



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Youth Work
Excellence
Awards
2022**

Thursday 1 December 2022
Brangwyn Hall, Swansea

Ministerial foreword



I am delighted to introduce the Youth Work Excellence Awards finalists for 2022.

Collectively, these finalists showcase the incredible creativity, innovation and resilience of the youth work sector in Wales and the often lifechanging opportunities and support they provide to our young people.

Youth work is an integral component of the education family. It is of particular value in our fight to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment and to set high standards for all. This year's finalists for the Youth Work Excellence Awards show how youth work is providing a myriad of opportunities

for young people to have fun, develop their confidence and abilities, and to make new connections. These opportunities offer new experiences, helping to keep young people engaged with education in its widest sense.

Underpinning this commitment to raising attainment is a focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of our learners. Some of the projects included in this year's finalists demonstrate that youth work often leads the way here too, with a huge range of services developed to nurture young people, provide safe spaces and a trusted adult when they need it.

These finalists highlight both the strength of the sector and the incredible diversity of provision offered by both the voluntary and statutory sectors. I am particularly proud of how effectively youth work organisations succeed in building partnerships with other services to support young people.

This is an exciting time for youth work in Wales as we respond to the recommendations of the Interim Youth Work Board and move at pace to build a sustainable model for youth work in Wales. The establishment of the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board is a key milestone. I look forward to working with them and the Young Persons Committee to build a youth work service that meet the needs of all our young people. But we cannot do this without you, our partners. I urge you all to get involved to help shape our future provision by sharing your expertise and experiences.

Congratulations to all the finalists and thank you all for your continued hard work and determination which makes a real difference to the lives of young people in Wales.

Diolch.

Jeremy Miles, MS

Minister for Education and Welsh Language

FINALISTS

Digital Innovation



Mindscape, Tanyard Youth Project

Mindscape was conceived, planned and executed by young people at Tanyard Youth Project. Its aim was to create a set of digital resources that support mental health and wellbeing.

Having settled on a decision to make five films based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing, the group involved a wide range of individuals and organisations across Pembrokeshire to participate in their film making. They became adept at selling the concept of the project to potential participants and shared the huge workload of filming and post-production editing. In all, over forty individuals and six organisations participated in the filming.

The judges considered Mindscape a great opportunity for young people to learn about digital technology and gain important transferable skills. Young people gained skills in film production, capture and use of drone footage, post-production film-editing, sound editing, photography, and online content creation. In doing so, the young people succeeded in producing professional, uplifting films. These have been shared online hundreds of times and commended by a number of the organisations involved in the filming who stated that they are already providing a valuable contribution to supporting young people's mental health.



'Nowhere to Go', Conwy Youth Service

'Nowhere to Go' is a clever animation and song about youth homelessness. It was developed and created by young people as part of the Oak Tree Project, a Conwy Youth Service youth homelessness project.

The Oak Tree Project brought together a group of young people for a series of online workshops. These were initially intended to encourage young people to create a theatrical production to educate others about youth homelessness. During the workshops, however, the young people felt confident enough to change this brief and take the lead on the project - choosing instead to write a song and create an accompanying animation.

The participants learned to operate new technology, cameras and recording equipment. They recorded the vocals and created a thought-provoking animation using cardboard boxes and other waste materials that they associated with homelessness. Encouraging young people to lead with their own ideas ensured that the final product contained relevant material and was targeted towards their peers. This resource is utilised in both informal and formal education settings and is warmly received. The judges considered the project a great opportunity for young people to gain transferrable digital skills, whilst being able to educate themselves and share their learning.

Equality and diversity in a youth work setting



Sarah McCreadie, Cardiff Youth Service

Sarah is a talented, digitally-savvy youth support officer at Cardiff Youth Service. She is a key member of the digital team that took new opportunities that arose following the pandemic to completely transform the youth service's digital approach.

