



Take your partners in Caerphilly

A toolkit for effective
partnership working
in out-of-school-hours
learning



continyou
Building learning
communities

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Take your partners in Caerphilly is an introductory toolkit for anyone – schools, activity providers, potential or actual partners, businesses, the voluntary and community sector – wishing to work in partnership to help deliver effective out-of-school-hours learning (oshl). (There is a definition of oshl in Part 1 of the toolkit.)

Caerphilly County Borough Council and ContinYou Cymru have compiled the toolkit with help from many partner organisations and schools, and with support from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

We suggest that it can be used most helpfully in conjunction with the Code of Practice and the Welsh training pack for oshl, which were produced by ContinYou Cymru for WAG. There are details about these resources at the back of the toolkit.

We hope you find the toolkit useful and we welcome your feedback. We have produced this toolkit because we believe that what children do out of school affects their life chances. This is not just about giving young people the opportunity to learn something they might not have had the opportunity to learn during the school day – out-of-school-hours learning has profound benefits for pupils and school staff, as well as parents and communities. It makes an enormous contribution to the core function of schools, which includes raising standards, and plays an important role in efforts to regenerate disadvantaged communities.

Oshl can, quite literally, change lives.

Peter Gomer – Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure, Caerphilly County Borough Council

Ian Bottrill – Development Manager, ContinYou Cymru

Michelle Jones – Play Development Officer, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

Lowri Catrin Pugh – Development Officer, Menter Iaith Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili



'The Graig-y-Rhacca Welsh-medium Homework Club has developed as an excellent example of how children are able to support their formal education with innovative learning experiences within their communities.'

Lowri Pugh (Menter Iaith Caerffili)

Part 1: What is oshl?

Out-of-school-hours learning (oshl) is any activity outside normal lessons which young people take part in voluntarily. It is an inclusive term embracing many different kinds of activities offered by many providers and offering young people a wide range of benefits. Oshl activity can take place anywhere and at any time outside the traditional school day. Its purpose is to improve young people's motivation, build their self-esteem, and help them to become more effective learners. Above all, it aims to raise achievement.



Among the names used for 'out-of-school-hours learning' are:	Oshl can include:	All of these oshl activities might take place:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● out-of-hours and out-of-lessons learning ● after-school activities ● extra-curricular activities ● study support ● play and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● homework and study clubs ● help with key skills, including language skills in Welsh and English ● sports, games and adventurous outdoor activities ● creative activities ● residential events ● opportunities for volunteering and community service ● mentoring by adults or other pupils/club members. ● play experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● before school (breakfast clubs) ● at lunchtime ● after school ● at weekends ● during holiday periods ● anywhere.

Out-of-school-hours learning is about enabling, extending and enriching the learning experiences of children and young people.

The Community Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough Council sets out the objectives and priorities that public, private and voluntary organisations in the county borough have agreed will improve the well-being of people who live and work there.

A wide variety of audits and assessments of need were carried out, and research data were collected and analysed to develop the following four key themes upon which the Community Strategy stands:

- Health, social care and well-being
- Regeneration
- Living environment
- Education for life.

The Children and Young People's Framework Partnership sits alongside these four themes to ensure that coherent

and joined-up plans for children and young people in Caerphilly are developed. The Framework Partnership has set up eight Local Priority Theme Groups in order to gather and organise all the information it needs. One of these groups, Learning, Education and Development, has the following strategic aims:

- 1 To develop inclusive, high-quality community education provision for children and young people (pre-nursery, nursery, schools, colleges and work-based learning) that meets the needs of all learners and inspires them to achieve their best and prepares them for life.
- 2 To provide children and young people with the basic toolkit of skills upon which they can build and develop their learning, and which can help them through key stages of transition. (This toolkit needs to be provided in accessible and appealing ways that will meet the diverse needs of children and young people.)
- 3 To develop a culture of learning that crosses generations and raises the attainment of children and young people.

Community focused schools

As this booklet was being prepared, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) published proposals to support the development of community focused schools (CFS), defined as follows:

'A community focused school is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. Across Wales many schools already provide some community services including adult education, study support, ICT facilities and community sports programmes.' (WAG guidance, 2003)

The concept behind the term 'community focused school', as described above, has been around for a long time and a number of schools in Wales and beyond have worked in this way for decades. The difference is that, far from being seen as interesting oddities, such schools are now being looked at as role models for how all schools might develop in the future. They are the vanguard of a cultural revolution in community-based learning.

Community focused school development, therefore, has clear relevance to anyone working in partnership to develop and support out-of-school-hours learning. We believe this development will complement and support oshl.

Part 2: Who are the partners in out-of-school-hours learning?

Many organisations are actual and potential oshl providers. Traditionally, we see schools as the deliverers of what used to be called 'extra-curricular activities'. However, over recent years, with a growth in the understanding of the power of oshl to enhance the lives of all children, there is more understanding of how a wider range of oshl activities can be offered.

Schools and other organisations can be providers as well as partners to each other. A partner can be any person or organisation with something appropriate to offer to young people in an oshl context. It might be a parent running a few sessions on fishing or safe cycling, or it might be a major public company encouraging young people to visit their factory as part of an after-school business enterprise club – and many things in between.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is itself a huge organisation. All of its various departments (ranging from social services to highway maintenance) can offer support to oshl in various ways. For example, if a group in a school or club is concerned about local traffic conditions, the Council could provide statistics and perhaps send along a highway or traffic engineer to discuss the issues with the young people.



Top tip

Never be afraid to ask for help.

'After one concert,' reports a teacher, 'I asked if there were any parents who could help. A retired composer, a choir leader and an orchestra conductor now run the school choir and young composers clubs.'

