

Spring 2024



NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2024!

Although the weather is gloomy, we still continue to have successes at CYCA. We continue with our vital services to families through funding from the Llanelli GP cluster and Waterloo Foundation. Over 200 children have been supported in the last 4 months. This support has been enhanced through utilising three new trainee counsellors on placement, as they study for their degrees in Counselling.

National Lottery Community Fund, Heart of the Community also continues to attract new beneficiaries as they learn new skills in activities such as cooking, exercise and Resilience. In addition, these learners have progressed further as our partnerships with Open University and Agored Cymru continue to strengthen. We have enrolled new learners to expand their learning and bring them closer to employment or further training.

Four CYCA staff received new qualifications at the end of 2024 to enhance our therapeutic work as we constantly seek to identify the most appropriate support to children and young people. We pride ourselves that each child is unique and has differing needs and it is crucial that CYCA staff continue to attend professional development to support them when distressed.

And finally, many thanks to local businesses as they provide donations at festive times such as Christmas and Easter when families continue to struggle with cost of living. Your support is invaluable.

Tracy Pike MBE
CEO

CYCA has a long-standing partnership with Agored Cymru. We are approaching our 9th year with Agored. We have been in talks around an exciting opportunity, more about this exciting venture will be revealed over the next few months. Keep an eye out on our social media.



HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Since January 2024, the Heart of the Community project has continued a phased timetable of courses which include accredited and non-accredited, such as our Resilience and Child Development courses. We have also run cooking sessions with our HOC volunteers and worked closely with our CYCA nurseries to run both term-time and half-term nursery sessions such as Conversational Play and family days.



We have worked hard to try and extend our reach and run coffee mornings at local schools to promote our services to parents and carers. During February half-term, we ran a mix of sessions aimed at supporting local families whilst alleviating the cost of transport and childcare issues that families face.

The activities included a trip to the Wetlands with transport provided via Dolen Teifi minibus hire and a very popular animal encounters session.

We continue to receive fantastic feedback from our beneficiaries that value our services.



"I can't put into words what CYCA have done for me since I joined last summer. I have improved my own mental health and my children and even my husband have joined me on activities. The childcare and transport aspect are so vital to some of us and the staff are so accommodating to our needs. They have supported my son for his ALN diagnosis also, and I can honestly say all our lives have improved since coming here."

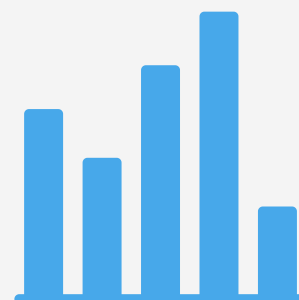
SOCIAL PRESCRIBING



Social Prescribing remains a valuable and successful core project of CYCA. This year we have seen an increase in our referrals from Llanelli GPs. From the period of December 2022- March 2023 the total number of referrals was 21. From December 2023 to March 2024 we had an increase of 32 referrals.

53 children and young people overall who were referred into the SP project, presented with anxiety and stress. We successfully work systemically with the child and family to try to prevent medicalisation and pathologizing of children. To cope with demand CYCA have extended their team by providing placements to an additional three trainee Counsellors who are in their final year of training. All the staff who work with the SP project receive monthly internal supervision. This project remains successful and unique, we never give up on a family!

Our referrals in the last four months have been between the ages 4-18. The average age of referral was 14 years old, with 8 referrals.



We see a lot of varying issues that present at point of contact, such as, domestic violence, sexual abuse, sleep issues, problems in school, low mood, bereavement, bullying, suicidal ideation, anger, behavioural issues and ADHD.

In the last 4 months 16 young people have been referred to us with anxiety.

CASE STUDIES



By Emma Harding

Child A was referred through our Social Prescribing project. They were referred due to experiencing anxiety, excessive worrying and low confidence. They found it difficult to engage with others and socialise in school.