Sarah worked with a group of young people and youth workers that was set up to co-design and implement an entirely new digital presence. Judges considered her approach to be an excellent example of a youth-led and inclusive methodology.

Following a consultation with over 100 young people, Discord was identified as the preferred digital platform. The Cardiff Youth Service Discord platform launched this year and now offers so much to young people, many of whom were previously socially anxious or isolated. The service offers a safe space for young people to meet with others, access youth work support and engage in youth work activities. Activities have taken place online and offline which include 1-1 support, wellbeing sessions, watch parties, gaming sessions, bowling and a residential to London to visit Microsoft.

For Cardiff Youth Service, Discord has succeeded in bringing youth work to a wider range of young people – in their space.



Mixtup

Mixtup is a youth club in Swansea for young people aged 11-25 with mixed abilities. The organisation provides an extensive and varied range of accessible youth club sessions, trips and visits, and other activities. This allows members who often face significant physical and emotional challenges, to have fun and try a wide range of new activities in a safe environment where they can build confidence and self-esteem, while reducing social isolation.

Mixtup has enabled an incredible number of positive experiences for its members this year, despite the challenges post-pandemic and the numerous additional barriers that many of its members face on a daily basis. Members represented Mixtup as Community Ambassadors for the Children's Commissioner for Wales and Mixtup even made its own film 'The Mixtup Museum'.

It was clear to the judging panel that young people who attend Mixtup consider it to be their safe place, their family away from home and many young people rely on the group for social interaction. Judges described it as offering fabulous opportunities that have a huge impact on its young people and their families.



STAND NW Youth Zone

STAND North Wales Youth Zone is an online youth club for young people aged 12 to 18 who have a range of learning or social challenges such as autism, ADHD, severe anxiety, selective mutism and hearing loss. Each of these can impact on the young person's ability to communicate with others and develop meaningful relationships.

The group is supported to plan each session with time to chat and have fun through games, quizzes and activities such as listening to music and singing along. There is also a mindfulness session to help the young people relax. The Youth Zone is structured to ensure that young people can both chat verbally and also use the 'chat room' function if they are struggling to talk after a challenging day. It offers a safe and supportive space to share joys and troubles and receive peer and youth worker support.

The Youth Zone buzzes weekly with verbal chat and typed chat room conversations and all young people now keep their cameras turned on which is very rewarding due to the social anxieties initially expressed by parents and professionals of the young people. Judges acknowledged that increasing participation and encouraging empowerment are huge achievements for this group, which shows great potential for the future.



Stuart Parkinson, Deaf Hub Wales

Stuart has been a youth worker for over 20 years. He is the lead youth worker based at Deaf Hub Wales, which has been the 'safe space' for deaf people in Cardiff and the surrounding area for over four decades. Stuart has ensured that the ethos of Cardiff Deaf Cool Youth Club is to ensure accessibility for all, and in particular for those who may have experience of isolation, marginalisation, exploitation or discrimination or those just taking the time to find their deaf identity.

Stuart assists in the emotional and psychological development of deaf young people by providing them with opportunities to meet strong deaf role models and to enjoy experiences that improve the quality of their lives. He works collaboratively with his team to create inclusive activities, information and resources – making things more accessible to deaf young people who use British Sign Language. Stuart ensures that quality youth work and support is offered to all. He often reflects on his own experiences as a young deaf person and shares how youth organisations like Friends of Young Deaf (FYD) made an impact on his life. He also works with volunteers involved in community projects and groups including Cardiff Deaf Creative Hands, Sunday Sign School, Deaf Arts Festival, Deaf Heritage Project, Deaf Energy Project, Deaf Pride & Pride Cymru, Sherman Theatre & Taking Flight Theatre.

The judging panel highlighted Stuart's breadth of experience, demonstrable impact and his long-term commitment, stating that his commitment to improving the lives of deaf young people is second to none.