Similarly, other huge organisations – the NHS, police, fire service and others – will be able to support aspects of out-of-school activities in many ways. Below is a list of others that can offer support:

- NCH Action for Children
- Sure Start
- Libraries
- National Childminders Association
- Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin
- CAMHS Primary Mental Health Project
- Parent Network
- SNAP Cymru
- Careers Wales
- Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association
- Menter Iaith
- Barnados
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Club
- Caerphilly County Borough Youth Services
- Voluntary Youth Services
- Gwent Association for Voluntary Organisations – Creative Play Project
- Groundwork Caerphilly
- Super Shell-by
- Language and Play
- Arts Development
- Local Further Education colleges.

Part 3: How are partners in Caerphilly presently involved in oshl?

Oshl provision in Caerphilly goes way beyond traditional after-school sports clubs or revision classes in any subject. It is a broad and deep offering of important learning experiences for the young people of Caerphilly, often in novel venues and provided by an impressive array of statutory and non-statutory organisations, schools, and so on.

Who is involved?

Schools are still the main players in much of the out-of-school-hours learning in Caerphilly, either as providers or as venues. However, there are many schemes that involve partnership working between schools and other providers or partners, as well as activities that are delivered independently by other organisations. Examples include:

- youth drop-in centres
- out-of-school clubs offering different activities
- come-and-play sessions
- after-school clubs offering oshl and childcare
- breakfast and tea clubs
- Young Writers Squads
- library activities
- leisure centre activities
- sports and games clubs
- community dance schemes
- music and singing clubs
- out-of-school childcare schemes during holidays
- Welsh-medium homework clubs
- youth clubs
- homework clubs
- voluntary sector groups
- pre-school provision (in some circumstances).

The role of play in oshl

A play perspective in an oshl activity can emphasise children's appetite for life, their need for freedom and choice, and their ability to learn through self-motivated exploration of their surroundings. Being in an environment that supports risk-taking, but does not stifle their self-expression, can be fertile ground for children's personal, social and emotional development.

The key to including a play perspective in oshl is to use strategies that will: increase children's choices; respect their autonomy and abilities; foster their self-esteem; and encourage them to explore and test boundaries while respecting others.



Case studies

Ysgol Y Castell Out-of-School Childcare Scheme

For the past four years, with the support of Clybiau Plant Cymru, a Welsh-medium out-of-school childcare scheme has operated under the supervision and support of Menter Iaith at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Castell in Caerphilly town. During that period, through start-up funding from the New Opportunities Fund, a breakfast, after-school and holiday scheme have developed at the school. Although the scheme evolved as childcare provision, which was clearly separate from the school itself, the scheme represents a valuable and effective partnership with the school.

Graig-y-Rhacca Welsh-medium Homework Club

Children in the Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen areas can go to a Welsh-medium homework club at the Graig-y-Rhacca Resource Centre. Many children who receive Welsh-medium education in Caerphilly town are often isolated when they return to their communities after school and they lack opportunities to use their Welsh language. Although the club is a recent development, its organisers hope to offer more activities, such as Welsh classes that parents can attend while their children are at the homework club. The organisers also hope to attract older young people to the club to help the younger children.

New Tredegar Integrated Children's Centre (ICC)

Since November 2004, 'Come and Play' sessions have been running in the Integrated Children's Centre. The sessions originated when the external organisations Creative Play, Language and Play and Bookstart were invited to come to the ICC to do a session with the Parent and Toddler group.

Cefn Hengoed After-school Childcare Club, Caerphilly

Cefn Hengoed After-school Club, managed by a voluntary management committee, has been running for approximately three years in an area of deprivation in Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC). The club serves two schools and accommodates 24 children every evening from the time school ends to 6pm. Children are escorted from their schools to the club, which is in the local youth centre.

Caerphilly Young Writers Squads

Caerphilly Young Writers squads are co-ordinated by CCBC's Arts Development team and are a partnership between the Schools Effectiveness Unit, the Library Service and the Welsh Academy. The squads give talented young writers the chance to develop their skills by working with professional writers. The sessions take place at least once a term on Saturday mornings.

Community Dance Workshops (Cefn Fforest scheme)

The CCBC Arts Development Team works with dance practitioners, schools and leisure centres to provide a network of facilities where young people can engage in out-of-school dance activities.

Senghenydd Youth Drop-in Centre (SYDIC)

SYDIC provides an enormous range of opportunities to children and young people in the area. Programmes offered include: an art club, dance, pottery, karaoke, computers, a pool league, a DJ workshop, a youth club, a healthy living scheme – which runs every evening and includes a fitness class, healthy menus and healthy eating cookery classes – plus a fun sports day in August, a summer scheme, the River of Light Lantern Parade and an environmental project. In addition, the centre offers an alternative curriculum for young people who have been permanently excluded from schools in the area. This offers basic skills tuition, woodwork, cookery, art, computers, environmental work and sports.



Part 4: How partners add value to oshl

There is little substitute for experience. The added value from involving partners in oshl projects can be anything from a sharing of the load to a life-changing experience for young people.

Schools and other providers are innovative and resourceful but they can't do everything themselves. In smaller schools, particularly, partners can broaden the range of experiences offered to young people. This may be rugby coaching (for girls and boys) or it might be linking up with a local college for some CAD/CAM experience or a 'street dance' session in a local youth centre.

If smaller schools work together in clusters and with other partners, they will find more opportunities to provide young people with a range of experiences that single schools on their own cannot offer.

Top tip

Involvement of community members is so important when delivering a diverse and engaging oshl programme. It can reduce pressure on teachers and give children the opportunity to develop skills in areas of interest that cannot always be offered by school staff.

Involvement of members of the wider school community not only benefits the children, but enables 'helpers' to develop their own skills and to have a better understanding of what the school stands for.

