

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19
ar blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

COV - 11
Ymateb gan: Abergele Community
Action Ltd

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education
Committee

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak
on children and young people in Wales

COV - 11
Response from: Abergele Community Action Ltd

Abergele Community Action Ltd (formerly Abergele Youth Action Ltd) has been working in the community with young people aged between 10 and 25 since 2001. From discos and gig nights in the early days to an internet cafe and community hub since 2005.

More recently, with grant funding, we have refurbished a building adjacent to the local secondary school. The building is known as Abergele Youth Shed and consists of two rooms. One is fitted with two kitchen workstations for cooking and a lounge area for sharing meals together. The second room provides a workshop space where young people can learn new skills and gain confidence and self esteem by working on practical projects of their choosing.

We have funding for three years from BBC Children in Need and the National Lottery Community Fund to staff the project with one full time youth worker and two part time workers and are able to provide activities after school and early evening as well as during school holidays. The facility is available during the day time for those not in employment, education or training.

Most of the young people that we work with are, or are at risk of becoming, excluded from social, educational, economic and digital opportunities. We work closely with the Inclusion Support Team at the local school in identifying those young people most at risk.

Since the beginning of 'lockdown' we have tried to contact all of the young people using mobile phones, social media, Instagram and zoom meetings. We have daily online activities and discussion as well as quizzes to encourage the young people to remain engaged. This is no substitute for one to one support and guidance.

Our greatest concern is for those vulnerable young people that may be trapped in abusive or violent situations in the home with no way out. With that in mind, we are working closely with the school in an attempt to reach these vulnerable young people. Some of them have already been identified as 'at risk' and are able to go to school along with the children of key workers, but inevitably, we will not have identified them all and some will

slip through the net. We are currently working on an online resource using QR codes to direct the young people to resources under a variety of headings that will be of most use to them in different situations.

At the end of lock down when 'normal' life resumes we will work hard to re-establish the group and we are already preparing resources which will focus on mental health well being. Our young people need us now more than ever.

As a voluntary organisation, safeguarding is of utmost importance to us and we risk assess all of our activities including the use of social media and we will continue to maintain contact with the young people throughout the current situation and in the future.

I hope that this helps you to understand a small part of Wales during this unprecedented situation that we all find ourselves in.