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## Consultation on Mobile Youth Provision in Ceredigion

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# 1 Executive Summary

Wavehill was commissioned by Cynnal Y Cardi on behalf of Ceredigion Youth Service to conduct a study of the need for and feasibility of developing mobile youth provision in Ceredigion. It was funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

The context of the study is Ceredigion Youth Service's ongoing exploration of mobile provision as a means of extending its services in the more rural parts of the county. The purpose of this study was to conduct an independent assessment of the need for this kind of provision and make recommendations about how this kind of service could be made sustainable. In putting this report together, the evaluation team drew on existing literature on youth work, a review of key documentation, stakeholder interviews, a community survey, survey/in-depth interviews with young people as well as a stakeholder focus group with key partners of the Youth Service. Overall, the findings of this report are robust, although some caveats must be added when considering how representative the young people surveyed are of the population of Ceredigion as a whole.

As well as operating in a rural area, Ceredigion Youth Service faces severe budgetary constraints on its activities, facing the challenges of spreading its activities out over a wider geographical area, with fewer resources.

In 2015-16, the average core budget per head for a youth service in Wales was £34, but in Ceredigion the core budget per head in the same period was only £19. Likewise, the average total spend per head by youth services across Wales was £56 in 2015-16, but in Ceredigion total spend per head was just £24.

These budgetary constraints, coupled with the rurality of the county necessitate innovative approaches to service delivery, and mobile youth provision has the potential to greatly add to the Youth Service's capacity. Mobile youth provision would help the Youth Service to develop youth clubs in rural parts of Ceredigion, extend the reach of its existing outreach work and give the Youth Service a resource from which to do street-based youth work.

The evidence gathered in writing this report demonstrates support for developing this kind of service in Ceredigion, among both young people and stakeholder groups.

*"I think it sounds like an amazing thing to have, to be able to get to places where there isn't anything available for young people."*

**Stakeholder**

*"I live in the middle of nowhere, no one lives near me. I think it would be really popular if it went to Mydroilyn. I'd definitely make the effort to go, it'd be really enjoyable, it's so cool!"*

**Siân, 17 - Mydroilyn**

The consultation found that in order to develop a sustainable service, stakeholders perceived that the most appropriate vehicle for this kind of provision would be a converted 17-seater van. While a larger vehicle - such as a bus - might provide more space, this would create obstacles with regard to access to the kind of rural areas this service would need to target, and limit who was able to drive the vehicle due to licensing issues. The addition of an awning and a trailer to transport equipment would add capacity to the provision, without creating these same obstacles. Stakeholders identified space for young people to 'chill out', space for training and a kitchen area as core features of any proposed service, but also suggested that young people should be as involved in the design of the space as possible. Young people had plenty of ideas- often conflicting- about what they would like to see in any such provision.

*"A little canteen or corner shop in there would be great."*

**Aled, 13 - Gilgerran**

*"Most important for me would be music equipment, like guitars and acoustic keyboards. Art stuff and sports equipment would be good too, so we can play team games."*

**Adam, 12 - Penparcau**

It is also of paramount importance that the Youth Service consults young people with disabilities and their representative organisations when designing the final service.

In order to sustain the service in the long-run, it would be important for Ceredigion Youth Service to develop partnerships, either with other council departments, or external partner organisations. Throughout the consultation, it was evident that there would be synergies between this kind of service potentially delivered by Ceredigion Youth Service and the service that other council services and non-statutory youth organisations seek to deliver. There would be clear benefits for partner organisations in 'buying in' to a service provided by Ceredigion Youth Service, and financial contributions to the service would contribute to its long-term sustainability. Stakeholders suggested that the best model to deliver effective partnerships around this service would be for Ceredigion Youth Service to develop the service independently, but then establish Service Level Agreements with other organisations that want to 'buy in' to it once it has been developed.

Based on this research, there is a strong case for Ceredigion Youth Service to continue to explore the possibility of developing mobile youth provision. The rurality of Ceredigion, and the funding constraints faced by the Youth Service means that increasingly innovative approaches to service delivery will have to be sought in the future. Among stakeholders there is a broad consensus that this is the most resource-efficient way to develop services in rural areas. In addition to this, there was a strong appetite for this among stakeholders and young people consulted in this study. All of this suggests that- if developed effectively - this kind of provision has a lot of potential to add value to what Ceredigion Youth Service already does, as well as expanding its activities into more rural parts of the county.

## 2 Introduction

This report explores the need for and feasibility of a mobile youth service in Ceredigion delivered by Ceredigion Youth Service. It was commissioned by Cynnal y Cardi, on behalf of the Youth Service. Although the findings are intended to feed in to the Youth Service's ongoing strategic priorities, this is a completely independent study and the findings and recommendations in this report have been drawn independently of both the Youth Service and Cynnal Y Cardi.

The context of this research is the ongoing challenge faced by the Youth Service of delivering its services across the length and breadth of the county. Ceredigion is the fourth largest principal area in Wales by area, but the fourth smallest by population and a predominantly rural area. As the Welsh Government has recognised, the rural areas of Wales face distinct problems,<sup>1</sup> for example being more deprived in terms of services than urban areas,<sup>2</sup> and facing the need to spread services out across a more geographically dispersed population.

A major part of this challenge facing the Youth Service is that they receive less core funding from government than equivalent services in urban areas. For example, in 2015-16, the average core budget per head for a youth service in Wales was £34, but in Ceredigion the core budget per head in the same period was only £19. Likewise, the average total spend per head by youth services across Wales was £56 in 2015-16, but in Ceredigion total spend per head was just £24.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, Ceredigion County Council faces the need to do more with less, spreading its small funding out across a large, sparsely populated area. This is a pressure felt strongly by the Youth Service, which faces difficulties in engaging young people across a large, rural county on a smaller budget than other youth services elsewhere in Wales.

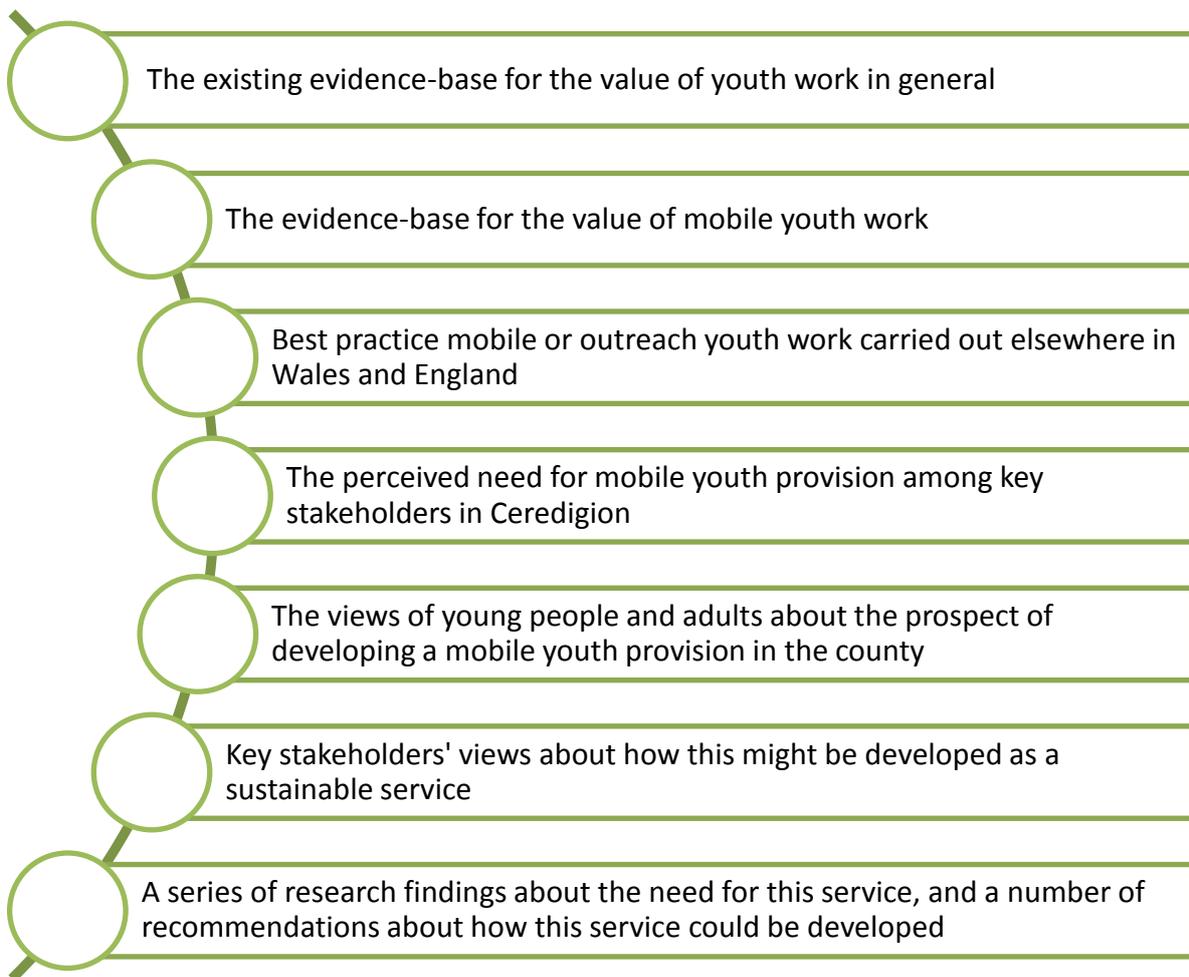
In this context, it is necessary for Ceredigion Youth Service to investigate innovative forms of service delivery. This report responds to the question of whether developing a mobile youth provision is the best way to meet the youth service's obligation to deliver services across the county, and if so, what this provision should look like. Broadly speaking, the report covers the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, E. & Doyle, R. (2016) *Rural Poverty in Wales: Existing Research and Evidence Gaps*, Cardiff: Public Policy Institute for Wales.

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2015) *Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014: A Guide to Analysing Deprivation in Rural Areas 1- Revised* (available at: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation/?lang=en>).

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2016) *Youth Work in Wales, 2015-2016* (available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/27778/1/161020-youth-work-2015-16-en.pdf>), p. 13.



## 3 Aims and Methods

This section briefly outlines the research questions that underpin this study, and the research methods used to answer these questions. It also examines potential limitations to the methods employed during this research and assesses the overall robustness of the findings.

### 3.1 Aims

This study has been driven by a number of substantive research questions. The research team developed two main research questions from the brief submitted to Wavehill by Ceredigion Youth Service and Cynnal Y Cardi:

*“Is there a need for Ceredigion Youth Service to develop mobile youth provision?”*  
and the second:

*“Is it feasible for Ceredigion Youth Service to provide a mobile youth service? If so, how should it be provided?”*

In addition to these two central research questions, the research was driven by a number of sub-research questions. These additional research questions can be grouped into a number of thematic areas.

*“To what extent is the current provision of universal open-access youth services in Ceredigion adequate for the needs of the county? How effectively could these inadequacies be met by provision of a mobile service?”*

*“To what extent would targeted, street-based youth provision run from a mobile unit add value to what Ceredigion Youth Service already does and complement other services?”*

An important consideration for this study has been to ground recommendations in an appropriate evidence base. To this end, the research team has sought to review appropriate articles from both academic and practitioner literatures to assess what evidence there is that youth work is effective on delivering wider social goals.

*“What evidence-base is there for the social and educational benefits of youth work?”*

*“What evidence is there that targeted, street-based youth work has impacts on the individuals involved and the communities it takes place in?”*

Another important component of the study's remit was to identify the levels of support for this proposal within the local community and specific stakeholder groups.

*"To what extent is the proposal supported by key stakeholders in Ceredigion?"*

*"How popular is the idea with young people in the area?"*

Another important element for this study to address is the overlap between the provision delivered by this service and the strategic priorities of other organisations within Ceredigion County Council and other providers of youth services in the county. Equally, given the financial constraints under which Ceredigion Youth Service operates, it is important to examine the feasibility of partnership working in the delivery of this service in the long-term.

*"How far would the youth service delivering a mobile youth service help to deliver on the strategic priorities of other council departments and youth support services in Ceredigion?"*

*"To what extent would it be feasible to use a mobile youth facility to deliver services for other partner organisations?"*

*"What partnerships can and should be formed to help deliver a financially and operationally sustainable service?"*

## 3.2 Methods

In order to answer these questions, the research team employed a number of research methods. The research was designed to triangulate between insight gained from literature on youth work, consultation with key stakeholders, as well as consultation with young people and the wider community in Ceredigion.

### 3.2.1 Scoping interviews

The research team conducted scoping interviews with members of Ceredigion Youth Service and the Principal Officer responsible for the youth service within the council. These interviews were used to develop a comprehensive picture of the youth service, its remit and its activities, as well as the Youth Service's rationale for seeking to develop mobile youth provision.

### 3.2.2 Desk review

The research team reviewed the academic literature surrounding the evidence of the efficacy of youth work, as well as the policy environment in which Ceredigion Youth Service is operating. This stage of the research also included a review of the key documentation provided following the scoping interviews as well as identifying comparable projects in other local authority areas within England and Wales.



### 3.2.3 Stakeholder interviews

The research team conducted 15 stakeholder interviews with key stakeholders identified during the scoping interviews. The stakeholders identified included representatives of other departments within Ceredigion County Council, other youth work organisations in the county, and local groups with experience of doing outreach and other street-based work. These interviews addressed stakeholders' assessments of the main barriers to delivering effective youth work in Ceredigion, their perceptions of the proposal to develop mobile youth provision, potential overlap between this provision and what is already happening in Ceredigion, and their recommendations for what kind of service should be delivered.

### 3.2.4 Community survey

The research team developed a survey that was circulated to stakeholders and the wider community by the client. The online survey included branching paths for young people and adults, and covered perceptions of respondents' local area, access to youth clubs and other youth facilities, and participants' perceptions of and recommendations for the proposed service. The survey was distributed via Ceredigion Youth Service's email and promoted on its Facebook page, and received 171 responses, of which 107 were from young people and 64 responses from people older than 24. As the survey was distributed by Ceredigion Youth Service, conclusions drawn from this survey have to be treated with some caution. Although not all of those who completed the survey were youth service members, and a broad range of opinions were represented within the consultation, there is a strong likelihood that the sample will over-represent those already more engaged with the work of the youth service. Consequently, while useful conclusions can be drawn from the results, the sample should not be taken to be fully representative of the population of Ceredigion as a whole.