During the first few sessions, Child A struggled to engage in eye-contact and engage in conversation. However, I worked on building a rapport with Child A and playing games to help them improve their confidence and to help them understand more about their worries. We created an emotion box to help with their anxiety and worries, we also looked at coping strategies to use such as grounding, using bubbles and breathing techniques.

Additionally, we looked at things that are in our control and things that are out of our control and how they can limit their worries around school and socialising by creating a worry jar.

After engaging in 17 therapeutic play sessions, child A's confidence significantly improved. They are now engaging with their peers more and engaging in more activities in school. They are engaging in a lot more eye contact with peers and engaging in conversations with peers and other people in the community. Overall, their worries decreased, and their well-being score significantly improved from 21 to 31.

X was referred to us through our social prescribing project for support with anxiety, low self-esteem and declining school attendance. Through mentoring sessions X was provided with a safe space to talk freely and to make sense of their emotions, which supported them to build their personal confidence.

X is passionate about caring for animals and is looking at possible careers in this field when they leave school. To make sessions relevant to X animal therapy was introduced by going for walks to feed animals at a local farm. Being around animals has a calming effect on X who finds it easier to speak about their worries and open up about how they are feeling. X has started to use this as an activity to clear their mind and gather their thoughts outside of sessions.



By Luke Brown

Since starting mentoring sessions, X has greatly improved their attendance in school which has had a positive impact on both their schoolwork and friendships as a result.

X's relationships with their family have also improved as they've learned to recognise how their actions can affect others close to them, and X's maturity has developed from this realisation. X has been accepted on a course to study animal care in college to follow their passion of working and caring for animals. To do this X had to step out of their comfort zone and attend an interview, which was something X stated that they wouldn't have been comfortable in doing previously. X is currently seeking a part time job as they are motivated to gain independence and earn money for themselves whilst in college.

WATERLOO SCHOOLWORK



The Waterloo school project continues to be successful we are supporting more families across the five schools Ysgol Gymraeg Ffwrnes, Bynea primary school, Stebonheath primary school, Penrhos primary school and Bigyn primary school. On the 12th of March we held our quarterly school supervision with our school link officers. The supervision is essential and forms part of the partnership.

The link officers are able to give us insight into the impact our partnership is having on the families we are supporting, for example, improved attendance at school, children are reported as being happier in school. As part of the supervision we offer training, the training this quarter we explored the emotions we face on a daily basis, how we are all 'quirky' and we as a group we identified what we liked and didn't like. For example, sitting in a certain chair, how we don't like certain clothes and materials, how we may struggle to concentrate on conversations, thinking about our upstairs and downstairs brain (rational and amygdala).

It offers the school link officers tools and strategies to be able to help and support them to support families.

As we approach the end of the first year, we have compiled end of year reports for the schools and this included some quantitative data around the HACT model, this depicts how much we are saving society as a result of the partnership.

We are looking forward to heading into year 2.

If you would like further information about the partnership, please email lianna@cycaonline.org



THRIVE



Thrive is an exciting project which is intended to help facilitate individuals back into the workplace with lots of support and on-going training available. It is a volunteer-based placement in a relevant setting leading into potential paid employment.

Since September 2023 we have had engagement figures in excess of 36 beneficiaries interested and taking an active part in the Thrive project through various avenues including confidence building pre-employability training, Customer Service and placement opportunities with an end goal of assisting those to progress into paid employment.

The measure of success on the Thrive journey is ongoing, and we have been fortunate to secure Levelling up funding until 31st December 2024.

One of our success stories includes a beneficiary who initially came on board through the Open University program we run here at our Dragon Offices. J completed her Thrive courses, fast tracking her way through the placement opportunity offered as her interest was to become a trainer herself. As a result, J was offered employment and currently delivers some courses for CYCA.

Thrive volunteer working at the Goods Shed

"I'm so glad I found it. It's exactly what I've been looking to do, it looks amazing. Can't wait to show the kids the train one day."



NURSERIES



In January we had four children start with us, one needing intervention support (1-1 staff). We have just completed their baseline development trackers and it shows three out of four are delayed in their speech, language, and communication development. This term we will be working on developing core vocab.



