

FINDING FUTURES

With young people in Powys



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Project funded by



HEADLINES

FINDING

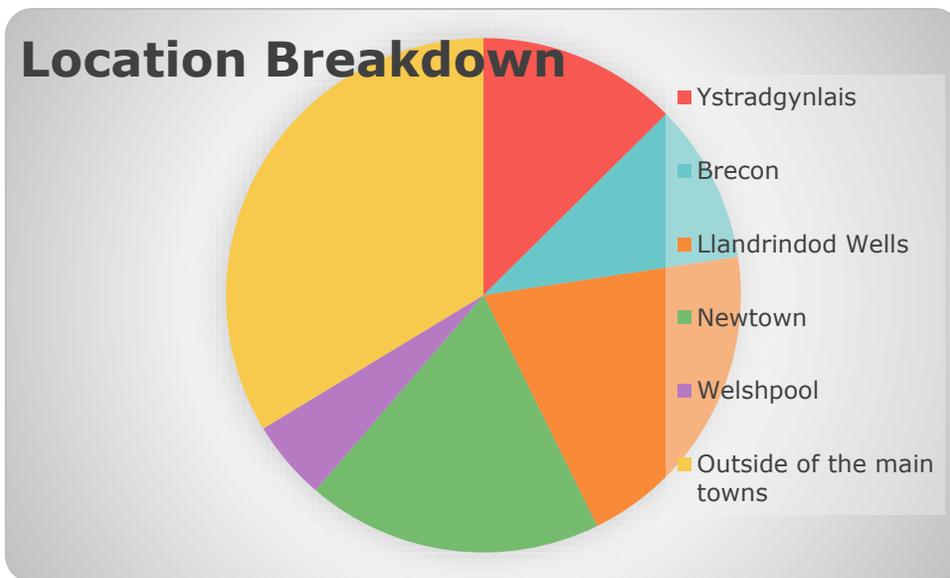
FUTURES

- **WORKED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE “OFF THE RADAR” NOT ON THE STATUTORY SERVICE BOOKS, OR WHERE THE SUPPORT WASN'T MAKING ANY DIFFERENCE**
- **ABLE TO GIVE INTENSIVE PERSON-CENTRED SUPPORT AROUND WHAT'S IMPORTANT IN THEIR LIVES**
- **HELPED 199 YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS RURAL POWYS FIND THEIR FUTURES.**

FINDING FUTURES THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE WORKED WITH

In total 199 individual young people worked with us throughout the project, with a small number of our young people needing the support for the full 3 years.

Young people were evenly split across the 3 shires of Powys.
Brecknockshire: 34%, Radnorshire: 28%, Montgomeryshire: 36%.



The largest number of young people self-referred (26%), followed by those referred by the Job Centre (18%) and Careers Wales (15%). Overall 28 different organisations or professionals referred young people to work with us.

42% were female, 57% were male, with 2 young people not identifying with either sex.

8% of young people identified as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer).

The youngest was 15 years old and the oldest 26. 28% fell in the 15-18 age bracket.

"I've been given nothing but positivity and great opportunities from the start"

"We would have really struggled to find the money to buy her boots and overalls (that was stressing me) – keep up the good work, you've helped us immensely"

"Great attitude toward young people and manages to bring the best out of them, working on their behalf and putting them first"