The children learn from experts in their field whilst getting the opportunity to see how other adults make their living.

The benefits of involving partners in oshl: comments from partners and participants

Behaviour

'I've calmed down a lot lately. I listen a lot more and don't argue back with my teachers at school so much. I learn more in lessons as well.'

Ashley (14 years old) – *Young People Now*, June 2005

Healthy living

'Cefn Hengoed After-school Club has developed a gardening project at allotments close to a local nursing home. The children have been digging, hoeing, planting and watering seeds, with advice from the residents at the nursing home. The children take it in turns to visit the allotment and each has their own, named plot, which they tend. They have enjoyed nurturing the plants and taking their bounty home when it is ready for picking, and the parents then supply a packet of seeds for the following harvest. Large, easy to grow seeds are used, such as beans, cucumbers and pumpkins, which are easy to handle and sprout quickly.'

'Parents have said that their children are now trying vegetables they wouldn't have tried before. Although it is hard work, the children and staff have all enjoyed the experience.'

Here are some comments from the children:

'I like picking the weeds and growing plants.'

'I get dirty but I wear gloves.'

Alison Wood, Clybiau Plant Cymru, 2005

Confidence, self-esteem, social skills

'The success of this particular example [Ysgol Y Castell Out-of-school Childcare Scheme] highlights the way in which the scheme is able to provide stimulating and educational experiences in an informal and relaxed way, while also supporting their formal learning experiences. Staff within the scheme have noted that many children who do not excel at school demonstrate a confidence and enthusiasm for the activities provided at the scheme, and that they are able to offer a supportive and non-threatening environment, within which children are able to learn informally through alternative activities.'

Lowri Pugh, Menter Iaith Caerphilly

'The Parent and Toddler group [at White Rose Primary School, New Tredegar] has benefited from the professionals' knowledge and skills, leading to the parents and carers being actively involved in their child's learning. The children have developed various skills, including communication skills, emotional and social skills, concentration and the ability to sit and listen to instructions, and have developed in all other areas of learning.

'The ICC [Integrated Children's Centre] also works well with the school. The White Rose Nursery teacher has noticed the difference in the children coming from the playgroup and parent and toddler group. The transition into [formal] education is easier and children settle very quickly as the rooms mirror each other. The medium-term planning is regularly completed jointly so that wraparound childcare does not plan identical activities in the afternoon to those in the nursery in the morning. The theme is the same, but the activities and the way they are presented are different to enable greater skill development, enthusiasm and motivation. Both staff teams bring different skills but understand they are all needed to enhance the learning of the children.'

Sarah Mutch, White Rose ICC, 2005

'The educational benefits of the project [Cefn Hengoed After-school Club] include opportunities to develop observation and recognition skills, communication skills and language, co-operation [group and team work], socialisation, practical skills, gross and fine motor skills, an understanding of the natural world, raising of confidence and self-esteem, and dietary benefits. The children learn about the natural world and which chemicals are useful – for example, soapy water to get rid of greenfly and eggshells to deter slugs. The project also inspires enjoyment in learning.'

Alison Wood, Clybiau Plant Cymru, 2005

Top tip

Invite senior citizens, parents and governors regularly to watch or take part in a 'club' activity.

The people and places around your school are unique to your group – take advantage of what and who is just outside your door.



Part 5: What does oshl offer partners?

Partners have an enormous range of reasons for becoming involved in oshl projects. It can be, very simply, something that someone or an organisation wants to do because they are passionate about it – for example, photography or wood carving. It can be because a large local employer wants to put something back into the community and can see that happier and better-educated young people will enhance their business opportunities in the future. It can also be because there is a greater understanding of how out-of-school-hours learning can motivate and raise self-esteem, or it can be to:

- enhance formal learning
- develop new audiences, for example, for theatre, music
- develop new participants in a local club, for example, bird watching, cricket.

However, we need to make the experience for the partner as fulfilling as possible, as a poor experience of involvement in an oshl project will not encourage future co-operation or involvement.

Top tip

Local businesses and enterprises like to be associated with success and they may be keen to play a role in achieving recognition and awards for your school – as long as they can bask in some of the glory too.

'Since the basic objective of social education is to help young people towards competence in active adult participation in the life of society, it would be strange if social educators did not support the use of community service and community involvement as one of their primary strategies'.

Marsland, D (1993) *Understanding youth: issues and methods in social education*, Claridge Press

Reasons for partners to become involved in oshl

- Oshl partnerships can enhance relationships within a community and can increase young people's motivation.
- It helps to realise the potential in the community.
- It provides people in the community with opportunities to work with children and young people of all ages.
- Partners can provide oshl clubs with opportunities to try out interesting and innovative ideas and materials which they may not have access to at school.

- Partnerships can break down barriers between different parts of the community, including those between schools.
- Partnership working makes wider use of community facilities.
- Forging partnerships to run oshl projects often leads to more and stronger partnerships between various organisations, which benefit the community as a whole.
- Involving other schools as partners offers a chance to work with them in new ways; it also pools scarce resources.
- Partners have the opportunity to learn more about schools, their priorities and the curriculum.
- Everyone in a partnership benefits because there are more opportunities to make contact with local children, young people and their families.
- Working with partners offers the chance to develop new and innovative programmes and activities for young people.
- Working with partners in the community helps break down the idea that learning only takes place in schools.
- Everyone in an oshl partnership has the opportunity to learn something.

Top tip

Be open to suggestions from the local 'experts' and be prepared to be flexible to accommodate their requirements.

Try to get hold of lists of specialists (for example, from LEAs or the library service) who can add something different. Ask the providers you approach to explain how their work can enhance the aims of the oshl activity.

