self-assessment and associated evidence, online and face to face meetings with young people and staff. Quality Mark Peer Assessors, Mick Conroy and Gareth Williams and Lead Assessor, Nicky Sturgess, carried out the assessment during the period of the 20th – 22nd September

The assessor team would like to formally convey their thanks to the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service (VYS) for engaging in the Youth Work Quality Mark and planning the assessment. This includes: Ve Van de Voorde for collating the evidence and organising the assessors’ visits; all the youth workers who gave their time to gathering evidence and speaking with the assessors; the staff, volunteers and young people who welcomed the assessors and talked of their experiences in the Duke of Edinburgh Award group; the Rights Ambassadors; Stanwell Wellbeing After School Club; the Homelessness Project; the Youthy 18+ Project and Llandough Out Loud (LOL).

The table below provides a brief outline of the service’s performance against each of the Quality Mark standards, which we hope you will find useful to share with the team. The Welsh Government Youth Work team will be writing to you to formally award the Quality Mark.

Quality Mark Feedback Report for the Silver Level

This template is to be used by assessors to provide their feedback report to Organisations who have been assessed for the Quality Mark. In order to gain the Quality Mark at the Silver Level the organisation must demonstrate that it has achieved a *'good practice'* grade against each of the indicators.

2.1 Involving young people

Silver Level: Involving young people indicators	Assessor verification that assessment criteria have been met.	Recommendations
<p>The organisation has a strategy or plan in place to ensure young people's continued active participation and engagement.</p>	<p>The Vale Youth Service (VYS) vision states: 'We will offer personal, social, emotional, cultural and educational opportunities during transition into adulthood' It takes: a rights-based approach to empower young people to make positive choices to enable them to become ambitious and creative contributors; informed citizens; and healthy and resilient individuals.'</p> <p>The Vale of Glamorgan (VoG) Public Participation Strategy 2022-25 outlines diverse engagement methods and 4 wellbeing objectives: 'to work for and with communities; to support people at home and in their community; to respect, enhance and enjoy our environment; to support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth.'</p> <p>Consultation with YP in 2021 highlighted identified actions to improve the environment and health and identified the</p>	

	<p>difficulties with engaging groups. Opportunity for young people to contribute more came via the Vale Big Voice Forum.</p> <p>The quality of the work on participation led to the awarding of the Participation Standards Charter in August 2021. Young people receive participation and rights training and link with town councils. Positive outcomes from this include campaigns based on local need eg improving a local amenity used by young people and reducing homelessness.</p>	
<p>The organisation monitors and evaluates their strategy or plan which ensures young people's active involvement at all levels in decision-making and contributing to their work.</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluating of grant funded projects are done through Results Based Accountability (RBA) reports. These show levels of participation and who benefited from the work. Annual reports from Youth Action Groups outline achievements, membership, campaigns, consultations and events attended. They include an action plan for following year.</p> <p>Young people planning their work for the term was seen in observations. Youth workers facilitated young people's choices and young people were keen to contribute to discussions about future plans.</p> <p>Evaluations at the end of activities e.g. summer holiday clubs show how young people's feedback influences future plans. This was evidenced in the response provided by the VYS entitled: You Said, We Did.</p>	

<p>The impact of young people’s active involvement in decision-making contributes to the work of the organisation and is measured and identified.</p>	<p>The VYS has trained a group of young people to be Rights Ambassadors. They develop their knowledge of Children’s Rights and provide workshops to children and young people. They support the pupil voice with their work in primary and secondary schools and with governors.</p> <p>The Rights Ambassadors are also Community Ambassadors for the Children’s Commissioner for Wales thereby able to influence ideas at national level. With this support, 1245 young people from the Vale responded to the Children’s Commissioner for Wales” Jan 2021 survey Corona Virus and Me.</p> <p>The School Council Network is managed by VYS. All secondary schools meet to discuss best practice and share news. Young people can exert influence within the county as this group is able to access the Cabinet Member for Education.</p> <p>Further opportunities for decision-making are planned as young people are becoming part of developing a new youth council project.</p> <p>An area for enhancement and development was noted. The signing of the Children and Young People’s Participation Standards Charter is acknowledged by the team as an important commitment. We would encourage the VYS to build stronger evidence of achievement in this area. This could entail moving to the next stage of the process and applying for the Children in Wales National Participation Kitemark for Participation, which is endorsed by the Welsh Government. Services are assessed and inspected to show they have achieved all seven of the National</p>	<p>Good Practice: The VYS is to be commended on its</p>
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	Standards that the Vale has signed up to in the Charter. The practice observed during visits, in interviews, and evidenced within the submission, suggests that the Vale would succeed in achieving the Kitemark. The work of the Rights Ambassadors and the School Council Network would be crucial in achieving this award. This would endorse the good practice seen in delivering a participative and rights-based agenda.	work on young people's participation. The Service should consider applying for the Children in Wales National Participation Kitemark.
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2.2 Curriculum

