

f cymru focus

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Changing lives through learning

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OSHL Edition



Supporting community focused schools and out-of-school-hours learning

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Recognition for volunteers

ContinYou Cymru's Volunteering for Active Communities (V4AC) pilot project, funded by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), has come to an end. The project developed routes for volunteers delivering out-of-school-hours learning (oshl) activities to become accredited for their work.

The pilot has seen the testing of an accreditation route via Glyndŵr University (formerly NEWI), as well as an OCN Level 1 in Volunteering Skills. Those taking part have included:

- volunteers from Monmouthshire Youth Service
- sixth-form pupils from Ysgol Penglais, Aberystwyth, volunteering in a variety of projects, including a Pyramid club, a peer mentoring scheme, and a gymnastics club – again, as part of their Welsh Bacalaureate qualification
- Dim Prob volunteers from Aberystwyth University supporting young people who are becoming disengaged from education within Ceredigion in a project set up by social services
- volunteers participating in a variety of projects in Torfaen, including projects run through the Play Service, as well as through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

The Volunteering Skills module is designed to provide individuals who wish to volunteer, or who are already volunteering, with a greater understanding of: the purpose and structure of a volunteering project; the rights and responsibilities of volunteers; how a volunteering plan is put into action; the personal benefits from participating in the projects; time management skills; and developing interpersonal skills.

Heledd James, Acting National Development Manager, ContinYou Cymru, says: 'Piloting the OCN module has shown that a need exists for the recognition and accreditation of volunteers who deliver out-of-school-hours learning activities in a range of settings. We will be building on this and offering training and accreditation for anyone, not just volunteers, working to deliver out-of-school-hours learning provision.'

For more information, please email info.cardiff@continyou.org.uk.



Community Focused Schools



Addressing the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community

Welcome to this spring 2010 edition of Focus. Once again we have an issue full of interesting and thought-provoking articles and information.

We are all aware of the tight economic and financial situation and the need for us to be looking at ways in which we can **provide better services more cost effectively**. We believe that Community Focused Schools (CFS) have a huge role to play in achieving this.

Recent research by Save the Children demonstrates how Wales still has the highest levels of child poverty in the UK. The new report from Estyn, *Tackling child poverty and disadvantage in schools*, identifies key issues for schools and local authorities; it also recognises **the role of CFS and oshl in addressing child poverty** (www.estyn.gov.uk/Thematic Reports/Tackling_child_poverty_and_disadvantage_in_schools_January_2010.pdf). This is backed up in Estyn's 2008-09 annual report, which indicates that in disadvantaged areas the best schools have high expectations of standards and behaviour, and pay attention to developing young people's social skills, confidence and self-esteem (www.estyn.gov.uk/annual_report.asp).

ContinYou Cymru's work has always focused on those most disadvantaged within society, and we believe that this role is still needed to help **provide support and solutions** to schools, local authorities and the wider community.

We should remember that children and young people only spend about thirteen per cent of their time in school and, if we are really to make a difference, then we need to think

about how they can be supported outside the school day.

Oshl has, for very many years, been recognised as a vehicle for **providing enrichment and additional opportunities** the most disadvantaged children and young people often miss out on, for supporting transition, and for helping to develop their soft skills, self-esteem, confidence and motivation. It is right that, in the current economic climate, we really do focus on those in areas of most need. As CFS development has grown, oshl has sometimes got a little lost in the bigger picture and we need to re-focus on the impact that oshl can have on the lives of children and young people.

We are particularly delighted that the work on the revised code of practice for out-of-school-hours learning has resulted in a new web-based resource that we hope will be useful to all those involved in developing and delivering oshl. The national working group (a big thank you to them all) has been invaluable in helping to ensure that

the new mini guides for schools, local authorities, children and young people, community organisations and families will help to **provide greater understanding and delivery of oshl across Wales**. The intention is to produce additional mini guides as needed and to update the existing guides on a regular basis.

I was recently able to meet with David Hawker, Director General – Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh Assembly Government, to discuss the future of CFS and oshl, including issues about the definition of Community Focused Schools, the International Standards for Community Schools and developing Community Focused Schools alongside the School Effectiveness Framework.