A local community audit will show who in the community is available to be involved in oshl activities – for example, as visiting speakers. It will also provide a bank of information that will be useful for the children.

Local services, including police, fire services and ambulance teams have a responsibility to educate the whole community about health and safety in the area.

Case studies

Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili, the Caerphilly County Welsh Language Initiative, developed the **Ysgol Y Castell Childcare Scheme** to meet the demands amongst parents for high-quality, affordable childcare. It also performs an extremely important educational role, but it has an important further advantage. The children at Ysgol Castell receive their education through the medium of Welsh, although a high percentage comes from English-speaking homes. Consequently, the scheme provides a valuable and essential opportunity for the children to go into a different, new and stimulating educational environment where they speak Welsh. The children's Welsh language skills have significantly improved as they are able to use the language in an additional environment, which is particularly beneficial to those from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds.

At **Graig-Y-Rhacca Welsh-medium Homework Club** the children are able to continue with their studies in an informal, relaxed and different environment, and are able to learn alongside children from other Welsh schools. This has developed an important network of friends for the children as the location of many Welsh schools can prevent the children from meeting other children who are receiving Welsh-medium education.

These out-of-school activities have thus helped **Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili** to meet its objective of supporting the development of the Welsh language in Caerphilly.

Similarly, **Clybiau Plant Cymru (CPC) Kids' Clubs** exists to help communities in Wales by promoting, developing and supporting quality, affordable and accessible out-of-school childcare clubs. These offer all club members extended learning through a variety of freely-chosen, daily play activities. There are numerous educational benefits that flow from this work, which strongly supports Clybiau Plant Cymru's core purpose.

There are currently three active **Writing Squads** in Caerphilly: one working with children in Years 9 and 10; another involving children currently in Years 5 to 7; and a third, a Welsh-medium group, for Year 7. Although there is a cost for the scheme, there are clear mutual benefits for each of the partner organisations. Other local authorities run similar schemes in partnership with the Welsh Academy, which sees it as an opportunity to nurture the talent of the next generation of Welsh writers.

Furthermore, the Community Dance Workshops (**the Cefn Fforest scheme**) has developed a model of involvement that has been used in many communities to give a kick start to new dance classes while they are still being established. It also has the benefit of forging better links between schools and their local leisure centres.

The **local environment** is also a valuable tool for engaging young people in out-of-hours learning.

Groundwork Caerphilly, through its community environmental and youth programmes, has been engaging young people in environmental activities for a number of years. Groundwork Caerphilly's activities include:

- raising awareness and education about the environment
- interactive practical workshops (mini-beast hunts, global environment discussions)
- traditional skills (willow weaving, paper making)
- conservation (animal/plant life and habitats)
- developing green spaces (small-scale local community regeneration).

These activities build the capacity of children and young people to understand and play a meaningful part in the processes that can shape their lives and help protect and enhance their local environments.

Everyone benefits through partnership working in out-of-school-hours learning. Involvement in the community is important for young people as it often gives them a sense of value and can break down cultural barriers that exist between young people and adults.



Top tip

Community involvement:

- provides a diversity of adults offering different kinds of learning experiences
- facilitates access to a wider range of unusual, interesting activities
- enables everyone to care, share and learn together.

The more children learn about their community, the more they are likely to respect and appreciate it.

It's amazing what people will do for free coffee and biscuits.

What people say about play

'The right to play is the child's first claim on the community: play is nature's training for life. No community can infringe on that right without doing deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens.'

David Lloyd George, 1926

'We believe that when it comes to children's growth into confident, capable, emotionally literate adults, what happens in the street, the park and in the playground is just as important as what happens in the classroom.'

Tim Gill, Former Director of the Children's Play Council

'Play is first and foremost the process of a child's own, self-directed learning and as such is a process that has a validity for all ages of children. It is such a vital component of a child's life that the child's capacity for positive development will be inhibited or constrained if denied free access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.'

From the WAG play policy



Part 6: What can oshl with community partners do for young people?

Strengthen and deepen young people's school-based education

Out-of-school-hours learning opportunities can give young people the chance to learn new things and develop thoughts and ideas they may have. With support, their ideas can be put into actions and can show real results. This goes beyond school-based learning and can help to motivate those who may not be academic. It can show young people that even though they may not be the best in school, they do have a part to play in society and can be a valuable member of their community. For those who are more academically able, oshl can add value to what they are already experiencing. Being involved in preparing bids, costing trips and projects, for example, can all be built on the foundations of school-based learning.

Enhance confidence and self-esteem

In a project that gives young people the chance to have a voice and say what goes on in their community, they begin to see that they are valued. By being listened to and having their views and opinions acted on, they start to recognise they are an important part of that community and are respected as individuals. Recognition in an oshl programme can promote feelings of self-worth and give an enormous confidence boost to young people who feel they have never achieved anything.

Widen social horizons

By getting involved in community activities young people have access to a wider social group and new opportunities. This can be through mixing with people, via meetings, sub groups, and so on, with whom they would not usually liaise. These people can be professionals, residents from other communities, and residents from their community.

Opportunities also become available through development of the community, community activities and through new skills learned through taking part and observing others.

Give learning a practical and relevant edge

The skills learnt through being involved in community development can be vast. These range from communication skills – for example, talking and getting a point across in a meeting – to mathematical skills such as preparing bids, costings, and so on. These are skills that can be used in everyday life, for example, to enhance employment opportunities. These types of activities can also help young people link the work they are doing in school to everyday experiences. For example, maths may be something irrelevant to a young person in the classroom, and they may think it is of no use to them in the real world. Yet when they are involved in bidding for money for a new skate park, they can recognise its importance.

