



Nadroedd 'N' Ysgolion - Y Pandemig Arall

Snakes 'N' Ladders - The Other Pandemic

# YOUTH ADVISORY PANEL

## 2024/2025 PROJECT DELIVERY REPORT



**SMT**

Cefnogi Cymunedau Diogel a Hyderus  
Supporting Safe and Confident Communities



VOLUNTARY ACTION  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
GWETHREDU GWIRFODDOL  
MERTHYR TYDFIL

Credwch  
mewn plant  
Believe in  
children  
**Barnardo's**  
Cymru

**MTBWYF**  
Forwm Ieuenctid Ledled Bwrdeistref Merthyr Tudfu  
Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum



**GIG**  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
University Health Board

**LLOYDS BANK  
FOUNDATION**  
England & Wales



**CRONFA  
GYMUNEDOL  
COMMUNITY  
FUND**

# READ OUR PREVIOUS REPORTS!



Issue 1



2022/2023

Issue 2



2023/2024



Nadroedd 'N' Ysgolion - Y Pandemig Arall  
Snakes 'N' Ladders - The Other Pandemic



Contact Us!



Linktr.ee

Our  
Co-production  
Project is

Led by Young  
People

Inclusive

Working  
in Partnership



from the Youth  
Advisory Panel

# WELCOME...

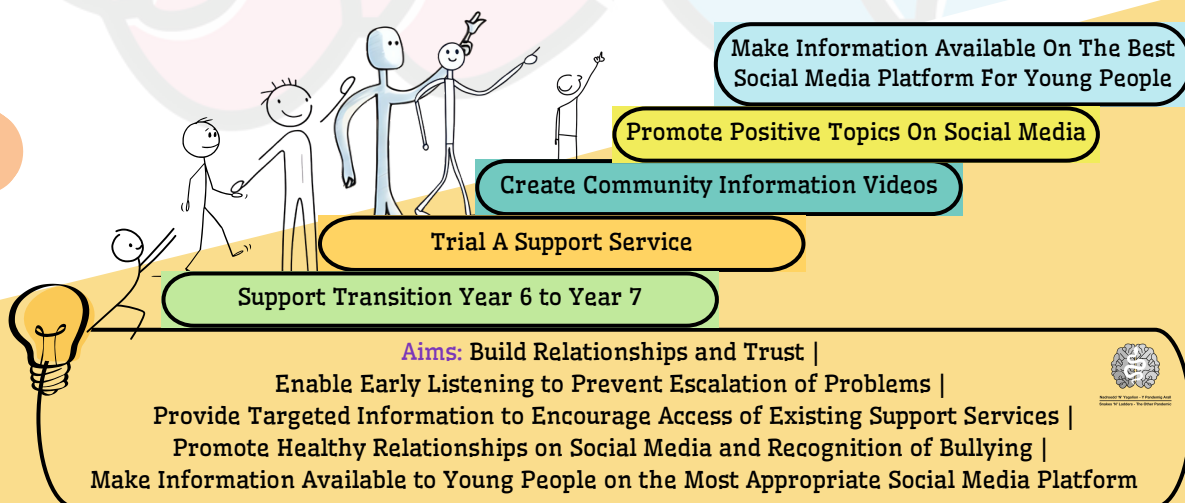
October 2024 to September 2025 was a busy and exciting year for Snakes 'N' Ladders - The Other Pandemic. More and more young people are getting involved in the project and we now have four youth advisory panels.

Young people are helping to shape the project by sharing what matters most to them about mental health, wellbeing and resilience. Together, we are creating work that's practical, meaningful, and evaluated by professionals - so our ideas lead to real learning and lasting change!

We are now halfway through the Snakes 'N' Ladders project and excited to show you what we have been working on this year. We hope the pilot projects reflect what young people really need and help support better mental health, wellbeing, and resilience for everyone.

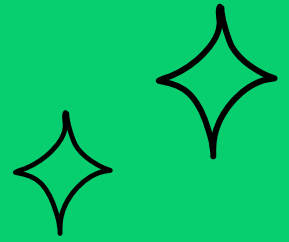


**The project began in June 2022 when young people from Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum applied for a grant from The National Lottery Community Fund. They were awarded a whopping £1.2m to help young people in Merthyr Tydfil. The project will run until July 2027.**





There needs to be an interest in, and an understanding of, young people and what they go through.



We need to deal with bullying, especially in school and on social media.

Bullying is everywhere in school.

We need more support in school.

I'm tired of school and caring activities.

Most days I feel happy but a bit sad because of school and family loss.

## WHAT SOME YOUNG PEOPLE SAID DURING THE RESEARCH YEAR:

We need ONE place to find out about all the help already available to us.