Silver Level: Curriculum indicators	Assessor verification that assessment criteria have been met.	Recommendations
The organisation has a curriculum or program of youth work and the workforce is confident in delivering it consistently.	<p>There is a range of provision provided by teams working with targeted young people. Access to universal groups across the county is more limited. The Youth Wellbeing Team provides mentoring for young people 10-25 with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) focus on pre and post 16 who are at risk of being not in employment education or training (NEETS)</p> <p>The Homelessness Team works in partnership with the Vale Housing Department and the charity, Llamau.</p> <p>The VYS provides support for young people to succeed in a school and offers alternative provision for children for whom a school setting is challenging.</p> <p>There is open access in community settings and on the V-pod – a bus that can travel to areas without regular provision.</p> <p>The VYS also offers the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DoE).</p>	

	<p>Interviews with youth workers showed there was a clear focus for their work. Discussions with young people confirmed assessment activities are used to develop programmes suitable to each individual. Evaluations at the end of the programme consider the distance travelled and provides impact of the intervention. Young people also spoke of thoroughly enjoying the informal activities that were not necessarily accredited. This has value in itself.</p> <p>Youth workers are offered universal CPD training available through the council portal. In addition, one week each year is devoted to training. All staff can choose from a menu of training to ensure that diverse needs of different teams can be met. Termly team days provide taster training sessions and allow networking and sharing of expertise between teams. Youth workers are able to request specific training eg trauma informed.</p> <p>Staff, including volunteers, spoke positively of their access to training and the assessors' observations showed skilled and reflective practitioners at work.</p>	<p>Good Practice: Assessors noted good practice and well - maintained relationships between youth workers and young people. The VYS has programs of work tailored appropriately to the differing needs to young people. The assessment team saw very skilled and confident youth workers</p>
<p>The organisation carries out regular needs analysis to inform the range and type of provision they will offer young people.</p> <p>The organisation's provision addresses young people's differing needs, interests and circumstances.</p>	<p>The Youthy 18+ Project was set up to meet the needs of older young people with additional needs. It develops life skills and social interaction and provides additional support for those moving towards more independent living.</p> <p>The Homelessness Project works in partnership with Vale Housing and Llamau to help equip young people with skills needed for independent living and help resolve their issues with</p>	

	<p>homelessness. Young people in the most difficult circumstances spoke of how they valued the youth workers: 'The world is not as scary a place as I thought because of them'. The assessor was most impressed by the care and support that the staff showed to these vulnerable young people.</p> <p>The LGBTQ+ club has been set up in response to an emerging need. It developed pronoun badges at the request of the young people. These have now been offered across the service for other staff if they so wish.</p> <p>The VYS is able to react promptly to changing circumstances. By linking with the Vulnerable Groups team within the council, the youth service has provided support to Ukrainian families who have recently relocated to the Vale. This is providing support with accommodation needs and ensuring engagement with education.</p> <p>Work on period dignity identified an area in the Vale that provided little access for this. Young people worked with the youth service to make products more readily available at centres that young people can easily access.</p> <p>Young people's views contributed to a needs analysis that identified favoured facilities. These ideas have been included in a new draft strategy within the council. In addition, virtual reality headsets have been purchased and have been rolled out throughout the youth service.</p>	
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	<p>The VYS reacts positively to young people’s needs. Youth workers spoke of ensuring dietary requirements are catered for, developing relationships with a local Halal butcher to ensure barbecues are inclusive. One young person really valued his youth worker bringing vegan snacks to the meetings.</p>	
<p>Young people benefit from being involved and participating in the youth work provision offered by the organisation.</p>	<p>Young people readily discussed the benefits of their involvement with the VYS. The DoE Silver group were seriously considering progressing to Gold. Each of them acknowledged its value to them in their development. They spoke of the qualifications and new skills acquired doing the award highlighting orienteering and how to communicate well with others. They appreciated the way the youth workers treated them with respect and explained how easy they are to talk to. Comments included: ‘They’re great. They respect us. They’re easy to talk to’.</p> <p>Positive engagement was seen in the work with Rights Ambassadors. Young people demonstrated a high level of participation and vocalised clearly issues around the rights of women and girls. The Ambassadors highlighted the skills and confidence in public speaking that they had developed. Some young people joined as part of their DoE volunteering hours. They continued even though they had finished their DoE award as they enjoyed the project and valued its benefits. Another young person was considering a future career in Law as a result of this project.</p> <p>One girl attending a wellbeing after school club spoke of how her anxiety levels had reduced and this had helped her to make</p>	