Offer young people a chance to explore and understand their role in society through citizenship projects

Out-of-school-hours learning projects with a citizenship focus can give young people a grounding in some of the adult roles they might be involved in during their future lives. Such projects can offer young people a positive role in society, which they need and are commonly denied. After-school citizenship activities can also complement curriculum work in practical ways. Involving young people in organising community events and offering them a chance to lead activities, for example, encourages them to see that they can make a difference, can solve problems, and are capable of taking responsibility. Citizenship projects, especially those which cover issues that young people find relevant to themselves, have been found to be highly motivating for participants.

Finally, out-of-school-hours learning that involves community organisations can produce and enhance all of the aforementioned benefits in many ways. As discussed in Part 2 of this toolkit, it can enhance young people's health, confidence and self-esteem, and it can also influence their behaviour and their career options, as the following quotes from young people involved with the Caerphilly Youth Service indicate:

'Getting Connected helped me to learn about the person that I am and how I can change.'

'The staff gave me advice and support on my future career, which gave me the confidence to start at drama school in September.'

'Coming to the Hub helped my behaviour – I am now good in lessons and don't answer back.'

'I am glad I was in the group as teachers now understand that I have issues and I am trying to work on them.'

'Through the anger management sessions I feel I am now more able to deal with my anger during classes by talking about the issues and coming up with solutions to be able to deal with them.'

Top tips

Ensure that everyone involved takes part in the running of the scheme.

Get the pupils involved in the leadership and ownership of the club, so they stay committed and involved even during the cold, dark winter evenings.

Students create ideas and opportunities which adults are unlikely to think of on their own.



Part 7: The long-term impact of oshl on young people

Case studies from Caerphilly Youth Service

Involvement in oshl projects can build confidence and employability

This example of how oshl can have a long-term impact on young people, concerns a particular young man who started off attending the Caerphilly Youth Service as a service user and later became involved as a member of our staff. (For the purpose of this case study, he will be known as John.)

John comes from a disadvantaged area and found school quite difficult. Whilst still of school age he regularly attended The Hub (a mobile youth project) and always joined in with the activities; he was good-natured and got on very well with staff and his peers. As one of the older members in the group, he often helped the younger members with activities and acted as a role model.

Through working with the young people in this area, one member of the Caerphilly Youth Service team recognised their interest in motorbikes, and a motorbike project was established with a small group, which included John.

The group worked with used bike parts and, over a period of months, used them to build a new bike. They entered the bike into the National Youthbike competition and won the group a trophy for best newcomer.

The following year we ran the project again. Due to John's experience and the fact that he enjoyed the first project so much, he offered to help out. John eventually became so invaluable to us in terms of his experience and the way he supported his peers, that we felt it was only fair to pay him for his time.

Since then, John has been involved in other aspects of the project, and as a paid member of staff.

Here is another case study, which shows how oshl really can help to change the lives of some troubled young people.

This example is about a young man we worked with on the Caerphilly Youth Service school re-integration project. (For the purpose of this case study, he will be known as Tom.)

When we first met Tom he had not attended school for many years. He had not been excluded so could not get home tuition.

Because Tom would not engage with any of the supporting agencies and services that had been offered to him, it was impossible to find out why he would not attend school or why he sometimes displayed very aggressive behaviour. All of the services that had been involved with him felt they could go no further with him.

Through attending sessions at the Hub, Tom eventually discussed and addressed his issues. He learned strategies to avoid conflict and to manage his behaviour. He has been involved in various forms of accreditation, and has helped write an award-winning poetry book.

This young person has changed dramatically. Whereas Tom was once very quiet and withdrawn, he has now become quite confident. He went back to school, which was an enormous step for him, since he had missed so many years. He now intends joining the Youth Access initiative in September 2006.

Top tips

Don't forget your school governors – they are obviously keen to support the school.

Inviting local groups and businesses into school develops links and friendships that can support children with career planning.

Part 8: How can oshl partners work together most effectively?

A basic principle for effective partnership working is: each partner needs to be clear about what they expect from every member of the partnership and what the purpose of the partnership is. There are many other points to consider, which are discussed below. However, without this clarity of purpose and understanding of expectations, no one, including the young people, is likely to get the best out of the experience.

Finding the right partner(s)

- It is important to avoid over-committing yourself or overburdening the partner/s you work with. A suitable oshl partner needs to be someone or an organisation with whom you think you can work comfortably and productively.
- Ask the local authority for guidance, and also approach other agencies – for example: ContinYou Cymru, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), other schools, families, people in the community with skills or knowledge relevant to your oshl project
- It is a good idea to take some time over deciding who to approach – partnerships that are rushed into rarely succeed.

Top tips

Share good practice and build relationships with similar oshl providers.

Encourage children to appreciate the achievements of children from other schools or clubs.

What you need to do when setting up an oshl project with partners

- **Consult early with the children/young people**
 - Make sure you ask the children/young people you are trying to reach with the oshl activity what they think about it and what they want to gain.
 - Ensure the children/young people know what to expect. If you involve them in discussions and planning about the oshl activity, you will be able to avoid raising false expectations.



- Think about the environmental and social impact of what you are planning – young people are often very enthusiastic about the environment and social issues.

- **Build relationships**

- When looking for suitable partners, remember to keep your partnership personal and local. People form partnerships with people, rather than organisations with organisations.
- Be flexible – partners may need (for a huge variety of reasons) to make last-minute changes and you may need to adapt to accommodate this.
- Give partners plenty of time to develop a relationship with your school or with other oshl providers. Build in plenty of planning time for everyone to develop ideas.
- Communicate openly, clearly and often.

- **Find the common points**

- Look for a shared ethos with partners, for a common purpose, shared agenda/aims/objectives. Work out how out-of-school learning aims can fit in with those.
- Build on existing situations – if a partnership already exists for some other purpose, try to work out how it can work in with oshl purposes.