### 3.2.5 In-depth interviews with young people

The community survey was complemented by 14 in-depth interviews with young people. These in-depth interviews focused on developing an in-depth picture of some of the young people that Ceredigion Youth Service engages with, their perceptions of what is available for young people in Ceredigion, with a particular focus on the barriers facing young people in rural parts of the county. Again, the limitations of the research method employed must be acknowledged here: given that participants were already known to Ceredigion Youth Service, there is likelihood that the responses received may not be truly representative of the youth population of Ceredigion as a whole.

Where quotes from these interviews have been included in this report, it has been quoted pseudonymously so that respondents cannot be identified from the data presented.

### 3.2.6 Focus group

The research team conducted a focus group with selected partner organisations. The focus group explored possible models of delivery for the proposed service, and potential forms of partnership working with other organisations that might benefit from the service. The findings of this focus group were then used to shape recommendations regarding how the service should be designed and delivered.

### 3.2.7 Rapid evidence assessment

Finally, the research team conducted a Rapid Evidence Assessment to ascertain what works when it comes to mobile youth provision. Based on the desk review carried out earlier in the project, the research team identified the most successful examples of mobile youth provision in order to develop recommendations for the report.

## 4 Literature Review

This section of the report summarises the findings of the literature review and Rapid Evidence Assessment carried out during the research. It covers research that identifies the value of youth work, reviews the policy context of youth work in Wales in 2018, examines the literature that looks at best practice for mobile youth provision, and explores the key conceptual distinction between open access and targeted youth provision.

### 4.1 The value of youth work: the evidence base and policy environment

This section of the report explores the evidence base for the benefits of youth work. Although there have not been many systematic studies that demonstrate the impact of youth work on young people,<sup>4</sup> there is a growing body of qualitative research that suggests youth work has wide social impacts.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, despite the relative lack of empirical studies, the idea that youth work contributes to both personal and societal positive outcomes has become commonplace in recent years.<sup>6</sup> Adamson and Poultney suggest that what research there has been point to four main conclusions:

- Increased self-esteem, confidence and aspiration, team-working and social skills among young people;
- Skills learned in youth work settings can have knock-on impact on participants' performance in formal educational settings;
- Positive outcomes for young people depend on relationships formed through long-term periods of sustained engagement;
- There can be wider benefits to local communities through building social capital and community cohesion.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Adamson, J. & Poultney, J. (2010), *Increasing the Engagement of Young People in Positive Activities*, London: Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young Peoples' Services, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> See for example:

McGregor, C. (2015) *Universal Youth Work: A Critical Review of the Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium.

McKee, V., Oldfield, C. & Poultney, J. (2010) *The Benefits of Youth Work*, London: Institute of Education.

<sup>6</sup> Dunne, A. et al (2014) *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*, Brussels: European Commission, p. 180.

<sup>7</sup> Adamson, J. & Poultney, J. (2010) *Increasing the Engagement of Young People in Positive Activities*, London: Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young Peoples' Services, p. 19.

Dunne et al's systematic review of youth work in the European Union suggests that the literature on youth work points to eight main potential outcomes:

- Education and training outcomes
- Employment and entrepreneurship outcomes
- Health and well-being outcomes
- Participation of young people
- Volunteering outcomes
- Social inclusion outcomes
- Youth and the world outcomes
- Culture outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

Even if systematic academic research into the benefits of youth work is in its infancy, the perceived value of youth work in a number of areas has been a key driver of youth policy at least since the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999. From its inception onwards, the Assembly brought out a raft of policies that included youth work as part of a broader strategy to improve the life chances of young people in Wales. Indeed, the *Learning and Skills Act (2000)*, which gave the National Assembly the authority to direct local authorities to 'provide, secure or participate in the provision of' youth support services, defined 'youth support services' as:

"services which in the opinion of the Assembly will encourage, enable or assist young persons (directly or indirectly)-

- (a) To participate effectively in education and training
- (b) To take advantage of opportunities for employment, or
- (c) To participate effectively and responsibly in the lives of their communities"<sup>9</sup>

Following devolution, policymakers started to see youth work as an increasingly important driver of skills acquisition, particularly where it engaged with young people who were harder to reach. An example of this way of thinking is the 2010 Wales Employment and Skills Board report, *Moving Forward: Foundations for Growth*, which recommended that the youth service should be given an enhanced role in combatting disengagement among young people.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Dunne, A. et al (2014) *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*, Brussels: European Commission, p. 180-181.

<sup>9</sup> *Learning and Skills Act (2000) Section 123*, United Kingdom, (available at: [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/21/pdfs/ukpga\\_20000021\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/21/pdfs/ukpga_20000021_en.pdf)).

<sup>10</sup> Wales Employment and Skills Board (2010) *Moving Forward: Foundations for Growth*, Cardiff: Wales Employment and Skills Board.

This holistic approach to youth engagement and development was taken up formally by the Welsh Government in its 2013 *Youth Engagement and Progression Implementation Plan*, which provided non-statutory guidance towards reducing the numbers of young people in Wales who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET).<sup>11</sup> This document was wrapped around the Welsh Government's 2014 *National Youth Work Strategy for Wales*, which set out a four-year vision for youth work in Wales, and identified youth work as something which contributes strongly to the government's broader policy agenda.<sup>12</sup> This holistic approach has only been reinforced by the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act*, which was passed in 2015.<sup>13</sup>

One of the key reasons that youth work has become so important for policymakers is its perceived value for money. The *Every Child Matters* Green Paper, prepared by the U.K. Treasury in 2003, explored the relative cost of the criminal justice system and other youth interventions, including youth work, stating that "society as a whole benefit through reduced spending on problems that can be avoided through maximizing the contribution to society of all citizens. For instance a child with a conduct disorder at age 10 will cost the public purse £70,000 by age 28."<sup>14</sup> Research indicates that youth work provides significant cost savings to the public purse insofar as youth work can help to prevent subsequent interventions by the criminal justice system, or other statutory services.<sup>15</sup> Research produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that even a systematic street-based youth service targeted on hard-to-reach young people across a local authority area would spend only a small fraction of the budget spent on other services targeted at this group.<sup>16</sup>

## 4.2 Mobile youth provision

In addition to exploring the literature that evidences the impact of youth work and the policy environment in which youth work takes place in Wales, the research team conducted a systematic review of 'what works in mobile youth provision.' The evidence base for what works in mobile youth provision is limited, but nonetheless, a number of conclusions can be drawn.

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<sup>11</sup> *Youth Engagement and Progression Implementation Plan (2013)* Welsh Assembly Government, (available at: [http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/18502/13/130930-ye-framework-implementation-plan-en\\_Redacted.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/18502/13/130930-ye-framework-implementation-plan-en_Redacted.pdf)).

<sup>12</sup> *National Youth Work Strategy for Wales (2014)* Welsh Assembly Government, (available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/19353/1/140221-national-youth-work-strategy-en.pdf>).

<sup>13</sup> *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)* Welsh Assembly Government, (available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted>).

<sup>14</sup> The Treasury (2003) *Every Child Matters*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> McKee, V., Oldfield, C. & Poultney, J. (2010) *The Benefits of Youth Work*, London: Institute of Education, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2004) *The cost of providing street-based youth work in deprived communities*.

A particularly important resource for understanding the theory and practice of mobile youth provision is the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services' *Mobile Youth Provision: Method and Resource Handbook for Youth Work Practitioners in Wales*.<sup>17</sup> This handbook provides an important resource for good practice in mobile youth work in Wales.

The handbook defines mobile youth work as something which:

*"[aims] to take youth work to geographical areas where there has been difficulty for young people to access it or where targeted provision is required."*<sup>18</sup>

As such, the objectives of mobile youth work are similar to those of centre-based youth work, and in a Welsh context, consistent with *Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes*, a document which sets out the national priorities for youth work in Wales.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, it is not necessary - for the most part - to understand mobile youth provision as a *sui generis* form of youth work, but rather as a more geographically dispersed form of centre-based youth work.

One theme that emerged from this systematic review is that mobile youth work projects are quite distinct, and that it is particularly important to judge the success or failure of a project according to local conditions and local requirements. While broad guidelines - of the type set out by the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services - are useful, there is no single answer to the question of 'what works for youth services?', and very different projects can ultimately be successful. As a consequence, it is perhaps more appropriate to look for elements that work within existing mobile youth provision, rather than looking for a model for mobile youth provision. To this end, the following chapter will outline several successful mobile youth projects with a view towards gaining some insight about what made these projects successful.

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<sup>17</sup> Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (2012) *Mobile Youth Provision: Method and Resource Handbook for Youth Work Practitioners in Wales* (available at: <http://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HB-Mobile-Youth-Provision.pdf>).

<sup>18</sup> Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (2012) *Mobile Youth Provision: Method and Resource Handbook for Youth Work Practitioners in Wales*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (2013) *Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes*, (available at: <http://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Youth-Work-in-Wales-Principles-and-Purposes-March-2014.pdf>).

### 4.3 Open access and targeted youth provision

As part of the literature review, the research team assessed different modes of operating within youth work. While there are ultimately many different ways of doing youth work, the main distinction within the literature appeared to be that between open-access youth provision and targeted youth provision. This distinction has been discussed at length in the literature, notably in Ritchie & Ord,<sup>20</sup> but the following table sets out the distinction in simple terms. It is important to understand this distinction, not just because it is a key theoretical distinction through which youth work is understood, but also because it is a recognised- and politically charged - distinction within youth policy,<sup>21</sup> and - perhaps most importantly - because it is relevant to the way that Ceredigion Youth Service understands its own activities. This report will return to this distinction later, in the overview of Ceredigion Youth Service’s current activities, and again in chapter seven, when it assesses the need for mobile youth provision in each of these settings (open access and targeted youth work).

**Figure 4.1: Open Access and Targeted Youth Provision**

<b><u>Open access youth work provision</u></b>	<b><u>Targeted youth provision</u></b>
<p>Open access, or ‘universal’ youth work is intended for all young people in an area. It is designed to be accessible to all young people and does not require a long-term commitment from the young person. It is intended to provide the young person with a supportive, nurturing environment and enriching life experiences, as well as opportunities for self-development. Typically, open access youth provision includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth clubs</li> <li>• Play sessions</li> </ul>	<p>Targeted youth work tends to focus on identifying young people that need engagement, designs youth work around their particular needs and often envisages particular purposes and outcomes. Targeted youth work often takes place with young people deemed at risk of becoming NEET, entering the criminal justice system, using illicit drugs/alcohol, or suffering from particular adverse childhood experiences. Targeted youth work takes place following the recipient being identified as ‘at risk’ and there is frequently a pre-defined outcome of the youth work envisaged before it begins.</p>

<sup>20</sup> A fuller, more academically informed distinction between open access and targeted youth work can be found in Ritchie, D. & Ord, J. (2015) ‘The experience of open access youth work: the voice of young people’, *Journal of Youth Studies* 20(3), pp. 269-282.

<sup>21</sup> Davies, B. (2010) ‘Policy analysis: a first and vital skill of practice’, in Batsleer, J. & Davies, B. (Eds.) *What is Youth Work?* Exeter: Learning Matters.

## 5 Review of Comparable Provision

This chapter provides an overview of comparable projects that have been developed by statutory youth services and voluntary organisations in other parts of Wales and more broadly across the U.K.

There are plenty of examples, and the idea of using a bus to facilitate mobile provision is an old one. Locally, for example, in the mid-1970s, the Welsh Association of Youth Clubs secured funding for a bus that would provide a mobile service in selected parts of Dyfed and Powys.<sup>22</sup> Given the age of this project, it is not a useful example to explore further. In order to identify more useful comparators, this next section of the literature reviews looks at how mobile provision has been implemented in other local authority Areas across England and Wales in recent years. It focuses on how it has been used to expand and enhance both universal and targeted provision, with a view towards gaining greater insight about how such a service could be developed in Ceredigion.

### 5.1 Conwy County Council

Conwy County Council has two youth buses that are used to provide universal and targeted provision across the local authority area. These buses not only allow youth workers to travel across the local authority area, but also provide a safe space for youth workers to talk to young people.

The bus provides resources for communities that do not have permanent youth provision within them, and also helps youth workers to deliver more targeted aspects of provision. An example of this more targeted provision facilitated or enhanced by the youth bus are PSE sessions run at schools across the local authority area.<sup>23</sup> These buses park up at schools and allow students to 'drop in' during break or lunchtimes. According to a 2015 report produced by *Arad Research*, an average lunchtime session can see up to 70 students attending.

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<sup>22</sup> Frost, D. (c. 1980s) *Welsh Association of Youth Clubs: The Mobile Youth Unit, 1977-1980*, <http://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Welsh-Association-of-Youth-Clubs---Mobile-Youth-Unit.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Arad Research (2015) *Youth Work in Schools in Wales: Full Report*, Cardiff: Arad Research, 24.

***Figure 5.1: The outside of the Conwy youth bus***



***Figure 5.2: The interior of the Conwy youth bus***



To engage young people, the bus has a number of activities for young people, including laptops and games consoles.

## 5.2 Kent County Council

Kent County Council has a number of initiatives for mobile youth provision. These are delivered in partnership with local organisations, allowing Kent County Council to provide mobile youth provision that meets local needs, and reflects the capacity and willingness of local groups to make use of the provision.

The Sheppey Inter-Agency Project in Swale, Kent, works mainly 'on the streets' in four areas around the area. It provides fun activities in a safe environment for those aged 11-22. Young people are encouraged to take a lead in what goes on, including running their own tuck shop. Activities include sports, game boards, cooking, X-Box, arts and crafts, DVDs, music, and lots of trips. Mobile youth provision has been central to the delivery of these services. While Kent County Council has been involved in funding and supporting this project, it has been delivered in partnership with Swale Young People Community Interest Company.