Leadership



David Williams, Torfaen Youth Service

David is Service Manager for Torfaen Youth Service, a role that includes responsibility for local community youth clubs, youth work 'out on the streets' through its detached team, youth work within local schools, and a range of exciting and innovative youth work projects and programmes.

In addition to this busy role, David actively works to raise the profile of youth work through participation in a range of cross governmental groups and through his recent chairship of the Principal Youth Work Officers Group. He also continues to serve as a volunteer leader within a local youth club, maintaining that link with a grassroots organisation.

David was instrumental in the creation of Torfaen Youth Service's Apprenticeship Programme. He also introduced an educational psychologist to work within Torfaen Youth Service to support youth workers by helping develop effective strategies and learning materials to assist in their work with young people.

The judging panel highlighted that David's leadership is inclusive, collaborative and delivered with warmth. As well as being a highly capable manager, he has the ability to inspire his team with what colleagues describe as "contagious enthusiasm" and a willingness to "move heaven and earth to support young people". An excellent role model all round, he gives credit and shares knowledge readily, encouraging his team to develop and progress.

Outstanding Youth Worker



Andrew Owen, Ieuenctid Gwynedd Youth

Andrew is a qualified, full-time Youth Support Worker for Gwynedd Youth Service. He was nominated by a group of young people who believe him to have had a hugely positive impact on their lives. They explained how he helps their confidence, respects their opinions and makes them feel 'safe, happy and wanted' as well as being someone they 'also have a lot of laughs and happiness with'.

Andrew's role includes working in two secondary schools and a variety of communities within the Dwyfor area. He plans, coordinates and delivers an extensive and diverse programme of youth work services – with a phenomenal impact locally. He works on various educational programmes, including a 2-year podcasting project, co-designed with young people, that enables them to gain a recognised qualification.

Andrew has the ability to connect well with people from all walks of life, enabling him to easily bridge different communities, while developing innovative ideas and safe practice. He has worked with young people to obtain funding from the police to tackle anti-social activities; he's developed a partnership with the local football club, and he has enabled young people to explore their community through an arts project using theatre and drama.

The judging panel highlighted Andrew's demonstrable impact and commitment, as well as his enthusiasm for teaching and learning, and positive 'can do' attitude.



Carly Powell, Caerphilly Youth Service

Carly is a qualified youth worker who is dedicated to supporting young people and creating positive opportunities. She is enthusiastic, radiates positivity and is a wonderful role model for those around her.

Carly's role is focused on improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of those she supports. Many of the young people Carly works with are vulnerable. Carly excels at building positive relationships with them and has a reputation for being able to engage well, often succeeding when others may struggle to build a rapport. The judging panel acknowledged the massive impact that she has had on the young people she works with, often through experiences provided in outdoor settings and residential trips.

Carly offers a huge range of activities. She has developed and leads workshops that focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing, including sessions on self-esteem, confidence building and relationships. Carly offers training and support to colleagues and fosters strong links between professional services and departments.

Evidently someone who goes above and beyond her youth work duties, Carly is described by one of the parents of the young people in her sessions as being "an inspiration [...] truly born to work with and nurture young people".



Lin Brackenbury, Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Wales

Lin is an experienced, qualified youth worker and is the senior member of staff at the New Dragons Speech and Language Youth Club, based in Flintshire.

The club caters for young people facing significant speech, language and communication difficulties, including young people with autism, ADHD, Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy. It is a lifeline for many of its members, since it is often the only opportunity that they have to socially interact with friends outside of school. Joining weekly sessions has been a significant step for those who attend, and has empowered them to build confidence and interact with other young people.

The judging panel felt that Lin consistently demonstrates outstanding quality of practice, is an inspirational team leader and has a great rapport with the young people she supports.

Lin ensures young people feel safe, included and can develop their social skills and make friends in an environment where they are no longer marginalized by their disability. In the words of a parent, "Lin is an amazing person who has transformed my child's life through her role at the New Dragons Speech and Language Youth Club."