	<p>friends and just be with other people. Others spoke of being able to plan their activities and having something to look forward to in the middle of the week. Positivity Jars, in which fellow members placed written positive comments about each other, were a particular highlight for some. During a visit, the easy relationship between the young people and their youth workers was evident. One mentioned how refreshing it was ‘to be with adults that aren’t teachers. You don’t want to say some things to teachers. They are strict and they can shout.’</p> <p>Young people in the Homelessness Project talked of their increasing confidence ‘I know I can do some things that I thought I couldn’t. eg just talking to you two. I don’t think I would have done that like talking with strangers before coming here.’ Another in the project explained the main reason for coming was to access information and support. The youth worker was highly praised; ‘Now I am hoping to get my own place and I never thought that would be possible’.</p>	<p>Good Practice: Assessors highlighted the good practice by staff. Young people in a variety of VYS settings commented with enthusiasm on the wide range of benefits they derived from their involvement with the youth workers.</p>
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2.3 Equality and Diversity

Silver Level: Equality and diversity indicators	Assessor verification that assessment criteria have been met.	Recommendations
<p>The organisation has a proactive approach to promoting equality and diversity through its policy(policies) and practice(s).</p>	<p>The Vale Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 outlines the corporate training to be undertaken to comply with the Equality Act. Youth Service training includes Prevent, and ACEs. A training review identified a need for further development in relation to LGBTQ+ and autism awareness.</p> <p>Bilingual documentation and social media posts are produced by all the teams. The Vale works in partnership with the Urdd to provide Welsh speaking youth club provision. Putting on activities that suit the needs of Welsh speakers has been identified as an area needing further development. Two members of staff have been supported to learn Welsh and the whole team has accessed a taster session.</p> <p>Following consultation during Barry Pride 2019, a LGBTQ+ youth group was set up offering a safe space for young people and providing session on healthy relationships, internet safety and confidence building.</p> <p>Following consultation about older young people’s needs, the Youthy 18+ group was developed. This provides support and advice from youth workers on topics such as money management, job seeking wellbeing and life skills to young people with some additional learning needs.</p>	

	<p>Her Voice Wales developed from work with Cardiff YMCA. Its focus is on street safety and is working to identify areas where young women feel less safe.</p> <p>There is a range of provision offered by the VYS. In addition to open access youth clubs, there are after-school wellbeing clubs; DoE; participation projects; school holiday activities and events; outdoor activities, accredited opportunities; wellbeing projects; detached and outreach session; digital youth work and the C Card.</p> <p>To support recent Ukrainian refugees, the VYS has linked with the inclusion team to support access to education for children you have recently arrived in the Vale.</p>	
<p>The organisation has a proactive approach to its use of data and information in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion policy(policies) and practice(s).</p>	<p>The VYS use the same information management system as the education staff. This allows staff to access information on vulnerable groups and ensures that reporting systems include this. Reports are produced regularly for Welsh Government and the local authority.</p> <p>Results Based Accountability reports are provided for grant funded provision. These provide information on defined groups that is then considered when identifying emerging needs eg the setting up of the post 18+ provision.</p> <p>The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) provides indicators to help identify young people at risk of becoming NEET. This data drives the referrals to Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) ensuring that face to</p>	