Since 1997, Kent County Council has run a similar project in Tunbridge Wells, in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Their 'Street Cruiser' – a converted double-decker bus that tours places where young people regularly congregate - is used as a mobile youth facility. The primary function of the bus is as a point of contact between youth workers and young people in small, rural communities around Tunbridge Wells. The bus has also been used as a base for youth forums and for more targeted forms of youth work.

**Figure 5.3: Tunbridge Wells Street Cruiser**



### 5.3 Sandwell Youth Bus

The Sandwell Youth Bus is a mobile facility providing young people with opportunities to engage in positive activities and a safe place to access administration and support. The youth bus engages in two different ways: first, in areas that do not have any youth provision, and second, in areas that have witnessed anti-social behaviour.

**Figure 5.4: Activities provided on the Sandwell Youth Bus.**



The Sandwell Youth Bus provides a number of activities, a graphic of which (produced by Sandwell Youth Service) is above. Some of the activities provided by Sandwell Youth Service are provided in partnership with external agencies, including local training providers such as Juniper, Rathbones and Connexions. The bus attends larger-scale events and has regular calling points around the area.

### 5.4 URBIE in Yate

Yate Town Council has used a converted van as part of its strategy to engage young people who are not interested in going to a conventional youth club. The vehicle, called ‘Urban Vehicle for Information and Education’ (URBIE) provides a safe space for young people to learn new skills in a neutral environment. Dawn Young, a youth worker involved with the project, said:

*“When we go into parks it’s sometimes tricky to engage the kids because it’s their territory. However, we mostly have a very positive response in Yate – it’s a big area but we’ve got it just right here with the URBIE plus the youth centres in the North and South and the Armadillo Centre.*

*The bus gives us a chance to talk to the youngsters in a neutral environment about any issues they might be facing.”<sup>24</sup>*

**Figure 5.5: URBIE in Yate**



In addition to providing a safe space for youth workers to talk to young people, URBIE is also used to strengthen existing provision, for example working with schools in the area to provide additional guidance on careers or PSE.

## 5.5 The Connections Bus Project in Cambridgeshire

The Connections Bus Project in Cambridgeshire is a charitable organisation that was set up after the death of three young people in rural Cambridgeshire in the early 1990s. Relatives and members of the community sought to invest in a service that would provide long-term benefit to young people in the local community. Stakeholders in the project include youth workers, local churches, parents, Community Education and Parish Councils. According to its constitution, the project has two main aims, the first of which being:

*“To advance the education and training of persons in Cambridgeshire and the surrounding areas who are in need and unlikely to gain employment, in particular through the supervised provision of services and facilities not otherwise provide by the employment services.”*

and the second of which being:

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<sup>24</sup> National Association of Local Councils (2017) *Case Study: Yate Town Council Takes Education on a Road Trip* 21.11.2017.

*“To provide recreational facilities to persons in Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas who are in need of such facilities by reason of their youth in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their quality of life.”*

**Figure 5.6: The Connections Bus in 2008**



## 5.6 The Vale of Glamorgan V-Pod

The V-pod is a state of the art youth provision provided by Vale of Glamorgan council. The V-pod is a converted single decker bus that has been fitted with games consoles, DJ mixing decks, Bose surround sound, plasma screens, disco lighting and a chillout area.

Sy Joshua, Vale of Glamorgan Council youth officer said:

*“We have listened to the voices of young people telling us they require better access to youth provision during school holidays, weekends and in areas close to where they reside...”*

Young people were involved in the design of the service, providing ideas and concepts for the bus, and the council ran a name and logo competition open to local schoolchildren.

In terms of service delivery, Vale of Glamorgan Council has used the V-pod to complement existing youth provision and plug gaps within the council's existing universal provision. As Sy Joshua says:

*“We also recognise that complicated youth issues, increases and changes to the Vale youth population cannot be efficiently tackled by attempting to operate a youth centre in every electoral ward. We aim to utilise this new mobile youth provision as a platform to complement existing youth provision, undertake informal activities/ events/ workshops in areas of little or no youth provision during school holidays and weekends. In addition, we aim to involve young people in existing community events and initiatives through the mobile provision.”*

**Figure 5.7: Vale of Glamorgan Council's V-pod**



## 6 Youth Provision in Ceredigion

### 6.1 Ceredigion Youth Service and the policy environment

According to Ceredigion County Council's 2013-2018 *Youth Service Strategy*, the rationale for the organisation's youth work is as follows:

*"High-quality youth work has a crucial role to play supporting many young people to achieve their full potential. Through informal and non-formal educational approaches, effective youth work practice builds the capacity and resilience of young people and can change young people's lives for the better. Through participation in youth work young people gain confidence and competence, develop self-assurance and have the opportunity to establish high expectations and aspirations for themselves."*<sup>25</sup>

The youth service delivered by Ceredigion County Council is in line with a number of key strategic frameworks for Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council. These include:

- Youth Engagement and Progression Framework
- National Youth Work Strategy for Wales (2014-2018)
- Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes (2013)
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)
- Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure (2011)
- Ceredigion Local Wellbeing Plan

The Youth Service Strategy delivers directly on the priorities of the council's *Corporate Strategy 2017-2022*, specifically to:

- Promote physical and emotional health and well-being of young people
- Enable all children and young people to reach their full potential
- Reduce the effects of poverty and combat inequalities for young people
- Safeguard and support vulnerable young people.<sup>26</sup>

In particular, Ceredigion Youth Service contributes to Ceredigion County Council's well-being objectives 2, 3 and 4, specifically:

- Investing in People's Futures
- Enabling Individual and Family Resilience
- Promoting Environmental and Community Resilience.<sup>27</sup>

Stakeholder interviews conducted as part of this research suggested that there is close alignment between the strategic priorities of the Youth Service and other youth support services.

<sup>25</sup> Ceredigion County Council, *2013-2018 Youth Service Strategy*.

<sup>26</sup> Ceredigion County Council, *Corporate Strategy, 2017-2022*.

<sup>27</sup> Ceredigion Youth Service, *Business Plan 2018*.

*“We have an interface group and we try to plan things collectively. There’s a lot of overlap between youth justice and prevention, targeted outreach from the youth service, the kind of NEET work being done by the local authority and behaviour support services in schools.”*

In addition to the strategic alignment, some of the stakeholders indicated that there is already collaborative work in conjunction with the Youth Service.

*“The Youth Service is one of our main partners in pretty much all we do. We do a lot with the youth service. We use a lot of their facilities (e.g. Youth clubs) and organise a number of joint activities.”*

It is important to recognise that the Youth Service has a role in a broader and more comprehensive youth support strategy and plays a role in supporting other services to deliver on their specific targets.

## 6.2 Mapping Ceredigion County Council's existing provision

Ceredigion Youth Service provides both universal and targeted youth provision. According to Ceredigion County Council’s 2013-2018 *Youth Service Strategy*, the council provides (or intends to provide) the following services:

***Figure 6.1: Provision of youth services in Ceredigion***

Universal provision	Targeted provision
Youth clubs	School Based Youth Work
County Youth Forum	Outreach Youth Work
Holiday Provision	PSE Programme
Outdoor Activity Programme	Accredited Learning
Duke of Edinburgh Programme	Young Volunteers Programme
Sexual Health Programme	Student Youth Workers Programme
International Youth Work	County Youth Council
	Street Based/Detached Youth Work
	Youth Enterprise
	Family Engagement and Support
	Mobile Youth Work

**Key:**

Currently available
Partially available, needing further development
Not currently available

### 6.2.1 Universal provision in Ceredigion

Youth work is an intrinsic element of youth support services across Wales, and youth support services seek to ensure that all 11 to 25-year olds have the services, support and

experiences they need to fulfil their potential.<sup>28</sup> The youth service is a universal entitlement in Wales, open to all young people, and through Section 123(1) of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000*, local authorities are directed to provide youth services.<sup>29</sup> Although universal youth provision has come under increasing pressure for funding in recent years, there is a body of evidence that demonstrates the benefits of universal youth work,<sup>30</sup> as demonstrated in chapter three of this report. In particular, Dunne et al identify benefits that can arise from participating in youth work, including improved academic attainment, employability, and improvement in some well-being measures.<sup>31</sup> It is, however, important to recognise that these benefits are not consistently felt, and depend greatly on the type and quality of youth work that is provided.

As figure 6.1 indicates, there are seven main ways in which Ceredigion's universal provision is delivered. Of these seven programmes, youth clubs are perhaps the most consistent interaction that young people have with Ceredigion Youth Service. As well as youth clubs run by Ceredigion Youth Service, there are other youth clubs available, run by voluntary organisations, often with support from the Youth Service. As figure 6.2 shows, these are unevenly distributed across Ceredigion, with provision much stronger in towns than in rural areas.

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<sup>28</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales, 2014-2018: Supporting Young People to Reach Their Potential and Live Fulfilled Lives*, p. 4.

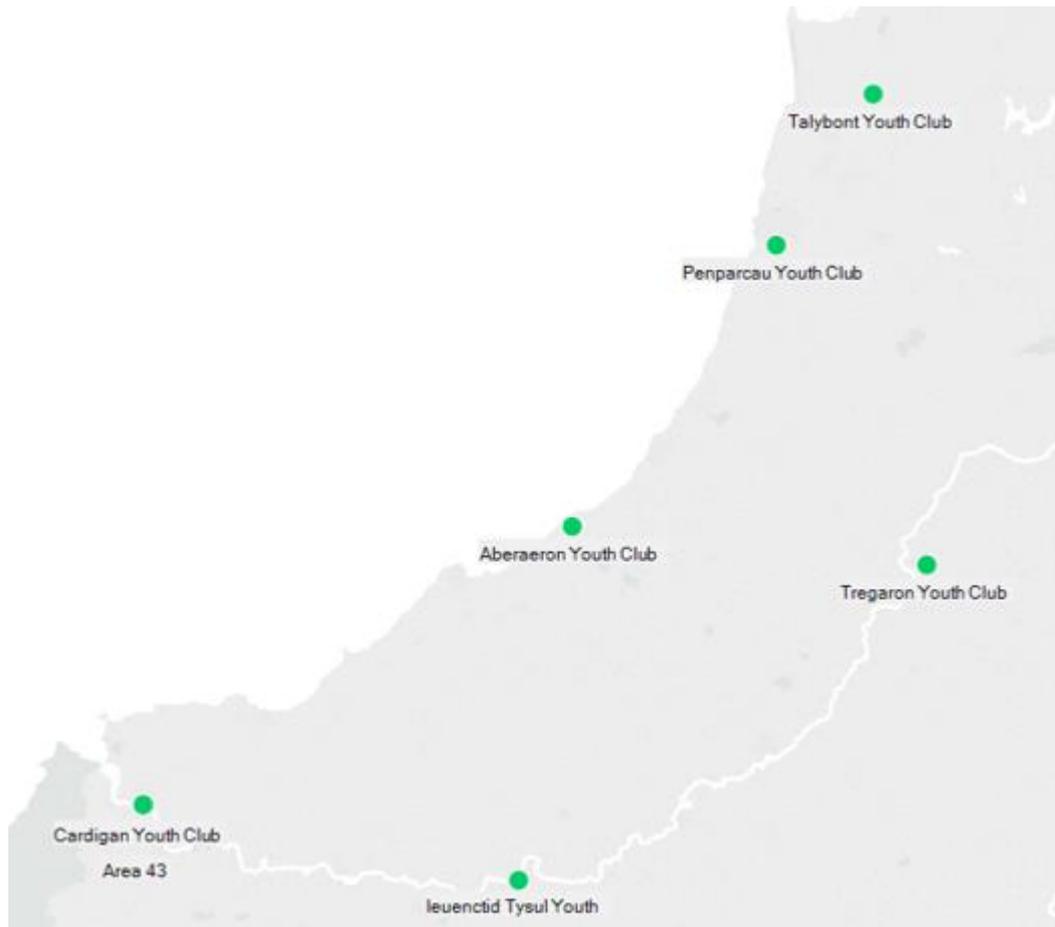
<sup>29</sup> UK Parliament (2000) *Learning and Skills Act 2000*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

<sup>30</sup> See for example:

Dunne, A., Ulicna, D., Murphy, I. & Golubeva, M. (2014) *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*, Brussels: European Commission.

<sup>31</sup> Dunne, A., Ulicna, D., Murphy, I. & Golubeva, M. (2014) *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*, Brussels: European Commission, p. 158.

**Figure 6.2: Map of Known Youth Clubs in Ceredigion, 2018 (N.B. Not all are run by Ceredigion Youth Service)**



Universal provision is not only important for giving young people new opportunities. It is also a site where more specialist needs are identified, as outlined in *The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales, 2014-2018*:

*“As we go forward it is vitally important that open-access provision is used to effectively connect young people with more targeted or specialised support where this is appropriate. To achieve this outcome, statutory and voluntary providers need to take their collaborative working to new levels, maximising the impact of limited resources and presenting a high-quality and coherent offer to young people.”<sup>32</sup>*

<sup>32</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales, 2014-2018: Supporting Young People to Reach Their Potential and Live Fulfilled Lives*, p. 2.

### 6.2.2 Targeted provision in Ceredigion

In addition to the universal provision outlined above, Ceredigion Youth Service provides specific targeted youth work interventions to meet local need and target the most vulnerable people aged 14-25 who are/at risk of becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and/or socially excluded, as stipulated in the National Youth Work Strategy and the Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant.<sup>33</sup> The Youth Service Strategy 2013-2018 identifies that Ceredigion Youth Service is currently meeting requirements in a number of key areas, but does not provide all of the services it sets out in its strategy.

One of these key areas is school-based youth work. School-based youth work focuses on preventative approaches and uses a variety of youth work methods to engage and provide additional social, emotional and behavioural support for young people aged 11-18. The Youth Service also works with schools to provide PSE sessions in line with the Welsh PSE Framework.

Ceredigion Youth Service does similar outreach work in other settings, with its outreach youth work targeted at young people at risk of becoming NEET, taking place in homes, youth centres and communities. Many of the opportunities provided as part of Ceredigion Youth Service's targeted provision focus on giving young people the kind of experience that will enhance their employability and give them vital skills for life beyond school. These programmes include the Young Volunteers and Accredited Learning Programmes.