We are also hoping that we will be able to support the School Gates pilot in Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent (in a similar way to the support we have given the pilots in England through ContinYou's extended schools work), as well as in Scotland. The School Gates initiative is funded by the Child Poverty Unit and is **helping non-working families to get back to work** or into training, or to develop enterprise opportunities.

While we are in challenging times, there is also a great opportunity to really make CFS part of the solution to the difficulties we face. This will mean a much **greater commitment to working together**. We have heard 'schools can't do it on their own' for a long time now, but we should also be saying 'health services can't do it on their own' and 'regeneration services can't do it on their own' – but we can do it together. That means looking at new ways of working, for instance, pooling budgets, and cross-authority, statutory and third-sector organisations planning for services together.

As always, we really like to hear from you – so please do get in touch with your views and case studies of the good things that are happening across the country, so that we can help to share good practice and solutions!

Tom Esd



We should remember that children and young people only spend about thirteen per cent of their time in school and, if we are really to make a difference, then we need to think about how they can be supported outside the school day.

Focus speaks to...

the Urdd's Chief Executive



HJ: How does the Urdd support and provide out-of-school-hours learning activities for children and young people?

EGJ: In many ways. The Urdd supports over 200 branches throughout Wales. In addition to this, 700 branches meet in schools. A wide range of activities are provided by the Urdd's officers and enthusiastic volunteers, including sporting clubs and competitions, holiday and weekly clubs. Sporting activities include rugby, swimming, football, gymnastics and athletics. At our residential centres, children and young people can take part in sailing, canoeing and climbing activities at Glan-llyn and tobogganing, skiing, and horse-riding at Llangrannog.

And, of course, there are opportunities to take part in the annual Eisteddfod, which is Europe's largest arts youth festival and includes singing, dancing, acting, performing, art and design, and poetry competitions – some 15,000 participants compete each year.

The majority of the Urdd's activities take place outside formal school hours – in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays – either on or off school sites. There are a number of activities that take place during the holidays, including one-day visits and trips abroad.

Part of the work of our development officers is to nurture and develop volunteers and their skills. For instance, our volunteers can train to be dance coaches so that they can then deliver dance clubs in their branches. We have 10,000 volunteers who are active in 900 branches across the country.

HJ: What do the children and young people tell you about the benefits of the activities they take part in?

EGJ: Having fun and making friends are benefits that we often hear – in particular, the opportunity to have fun through the medium of Welsh. This is a positive way for children and young people who are not from Welsh-speaking families to practise their Welsh outside the formal school curriculum with their

**The Urdd's
Chief Executive,
Efa Gruffudd Jones,
tells Heledd James
about the range of
opportunities that
are available to children
and young people
throughout Wales.**

friends, while supporting what they learn in the classroom.

HJ: Why does the Urdd think it's important that children and young people have opportunities to take part in oshl activities?

EGJ: Apart from the range of skills which taking part in such activities can create and develop, for the Urdd, it is also about providing opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language as a natural way of communicating with their peers and others. In many Welsh-medium schools the percentage of children from Welsh-speaking families is low – and can even be as low as five per cent. So taking part

in the activities which the Urdd offers is a way of supporting and strengthening Welsh language skills outside the formal school curriculum.

HJ: The Urdd is part of the Reach the Heights project in Wales, part funded by the European Social Fund. How is this supporting young people?

EGJ: We have appointed sixteen youth development officers, who are developing opportunities for young people from 11 years of age. This includes a large range of opportunities for qualifications, including in youth work, for those who volunteer at our residential centres in Glan-llyn and Llangrannog – and running a 'reality babies' project, an environmental project and a dance project. Most of these activities take place outside school hours.

HJ: What's next for the Urdd?

EGJ: There are many challenges ahead. A priority over the next few years will be to secure further funding to continue our work, following on from the Reach the Heights project. We also need to continually invest in our residential centres to ensure that they offer the very best opportunities for visitors.