● Sort out funding and resources

- Work out what money you will need and make sure funding is in place to cover all your costs.
- If partners are contributing funding to an oshl project, they may want to see an evaluation report. See Part 11 of this toolkit for some straightforward advice about why it is important to monitor and evaluate an oshl project, and how to do it.
- Make sure appropriate resources are being prepared (if they are needed) and that funding covers these.

● Build oshl in

- Make oshl part of your whole-school development plan.
- Try to persuade your partners to make it part of their development plans too – something that is built in rather than ‘bolted on’.

● Establish who is responsible for what

- Agree at the start who has overall responsibility for the oshl project and for particular aspects of your oshl partnership project.
- Make sure all the partners are clear about who they should be dealing with (there should always be a clearly identified person to contact).

● Sort out the location and space

- If a partner is involved in delivering an oshl project at your school, make sure they know its location, where in the school the project will be held, and when. Schools and other venues can be very confusing for outsiders.
- Ensure that space is not an issue (short-term or long-term, including storage space).

● Celebrate

- Involve all participants and partners in sharing and celebrating successes.

What to avoid doing

- Making unreasonable demands on the time of your potential partners, which may frighten them off and will make re-establishing your relationship with them difficult.
- Giving partners so much time before delivery that their enthusiasm wanes – and they go ‘off the boil’.
- Changing anything that impacts on the partnership without consulting the partners first.
- Becoming discouraged if a potential partnership fails to take off (not all are viable and not all succeed – there may be other fish in the sea).

What can you reasonably expect of partners – and what can they expect of you?

- That what has been agreed is delivered.
- That there is flexibility, with all partners accepting the others’ priorities and pressures.

Keep in touch regularly

‘Although the scheme [Ysgol Y Castell] has developed in such a way that children are encouraged to feel they are in a separate environment to the school, close links are maintained in order to share information.’

Lowri Pugh (Menter Iaith, Caerphilly)

Finally ... celebrate!

Here are a few ways to celebrate the success of your oshl partnership project:

- Have an awards ceremony or prize-giving assembly. Invite all the partners in your oshl project and also the families of the young participants.
- Celebrate in small ways: give out stickers for attendance, with a reward for a certain number; award small prizes for achievements along the way.
- Send home congratulatory letters, along with details about the young people’s activities – this can help encourage positive attitudes within the families of participants.
- Celebrate often.



Part 9: How to prepare partners effectively for involvement in oshl

Briefing partners thoroughly is essential in order to guarantee an effective learning experience for the young people.

A simple principle to adhere to when preparing partners to be involved with out-of-school-hours learning is to remember that they need to clearly understand the context of the situation they are entering.

Schools and other provider agencies often seem very clear about what they are doing. However, this can seem bewilderingly complex to outsiders.

Here are a few tips that will make the process easier:

- Make sure you convey clearly to partners what it is that parents, young people, the school and the community want from the oshl activity.
- Set clear objectives and realistic targets with your partners that everyone understands clearly.
- If your partners are involved in producing the oshl resources for you, make sure that these are suitable for the oshl target group. For example, printed material should be written in an appropriate style and set at the right reading level for the age of your young people; it is also important to take into account any safety aspects of equipment that oshl partners may supply.
- Make sure that partners are aware of the inclusion agenda in schools. Many schools may have children with special needs and these should be taken into account. Partners may ask about this and it's important to make sure everyone understands that oshl activities need to be run as sensitively and inclusively as possible.
- Make sure that partners understand that they need to be flexible – schools and other provider agencies are dynamic places and things can change rapidly, which means all partners may need to adapt accordingly.

Top tips

Show how much you value your community's input by rewarding people with a 'thank you' and 'come again' party at the end of the year. This enables your school to show gratitude and reminds the contributors of their role in the overall scheme.

Make sure your volunteers and sponsors enjoy themselves and feel valued so that they come back again!

Personal thank you letters written by the students are always greatly appreciated.



Part 10: Legal, health and safety requirements

If you are not sure what health and safety checks are required – always ask. You cannot afford to get this wrong in any way.

There are obvious benefits to children and young people of being involved in oshl and, as the network of providers of such experiences grows, the longer-term effects of extended learning will become evident. However, it is essential that parents and guardians can be assured that the children and young people accessing oshl schemes are safe and well looked after.

Risk is part of everyday life, and exposure to controlled risks can help children and young people in the decision-making skills required in life. However, these risks must be adequately controlled and those responsible for organising oshl schemes must ensure that the safety of the children and young people is their first consideration.

In order to meet legal, health and safety requirements, the following responsibilities are detailed for organisers, supervisors and volunteers.

Organisers will ensure that:

- the premises being used are suitable and in a good state of repair
- equipment and/or materials are safe and suitable for use by children or young people
- supervisors and volunteers are competent and have been provided with adequate information, instruction and training as required
- adequate arrangements are in place so that planned activities are properly assessed and any risks are adequately controlled
- adequate insurances are in place to cover premises and activities, that is public liability insurance.

Supervisors and volunteers will ensure:

- the safety of the young people under their supervision
- that any faults in terms of premises are promptly reported to the premises manager/organiser
- that any accidents or incidents are reported to the organisers as instructed.

Child protection

The safety and welfare of all children is the priority of support agencies/services and schools within the County Borough of Caerphilly. Together with police, health and voluntary agencies, the Council has established its own Area Child Protection Committee to ensure that this philosophy is developed in the area.

This body has been formed to introduce new procedures for all agencies to follow when child abuse is suspected. It also provides training for teachers and other school staff in this important area of work. All Wales Protection procedures are a set of guidelines and instructions that describe how children should be protected. Teachers and all other employees of the local education authority must obey these instructions.