### 6.3 The rationale for mobile provision

The rationale behind developing mobile based youth provision is that it would enhance the targeted provision that Ceredigion Youth Service is able to provide, with particular regard to the Street Based/Detached Youth Work and Mobile Youth Work aspects of the service's strategy. In the first instance, this would allow the Youth Service to do mobile youth work in areas which do not currently have permanent youth clubs. These youth clubs could be used to provide information, advice, advocacy, training and support in areas which do not have youth clubs, and in which it would be unfeasible to set up permanent youth clubs.

The other main increase in capacity that a vehicle would provide is a resource for doing street-based youth work in Ceredigion. As figure. 6.1 demonstrates, this would fill a gap within the Youth Service's existing provision, allowing youth workers to make targeted interventions in areas with high levels of antisocial behaviour or to engage with young people in town centres late at night. Typically, street-based youth work takes place with people who would not normally be engaged with universal approaches to youth work.

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<sup>33</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales, 2014-2018: Supporting Young People to Reach Their Potential and Live Fulfilled Lives*, Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales Commission, Welsh Government, Children, Young People and Education Committee (2016) *What type of youth service does Wales want? Report of the inquiry into Youth Work*, Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales Commission, Brierley, M. (2017) *Review of the Impact of the Youth Work Strategy Support Grant, July 2017*.



## 7 The Need for Mobile Youth Provision in Ceredigion

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Ceredigion Youth Service has a commitment to providing open access youth clubs across the county and providing outreach, street-based youth work targeted on areas of particular need within Ceredigion. The aim of this chapter is to assess whether mobile youth provision, facilitated by some kind of vehicle, is the best way to deliver across these two commitments.

### 7.1 Universal open access Youth Provision

One of the key drivers for developing a mobile youth service is developing the capacity to expand the provision of universal youth clubs across the county. The evidence gathered as part of this study suggests that rurality is a key problem facing Ceredigion Youth Service in its mission to provide universal, open-access youth clubs. Many people face barriers which prevent them accessing this provision because they live in rural parts of the county. Bus services are limited, and often finish in the early evening, which means that unless parents are able to drive their children to a nearby town, young people are only able to attend youth clubs in the more populated parts of the county.

#### 7.1.1 Stakeholder and community perceptions

As part of the research, the research team consulted with selected stakeholders identified by Ceredigion Youth Service. A full list of the stakeholders consulted has been included as an appendix to this report.

#### **Summary:**

- Stakeholders identified rurality as the main challenge facing the youth service.
- A feeling was expressed that given the challenge of rurality and funding, there is a pressing need to investigate innovative approaches to service delivery in rural areas.
- Stakeholders generally thought that some kind of mobile provision would be the best way to develop this kind of service.
- Some concerns were expressed that a mobile youth provision runs the risk of drawing funding and support away from existing provision.

Stakeholders were generally positive about the work that the Youth Service does, and the kind of impact that this can have on the young people the Youth Service works with. However, stakeholders recognised the challenges faced by the service in trying to deliver across a rural area. A recurring theme across stakeholder interviews was the challenge posed by rurality to effective service delivery in the county. As well as the Youth Service, council services such as Youth Justice and Prevention, Tim Plant Anabl, Families First, Team Around the Family, and Team Teulu all reported difficulties in delivering services in some of the more rural parts of Ceredigion. As one stakeholder suggested,

*“It’s a real challenge to deliver the same range of services in rural areas. Proportionally, we spend huge amounts of money in these areas when you think about it in terms of spend per head. Delivering services in a smaller rural area is very, very high in the context of reduced Welsh Government budget.”*

*“Pockets of young people who don’t have access to services are a real problem. Young people in cities are always much better able to access services than in rural areas.”*

While rurality is a big challenge for delivering services in Ceredigion, it was not the only issue identified by stakeholders. In addition to rurality, a small number of stakeholders identified the lack of suitable buildings in which to work with young people as an issue even within the county’s population hubs.

*“Rurality and distance are big issues in Ceredigion. Public transport is obviously an issue, but even in the market towns, you can’t always secure venues. We struggle for young-person friendly places to spend time with young people in. Old council buildings aren’t ideal, as they tend to be a bit sterile for young people, and if there’s no wifi that can be an issue.”*

Given the difficulties of delivering services on tight budgets in rural areas, stakeholders were in broad agreement that there is a need to investigate alternative delivery models for services in rural areas. Stakeholders were broadly supportive of the proposal to deliver youth services from a mobile unit of some kind.

*“I think it would be a good initiative. The young people in one of the groups we work with took part in a consultation and they were very supportive of the idea. It’s an issue for families as well as young people. The need for young people to have things to do can be an added pressure for families. This could provide young people with a place to hang out and spend some time.”*

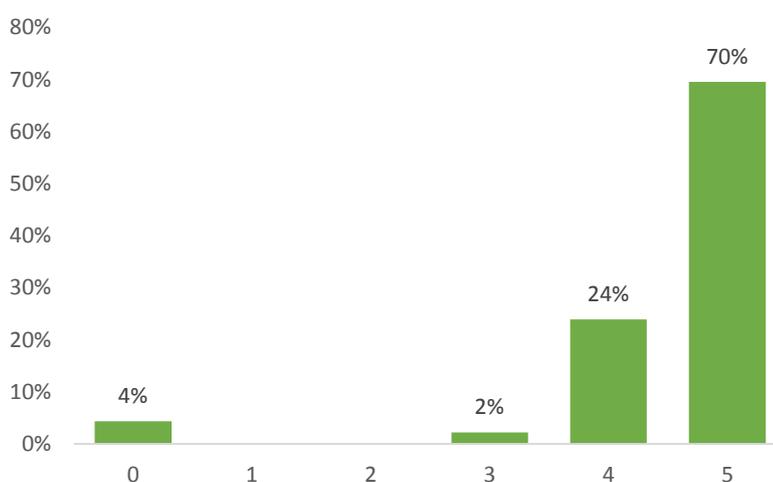
*“I think this is probably the way to go with delivering services like this in rural areas. We’ve already seen it in other areas, and the library service also does this kind of work in taking its services to its users.”*

Stakeholders were not unanimous in supporting this, however, and a small minority of stakeholders suggested that transporting young people by bus to existing hubs, such as youth clubs, might be a more cost-effective approach.

*“Running vehicles has a lot of pitfalls, mainly that it’s costly to maintain. Busing people to existing youth clubs might be a cheaper way of delivering the same thing.”*

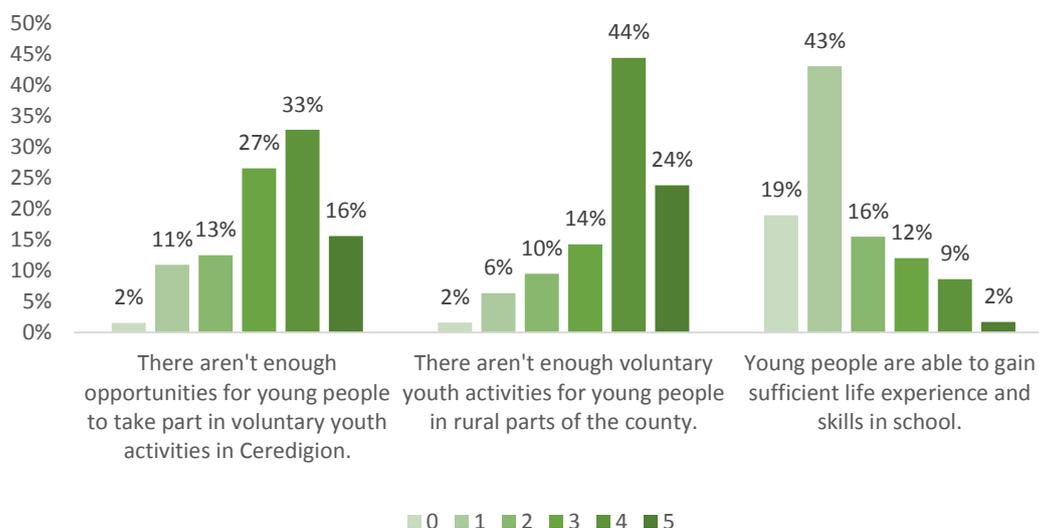
In addition to the other council services, the consultation engaged with the wider community and other organisations doing youth work in Ceredigion. A community survey was written by the evaluation team and distributed by Ceredigion Youth Service, receiving 64 responses. When participants were asked about mobile youth provision, responses were overwhelmingly positive, with 94% of those surveyed giving the proposal their support, as indicated in figure 7.1.

**Figure. 7.1: Perceptions of proposed mobile youth provision (0-5, where 5 is strongly support)**



Data indicates that there is a strong perception within the sample that there needs to be more access to voluntary youth activities in rural parts of Ceredigion. The community survey also asked respondents to rate their agreement with a number of statements about youth activities in Ceredigion from 0-5, where 0 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. Responses to the community survey, visualised in figure 7.2, indicate some agreement with the view that there are insufficient youth activities in Ceredigion, particularly in rural areas of the county. In addition, respondents suggested that youth work is valuable, as there are insufficient opportunities for young people to gain skills and life experiences within formal educational settings.

**Figure. 7.2: Community perceptions of the need for youth activities in rural Ceredigion (0-**



**5, where 5 is strongly agree)**

Organisations doing non-statutory youth work in Ceredigion were also broadly supportive of these proposals, agreeing that more needs to be done to engage with young people in rural communities.

*“It probably would help to engage more people. The area is a difficult one and we have to think of, develop and test new ideas. We’ve got no experience of this kind of thing though, we operate with a different model. Where there are volunteers wanting to run clubs or activities, we support them. We don’t have a statutory duty to reach everyone and anyone.”*

One particularly interesting piece of feedback received from stakeholders was that young people have a strong sense of identity based on place.

*“What’s important for our members is a sense of belonging. If they belong to a group in Pontrhydfendigaid, it’s their thing. It’s different to belonging to a group in Lampeter. It’s important young people have clubs in their own communities.”*

This suggests that it is particularly important for young people to have a sense of ownership of the youth clubs they attend, and for youth clubs to reflect the identities of young people and the communities they live in.

As well as engaging organisations that currently provide non-statutory youth work in Ceredigion, one individual involved with setting up a youth club in Aberporth engaged with the consultation. The respondent reported that they face a number of barriers to setting up this youth club, particularly the availability of expertise, child protection and ensuring continuity of service. While rurality is not the main barrier to developing a youth club in Aberporth, the respondent reported that some kind of mobile youth provision, which would provide both a space in which to hold youth events and bring with it attached youth workers, could add value to any future youth work done in the village.

It is important to acknowledge that not all of the feedback from organisations carrying out non-statutory youth work consulted was positive. A small minority of respondents reported that the main issue for youth work in Ceredigion is the lack of funding for existing organisations, and that rather than solving the problem, developing mobile youth provision runs the risk of drawing funding away from already underfunded youth clubs.

*“To be bluntly honest, my biggest concerns are that over the past 10-15 years, we have seen the investment of large chunks of money into assets, or prestige projects. At the same time, existing provision is underfunded. What would be better would be more funding for the youth clubs we already have.”*

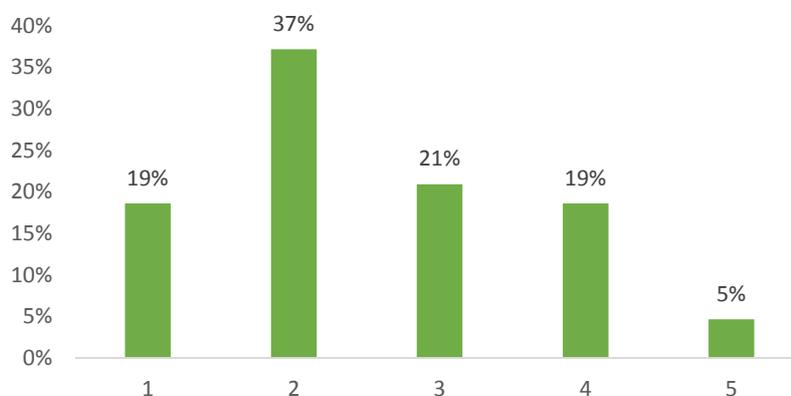
### 7.1.2 Perceptions of the proposal among young people

In addition to testing stakeholder and community perceptions of the proposals, a fundamentally important part of the research has been to consult with young people about them. Young people have been involved in the consultation in two main ways: through the community survey, to which 107 responses were received from young people, and through in-depth interviews with 14 young people. 92 of these responses were from students, with 12 respondents currently in some form of paid work, and two from young people Not in Education, Employment or Training.<sup>34</sup>

As part of the community survey, respondents under 25 years of age were asked a series of questions about their perception of the area they live in. Respondents were asked to what extent - on a scale of 1-5, where one equals completely disagree and five equals completely agree - they agree with a series of statements.

The first thing that participants were asked about was their perception of what there is to do for young people in their local area.

**Figure 7.3: “There are lots of things for young people to do in my area.” (1-5, where 5 is strongly agree)**



<sup>34</sup> In addition to these people, one person refused to answer this question.

As figure 7.3 indicates, perceptions among young people are generally negative, with 56% of young people disagreeing with the statement that there are lots of things for young people to do in their local area.

*“Where I live is quite boring. Places around here are more for tourists, there’s nothing for us to do unless the weather’s good and we can go to the beach.”*

**Mandy, 16 - Gwenlli**

*“Newcastle Emlyn is alright, but there isn’t much to do. It would be better with more youth clubs and activity centres for young people.”*

**Rhodri, 22- Newcastle Emlyn**

The qualitative data collected alongside the survey and through in-depth interviews indicate that lots of young people end up travelling in to local towns to find things to do.