About the Urdd

The Urdd is an exciting, dynamic movement that organises a range of activities for children and young people across Wales. Its development officers work throughout Wales to ensure

that the Urdd offers a full programme of activities for children and young people. The Urdd was established in 1922 to give children and young people the chance to learn and socialise through the medium of Welsh, and welcomes Welsh speakers and Welsh learners. 50,000 children and young people are members of the Urdd, and over 3,000 of these are aged between 16 and 25.



School rules ok!

The thought of going back to school may bring you out in a cold sweat but the Sports Council for Wales can reveal that people, young and old, are swinging back through the gates – but are swapping their satchel for their kitbag.

Ditching textbooks and pencil cases in favour of sports lycra, hundreds of people across Wales are going back to school. But they are not headed for the classroom – instead, they are pitching up at playing fields and sports halls to burn up calories and to get fit.

And good for them! Obesity is an international issue, with the World Health Organisation already making the very scary prediction that there will be 2.3 billion overweight adults on the planet by 2015. A woman's average waist size in 1951 nipped in at 70cm (27.5 inches). Today, this has bloated to 86cm (34 inches).

The Welsh Assembly Government has already called for more weekend and holiday activity. And there are schools that are doing their bit by throwing open their doors in the evenings, at weekends and during the holidays for the local community – something which the Sports Council for Wales is championing in their Time for Action campaign.

Take Porth Community School as an example. It is a hive of activity as a result of its 'exciting, enriching and extending'

curricular programme, known as E3+. From Monday evening through to Saturday the school accommodates Cardiff City FC Academy training and swimming lessons for children as young as three years old. Basketball and cricket are also on the menu, while Rhondda Paddlers hone their canoeing skills in the pool. And it's a similar story during the holidays.

Of course, it does need careful planning, as headteacher Steve Bowden explains: 'We started to look at the community school agenda and spent many hours thrashing out ideas with governors, parents and teachers. We are in contact with the local authority and other partners to make sure that there are always activities on offer, and we make sure we don't cut across other programmes within the community.'

The Sports Council is keen to highlight those making a contribution and is able to advise schools that want to take a leaf out of Porth's book. As the credit crunch drags on, belts are tightening across the public sector, which is having an obvious knock-on effect on building new leisure facilities. Using what we've got has a



We are in contact with the local authority and other partners to make sure that there are always activities on offer.

'make do and mend' ethos about it.

The Sports Council for Wales launched Time for Action in September 2009, but will be putting schools back on the agenda later this year as different sports join the organisation in calling for more community access.

Visit www.sports-council-wales.org.uk to find out more.

The Learning Exchange

The networking website for extended services practitioners

Although the **Learning Exchange** was built specifically for England, we hope that anyone interested in **oshl, study support, extended services and Community Focused Schools** will make use of this great new place to find useful information, build networks and exchange ideas on forums.

Join your colleagues now on www.learning-exchange.org.uk.



The Learning Exchange is hosted by ContinYou and supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.



Childcare and play

A Community Focused Schools childcare working group called 'Playcare' has been established by Torfaen County Borough Council to address childcare and play priorities across the borough as part of its Community Focused Schools developments.

Focus on provision

Holiday playschemes

This pilot programme is being delivered in partnership with Torfaen Opportunity Group (TOG) to enable children and young people aged 5 to 18 with complex and challenging needs to access existing holiday playschemes during school half terms.

Where? Playschemes are based at Llantarnam and Fairwater Leisure Centres.

Partners: Community Focused Schools Team, Play Service, Torfaen Opportunity Group and Action for Children

The difference it's making: The schemes have meant that twelve children and young people have been able to access opportunities which otherwise would not have been available – as well as providing an element of respite care for the parents.

Fairwater High after-school club

Aimed at 11 to 14 year olds, this club is open Monday to Friday (term-time only) from 3pm to 5:45pm and charges £3.50 per child, per session. Club attendees have the opportunity to engage in a variety of after-school activities, including music workshops, gym sessions and cookery.

Partners: Run as a partnership project between Fairwater High School and Fairwater Community Links.