	<p>face work, online courses and work placements are targeted on the young people who need additional support to succeed in or move forward from school.</p>	
<p>The organisation's equality and diversity policy(policies) are implemented and result in change and improvement.</p>	<p>Young people with accommodation concerns are included in the Youth Homelessness Project. Links with Llamau and the Vale Housing department help to address the housing needs of vulnerable young people. Additional outcomes from this work include academic progression, increase in confidence, happiness and family engagement.</p> <p>The need to increase access to informal youth work activity through the medium of Welsh has been identified. The VYS is working with the Urdd and the Welsh medium school to increase the opportunities for more young people to speak Welsh in a youth setting.</p> <p>Data shows the need to engage more BAME groups and those over 16. Actions to address this are in the Curriculum Plan. The membership form has recently been amended to include information that will help identify particular needs.</p> <p>Observation of Llandough Out Loud showed the club working well to cater for different cultural needs of BAME groups. It is hoped the VYS can readily develop the engagement of these under-represented groups as they continue to focus on this.</p>	<p>Recommendation: To continue developing provision for minority ethnic young people, those over 16 and young people who wish to access the service through the medium of Welsh. This will enhance the good work already in place.</p>

2.4 Workforce development

Silver Level: Workforce development indicators	Assessor verification that assessment criteria have been met.	Recommendations
<p>The organisation has a Workforce Development policy or strategy.</p>	<p>The Vale Youth Service Workforce Development Plan links with the Council Workforce Development Plan. It identifies training and development needs.</p> <p>On taking up a youth service post, the induction checklist ensures basic training is completed soon after arrival. The 6 week probation meeting with a manger provides feedback on attendance, reliability and training already accessed. It identifies next training needs.</p> <p>The Youth Service Supervision Policy outlines models used for supervision and defines expectation of those involved. Staff commented positively on the recent changes to supervision. They appreciated the more positive tone and its focus on staff wellbeing. Having a solution focused approach when discussing</p>	

	<p>challenges means the new system is more likely to improve practice.</p> <p>All supervisors need to be trained to a minimum level 3 and access training to help them with this role.</p>	
<p>The organisation invests in the development of skills and knowledge, and this is visible in the delivery of provision and its workforce's practice.</p>	<p>The annual training week offers a menu of training opportunities likely to benefit a service with a wide-ranging remit. Having been identified over the previous year, recent training on LGBTQ+ issues and autism awareness has been delivered.</p> <p>All VYS staff access safeguarding training level 1 training each year. Identified team members access level 2 or 3 training as appropriate.</p> <p>Time can be allocated to support youth workers taking on higher education courses. During 20221-22 one staff member achieved an MA and 2 others gained a BA Hons in Youth and Community Work.</p> <p>Interviews with youth workers showed an appreciation of the range and availability of relevant training courses. Team meetings are used to share information on training accessed by individuals e.g. trauma informed training has been shared within one particular team.</p> <p>Team days were deemed useful by staff as they involved team building and increased awareness of participation groups. Supervision includes an opportunity to discuss training to ensure it remains relevant and related to individual needs.</p>	<p>Good Practice: Assessors commended the team training plans. Youth workers spoke of the wide range of training that is available to them. Observations and</p>

	<p>Staff spoke positively of their ability to access appropriate training of quality that equipped them for their roles.</p>	<p>discussions showed a very skilled and knowledgeable workforce.</p>
<p>The organisation has a workforce that is fit for the purpose of working effectively with young people directly or indirectly.</p>	<p>Staff in all settings spoke of the wide range of training that they were able to access. One week each year is designated for training for the whole service. This provides a range of opportunities for a service working in diverse areas. Termly Team Days provide a chance for the service to network together and access taster training sessions. The Vale Council offers a wide range of training easily available online.</p> <p>Counselling support for youth workers is available through the Vale council. Managers can refer staff to Occupational Health for particular issues. following recent changes, supervision has focused on a more positive approach and staff wellbeing. Self-care workshops have taken place.</p> <p>During visits, staff were engaged, enthusiastic and skilled at developing supportive and meaningful relationships with young people. Young people were readily able to explain the wide range of benefits they felt because of their engagement with the Vale youth service.</p> <p>There is a lot of good work going on at county level. It would be good if this work could be influential across other counties and nationally, ensuring Vale representation on the strategic working groups for Interim Youth Work Board recommendations e.g. the Youth Offer card and having a national brand for youth work. The Vale could make a meaningful contribution to these groups.</p>	<p>Good Practice: The assessors were very impressed with the positive relationships the VYS has with young people. The youth workers are having very positive impact on those with whom they work.</p>

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