*“I live in the middle of nowhere, no one lives near me. A lot of the time I come to Aberaeron, I don’t really do a lot here, we sit around and hang out and chat in cafes, the beach or wherever.”*

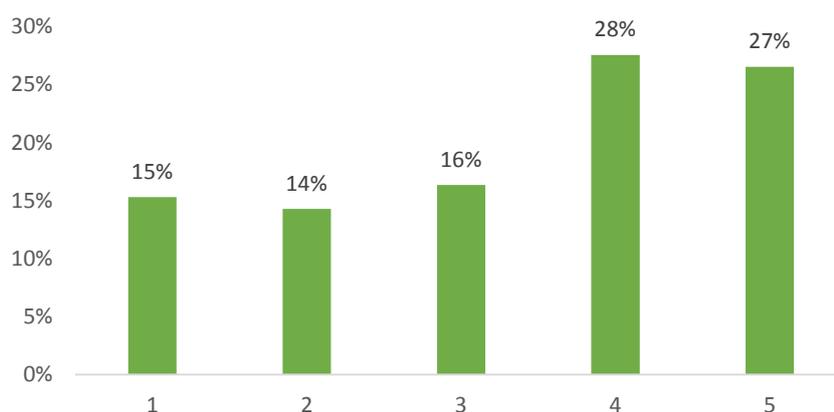
**Sian, 17 - Mydroilyn**

*“There’s nothing where I live, but sometimes I go to Cardigan and I visit the youth club there. There are lots of things to do, and I like playing ping pong and pool. I like it in Cardigan because that’s where my friends live.”*

**Tomos, 15 - Drefach**

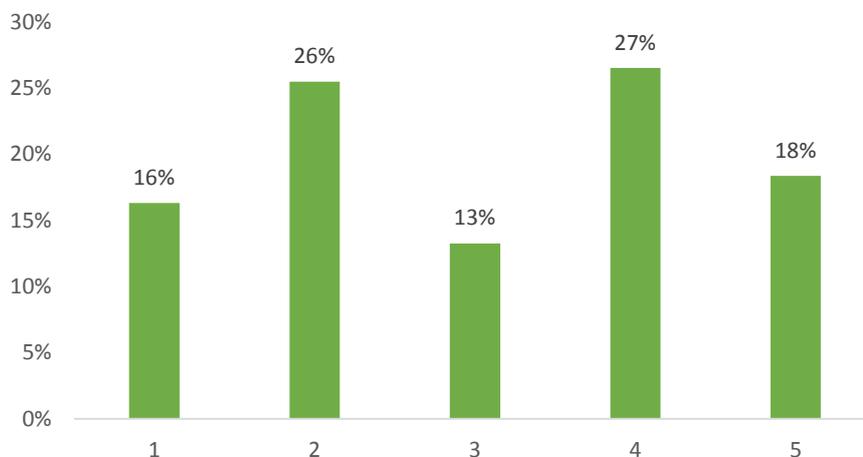
Consistent with these findings, figure 7.4 indicates that a majority of young people surveyed (55%) agreed with the statement “my town or village is boring.”

**Figure 7.4: “My town or village is boring” (1-5, where 5 is strongly agree)**



One of the biggest concerns expressed by young people, and a possible reason why young people agree with the statement that “my town or village is boring” is that there are not enough places for young people to spend time with their friends.

**Figure 7.5: “There’s nowhere for young people to hang out in my local area” (1-5, where 5 is strongly agree)**



As figure 7.5 demonstrates, perspectives on the availability of places for young people to hang out are mixed. At 45%, the proportion of respondents agreeing with the statement that “there’s nowhere for young people to hang out in my local area” slightly exceeds the proportion of respondents disagreeing with it (42%). The qualitative data collected around this question suggests that many of the young people that took part in the research found that the lack of safe places to spend time with their friends was a concern.

*“There is nothing to do in Tregaron. People just hang around at the bus stop. Lots of people drink and take drugs. I don’t like this. It makes me feel unsafe.”*

**Bleddyn, 16 - Tregaron**

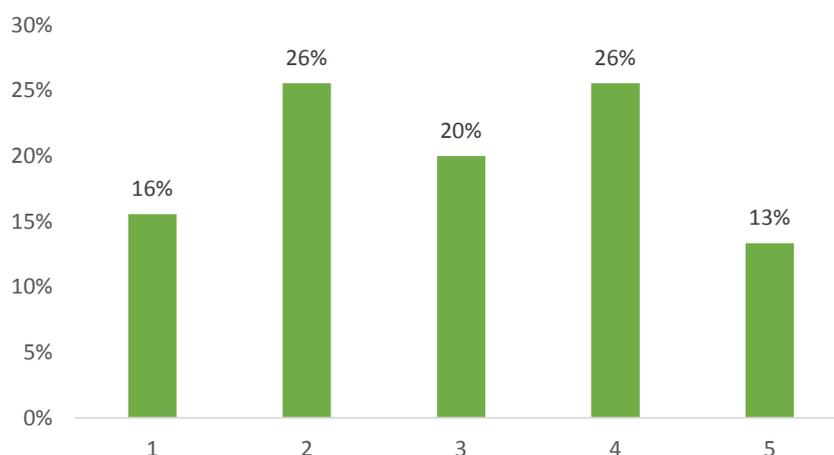
Indeed, a recurring theme in the qualitative data is that it is not just important for there to be places for young people to spend time together, but that it is also vitally important that these should be safe spaces.

*“There’s nothing really in my area, and there’s nowhere to go. There is a park, but young people aged over 14 aren’t allowed in it, there is no space for young people to go after school to be with their friends. The only time I see my friends is in youth club, it’s good and it’s important for us to have an area to hang out and talk to my friends.”*

**Ben, 17 - Llanarth**

Given that getting out of their own villages and going in to larger towns is important for lots of young people, participants were also asked about how easy it was for them to get to nearby towns. Clearly, for those young people living in larger population centres, this is not such an issue, but - as figure 7.6 indicates - this is an issue for 39% of respondents to the survey.

**Figure 7.6: “It’s hard for me and my friends to get to town” (1-5, where 5 is strongly agree)**



This theme also appeared in the qualitative in-depth interviews, where all of the respondents living in rural areas expressed frustration with the public transport available, and the limitations it imposes on them.

*“We have to get a bus to Aberporth to get anywhere. The bus from Gilgerran is every 2 hours and the latest one back from Cardigan is 9pm.”*

**Aled, 13 - Gilgerran**

*“It’s really difficult to see my friends. There are no buses that run through Mydroilyn, you have to go to Aberaeron to get anywhere else and the other buses then going on to anywhere else don’t link up.”*

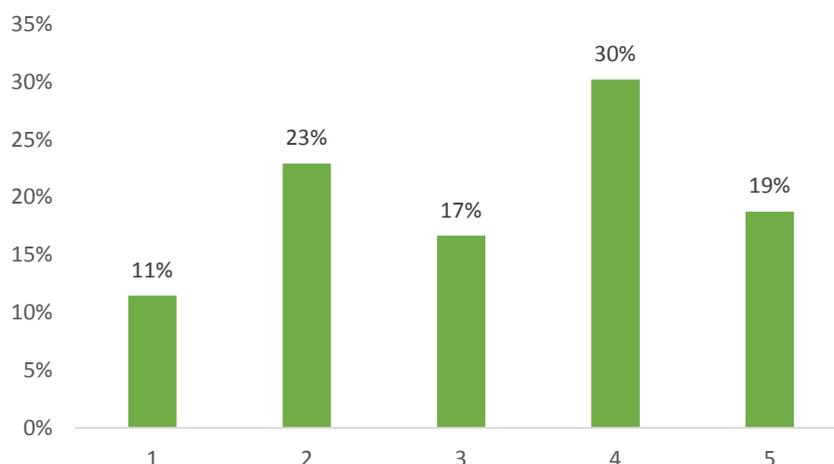
**Sian, 17 - Mydroilyn**

*“If I go anywhere, I go on the bus. There’s one every hour each way (Aberystwyth & Cardigan). Buses finish quite early though so if I want to go to Cardigan the latest bus home is 9.50pm, Aberaeron it’s 7.10pm, so the buses limit you and the T5 is seasonal so there’s more services when there’s more people around which is no good if you live here all year round.”*

**Mandy, 16 - Gwenlli**

Isolation is a serious issue for young people living in rural areas, and can have serious consequences, including on a young person’s well-being. As part of the online survey, participants were asked about whether they ever get bored or lonely because it’s hard to see their friends. As figure 7.7 indicates, 49% of respondents said that they sometimes get bored or lonely because it is hard to see their friends.

**Figure 7.7: “I sometimes get bored or lonely in the evenings because it’s hard to see my friends.” (1-5, where 5 is strongly agree)**



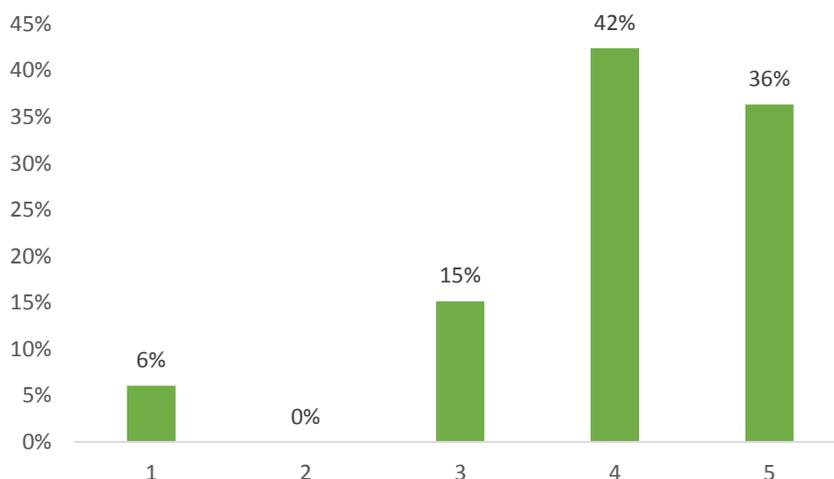
Although it is not possible to draw strong conclusions from this data, given the limitations of the methods used, it is consistent with a body of research which has identified specific negative well-being outcomes for rurally isolated young people.<sup>35</sup>

To summarise the previous sections, although findings were by no means unanimous, a significant proportion of young people surveyed reported a lack of things to do in their local area, dissatisfaction with the transport available to them, and negative well-being outcomes as a consequence of not being able to spend time with their friends. At the same time, this does not necessarily follow that mobile youth provision is the way to make these problems better. It could very well be the case that while young people have frustrations with their local area, mobile youth provision is not something they would be interested in.

As well as asking about their area, all 107 young people responding to the survey were asked how likely it was that they would attend youth clubs run from a bus on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is very unlikely and 5 is very likely). As figure 7.8 demonstrates, young people responding to this survey were generally positive about the idea of youth clubs run from this bus.

<sup>35</sup> Houghton, S. et al (2016) ‘It Hurts to be Lonely! Loneliness and Positive Mental Well-being in Australian Rural and Urban Adolescents’, *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools* 26, pp. 52-67.  
 Action with Communities in Rural England (2014) *Children and Young People Policy and Position Paper*, (available at: <http://www.acre.org.uk/rural-issues/young-people>).  
 Local Government Association (2017) *Health and well-being in rural areas* (available at: [https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.39\\_Health%20in%20rural%20areas\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.39_Health%20in%20rural%20areas_WEB.pdf)), p. 10.

**Figure 7.8: “How likely are you to attend a youth club if a bus comes to your local area?” (1-5 where 5 is very likely)**



The mean response to the question is 4.0, which suggests that, on the whole, young people have a very positive perspective about what this kind of youth provision could deliver in their local area. In addition to the survey data, qualitative data was also collected from the young people with whom the research team carried out in-depth interviews. As part of the interview, young people were shown pictures of the V-Pod from Vale of Glamorgan (detailed in Chapter 5.5 of this report) and asked the same question as in the survey.

*“Yes, it’d be fun with my friends. It looks fun and cool.”*

**Rob, 13 - Gilgerran**

*“I think it would be really popular if it went to Mydroilyn. I’d definitely make the effort to go, it’d be really enjoyable, it’s so cool!”*

**Sian, 17 - Mydroilyn**

Where participants were less emphatic in their support for the proposal, most suggested that they were potentially interested, but that it would depend on the activities that the Youth Service ran on the bus.

*“It would depend what they’re doing, I’m interested in learning, I love science and art, anything helpful and useful in life. I wouldn’t go if I had to do physical things, I don’t like doing sport in front of other people.”*

**Mandy, 16 - Gwenlli**

### 7.1.3 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on stakeholder interviews, a community survey distributed to young people and adults, and in-depth interviews with young people. Although the conclusions drawn here need to be treated with a degree of caution given the methodological limitations of the study, a number of key findings can be drawn from the research.

Rurality has been a prominent issue throughout the research. All stakeholders consulted identified rurality as a key barrier preventing them from delivering services effectively in rural parts of Ceredigion. In addition to this, significant numbers within the community, both young people and adults, reported that rurality is an issue that prevents young people from engaging with youth activities. Many stakeholders within Ceredigion County Council said that they were investigating some kind of equivalent, taking services to users in rural

**Finding 1: *Rurality is a significant barrier to effective service delivery for Ceredigion Youth Service and other council services that engage with young people, and one which requires innovative solutions.***

*Both public and private sector organisations face difficulties providing services in rural areas. Increasingly, these organisations are having to investigate different service models for rural areas, through increasing digitization of services and other means.*

areas.

The research then explored whether mobile youth provision is the best way for Ceredigion Youth Service to develop this innovative kind of service delivery and extend its reach across the county. The research found that the idea has a broad base of support among stakeholders, the community and young people. Where concerns were raised, these were largely fears that a mobile youth provision would be brought in to 'compete' with existing youth clubs in the county, or that a focus on this kind of provision would see resources drawn away from existing services.

**Finding 2: There is a broad consensus among the stakeholders and community members that took part in this consultation that mobile youth provision would be an effective way to overcome the rurality that prevents many young people from attending voluntary youth activities.**

*Developing mobile youth provision would help Ceredigion Youth Service to run open access youth clubs in more rural parts of the county. This would increase the coverage of youth clubs in rural areas and offers a more cost-effective way to engage young people in activities than devising ways of transporting young people to the activities.*

**Finding 3: Stakeholders perceive a mobile youth service as a cost-effective way of fulfilling Ceredigion Youth Service's commitment to providing open-access youth clubs across the county.**

At the same time, if mobile youth provision is to be used to run open-access youth clubs across Ceredigion, this must be an idea that young people are keen to engage with. This research demonstrates that, if we accept the limitations of the research carried out (acknowledged in Section 3.2 of this report), this idea has a broad base of support among young people in Ceredigion. The majority of young people who took part in this consultation said that they would like to attend provision run out of a vehicle, albeit with some caveats

**Finding 4: The idea of mobile youth provision in a form comparable to the service provided in Vale of Glamorgan is very popular among young people.**

*Young people were attracted to the space, the activities available within it, and the bright, engaging colour scheme of the Vale of Glamorgan V-Pod. It is likely that if something similar is developed by Ceredigion Youth Service, it will be very popular with young people.*

about activities, scheduling and location.