We need to be able to access help quickly and not wait weeks for a referral.

We need more people to talk to.

We need to be listened to and believed.

We need to know who we can talk to and where to find them.

We need help dealing with stress.

Give us time to talk about our feelings.

We need help to find help.











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# YAP HIGHLIGHTS 2024 TO 2025

## DECEMBER 2024



During December 2024, the YAP began thinking about the many challenges faced by young people living in supported housing at Christmas time. They learned about Llamau ([www.llamau.org.uk](http://www.llamau.org.uk)) and then led a small community appeal to create 'wellbeing boxes' for every young person accommodated by Llamau in December 2024.

## FEBRUARY 2025



A YAP residential trip was held to provide skills and training in videography and script writing. The YAP put their training into action and made a new recruitment video! You can view it on YouTube via the link on page three of this report.

## MARCH 2025



The 'SPACE' wellbeing pilot, based at Cyfarthfa High School, opened its doors and began welcoming direct access appointments from young people - no need for a professional referral! The YAP were really excited to see another of their pilot initiatives begin meeting the needs of young people! Thank you Cyfarthfa High School and Merthyr Tydfil Youth Services for partnering with us on this project!

## JUNE 2025



At the *Academy of Success Merthyr Tydfil 2025 Awards* in June, SPACE won third place for 'Tackling Personal and Social Issues that affect Young People!'.

Jacob Bridges, chair of the Youth Advisory Panel and also Youth Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil, won the 'Young Volunteer of the Year' award at VAMT's Volunteer Recognition Awards 2025!



Also during June, a day of fun, training and activity was held at Bryn Bach Park with outgoing and incoming Cyfarthfa High Youth Advisory Panel members. They received training in co-production.

## JULY 2025



MERTHYR  
VALLEYS HOMES

GELLIDEG FOUNDATION

Two new YAP panels began meeting monthly in Merthyr Valleys Homes and the Gellideg Foundation. The project is excited to continue hearing from more and more young people about issues that affect their mental health, wellbeing and resilience.

One of the first tasks for the new YAP panels will be to collaborate with professionals to produce a new wellbeing booklet for young people.

**ALSO MEETING MONTHLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!**





# The School Transition Pilot

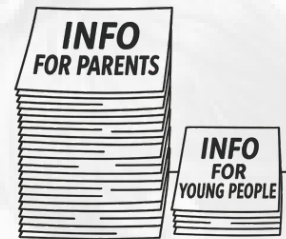
(Workstream 1)

# 2

## Building Relationships and Trust

**The school transition pilot was targeted for a key moment in young people's lives – moving from Year 6 into Year 7 at High School.**

Young people are sometimes nervous about moving from Year 6 into Year 7 at school, and feel that more help for them is key to reducing fears and negative experiences. They said that their parents were given information but they needed something for themselves.



Research for a new pilot project to help was carried out with the YAPs and with some students moving up to three High Schools in Merthyr Tydfil. This research gave young people a voice in what extra help could be created. One video and one information book was made per High School, with young people as the target audience. Below are some comments from young people as featured in the interim evaluation of the pilot.

### Books



"The booklet was useful as it outlines some of the train and bus times for getting to school."

"It was useful to understand what behaviour is appropriate."

"I liked it because it showed us what uniform we had to wear."

"I also liked that they have some of the important teachers in it, Head of Year..."

"It shows how timetables worked."

### Videos



"Helpful, I liked it [the video] because I might not know my way around the school."

"The video was useful because I got to see the school and some of the teachers, like the head of year, and other people who work at the school. So it made me feel reassured about coming up to high school."



Blessed Carlo  
Acutis Catholic  
School



Afon Taf High  
School



Ysgol Gyfun  
Gymraeg  
Rhedywaun

**"Resources are a vital part of easing [young people's] concerns about attending secondary school."**

(Snakes 'N' Ladders - Transition Pilot Evaluation Interim Report. Dr. Sion Tetlow, Wales Institute for Health & Social Care, University of South Wales, Pg 12, March 2025)



# SPACE: Open Access to Help

(Workstream 2b)

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## SPACE is created by students, for students!

Young people told us they sometimes need a quick and easy way to talk about their worries.

They said getting help early could stop small worries from becoming bigger problems.

Students at Cyfarthfa High School formed a new Youth Advisory Panel to design a pilot project that meets these needs. After carrying out research with students across the school, the SPACE pilot was launched in March 2025!

Young people decided how the service will run, how it can be accessed, and what it could include — they even transformed an old classroom into a warm, welcoming space for discussions and group work.