★ Outstanding volunteer in a youth work setting



David Stallard, Mixtup

David has been an incredibly committed volunteer with Mixtup since it began in 2011. Since its creation he has helped steer it from it being a project, to an independent provision, to an established charity. As well as working full time David regularly gives up his time on weekends and evenings to volunteer. He works tirelessly to help provide an established youth provision which encompasses all young people no matter their personal challenges in life. He regularly volunteers in sessions, is a dedicated trustee, an invaluable supervisor and is also the organisation's Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer.

David is kind, caring, supportive and compassionate. He is quick to notice young people who are finding it harder to participate in activities and checks in with them to make sure they can do what they want to do. The judging panel highlighted the huge impact he has on the young people at Mixtup, and was also impressed by his long-term dedication and evident ability to inspire those around him.

In the words of Jo Stephens, Project Manager at Mixtup, "the hours of volunteering that David has put into Mixtup are beyond count. The positive effect his involvement has had over the years is beyond measure. And he does it all for a few biscuits. Every organisation needs a Dave – but you're not having ours!".



Kieran Saunders, CCYP

Kieran has been volunteering with Cwmbran Centre for Young People (CCYP) since he was 8 years old and has become an integral part of the team – a valued team member who is "full of joy and very energetic". His role includes planning and developing a broad range of activities with the young people, helping to deliver them in a fun and engaging way.

He has forged and bolstered relationships with individuals and other organisations in the local community, including the police and Cwmbran Shopping Centre, who he has worked with to support evening drop-in centres. He communicates with other staff, advocates for the young people daily and is passionate about ensuring young people have their say. Kieran works hard to organise activities and workshops that tackle the issues that are most relevant to young people. He is always extremely aware of the barriers and issues they may face.

The judging panel felt that Kieran is a volunteer who young people are able to build a strong rapport with. Judges commended him for his dedication and commitment highlighting that he is a great role model for young people and a fantastic asset to CCYP.



Lela Patterson, Swansea MAD

Lela has made an outstanding contribution to youth work through volunteering with a wide range of organisations and projects including, Raise Your Voice, NYAS and the State of Mind project.

As part of BGC Wales and Swansea MAD's Raise Your Voice project, Lela has highlighted the barriers that young people who are blind or partially sighted face when trying to participate in the democratic process and she continues to advocate for improved accessibility and inclusion. Lela was also a founding peer mentor on Platform's State of Mind programme (supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing), providing consultation on accessibility and has supported NYAS in developing inclusion strategies.

Currently, Lela is a member of the Camerados group in Barry Island where she meets every week with a group of young people to create community connection and to minimise isolation and loneliness. The project has grown from 4 founders to 25 people and Lela has been pivotal in shaping how people feel welcomed.

The judging panel commended Lela for her knowledge, passion and commitment to raising awareness of disability rights. She is an incredible change maker who creates a safe, non-judgemental space in which people can learn, leading to positive changes in attitudes, language and practice.



Mahieddine Dib, EYST

Mahieddine volunteers at an EYST youth group in Wrexham. He is a key member of the team with a positive approach that is warm, friendly and welcoming to all. His role includes ensuring young people all register each week and he greets every young person individually, taking the time to 'check in'.

A fluent Arabic speaker, his experience has been invaluable in welcoming new Arabic speaking young people and their families to the area. Mahieddine informally educates young people on the small things that can make a huge difference - sharing support options that have benefitted him, sharing opportunities that young people are interested in, signposting, and generally being a friendly face and ally. He uses culturally sensitive and inclusive approaches to educate and empower the young people he supports.

Mahieddine is hugely committed and adapts exceptionally well to the needs of the group. He is involved across the range of EYST projects. Following a successful application for a £1k AVOW Youth-Led Grant, he recently planned and delivered a project to provide a free meal at a restaurant for vulnerable ethnic minority families new to Wrexham, who were delighted to make new connections and friendships.

Judges were impressed with the positive impact that Mahieddine is having on the young people he works with, also commending his dedication to learning and sharing his experiences for the benefit of others.