During February we held a family day which allowed parents and siblings to join in activities. Our theme for this was pancake/valentines ingredients were provided, and families got to make pancakes from scratch with their child. This term four children will leave us for big school, school visits and meetings are being held to ensure all children have a supported transition We have had our Easter allocation and will be welcoming five new children and we have started visit to meet and welcome them into our setting.



Developing our environment inside and out, creating a warm, comfortable nursery room. After being successful with small grant funding, we purchased new equipment including a sandpit shed and new mud kitchen.

Flying start provided us with Fa la la training, to support Welsh language development through music.



Our family day session was the most successful we have ever had with 25 children and 14 adults in attendance, celebrating Valentines day and pancake day with a variety of activities including making their own pancakes.

St Davids Day is always the highlight of the year, with staff and children dressing up and being proud of being WELSH.

CONGRATULATIONS

Four members of staff have completed qualifications. Our trustee Yvonne Rodgers presented them with mock certificates in lieu of their official ones at the trustee meeting in December 2023.



LIANNA DAVIES

Level 4 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)



KIRSTY HENRY

Level 3 Social Media & Marketing



EMMA HARDING

Level 3 Speech & Language & "Become a tutor" ELKLAN Course



LUKE BROWN

Level 5 Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools (Practitioner Status)

FEATURED VOLUNTEERS



KEVIN O'BRIEN

We are so incredibly proud of Kevin he has gone from strength to strength. From starting with us volunteering in the CYCA Hwb to completing two online courses with the Open University. Kevin continues to better his knowledge and skills through CYCA with our courses and has already completed our Improving Own Confidence course.

JESSICA ROBERTS

Jess is an absolute credit. She started in our THRIVE project and completed her first course which was Improving Own Confidence and is ready for her next which is Resilience. There is no stopping her. She has volunteered her time to the CYCA Hwb and Goodshed, and absolutely THRIVES in all posts.



QUOTES

school cyca

cookery course
family project
course for parents
appropriate training
resilience parent service

“I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your participation in our Child Care Seminar yesterday. Your dedication and contribution were invaluable, and it played a significant role in making the event a success.

I'm thrilled to share that your efforts did not go unnoticed - Several students have provided positive feedback, highlighting the impact of your involvement. Your enthusiasm and expertise greatly enriched the experience for all involved.

Thank you once again for your participation. It's through collaborative efforts like yours that we're able to achieve our goals and create meaningful experiences for our learners. Looking forward to future collaborations. Diolch.”

~ Ffiôn Kennett Employability & Entrepreneurship Co-ordinator Coleg Sir Gar

“The service provided has been exceptional. We have referred many families to CYCA through the schoolwork project and many families have benefited massively. It has supported us as a school, the pupils and the parents greatly. It has helped us understand some deeper issues that the family are maybe facing or have in the past, so that we are able to support them moving forward.”

Ysgol Gymraeg Ffwrnes

“Both myself and the school’s two Link Staff (ELSA’s) received appropriate training at the beginning of the project to be able to engage with the families with confidence. CYCA have supported my two ELSA’s throughout the year and are always available for support and advice when needed. There has been a supervision session each term with CYCA and this has proved to be valuable to share progress, information and experiences. CYCA ran a six-week Resilience Course for Parents during the year. This was very popular and well attended. CYCA Officers also supported individual children from families engaged in the project. CYCA organised a Cookery Course for the parents. Additionally, family members were engaged in Counselling sessions at the CYCA Offices.

The service we have received this year has been excellent. It has been wide-ranging, engaging and very beneficial to the school, to the families and to the children.”

Stebonheath School

Many thanks to Angelo Dragone of Stallion Boxing for raising nearly £300 for CYCA on with a white collar boxing event.

We would like to thank everyone who attended for their kind donations, every penny donated goes back to local families.



Thank you to Dolen Teifi for our partnership to provide transportation to those who need it.

The Community Transport Association has kindly donated two e-bikes to CYCA to help with transport.



thewaterloofoundation*



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