Child abuse includes physical violence, emotional cruelty, neglect and sexual abuse. It can involve deliberate harm. It can be the result of a parent not protecting or keeping a child safe. It can happen when a child is not given proper care or attention.

By law, any report that a child might be in danger from abuse or neglect must be investigated. Even anonymous reports must be treated seriously. However, most reports come from relatives or neighbours, from families themselves, doctors, health visitors, social workers schools, and so on. Checks must be made to find out whether there is a cause for concern and, if so, what action is needed to protect the child. Headteachers must inform the social services department if concern about the safety of a child is expressed.

Further information can be obtained from your local headteacher or from Mr Dick Ingram, Child Protection Development Officer at the Octagon, Van Court, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 8ED.

Specific health and safety guidelines

Premises	<p>Premises used should be suitable for the activities planned.</p> <p>Welfare arrangements must be considered, as well as access to male/female toilets and refreshments.</p> <p>Consider tripping hazards from flooring, ie poorly fitted/ripped carpets.</p> <p>Ensure cleaners' cupboards and food stores are locked at all times.</p>
Equipment	<p>Ensure that any electrical equipment is in good working order and has been subject to electrical inspection (label on the plug), for example, kettles, toasters and microwave ovens.</p> <p>Portable heaters, where possible, should not be used. If this cannot be avoided, heaters with naked flames should not be used.</p>
Security	<p>Consider the security of the building.</p> <p>Ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for communication, preferably a landline phone, plus a mobile phone for emergencies.</p> <p>Keep a register of all attendees.</p>
Staff	<p>Ensure that all supervisors and volunteers who have access to the children or young people have undergone appropriate criminal records bureau checks.</p>
Activities	<p>Ensure that planned activities are suitable for the group of children/young people involved.</p> <p>Ensure that potential risks have been considered and control measures are in place; record how the risks will be managed.</p>
Fire safety	<p>Ensure that all supervisors/volunteers are aware of the fire procedures for the building, including how to escape and where the assembly point is, should an evacuation be necessary.</p> <p>Test the arrangements by undertaking a fire drill with the children/young people.</p> <p>The register should be used for the purpose of a headcount after leaving the building.</p> <p>Smoking should not be permitted in and around the building.</p>
First aid	<p>Whatever activities are involved, first aid must be considered, not just for accidents but for anyone who falls ill.</p> <p>Ideally, a trained first aider should be on duty. However, an appointed person would be acceptable for lower-risk activities such as homework clubs.</p>

Part 11: Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating oshl partnerships is important because it may often be the key to securing future or further funding for projects, and will, if you do it well, encourage your oshl partners to work with you again.

The following advice about evaluation is adapted from *Partnerships for learning: a guide to evaluating arts education projects* by Felicity Woolf and published by the Arts Council (ISBN 0-7287-079-8). The guide has been written for arts projects, but the process it describes is a straightforward, commonsense one that can be easily adapted to monitoring and evaluating oshl activities.

Among many other groups, the guide is aimed at youth leaders, community workers, local authority officers, teachers and voluntary groups.

Monitoring or keeping records of evidence and progress

Monitoring is the basis of the evaluation process and is undertaken in order to track the progress and success of an oshl partnership itself and of the oshl activities. Simply, it is a process of gathering data and evidence of what is done during the process of forming an oshl partnership, of keeping clear records of what happens during the oshl activities, and explaining why. Monitoring should be done to help track progress during the entire life of your oshl partnership. Keeping clear records of important or milestone communications between partners in an oshl partnership is also part of monitoring and can be vital to refer to – for example, if there is a disagreement.

You will probably need to write some short reports to monitor the progress of the young participants in the oshl activity. But another way of collecting such evidence may be to ask the children/young people to tell you how they feel the activity is benefiting them and what their learning is, and to write down or record what they say on a tape recorder.

Decide how you will gather information and keep records when you are setting up and planning your project. Discuss this among your partners as they may be able to offer you some good suggestions, and they will also let you know what kind of information they would like you to gather.

You may also decide you want to collect the views of your oshl partners about how they view the partnership and the oshl activities.

Evaluation – what is it?

Evaluation is a powerful tool for learning. It is a structured way of thinking about the information you have gathered during the monitoring process, and why. It can be simple or complex, depending on the resources you have available, and on what you want to find out. However, it's always best to keep it as simple as possible, and to be sure it is appropriate to the out-of-school-hours learning activity you are evaluating.

Evaluation can be based on these three key ideas:

- 1 Evaluation involves making judgements about the value and quality of a project, based on evidence and accurate information.
- 2 Evaluation is open and clear and involves all partners, including the people taking part in your oshl project.
- 3 Evaluation can help with decision-making throughout the life of an oshl partnership and in future oshl partnerships.

Evaluation has two main purposes: to improve practice during the oshl partnership and for future projects; and to show what happened as a result of an oshl partnership.

Improving your practice with evaluation is important because it helps:

- oshl activities and programmes to evolve and change as they happen
- partners, such as teachers, youth leaders and the young participants to feel the evaluation is for their benefit, and not just to satisfy funders
- projects to be better the next time they are run, and standards to be raised
- partners to change and develop their practice when necessary.

It is important to show in your evaluation:

- that your oshl activity is a good way of improving young people's confidence, their opportunities to make new friends, and of adding to their learning – you need to find evidence that relates in quite clear ways to show these effects
- how everyone, including your partners, has benefited from being involved in the oshl activity
- how the funding has been used, and that it has been used well.

The *Partnership for learning* guide sets out the evaluation process in five clear stages, with appropriate questions to ask at each stage. These are adapted below for evaluating oshl partnerships.

Stage 1 – Planning

Why do we want to set up this oshl partnership?