Welsh language youth work



#FelMerch, Urdd Gobaith Cymru

#FelMerch is an Urdd project that aims to inspire, support, and empower young women and girls to keep active and break down the barriers that prevent young women and girls from participating in sport.

Youth work methodology underpinned the development of #FelMerch through a network of young female ambassadors across Wales. This approach ensured #FelMerch ambassadors have the voice, the platform and the knowledge to make a difference in sports for girls.

The idea for Wales' first female youth sports conference came from the Urdd's #FelMerch ambassadors who wanted to take further action. The two-day national conference featured high-profile speakers and provided an opportunity for girls and women to connect, share stories and to be inspired and empowered. The conference, held in Welsh, placed a particular focus on encouraging and supporting those less confident in using their Welsh to contribute and to hear Welsh as a living language. 140 young women attended the event.

The judging panel commended the project, highlighting it is an excellent example of using Welsh in an inclusive and impactful way, as well as offering a fantastic experience and learning opportunity for the ambassadors who led the development of the event as well as those who attended.



GISDA

GISDA is a charity that demonstrates excellent youth work practice through the medium of Welsh. It provides support with housing needs; independent living skills; education, employment and wellbeing and mental health support.

At the heart of GISDA's services is the belief that there is exceptional value in being able to provide services in a young person's preferred language. Support and training is offered to staff who need help with becoming more confident or to improve their Welsh language skills to ensure that they are in a position to provide the appropriate support for vulnerable young people in their mother tongue.

The judging panel recognised that the service GISDA provides is special and is making a massive difference to young people. They highlighted comments from young people who said that had it not been for GISDA they would likely be "be on a friends sofa", "going from house to house", or "probably dead". There is no doubt that being able to communicate in a young person's mother tongue when discussing sensitive issues hugely improves the quality of service provided.

★ Youth work champion(s)



★ Heulwen O'Callaghan, Junior Leadership Project

Heulwen is a qualified youth worker with a county-wide remit at Carmarthenshire Youth Support Service. She is passionate about providing inclusive opportunities and ensuring equal opportunity of access for Welsh speaking young people in the area.

In her role as Participation Worker, Heulwen has developed, written and produced a Prosiect Arweinyddiaeth Iau which enables young people to learn skills through volunteering, develop an understanding of youth work and gain a recognised qualification (Agored Cymru). Heulwen focused on the development of opportunities through the medium of Welsh, working with partner organisations in the voluntary sector to enable Welsh-speaking young people to undertake opportunities previously unavailable to them in Welsh.

The Prosiect Arweinyddiaeth Iau has created opportunities for young people to be able to engage with their peers in a safe space, in the language of their choice with trusted adults. Partnerships developed within the local community and with voluntary sector actively promote the Welsh language through supported youth work interventions. In addition to the excellent practice demonstrated and the positive impact on young people locally, the judging panel recognised the huge potential that the project offers in terms of future opportunities for the expansion of Welsh-medium youth work provision.



★ Hannah Lewis, The Hwb, Torfaen

Hannah is qualified youth worker, based in The Hwb in Blaenavon where she has a massive impact on all the staff, young people and partner agencies that she engages with.

Hannah's principal role combines coordinating the delivery of services to young people in Blaenavon through partnership and also directly delivering services to young people. The Hwb is a pioneering partnership made up of the local authority youth service and the third sector organisation, Hwb Torfaen – it is a lifeline for the young people of Blaenavon. It offers excellent youth work opportunities to young people in one of the most deprived communities in Torfaen, drawing on the best resources the statutory and third sector has to offer. Hannah also supports young people with Type 1 Diabetes through a partnership project with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, where she provides a link between the young person and the health service, improving communications and strengthening relationships.

The judging panel highlighted how successfully Hannah has championed youth work with partners locally. As an individual she is dynamic, enthusiastic and committed. Hannah is an excellent example of how by working collaboratively and using youth work approaches as a foundation for engaging with young people it is possible to make a real and sustainable difference in young people's lives.