## 7.2 Targeted youth provision

A second motivation for developing mobile provision in Ceredigion is that it would allow Ceredigion Youth Service to do targeted youth provision. Details of what could be done from a mobile unit have been outlined earlier in the report. This section will outline stakeholder, community and young people's perceptions of the need for this kind of provision, and the effectiveness of a mobile unit in delivering this kind of service.

### 7.2.1 Stakeholder and community perceptions

Stakeholders were generally positive about the idea of a mobile youth service offering this kind of provision. There was broad agreement that this service could broaden and deepen the partnerships that Ceredigion Youth Service has already formed with voluntary youth work organisations. One stakeholder running a youth club in Tregaron suggested that this service could be used to add educational elements to the youth club's existing programme of activities.

*“Because we’re such a rural club, we don’t always get access to services (information about sex and relationships, drugs and alcohol, etc.). If the Youth Service could come and run workshops, this would really help us to enhance the services we give, and I know the young people we work with are really interested in learning more about all these things.”*

Stakeholders also suggested that the space could be used to provide training sessions for young people in a variety of areas, including skills training and outdoor activities.

In addition to using this service for information sessions and workshops, there was also tentative support for the idea of doing outreach youth work. While it would not be applicable to all of the stakeholders consulted, a small number said that they were aware of areas where young people congregate, and there have been reports of antisocial behaviour. Going out to meet with these groups could be an effective way of getting young people engaged with the Youth Service.

*“We know that there are groups of youngsters just hanging about, and it would be great if we could go out and engage them. For example, in Llanddewi Brefi, lots of young people walk in from nearby villages to stand under lamp posts. If we had a van or something to engage them with, that could build really positive relationships with these groups.”*

This kind of work need not be a response to problematic behaviour or trouble-spots. It can also be used as a way of reinforcing and supporting positive initiatives among young people. Working in this way validated the kind of informal youth groups independent organisation are doing, but also engages them with more formal aspects of youth support services. As one stakeholder suggested,

*“I think this way of doing things can be really effective. Recently, we’ve been working with a group of skateboarders in Cardigan. We’ve been supporting their activities, but also introducing other activities as well. For example, you could complement the skate jam event they are currently planning with a youth bus. Draw people in and then you can do youth work with them.”*

In much the same way as the stakeholders taking part in this consultation, the community responded positively to this proposal. As part of the community survey, participants were asked to identify areas that mobile youth provision could add value to what is already available for young people in Ceredigion. 92% of respondents to the community survey identified “workshops, information sessions and courses” as services they would like to see provided. This is backed up by the qualitative data collected, with a number of responses suggesting that getting people out of their houses and engaging with important educational resources is one of the most important impacts this kind of service could have.

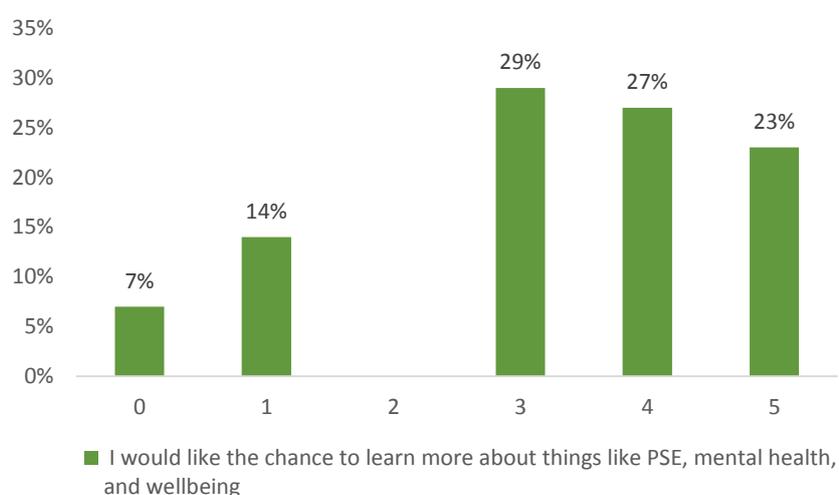
*“I think it sounds like an amazing thing to have, to be able to get to places where there isn't anything available for young people. Young people don't tend to hang around in places anymore, they're indoors either streaming things or playing X-box/ PS4. I think having something like this will draw young people from their homes, it will get them to socialise, to engage in positive things and learn about important things. I think it would be an amazing way to get young people to access support in an informal way, around substance misuse, mental health etc.”*

## 7.2.2 Perceptions among young people

In addition to stakeholder perceptions, the research has also sought to involve the opinions of young people within the consultation. In a number of respects, it is harder to ascertain young people’s perspective about targeted youth work. Whereas open access youth work depends on the voluntary commitment of young people and is open to all young people within the area, targeted youth work tends to be developed on an issue-by-issue basis. As outlined in Section 6.2.2 of this report, targeted youth work could involve going out into areas that are experiencing particularly high levels of antisocial behaviour and fostering relationships with these young people, or it could involve going in to schools and delivering workshops on particular issues such as drug and alcohol awareness or mental health.

To a certain extent, whether young people would engage with this kind of provision is dictated by the organisations - such as local schools - that Ceredigion Youth Service would partner with. At the same time, this consultation has sought to ascertain whether or not young people are interested in this kind of educational outreach work. To this end, participants in this research were asked a series of questions about whether they would be interested in learning more about things like PSE, mental health and well-being.

**Figure. 7.9: Young People’s Interest in Learning More About PSE, Mental Health and Well-being**



As figure 7.9 indicates, young people are generally interested in learning more about things like PSE, mental health, and well-being, with 79% of participants showing at least some interest in finding out more. This interest in using a mobile youth provision to undertake educational activities was supported by the qualitative data collected in the in-depth interviews.

*“I want to learn more about lots of things. I think the most important would be safety – how to stay safe. Maybe we could learn some self-defence. First aid classes would also be really important.”*

**Bethan, 12- Penparcau**

*“I’d like to learn more about mental health and well-being as both of these are a huge thing. Drug and alcohol awareness are also massively important for young people to have as much education and information as possible. Sexual health too, as in my house we don’t talk about it, so this would be great. Money management too so we get information we don’t get at school on banking, saving etc.”*

**Ben, 17 - Llanarth**

*“I want to learn more about mental health: it’s a big issue and comes up a lot. Well-being is important too as a lot of young people don’t appreciate their own well-being. Learning about body image, how to respect and look after your own bodies and gain self-esteem is important too. Drug & alcohol awareness, we need information on this and long term effects of drug misuse. Sexual health would be good too: young people need educating on this, but also learning about different sorts of pleasure. Relationships, as it’s important for younger ones too to learn about healthy relationships, abusive ones etc. Money management, how to save etc., I’m nearly 17 and don’t even know how to apply for a driving licence: we’re not taught these things in school.”*

**Mandy, 16 - Gwenlli**

### 7.2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has used stakeholder interviews, the community survey and a survey and in-depth interviews with young people to assess the proposal to use a mobile service to do targeted or ‘outreach’ youth work in Ceredigion. As noted previously, conclusions drawn from this research must be treated with a modicum of caution, as the sample engaging with the research through the survey and in-depth interviews is unlikely to be representative of Ceredigion as a whole. Despite these caveats, a number of findings can nonetheless be drawn from the research.

***Finding 5: There is strong support for Ceredigion Youth Service’s existing outreach provision, and a strong desire among stakeholders to strengthen and deepen it.***

*Stakeholders recognise the importance of the work that Ceredigion Youth Service does alongside other educational and youth work organisations in providing outreach work.*

***Finding 6: Mobile youth provision is perceived by stakeholders as an excellent way of extending Ceredigion Youth Service’s existing activities to do outreach work.***

## 8 Models of Service Delivery

As well as exploring the need and support for mobile youth provision, an important part of the remit of this research was to investigate what kind of service should be developed. It is important that any service that is developed should be sustainable, and best meet the specific needs of the Youth Service and users of the service. To this end, the research has also addressed a number of key questions about how the service should be delivered, including what kind of vehicle it would be best to use, scheduling and partnership arrangements, and how best to develop outreach work.

In answering these questions, this report has drawn on the same sources of data as employed in the previous chapter: stakeholder interviews with key stakeholders selected by Ceredigion Youth Service, a community survey, and a survey and in-depth interviews with young people. In addition to these sources of data, this section of the report draws on a focus group carried out with key stakeholders. Full details of who were consulted as part of this focus group have been included as part of Appendix A of this report.

### 8.1 What kind of vehicle should be used

As part of the consultation, consideration has been given to the type of vehicle that should be used to develop this service. In particular, this was discussed as part of the focus group held with stakeholder organisations. In this focus group, a number of options were considered, including a bus, a minibus, a van and trailer-based provision. It was generally accepted by all stakeholders consulted that whatever vehicle was acquired must be customised to meet the needs of the Youth Service: it is unlikely that an adequate vehicle can be bought 'off the shelf.'

Each of the options considered have advantages and disadvantages. For example, a full-sized bus, either single or double-decker, would clearly provide the largest space for the Youth Service to run activities, and at the same time, offer the greatest possibility for customisation. However, developing a service based on this kind of vehicle would also pose a number of challenges. In particular, it would be expensive (as well as incur high maintenance and running costs), necessitate staff holding additional certification to drive the vehicle, and pose difficulties on some of the smaller roads in Ceredigion. Of these, perhaps the most problematic is the certification required for driving a bus, which could potentially necessitate dedicating one or two members of staff with the licenses required to drive the bus. Conversely, a transit van or trailer used to carry materials and equipment to sites around the county would be a very cheap option, but one that would not provide any space for the Youth Service to work with young people.

Considering these options, there was a strong feeling among stakeholders that Ceredigion Youth Service should acquire a vehicle that provides a balance between size, ease of customisation and cost. Although the space would not be as large as a dedicated bus, it would have sufficient capacity for both seating and activities areas, capacity that could be increased with the addition of an awning or a gazebo. Although when freed from constraints of budget or space, a more complicated design could be envisaged, stakeholders agreed that the service should aim to include, as a minimum, a chillout space, space with a table in which to run training sessions or workshops, and some kind of kitchen facility.

***Recommendation 1: The best vehicle for this kind of service is a modified minibus or large van.***

*Although all the vehicles considered had benefits and disadvantages, a modified minibus provides the best blend of functionality, ease of customisation, affordability, and ease to drive. A brand-new modified minibus could be acquired for between £68,000-£90,000 depending on the level of customisation required. The cost of this could be reduced by converting an older, second-hand vehicle.*

*A minibus or large van would be sufficiently big enough to include some chillout space, a space with a table to run training sessions or workshops and a kitchen. It would also, as an added advantage, mean that Youth Service staff (or staff from partner services) can drive the vehicle with a standard minibus license.*

Among stakeholders consulted, particularly those that have previously run similar mobile services in the past, there was a strong sense that the Youth Service must decide whether this service is primarily about transporting people or providing a space in which to run activities. While the two functions can be integrated into one vehicle, this adds cost and means that each of these functions are delivered less effectively than they might otherwise be when part of dedicated services. Both external stakeholders and the Youth Service themselves identified that providing a space to work with young people, in both youth club and outreach settings, is the primary aim of this project.

***Recommendation 2: The vehicle should primarily act as a space in which to run activities rather than being used to transport young people.***

*While facilities to transport young people would add functionality, the requirements of this would reduce functionality in other areas and add to costs. As a consequence, the Youth Service should prioritise using the vehicle as a space in which to run activities rather than a vehicle in which to transport young people to activities.*

Stakeholders identified another key function of the vehicle as being to transport equipment to sites across the county. The Youth Service regularly uses equipment to run activities with young people. Likewise, if the bus is being used by partner organisations to run training sessions, then it is highly likely that equipment will also need to be transported. As a consequence, the service needs to provide this kind of facility. Although in-vehicle storage is an option, this would not be the most efficient use of the limited space within a modified minibus. A trailer that could be towed by the vehicle, or used independently, either by the Youth Service or a partner organisation, would be the best way of providing this kind of functionality.

**Recommendation 3: Value could be added to the service with a trailer to transport equipment.**

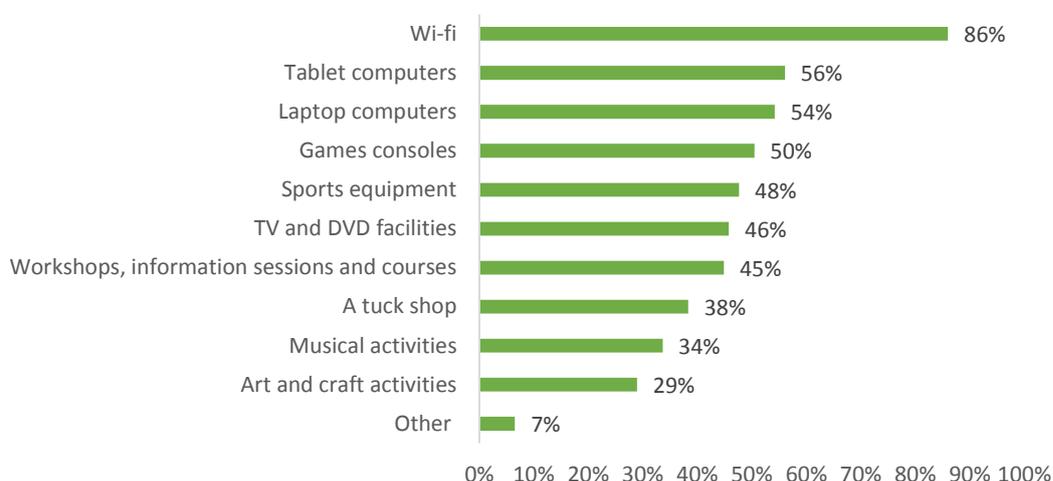
*Both Ceredigion Youth Service and partner organisations would need to transport equipment. While onboard storage is an option that could be pursued, the most effective means of providing this kind of equipment storage would be using a trailer.*

## 8.2 Design of the vehicle

The research team consulted with young people and stakeholders about activities relating to the design of the vehicle and facilities that should be included on the bus.