## Open Access

One-to-one support sessions are available with the new youth worker, as well as group sessions if young people prefer to hear about an interesting topic.

The service is open during break and lunchtime. Students can book a session via the 'wellbeing tab' on Class Charts, or by knocking on the door to the new wellbeing room and asking for an appointment.



## SPACE: Support, Positivity, Acceptance, Connection & Empowerment



SPACE Video 1



SPACE Video 2



## Award Winning!

In June 2025, SPACE won 3rd place group award at the 'Academy of Success Merthyr Tydfil' 2025 Awards for 'Tackling Personal and Social Issues That Affect Young People!'



SPACE was launched in March 2025 and so far has held 58 one-to-one sessions, 11 lunchtime group sessions, and 5 after school workgroups!







# Making Community Videos

(Workstream 1a)

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## Community Videos for Young People

Young people of Merthyr Tydfil, do you ask for help when you need it?



**Not usually no!**



We don't know anything about the available services.



We don't know who or where they are!



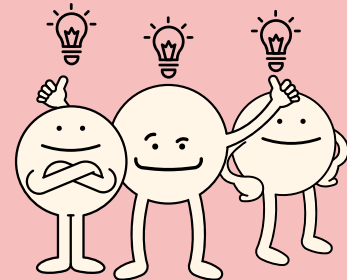
We don't know what will happen when we contact them!



How can Snakes 'N' Ladders help?



Tell us about them on social media!



In Merthyr Tydfil, there are many community support services available for young people who need help. However, young people have told us they often don't access them because they lack clear information - they are unsure who the services are, where to find them, or what to expect when they reach out.

To change this, Snakes 'N' Ladders is working with a professional videographer to create short, engaging videos, that introduce local

support organisations and explain what they offer. Designed for social media, these videos will make it easier for young people to understand and feel confident using the services available to them.

By the end of the project, we aim to produce at least eight videos, each highlighting an organisation chosen by young people. The videos will stay permanently available on the most relevant social media platforms.



**This work links closely with a recent consultation with young people in Merthyr about which social media platforms they trust for information. Over the next project year, the videos will be finalised and posted on the platform for all to see.**

**Snakes 'N' Ladders... Building trust for a more hopeful future. 7**



## Looking Ahead 2025 to 2027

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### Your voice matters - and the journey continues!

The next two years are all about building on what we've learned to make a real difference for young people in Merthyr Tydfil.

We will keep running 'SPACE', the open access wellbeing service at Cyfarthfa High School and responding to the voices of young people to shape and evaluate the service.

**continuing**  
*to create*

We will make up to eight new community videos that answer young people's questions about local support services

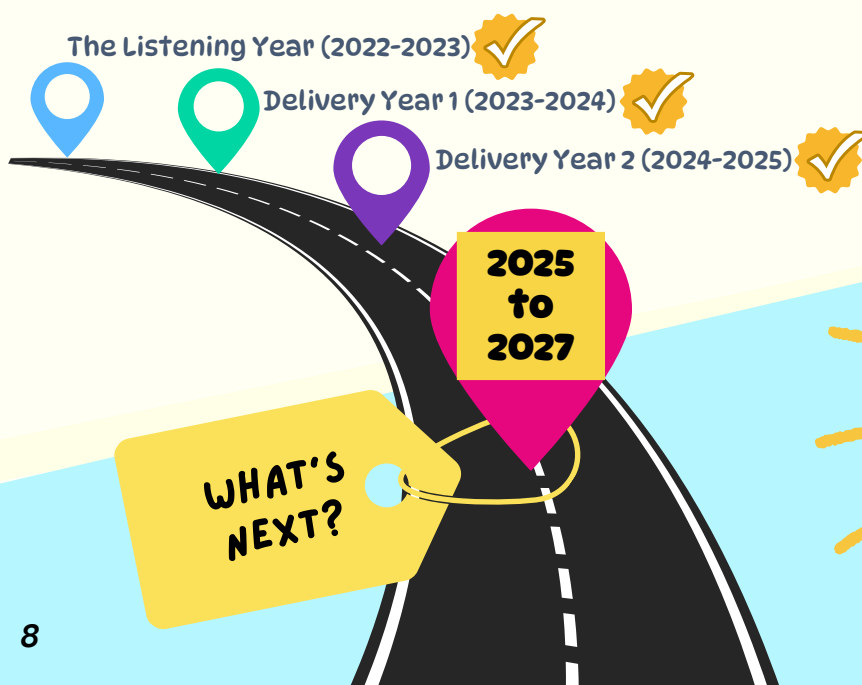
We will identify and post information for young people on the best, most appropriate social media platform for them.