The difference it's making: A local childcare facility has been developed that enables parents to work, knowing that their children are being looked after in a safe place. It's also increasing the number of fun, interesting and challenging oshl activities. As this is school-run provision, parents can apply for help towards costs through tax credits, which helps to make the club accessible to parents on a low income.

Llantarnam holiday playscheme and childcare breakfast club

This ran as a pilot during the October 2009 half-term. The breakfast club provided wraparound childcare for the half-term playscheme, which was run from Llantarnam Leisure Centre. This provided almost two extra hours of provision before the start of the playscheme.

Where? Community Focused Schools Team, Play Service and Llantarnam school cluster

The difference it's making: This pilot enabled 36 children to access care and play opportunities. The breakfast club part of the pilot enabled some parents to get to work on time, especially in cases where the children had disabilities. There was an average attendance of 25 children per day, with a total of 36 unique children registered.

The group, which meets bimonthly, has members from the Play Service and Youth Service, the borough's Childcare Manager, the Sure Start Co-ordinator, members of the Community Focused Schools Team, the Head of

Youth and Communities, and representation from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs.

Helen Keeble, Community Focused Schools Co-ordinator, says that the benefits of establishing such a group have been extremely valuable: 'Working in this way isn't only helping to address the priorities of our Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It is also helping to address those of the Play Strategy (to increase the amount of holiday play provision), as well as our Community Focused Schools priorities. These include: increasing the number of oshl opportunities that are available;

developing community-based provision; improving links between schools and communities; providing volunteering opportunities; and supporting parents into work. Working as a Playcare group has meant that we can share resources and staff, and make the best use of available funding, which means that we have a greater chance of achieving a sustainable provision.'

What's next?

Research carried out by the group into Welsh-medium play provision showed that children wanted to attend playschemes in their own communities. Planning for 2010–11 has taken this on board and all play provision funded through Community Focused Schools developments will be bilingual and inclusive for children and young people with disabilities.

And there's even more provision being planned – including play, youth service



Extending oshl provision through OwnZone

and wraparound childcare at four sites around Torfaen, and an Easter camp at the community farm in the second week of the Easter holidays to provide holiday childcare.

For further information, contact Helen Keeble, Community Focused Schools Co-ordinator: 07980 682840; helen.keeble@torfaen.gov.uk

Rhiannon Bennett, Community Focused Schools Co-ordinator: 07932 554136; rhiannon.bennett@torfaen.gov.uk

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Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi, in Holyhead, has almost 750 pupils, including 108 in its sixth form. Its mission statement declares that it 'works in partnership with the community for the success of each child and, in doing so, works to best prepare pupils for adult life.' The new Senior Leadership Team (SLT), formed in September 2008, sees oshl as having a vital role to play in the education and development of their pupils into lifelong learners.

Despite already having an established out-of-school provision, including lunchtime, after-school, weekend and holiday activities, the new SLT decided to further develop the oshl provision to meet the needs of both the pupils and the local community.

Supported by the local authority (LA), the school embarked on a partnership project to develop new out-of-school provision that would enable and welcome community involvement, while at the same time being focused on the desires of its pupils.

Working closely with ContinYou Cymru, and using its OwnZone model, a student-to-student consultation was held to explore:

- reasons for use/non-use of current oshl provision
- student feelings about the current range of activities
- practical issues that could hinder involvement
- peer group influences
- pupil participation and ownership of the provision.

The results of the consultation flagged up some interesting issues around: pupil perceptions of the

existing oshl provision; some reluctance towards clubs involving pupils from more than one year group; pupil involvement in the management of oshl; and the type and range of possible new activities. All the issues highlighted have been addressed by the project steering group, comprising pupils, staff, LA and outside community partners.

The new project, named Y Nyth (The Nest), is based around the OwnZone model developed by ContinYou Cymru. It has a base in the old science block, but will make use of space and facilities around the school site, including the library, ICT rooms and sports hall.

A dedicated project worker, employed by the local authority, has overseen the development of Y Nyth and will manage the provision on a day-to-day basis by

working in partnership with pupils, school staff and community volunteers. The activities on offer in the 'SkillZone' area will include revision sessions with peer mentors, Duke of Edinburgh's activities, setting up a film unit, and a maritime heritage club to name but a few.