Karen and Jake Henry, Vibe Youth CIC

Vibe Youth, based in Swansea, is an organisation that prides itself on offering a range of services that help young people to cope with life events and overcome challenges, whatever their circumstances. Karen and Jake Henry, the founders of Vibe Youth, design and adapt its services in response to the needs of the young people and communities it serves. They draw on their own personal journeys and lived experience to show how a life can be transformed through developing an understanding of oneself, making a commitment to value oneself and being empowered to make informed choices.

Vibe Youth offers a range of universal and specialist services for young people, including an innovative 'Street Safe' project in schools, that tackles drug issues and serious violence. Passionate about improving understanding of some of the biggest challenges young people face, Karen and Jake also offer workshops for professionals and practitioners that focus on the factors and circumstances surrounding gang and criminal involvement – challenging others to step up, make a difference and help change and improve the lives of young people.

Judges acknowledged the hugely positive feedback provided about the relevance of Vibe Youth sessions; the massive impact they have on both participants and professionals; and overall, the extraordinary work that Karen and Jake are doing to encourage people to embark on positive lifestyles regardless of background.



Nick Corrigan, Media Academy Cymru

For over 30 years Nick has led services for children and young people. He has spent more than 20 years focussing on services in Wales and established Media Academy Cymru (MAC) 13 years ago.

Passionate about the value of the youth work approach, Nick has often challenged statutory partners to consider the power of a youth work methodology in different contexts. The best example of this was when creating voluntary engagement diversion programmes, which have diverted some 17,000 children and young people away from the criminal justice system. Nick and his team oversaw this work which has been adopted across all areas of Wales.

Leading the way on youth violence-related work, Nick has strong working relationships with police forces, offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners, the Home Office, and Ministry of Justice. He champions youth work in other roles too, including being Chair of Community Music Wales; Chair of Green Willow; and a member of the Youth Endowment Fund expert panel. Nick is also an invited lecturer at three universities in Wales.

Nick's impact on individuals is also exceptional. As one young person highlights, "he listened. I was heard, I was valued, I felt he wanted me to succeed". The judging panel commended Nick's dedication and ability to connect with young people, highlighting his breadth of experience and commitment to promoting youth work far beyond the sector.



Demonstrating excellence in partnership planning and delivery at a regional/national level



Inspire, Youth Work in Hospital

Inspire is based at Wrexham Maelor Hospital. It began as a partnership between Wrexham County Borough Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and has since expanded provision into Flintshire.

Inspire provides support to young people who present at the hospital with self-harming behaviours, with the overall aim of reducing readmission rates. The project involves a multi-disciplinary team of youth workers and assistant psychologists working holistically to support each young person.

While supporting a young person one-to-one, the Inspire youth worker liaises with other professionals that the young person is involved with. This encourages seamless communication and transition between services, ensuring that a young person's needs and wishes are met. It includes working collaboratively with social workers, schools and colleges, counsellors, CAMHS, specialist services and others. The youth workers advocate for young people and are flexible in their approach to suit each individual, their situation and difficulties and the goals they would like to achieve.

The judging panel highlighted how the hugely successful Inspire approach is enabling the value of youth work in health settings to be more widely recognised. The project continues to grow, with other medical teams now choosing to invest in the support and expertise of an Inspire youth worker.

Ruth Letten, CONNECT, Adoption UK

Ruth Letten is the Manager for CONNECT, a national framework for children and young people who are adopted. CONNECT was developed through a collaboration between Adoption UK Cymru and the five regional adoption services which make up the National Adoption Service. It ensures that across Wales there is support for adopted children and young people.

Ruth works in partnership with the five regional adoption services covering the whole of Wales. Leading the development of CONNECT, Ruth and her team have successfully introduced youth work principles into social care teams that provide adoption services.