**evaluating**  
*what works*

We will work with young people, our project partners and the University of South Wales to evaluate all of our projects - from the school transition pilot, to our community videos - to see if anything has helped young people and how.

By 2027, we hope our learning will inspire positive changes across schools, services, and communities - keeping young people's voices at the heart of decisions that affect them.

**inspiring**  
*change*

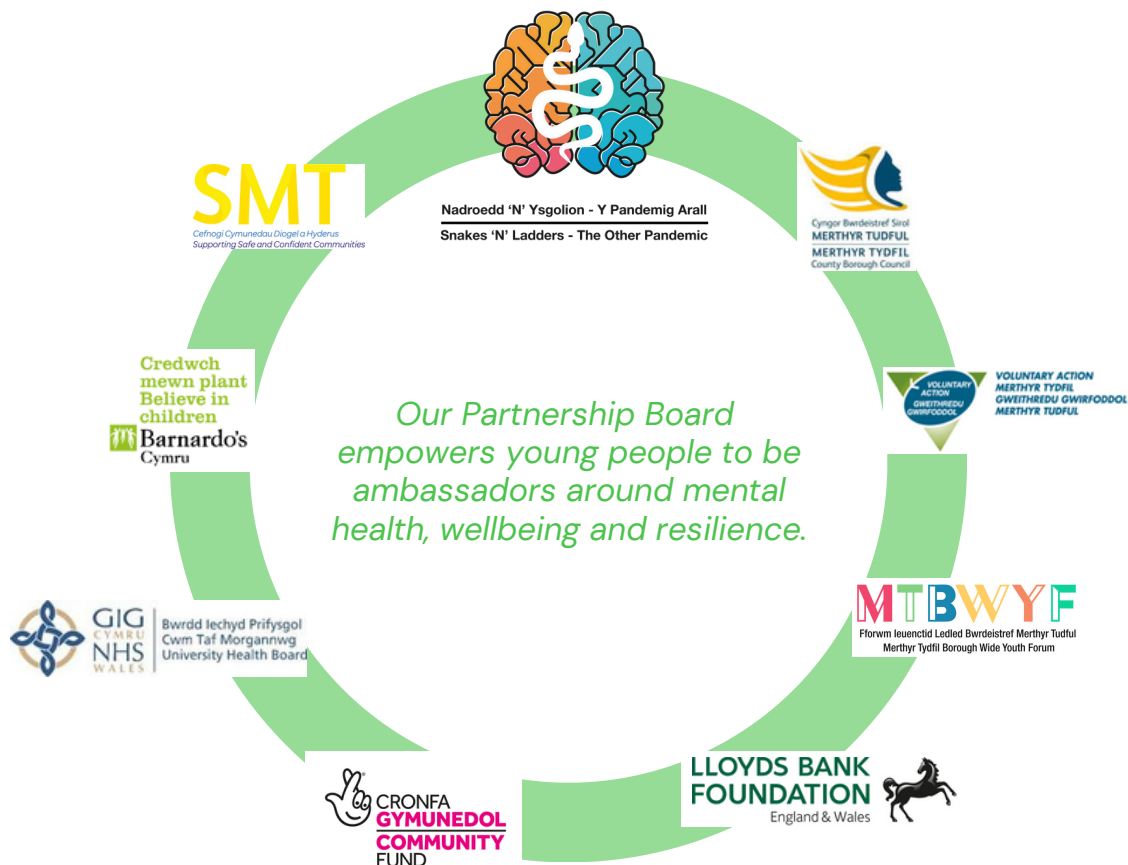


Thank you to everyone who has shared their ideas, stories, and feedback - you are helping to shape something really special. We are proud of what has been achieved so far, and excited for what comes next.



## Our Working Partners

**Snakes 'N' Ladders - The Other Pandemic** is fully supported by the following organisations and we could not do the work without them! Each partner supports the project in different ways - some employ staff specifically to work on the project, others provide us with training and premises to meet in. They all offer their time and expertise to support the project.



Thank you to all our partners, staff, and young people who continue to make Snakes 'N' Ladders – The Other Pandemic such a success. Together, we're creating a stronger, more resilient Merthyr Tydfil.

# Why are you called 'Snakes 'N' Ladders - The Other Pandemic'?

**Lacy Phillips**, a member of our panel said, "The meaning behind the name for the Snakes 'N' Ladders project is both visual and metaphorical. It shows stages of mental health issues - ups and downs, barriers and openings, climbing and falling."

**Rhian Davies** added 'The Other Pandemic' to the title because she said that "The other side of the covid pandemic is a rapid worsening of mental health in our youth and increasing the challenge of providing services to deal with it."