All involved in the project foresee Y Nyth becoming a vital point of shared learning for both the school and the local community.

For more information about this project, contact Debra Parry at the school. Email info.cardiff@continyou.org.uk to find out developing the OwnZone model.



Resources

Latest publications

A-Z for out-of-school-hours learning

This is the revised and updated oshl code of practice, which is web-based and provides tailored information on everything you need to know about planning, developing and delivering oshl.

Community focused schools information sheet

This two-page information sheet gives an introduction to Community Focused Schools developments in Wales. It supplements *Community Focused Schools – Making it happen: a toolkit*.

Lights, camera, action!

This 'how to' guide aims to help all those interested in setting up and running film clubs as oshl activities, and will be valuable for anyone working with children and young people. School staff, youth workers and members of Communities First partnerships may find it particularly useful.

The 'go to' guide: a signposting tool for community focused schools

This practical guide will help schools develop appropriate and effective ways of providing information and signposting some of the key services available on their own site, within any cluster arrangements, locally, and nationally.

See www.continyou.org.uk/wales for our latest resources.

ContinYou Cymru's website

Visit our webpages to find out more about our work in Wales, and tools and resources to help your Community Focused Schools and oshl provision. www.continyou.org.uk/wales

Coming soon!

Your Voice, Your Choice: running participation training for young people who are harder to reach or engage

This guide is aimed at those working with young people who want to support them to participate in decisions that affect their lives. It shares practice and lessons learnt from participation training run by ContinYou Cymru and Dynamix and also:

- shows ways of engaging with young people who are thought to be 'harder to reach' or 'difficult to engage'
- signposts people to other resources and information that will support this work.

A guide to monitoring and evaluating Community Focused Schools provision

A 'how to' guide setting out key stages, things to consider, and tools to use to help schools and others monitor and evaluate Community Focused Schools provision.

Information sheets

These cover the role of Community Focused Schools in helping to address community cohesion, child poverty and the rights of the child.

CânSing toolkit

This toolkit provides information, guidance and activities that schools throughout Wales can draw on when setting up CânSing singing clubs.

For more information on our forthcoming publications, email info.cardiff@continyou.org.uk or visit www.continyou.org.uk/wales.



Children's University in Swansea

Children's University (CU) is the first totally inclusive accreditation system for children and young people aged between 5 and 19 who take part in oshl activities. It is divided into three sections, according to age – Kids' College, Children's University and Youth University.

Children's University enables schools and activity providers to recognise the importance that oshl has in the development of children and young people. At Children's University:

- There is no cost to registering and accrediting activities.
- Any activity with learning outcomes can be accredited.
- Individual commitment is rewarded, rather than achievement against a predetermined target. No matter what level of ability, everyone can get the credit they deserve.

For every hour that a student participates in CU, they gain a credit. These credits are then banked and accumulate towards a bronze, silver or gold milestone award.

Since its inception in Swansea in 2005, there have been over 350,000 credits given for activities as diverse as animal husbandry and Young Firefighters. Over 8,400 students have been registered from primary and comprehensive schools, and there are over 80 activity providers, including sports clubs, faith groups and FE colleges.

One of the tangible benefits is recognition by a local FE college in its admissions system, giving preference to holders of a Gold Award at Youth University level.

CU recognises the achievements of children and young people, and by rewarding them it encourages lifelong learning and participation, enabling them to grow and increase in confidence.

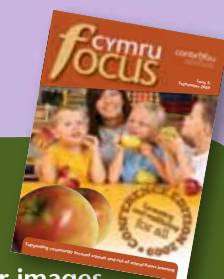
This article has been written by Mark Gosney, Out of School Hours Learning Co-ordinator. To contact Mark, phone 01792 450841.



Save the date!

Our sixth national conference will take place on **16 November** at **The Pavilion Conference Centre, Llandrindod Wells.**

More information will be available on our website shortly and in the September edition of *Focus Cymru*.



Please contact Heledd James (heledd.james@continyou.org.uk) with your suggestions for case studies, useful websites, cover images, and so on, for the next issue of *Focus Cymru*.