What specific things do we want to achieve?

How will we identify success for the young people? for the partners?

Stage 2 – Collecting evidence

How will we collect the evidence we need to evaluate our oshl partnership?

Stage 3 – Assembling and interpreting

What does the evidence tell us?

Stage 4 – Reflecting and moving forward

What have we learnt from the evaluation?

How will we do things differently in future?

Stage 5 – Reporting and sharing

Who will we tell about this oshl partnership and why?

How will we tell them?

What will we tell them?

However, it is important to note that while the guide shows those who are running oshl projects, such as schools and partners, how to evaluate them, it also points out that, in some circumstances, it may be important to appoint an external evaluator. This could be due to various constraints – such as lack of time, or funders may require it. The guide outlines the advantages and disadvantages of appointing an external evaluator.

You can download a free copy of the guide from www.artscouncil.org.uk or you can order one from:

Marston Book Services

Tel: 01235 465500

Email: direct.orders@marston.co.uk

ISBN 0-7287-0791-8



Useful publications and organisations

Publications

Big Lottery Fund (2004) *Building the future of learning: a guide to sustaining out-of-school-hours learning*, London, Big Lottery Fund. (A supplement for Wales is being produced.) Available online from: www.continyou.org.uk/oshl_details.php?DocID=9

ContinYou (2004) *Welsh training and resource pack for out-of-school-hours learning, Wales*. Available online from: www.continyou.org.uk/content.php?CategoryID=245

ContinYou (2005a) *Book-it: how to set up your own reading club and keep it going*. Available online from: www.continyou.org.uk/oshl

ContinYou (2005b) *Breakfast Club Plus: how to set up your own breakfast club and keep it going*. Available online from: www.continyou.org.uk/oshl

ContinYou (2005c) *Sum-it!: how to set up your own maths club and keep it going*. Available online from: www.continyou.org.uk/oshl

ContinYou (2005d) *Taking part: making out-of-school-hours learning happen for children in care*. Available online from: www.continyou.org.uk/oshl

ContinYou (2005e) *Extra Time Special – Study support/oshl: a bridge to your school's community*, London, ContinYou (contact info.london@continyou.org.uk for a copy)

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004) *Every child matters*, London, HMSO. Available online from: www.everychildmatters.co.uk

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National Assembly for Wales (2002a) *Early entitlement: supporting children and families in Wales*. Available online from: www.wales.gov.uk/subichildren/content/partnership/item%20d%20english.pdf

National Assembly for Wales (2002b) *Extending entitlement: supporting 11–25 year olds in Wales*. Available online from: [www.wales.gov.uk/organicabinet/SubCmteeMeetings/children/papers/cyp\(03-04\)27a-annex.pdf](http://www.wales.gov.uk/organicabinet/SubCmteeMeetings/children/papers/cyp(03-04)27a-annex.pdf)

National Assembly for Wales (2003) *Community focused schools*. Available online from: www.learning.wales.gov.uk/pdfs/c3403-community-focused-schools-e.pdf

National Assembly for Wales (2004) *Extending entitlement: creating visions of effective practice for young people in Wales*. Available online from: www.learning.wales.gov.uk/pdfs/extending-entitlement-visions-e.pdf

Welsh Assembly Government/Education Extra Cymru (2003) *Welsh code of practice for out-of-school-hours learning, Wales*. Available online from: www.continyou.org.uk/content.php?CategoryID=245

Organisations

The Arts Council of Wales

The Arts Council of Wales (ACW) is responsible for funding and developing the arts in Wales. ACW is also the distributor of Lottery money for the arts in Wales.

www.artswales.org

Children's University Cymru

The aims of the Children's University are to embrace the principle of learning as a lifelong process, and to extend and enrich learning beyond the normal school hours and curriculum. Out-of-school achievements are rewarded under a structured framework of gold, silver and bronze awards presented at graduation ceremonies.

www.childrensuniversitywales.org

Creative Play Project

Gwent Association of Voluntary organisations works with out-of-school play providers in Caerphilly Borough to promote good play practice, supporting groups and individuals by offering training and workshops, and also by providing materials to enhance the play experiences of the children and young people taking part.

www.gavowales.org.uk

Clybiau Plant Cymru

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs help communities in Wales by promoting, developing and supporting quality, affordable, accessible out-of-school childcare clubs.

www.equipe.org.uk/wales.htm

ContinYou Cymru

ContinYou Cymru offers support, advice, networking opportunities, conferences, publications, and resources in the fields of out-of-school-hours and community learning.

www.continyou.org.uk

Dragon Sport

Dragon Sport encourages children to become involved in a variety of organised sporting activities. A portfolio of seven modified sports is used in the scheme: rugby, athletics, cricket, football, hockey, netball and tennis.

www.dragon-sport.co.uk

Sports Council for Wales

The Sports Council for Wales is the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and recreation.

www.sports-council-wales.co.uk

The Co-operative Group, Community Dividend

Can grant aid to community and voluntary groups (grants up to £5,000) to develop work that benefits local communities where at least one of the co-operative businesses trades.

To find out more call 0161 827 5879.

The National Museums & Galleries of Wales (NMGW)

Visit the NMGW website for its excellent guide: *Working in partnership*, which can be downloaded as an Acrobat pdf. The guide contains examples of good partnership working undertaken by NMGW and, in particular, refers to the project called On Common Ground, which aims to make museums more accessible and appealing to 16 to 24 year olds.

www.nmgw.ac.uk

Opening the doors

Read about the different approaches to partnerships and networks of partnerships undertaken by On Common Ground in four Welsh areas: Denbigh, Pembroke, Swansea and Rhondda.

www.openingthedoors.org/site/projects/on_common_ground.htm