As part of the consultation, young people were shown equivalent provision provided by Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service (see report Section 5.5). Most respondents were very positive, suggesting that they would be interested in all the activities on the V-pod. Respondents were also asked about specific activities as well. As figure 8.1 indicates, wi-fi is the primary consideration for young people (selected by 86% of respondents), with other digital features such as tablet computers, laptop computers and games consoles featuring in 50% of responses or more.

**Figure 8.1: Activities to Include (Young People)**



The qualitative data collected alongside the survey and through in-depth interviews shows that for other, non-digital, activities, preferences were very specific. This means that while ‘arts and craft activities’ might only have been selected by 29% of respondents, for example, for those that did choose it, this was nonetheless a big priority for individuals that were keen on these activities.

*“A little canteen or corner shop in there would be great.”*

**Aled, 13 - Gilgerran**

*“Most important for me would be music equipment, like guitars and acoustic keyboards. Art stuff and sports equipment would be good too, so we can play team games.”*

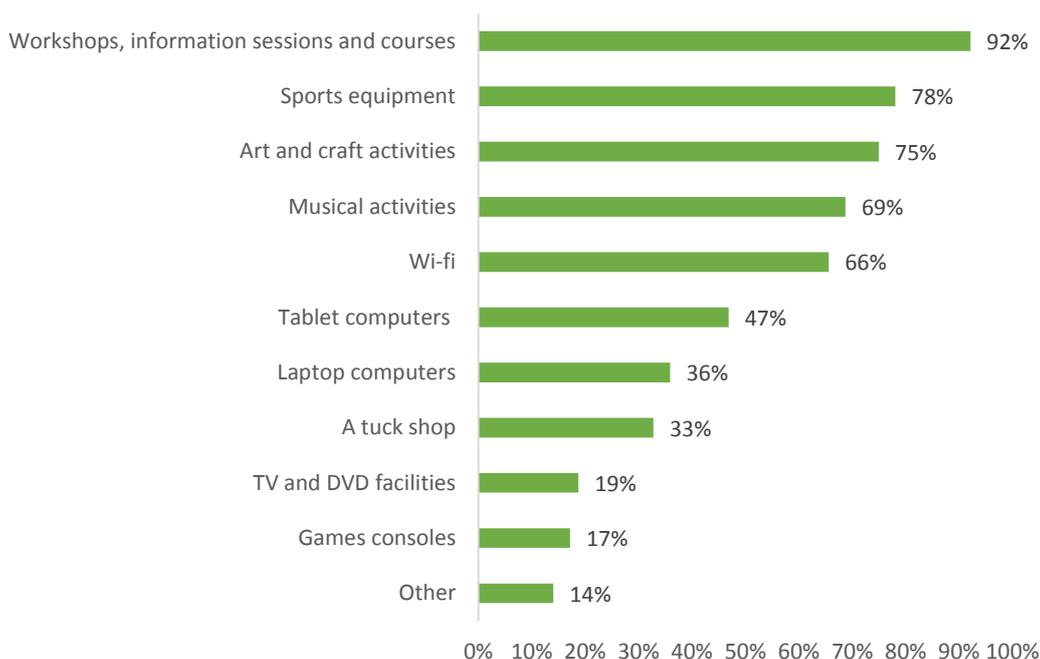
**Adam, 12 - Penparcau**

*“The consoles are really appealing, there’s a facility to charge your phone and have Wi-Fi and a facility to play your music, we need somewhere to relax as well so the separate space is good. Having flyers and information in there you can pick up and read for the educational side would be good.”*

**Sian, 17 - Mydroilyn**

There is some variation between the activities identified by young people and those identified by the community and stakeholders. While young people tend to emphasise digital activities, the community and stakeholders tended to prioritise educational.

**Figure 8.2: Activities to Include (Community Survey)**



Stakeholder perspectives about what the bus should include sit somewhere in between the survey with young people and the community survey. In general, one stakeholder in particular identified that the Adverse Childhood Experiences Agenda could be an important model for developing this kind of service.

*“I think it should be designed around the ACEs agenda, which promotes 4 aspects of resilience: Active and healthy (physical exercise, diet, cooking, sleep routine etc.); Emotional self-regulation (being able to understand emotions, emotional toolkit); Social Connections (how do you socialise, what are the limits of friendship); Secure, Safe Adults (making sure the people around become role models for children).”*

At the same time that stakeholders had views on what kind of activities are important to include in a mobile youth service, the majority of stakeholders stressed that it is very important for young people to have a sense of ownership over the design of the space and the activities that take place. This is not just important in the sense that young people are more likely to engage in activities that they have had some kind of say in, but also that designing a service could be an important development opportunity for young people.

***Recommendation 4: Young people should be actively involved in the design of the bus.***

*Young people’s voices should be involved as much as possible in the design of the service.*

If the service is to be run out of a minibus, some concessions will have to be made to ensure that the limited space available can be adapted to multiple purposes. Making as many of the fittings as possible removable would maximise the interior of the minibus as a multifunctional, multi-use space.

***Recommendation 5: As much as possible, the space should be flexible so that it can be used for various different activities.***

*It might not be possible to use the space for all desired purposes at the same time. A removable table might, for example, allow a training space to be used as a chillout space at other times.*

*As much as possible, fittings on the bus should be removable. This is particularly true of any technology included in the bus. While some features, TV screens for example, might have to be fitted, where possible, features should be removable so as to increase the flexibility of the space, but also reduce potential obsolescence of built-in technology.*

***Recommendation 6: Where possible, technology and other facilities should be removable so as to maximise the flexibility of the space and ensure that the vehicle is not left with obsolete technology that is difficult to remove.***

There was a consistent understanding among stakeholders, community members and young people, that the service should be as accessible as possible to people with disabilities. A number of suggestions about what access adaptations the bus should have were mentioned at various points during the research process. These suggestions included handles at the entrance and special seats, as well as wheelchair access ramps and space for wheelchairs onboard. While this research has given some consideration to the potential access modifications that could be made, this consultation has not gathered a sufficiently robust body of evidence upon which to make specific recommendations about access.

***Recommendation 7: Ceredigion Youth Service should work closely with Tŷm Plant Anabl and children with disabilities in order to ensure that the correct access adjustments are made.***

*While it is not possible to make specific recommendations about access adjustments based on this research, the Youth Service should take special care to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made.*

### 8.3 Location and scheduling of universal open access provision

From the stakeholder interviews conducted as part of this research, a number of key recommendations emerged concerning how resources should best be used to widen access to universal open access youth provision in Ceredigion. The first is that any delivery model for universal youth provision run from a kind of a mobile unit should take into consideration the existing youth provision in the county and consult with existing providers when choosing locations. There was a general perception among stakeholders that in areas where there are existing services, a mobile youth provision would not complement existing provision. Rather, any such service should be used to extend provision into parts of the county that do not currently have youth clubs or good transport links to existing youth clubs.

***Recommendation 8: Ceredigion Youth Service should work with existing youth clubs to design a service that complements existing services rather than competes with them.***

*Although non-statutory youth clubs involved in this consultation were broadly supportive of the proposals, there was a slight concern that a mobile youth provision would 'compete' with existing youth clubs in the county. Equally, if youth clubs run from a mobile provision are to be successful, they are likely to require close co-ordination with existing clubs to ensure that clubs are effectively spread out across Ceredigion.*

The second recommendation that emerges from stakeholder interviews is that consistency of service is a vital part of any successful youth provision. It is important that young people are able to make a youth club a regular part of their lives, and as a consequence, regularity of service should be a core principal in designing any open access youth provision. Stakeholders with previous experience of running mobile services in the county suggested that it may take time to develop a critical mass of interest in a new service, and the Youth Service should not expect to see immediate results. It was generally suggested that the areas with greatest need should be identified, and then on the basis of this, the Youth Service should try to develop users in these areas.

***Recommendation 9: Ceredigion Youth Service should make regularity a cornerstone of the youth clubs it runs from its mobile provision.***

*Consistency will be very important for this kind of youth provision. Stakeholder interviews and a review of relevant literature suggests that youth work has to be a regular weekly, fortnightly or monthly fixture within towns, with the same workers assigned to the service so as to build-up long-term relationships with the young people.*

In addition to consistency of service, stakeholder consultation also indicated that it would be easiest to cultivate a user base where local stakeholders, themselves embedded in the local community, are engaged and involved in promoting the service. The potential benefits of doing this range from increased local knowledge about the local area, publicity for the project and brokerage with other community groups.

***Recommendation 10: Ceredigion Youth Service should cultivate relationships with key stakeholders within the communities in which it works.***

*Developing positive relationships with key stakeholders in the communities in which it works will help Ceredigion Youth Service to develop a sustainable, well-attended service, and potentially overcome any concerns about competition between the Youth Service's activities and other local initiatives.*

## 8.4 Models for street-based youth work

With regard to best practice in detached and outreach youth work, continuity continues to be an important theme. The International Network of Social Street Workers suggests that the three keys to success in street-based work are:

- Long-term work
- Slow work that doesn't expect immediate results
- Continuous engagement<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> International Network of Social Street Workers, (2009), *Street Work: An International Handbook*, p. 24.

In terms of service design for a mobile youth provision in Ceredigion, serious consideration should be given to the model of service delivery chosen, to ensure that if Ceredigion Youth Service pursues outreach or street-based youth work, it does so in a way that provides for consistency of service. Consistency is important in a number of aspects. First, the consistency of timings, to ensure that youth workers are a regular presence in the community, appearing regularly at the same time and on the same days of the week. Secondly, relationships are important when doing outreach youth work, so it is important that the same workers return to the same place on a regular basis. As the International Network of Social Street Workers recommends in its handbook of street work:

*“As a street worker, you become recognised as a landmark or reference point. So, continuity is important. If you move on, you should introduce the new street worker to the area and to the young people. This ‘transfer of trust’ is vital and may take several months. And if you are starting somewhere, you should try to find out as much as you can from previous workers.”<sup>37</sup>*

These themes were repeated in stakeholder interviews, with stakeholders suggesting that regularity is just as important to outreach street work as it is to attempts to develop open-access youth clubs across the county.

*“If you’re doing outreach work, the only way to work with people is through routine. It helps to build trust, and young people can build you into their routine.”*

*“I have some experience of doing outreach work. Where it’s been successful, we’ve been consistent, running sessions once a month all year round.”*

Among stakeholders, there was a perception that a long-term view is crucial when deciding who to engage with and how to engage with young people through street-based youth

***Recommendation 11: Ceredigion Youth Service should seek consistency throughout any street-based youth work it undertakes***

Using a mobile youth service to do targeted, street-based work requires long-term commitment to an area, both in terms of scheduling and staff involved. Ceredigion Youth Service would be best served identifying fewer areas to do this kind of work and committing to regular, sustained engagement than trying to spread their resource too thinly.

work.

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<sup>37</sup> International Network of Social Street Workers, (2009), *Street Work: An International Handbook*, p. 6.

## 8.5 Developing a sustainable service

One of the key requirements of the brief to which this report is a response was that the research should investigate ways in which a mobile youth service should be developed sustainably. This question was a consistent theme running throughout this consultation, and a particular focus for stakeholder interviews and the stakeholder focus group.

Throughout the consultation, it was made very clear that Ceredigion Youth Service has to make its very limited funds go as far as possible. To this end, it was suggested that the sustainability of the service will depend on making the most of limited resources and drawing in funding from elsewhere to contribute to the costs of the service. This section draws on conversations with the Youth Service, stakeholders from other Ceredigion County Council services and external stakeholders, as well as the focus group with stakeholders, to make a series of recommendations about how a sustainable service could best be achieved.

One of the key reasons for recommending that the service should use a modified van or minibus rather than a larger bus was that this would remove the need for staff attached to the bus. Stakeholders felt that there were two main reasons why this would be a good idea. The first is that a smaller service, which could be driven by anyone with a standard minibus license, would increase the functionality and versatility of the provision, in that it could be driven by a greater number of Youth Service staff, and even staff from any external partner organisations that might work with the Youth Service in the future.

The second reason why stakeholders identified an advantage in a minibus is that it would not necessitate staff attached to the service. Not hiring staff would represent a substantial cost saving for the Youth Service. The average Youth Worker salary sits at Grade 7 which is around £22,401 annually, when factoring in National Insurance contributions and pension contributions. This could end up being in excess of £25,000 per annum for a member of staff, plus any training and equipment costs that might be required for the employee.

***Recommendation 12: Ceredigion Youth Service should not seek to hire staff for its mobile youth provision***

*For budgetary reasons, and to enhance the flexibility of the service provided, Ceredigion Youth Service should seek to develop a service without attached staff. Additional staff could be hired by the Youth Service to cover any increase in workload, but as much as possible, responsibility for the mobile service should be spread out to increase functionality and versatility.*

In addition to saving money through not hiring staff dedicated to the vehicle, savings could

***Recommendation 13: The Youth Service should look to run the vehicle as part of the local authority's fleet of service vehicles***

*Integrating the vehicle into Ceredigion County Council's fleet of service vehicles will help to reduce costs incurred if the Youth Service tries to develop mobile youth provision as a stand-alone service.*

be achieved by treating the vehicle as part of Ceredigion County Council's fleet of service vehicles. This would clearly have the potential to save money through economies of scale and avoiding the duplication of work in areas such as maintenance and administration.

At the same time that the Youth Service should seek to make use of the organisational efficiencies and economies of scale associated with integrating the service into Ceredigion County Council's wider fleet, ideally this should not come at the expense of important development opportunities that this service can provide. A number of stakeholders, both within the Youth Service and from other organisations doing work with young people in Ceredigion, made the point that a key youth work strategy is getting older members of youth groups involved in the management of the clubs they attend. This principle could easily be applied in the case of mobile youth provision, with young people able to use the service as a development opportunity.