The judging panel acknowledged the significant challenge that Ruth overcame working with each region to help them understand what the youth work model looks like and why it is the best approach for working with adopted young people in a truly participative way. Ruth's team now delivers monthly 'Connected' sessions for adopted young people, who are some of the most vulnerable in Wales.

The approach Ruth promoted is now widely accepted and CONNECT is being developed for implementation across the National Adoption Service, which is a remarkable achievement.



Demonstrating excellence in partnership planning and delivery at a local level



Wellbeing Festival, Ieuentid Gwynedd Youth



The Wellbeing Festival focused on promoting good mental health and wellbeing, while providing young people with easy access to information and support from a range of services.

The initial intention was that youth work practitioners and a group of 15 young people would co-design a two-hour conference. However, inspired by a wish to bring positive change to their communities, the young people led this plan to be developed further and it became a week-long festival that extended across the county of Gwynedd. Practitioners worked tirelessly to support the group of young people throughout and facilitated collaboration with 31 organisations from both the voluntary and statutory sectors to deliver the festival.

The festival was a phenomenal achievement – fun, informative, bilingual and inclusive. Across Gwynedd, 49 varied sessions were delivered during the week and over 700 wellbeing boxes were distributed. This had a hugely positive impact on the lives of young people.

Judges highlighted how the festival has helped develop and strengthen connections for the future. New relationships between those supporting delivery of the festival span organisational boundaries, highlighting how agencies and services can better experiences for young people when they work in partnership.

Mick Holt, Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision



Mick Holt is the Lead Officer for the Integrated Youth Service in Flintshire County Council. He also runs a purpose-designed Eco-centre for young people. This centre is a haven for young people at risk of exclusion, children attending Pupil Referral Units and children with disabilities.

Through collaboration with Flying Start, which supports families with children under four in disadvantaged areas of Wales, Mick identified a gap in provision for families with older children. He developed, and subsequently delivered, a proposal to use Summer of Fun funding in 2021 to enable him to open up the Eco-centre for families with children across all age ranges. Sessions focussed on whole family participation activities encouraging the development of social and emotional skills for children, young people and parents, including young people as parents.

As a result of Mick's innovative approach, his team now receives funding through the Child Development Fund to deliver weekly sessions in collaboration with Flying Start for parents at the Eco-Centre which sustains and complements the work with young people. The team also welcomes families registered with statutory services in recognition of the impact this work can have with children at risk.

The judging panel was impressed by how Mick's determination addressed a specific gap in provision and noted the opportunities for the project to continue to progress.



Yarn Trail, Blaenau Gwent Youth Service

The 'Yarn Trail' project was devised in response to the isolation young people felt in the wake of the pandemic and their desire to forge links with their community. The intention was to bring young people together to express themselves through the arts, while extending friendship groups and developing social skills.

A highly effective collaborative partnership between Blaenau Gwent Youth Service and Tai Calon Housing was set up to take the project forward. The partnership supported delivery of free yarn-making kits and coordinated wellbeing groups that encouraged young people to join other members of the community to design and make colourful items.

Judges commended the inclusive approach, which resulted in 40 different groups and over 400 people taking part in creative sessions. The project culminated in a display at Bedwellty House in Tredegar that was visited by hundreds of members of the community. Ongoing wellbeing sessions ensure the project continues to have huge impact in the community. The project inspired creativity and offered many opportunities to build important intergenerational relationships.



Thank you

Our judges

Thank you to all members of our judging panels for willingly giving the time required to judge the large quantity of nominations received this year.

These awards are more meaningful because of the insight and experience you bring to the judging process.

Entertainment

Thank you to the exceptionally talented young musicians and artists providing entertainment for this awards ceremony.

Live music provided by:

David Ingham and Elin Rolles
Laila Woodward

Art displays provided by:

Swansea Music Art Digital
Makenzy Beard

Don't forget to tweet about your evening and the awards using [#YWEA22](#) [#GRhGI22](#)