***Recommendation 14: The Youth Service should look to use the development and management of the service as a development opportunity for young people***

*Involving young people in the design, management and delivery of services is a part of standard youth work practice and can provide important development opportunities to young people. There are two obvious opportunities for this in the youth bus project: first, to involve young people in the initial design of the bus, and secondly, to involve young people in the ongoing operation of the bus.*

## 8.6 Opportunities for partnership with other organisations

One of the key opportunities for the Youth Service to develop a sustainable service will be through forming partnerships with other departments within Ceredigion County Council and potentially identify organisations outside the local authority as well with which to develop partnerships. Again, this was an issue that was consulted on throughout the research, mainly through the stakeholder interviews and again in the stakeholder focus group.

The main findings in this area are that there is an enormous appetite for collaborative working with the Youth Service, and a number of potential models for collaboration, but little in the way of clarity about how this should optimally work. Most organisations consulted during the stakeholder interviews identified potential collaborations with the Youth Service, including using the vehicle as a space in which to deliver training sessions or workshops, ‘piggybacking’ off the bus to send out staff from other services to run activities alongside youth clubs in rural communities, and using the bus to run drug awareness and PSE workshops at schools.

While the desire for collaboration is an important opportunity for developing the service, the absence of a clear model according to which these collaborations should function, means that the Youth Service should continue to take leadership of the project. In the first instance, the Youth Service should design a service that best meets its own needs and then look at ways of drawing in other streams of funding to make the model sustainable. Giving too much consideration to potential partners’ views at this early stage of the project runs the risk of diluting the service that the Youth Service ultimately delivers.

***Recommendation 15: The Youth Service should, in the first instance, develop a service that meets their own needs, and then try to identify other partners who want to ‘buy in’ to this service***

*Another way of dealing with this problem would be to develop the service in conjunction with partner organisations. While this would have the benefit of securing buy-in from day one, it has the major disadvantage of diluting the Youth Service’s influence and control over the project, running the risk of trying to design a service that is suitable for too many stakeholders, and ultimately satisfying none.*

While stakeholders indicated that there were clear advantages to the Youth Service taking the lead to design and deliver this service as the primary user, they also indicated a preference for the Youth Service later working with other organisations. Doing so would add value to what other services provide for young people across Ceredigion, and if this was a paid service provided to partner organisations contribute to the long-term sustainability of the provision.

Stakeholders suggested that for effective partnerships to be formed, there needs to be a formal relationship between the Youth Service and partner organisations. This would allow both organisations to be clear about what they can expect from the arrangement, with both Ceredigion Youth Service and partner organisations having certainty about how often they would have access to the service. While stakeholders had different opinions about how best to formalise these relationships, there seems to be a consensus that Service Level Agreements would be the best way to achieve certainty about levels of service and financial contributions.

***Recommendation 16: When long-term partners have been identified, the Youth Service should seek to form partnership agreements with SLAs to establish what levels of access each organisation can expect***

*When looking to form partnerships, both the Youth Service and partner organisations would benefit from bringing an element of formality to the relationship.*

## 9 Summary of Findings and Recommendations

This section provides a conclusion to this report by way of summarising its findings. This research has sought to answer two main questions:

*“Is there a need for Ceredigion Youth Service to develop mobile youth provision?”*

and:

*“Is it feasible for Ceredigion Youth Service to provide a mobile youth service? If so, how should it be provided?”*

In response to these questions, this report has drawn a series of findings in response to the first question, and a series of recommendations in response to the second. As noted in the third chapter of this report, there are some limitations to the methodology of this report, particularly around the selection of participants for the survey and in-depth interviews with young people. Nonetheless, beyond these slight caveats that must be acknowledged, we can be confident about the robustness of the report’s findings. This section will now briefly summarise these findings, before outlining them in full in the following two sections.

Broadly speaking this report has found that there is a need for Ceredigion Youth Service to explore innovative approaches to extending the reach of its activities in the more rural parts of the county. Stakeholder interviews, the community survey and interviews with young people all suggest that a mobile youth service would be an effective way of extending reach, through running open access youth clubs and doing targeted outreach and street-based work.

Stakeholder consultation suggested that the most appropriate way to develop this service would be through a large van or minibus, with a trailer for transporting equipment. This is a smaller vehicle than some proposed alternatives, but one which is more flexible, and can be driven by more people within the Youth Service and partner organisations than a larger, bus-based service. Another key finding is that young people should be as involved as possible in the design and management of the service, as this would provide important development opportunities for those involved. Finally, it is very important that Ceredigion Youth Service looks to form partnerships with organisations it works with, and SLAs with partner services and even, potentially, external partner organisations would be the best way to formalise these relationships.

## 9.1 The need for mobile youth provision

As indicated above, one of the key drivers of the research has been answering the question:

***“Is there a need for Ceredigion Youth Service to develop mobile youth provision?”***

This research has answered this question by reviewing relevant documentation, conducting stakeholder interviews, running a stakeholder focus group, and consulting with young people on both a survey and an in-depth basis. A number of key findings have emerged through this research:

**Finding 1: Rurality is a significant barrier to effective service delivery for Ceredigion Youth Service and other council services that engage with young people, and one which requires innovative solutions**

Both public and private sector organisations face difficulties providing services in rural areas. Increasingly, these organisations are having to investigate different service models for rural areas, through increasing digitisation of services and other means.

**Finding 2: There is a broad consensus among the stakeholders and community members that took part in this consultation that mobile youth provision would be an effective way to overcome the rurality that prevents many young people from attending voluntary youth activities**

Developing mobile youth provision would help Ceredigion Youth Service to run open access youth clubs in more rural parts of the county. This would increase the coverage of youth clubs in rural areas and offers a more cost-effective way to engage young people in activities than devising ways of transporting young people to the activities.

**Finding 3: Stakeholders perceive a mobile youth service as a cost-effective way of fulfilling Ceredigion Youth Service’s commitment to providing open-access youth clubs across the county**

At the same time, there is little point trying to run youth clubs from a mobile service if young people are not likely to attend.

**Finding 4: The idea of mobile youth provision in a form comparable to the service provided in Vale of Glamorgan is very popular among young people**

Young people were attracted to the space, the activities available within it, and the bright, engaging colour scheme of the Vale of Glamorgan V-Pod. It is likely that if something similar is developed by Ceredigion Youth Service, it will be very popular with

As well as running open-access, universally accessible youth clubs, Ceredigion Youth Service also provides more targeted, outreach provision, providing support across a number of areas.

**Finding 5: There is strong support for Ceredigion Youth Service’s existing outreach provision, and a strong desire among stakeholders to strengthen and deepen it**

Stakeholders recognise the importance of the work that Ceredigion Youth Service does alongside other educational and youth work organisations in providing outreach work.

**Finding 6: Mobile youth provision is perceived by stakeholders as an excellent way of extending Ceredigion Youth Service’s existing activities to do outreach work**

## 9.2 The feasibility of developing mobile youth provision in Ceredigion and how it could be provided

In addition to looking at the need for mobile youth provision in Ceredigion, this research has also examined the feasibility of developing this kind of service. In so doing, it has sought to answer the following question:

***“Is it feasible for Ceredigion Youth Service to provide a mobile youth service? If so, how should it be provided?”***

This section will now summarise the recommendations that can be made on the basis of the research carried out in compiling this report.

**Recommendation 1: The best vehicle for this kind of service is a modified minibus or large van**

Although all the vehicles considered had benefits and disadvantages, a modified minibus provides the best blend of functionality, ease of customisation, affordability, and ease to drive. A brand-new modified minibus could be acquired for between £68,000-£90,000 depending on the level of customisation required. The cost of this could be reduced by converting an older, second-hand vehicle.

A minibus or large van would be sufficiently big enough to include some chillout space, a space with a table to run training sessions or workshops and a kitchen. It would also, as an added advantage, mean that Youth Service staff (or staff from partner services) can drive the vehicle with a standard minibus license.

**Recommendation 2: The vehicle should primarily act as a space in which to run activities rather than being used to transport young people**

While facilities to transport young people would add functionality, the requirements of this would reduce functionality in other areas and add to costs. As a consequence, the Youth Service should prioritise using the vehicle as a space in which to run activities rather than a vehicle in which to transport young people to activities.

**Recommendation 3: Value could be added to the service with a trailer to transport equipment**

Both Ceredigion Youth Service and partner organisations would need to transport equipment. While onboard storage is an option that could be pursued, the most effective means of providing this kind of equipment storage would be using a trailer.

**Recommendation 4: Young people should be actively involved in the design of the bus**

Young people's voices should be involved as much as possible in the design of the service.

**Recommendation 5: As much as possible, the space should be flexible so that it can be used for various different activities**

It might not be possible to use the space for all desired purposes at the same time. A removable table might, for example, allow a training space to be used as a chillout space at other times.

As much as possible, fittings on the bus should be removable. This is particularly true of any technology included in the bus. While some features- TV screens for example- might have to be fitted, where possible, features should be removable so as to increase the flexibility of the space, but also reduce potential obsolescence of built-in technology.

**Recommendation 6: Where possible, technology and other facilities should be removable so as to maximise the flexibility of the space and ensure that the vehicle is not left with obsolete technology that is difficult to remove**

As well as ensuring that the service contains the right activities for the Youth Service to carry out the activities it wants to, it is important that the activities are available to as many young people as possible.

**Recommendation 7: Ceredigion Youth Service should work closely with Tîm Plant Anabl and children with disabilities in order to ensure that the correct access adjustments are made**

While it is not possible to make specific recommendations about access adjustments based on this research, the Youth Service should take special care to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made.

**Recommendation 8: Ceredigion Youth Service should work with existing youth clubs to design a service that complements existing services rather than competes with them**

Although non-statutory youth clubs involved in this consultation were broadly supportive of the proposals, there was a slight concern that a mobile youth provision would 'compete' with existing youth clubs in the county. Equally, if youth clubs run from a mobile provision are to be successful, they are likely to require close co-ordination with existing clubs to ensure that clubs are effectively spread out across Ceredigion.

**Recommendation 9: Ceredigion Youth Service should make regularity a cornerstone of the youth clubs it runs from its mobile provision**

Consistency will be very important for this kind of youth provision. Stakeholder interviews and a review of relevant literature suggests that youth work has to be a regular weekly, fortnightly or monthly fixture within towns, with the same workers assigned to the service so as to build-up long-term relationships with the young people.

**Recommendation 10: Ceredigion Youth Service should cultivate relationships with key stakeholders within the communities in which it works**

Developing positive relationships with key stakeholders in the communities in which it works will help Ceredigion Youth Service to develop a sustainable, well-attended service, and potentially overcome any concerns about competition between the Youth Service's activities and other local initiatives.

**Recommendation 11: Ceredigion Youth Service should seek consistency throughout any street-based youth work it undertakes**

Using a mobile youth service to do targeted, street-based work requires long-term commitment to an area, both in terms of scheduling and staff involved. Ceredigion Youth Service would be best served identifying fewer areas to do this kind of work and committing to regular, sustained engagement than trying to spread their resource too thinly.

**Recommendation 12: Ceredigion Youth Service should not seek to hire staff for its mobile youth provision**

For budgetary reasons, and to enhance the flexibility of the service provided, Ceredigion Youth Service should seek to develop a service without attached staff. Additional staff could be hired by the Youth Service to cover any increase in workload, but as much as possible, responsibility for the mobile service should be spread out to increase functionality and versatility.

**Recommendation 13: The Youth Service should look to run the vehicle as part of the local authority's fleet of service vehicles**

Integrating the vehicle into Ceredigion County Council's fleet of service vehicles will help to reduce costs incurred if the Youth Service tries to develop mobile youth provision as a stand-alone service.

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Involving young people in the design, management and delivery of services is a part of standard youth work practice and can provide important development opportunities to young people. There are two obvious opportunities for this in the youth bus project: first, to involve young people in the initial design of the bus, and secondly, to involve young people in the ongoing operation of the bus.

**Recommendation 15: The Youth Service should, in the first instance, develop a service that meets their own needs, and then try to identify other partners who want to 'buy in' to this service**

Another way of dealing with this problem would be to develop the service in conjunction with partner organisations. While this would have the benefit of securing buy-in from day one, it has the major disadvantage of diluting the Youth Service's influence and control over the project, running the risk of trying to design a service that is suitable for too many stakeholders, and ultimately satisfying none.

**Recommendation 16: When long-term partners have been identified, the Youth Service should seek to form partnership agreements with SLAs to establish what levels of access each organisation can expect**

When looking to form partnerships, both the Youth Service and partner organisations would benefit from bringing an element of formality to the relationship.

# Appendix A: List of Participants in the Consultation

## Participants in stakeholder interviews

The following individuals and organisations took part in the scoping and stakeholder interviews that were undertaken as part of this consultation:

Pete Bradley - Tros Gynnal Plant

Dai Bryer - URDD Ceredigion

Simon Champion - Tîm Plant Anabl, Ceredigion

Lowri Evans - Ceredigion Youth Service

Billy Goodfellow - Team Around the Family

Elen James - Corporate Lead Officer – Lifelong Learning and Culture

Gethin Jones - Ceredigion Youth Service

Sally Jones - Area 43

Jamie Jones-Mead - Ceredigion Youth Justice and Prevention Service

Cathryn Morgan - Families First Co-ordinator

Vanessa Owens - Aberporth Youth Club

Steve Parkin - Tysul Youth

Rhian Rees - Manager of Integrate Children's Centre

Nicky Sandford - Service Development Officer, Ceredigion County Council

## Participants in stakeholder focus groups

The following individuals and organisations took part in the stakeholder focus group that was carried out as part of this consultation:

Simon Campion - Tîm Plant Anabl, Ceredigion

Alwyn Davies - Active Young People, Ceredigion

Elen Ebenezer - Communities for Work+

Nia Evans - Iechyd Da, Ceredigion

Mark Gleeson - Hyforddiant Ceredigion Training

Gethin Jones - Ceredigion Youth Service

Sally Jones - Area 43

Jamie Jones-Mead - Ceredigion Youth Justice and Prevention Service