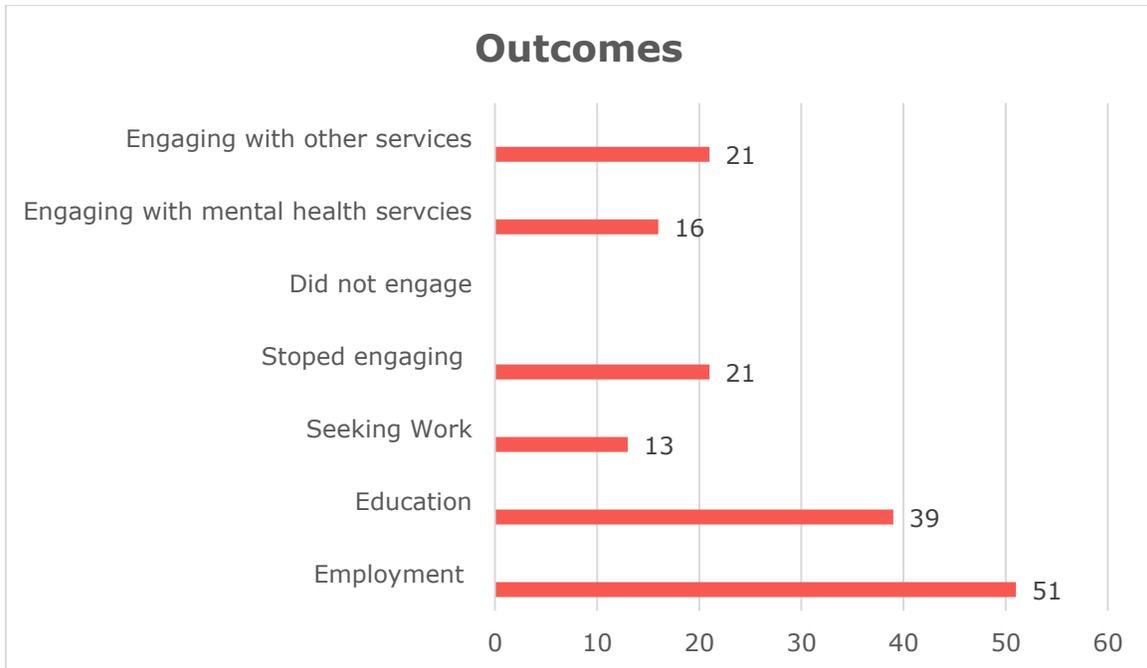
FINDING FUTURES WHAT WE ACHIEVED TOGETHER

Most young people had under 5 visits (54%), with only 30% requiring more than 5 visits. The maximum number of visits for one person was 41. Visits were to home or where ever the young person wanted to meet, for instance a café or a park. Of all the young people working with us only 16% did not receive any visits, this was because of pulling out before a visit for example finding a job, or no longer wanting our support for other positive reasons.

At least 21 young people became included in peer support groups. This peer support is proving sustainable, with young people now meeting independently and for instance having sleepovers in each other's houses countering the before-project isolation. For our end of year celebration, we took the peer groups to Bristol Zoo: this was their choice and a brilliant day. It was a wonderful end to a great project seeing them mixing, sharing experience and supporting each other on the high ropes course.

“We have learnt to be person-led and were continually impressed and excited by the young people we worked with as we got to know them.”

70% of the young people referred to the project achieved their positive outcomes working with us. The graph over the page shows the breakdown of outcomes for our young people.



Of the 30% that did not engage with the project, a small number moved out of the area to have greater opportunities: for example, one young person now works in a supermarket near Plymouth awaiting entrance to the Navy. Several moved out of the area due to having babies, a couple of which went on to receive support in their new area after learning about the available support from us. Young people stopped engaging with the project as well for a number of reasons, including family issues and not being in a stable enough environment in which they could use the support they were receiving effectively. A group of young people stopped engaging after leaving a Pupil Referral Unit, where they had been previously worked with.

Of the 70% that worked with us, the majority went into employment and are now maintaining working thanks to the support through this project, including any training they received.

Approximately 33% of young people who engaged or started to engage with the project took part in training through us: 44% accessed practical training such as motorcycle/moped compulsory (CBT) training and construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) training. 44% accessed accredited training such as Open University courses, hospitality & beauty courses through the local FE college and our Agored Cymru courses run through this programme. Two young people accessed a traineeship, with a further 6 accessing unaccredited training.

18% have continued their education by returning to FE college, going to university or studying with the Open University.

"Helped me out to find a career and a course. Sponsored me with my bus fare and money. It was easier coming to see me at my house instead of travelling somewhere else. Made my life much easier."

CASE STUDY 1

Referred to us by the Job Centre, this young man wanted to work as a lorry driver. He'd left school with very few qualifications which he put down to his substance abuse at the time. He has a young son and wanted to make something of himself and be good dad. He'd been clean of drugs for 6 months and had managed to save up some money towards a C2 driving test.

We helped research test centres and paid the remainder for the test. He passed first time and got a full-time job: he hopes to get more training and progress with his career. His son had his first birthday in the summer and he feels he can now support and look after him and give him someone to look up to too.

CASE STUDY 2

A young woman self-referred to our project from Facebook. She'd left school after year 11 and didn't know what to do with herself: she was unsure if she could cope with college or training.

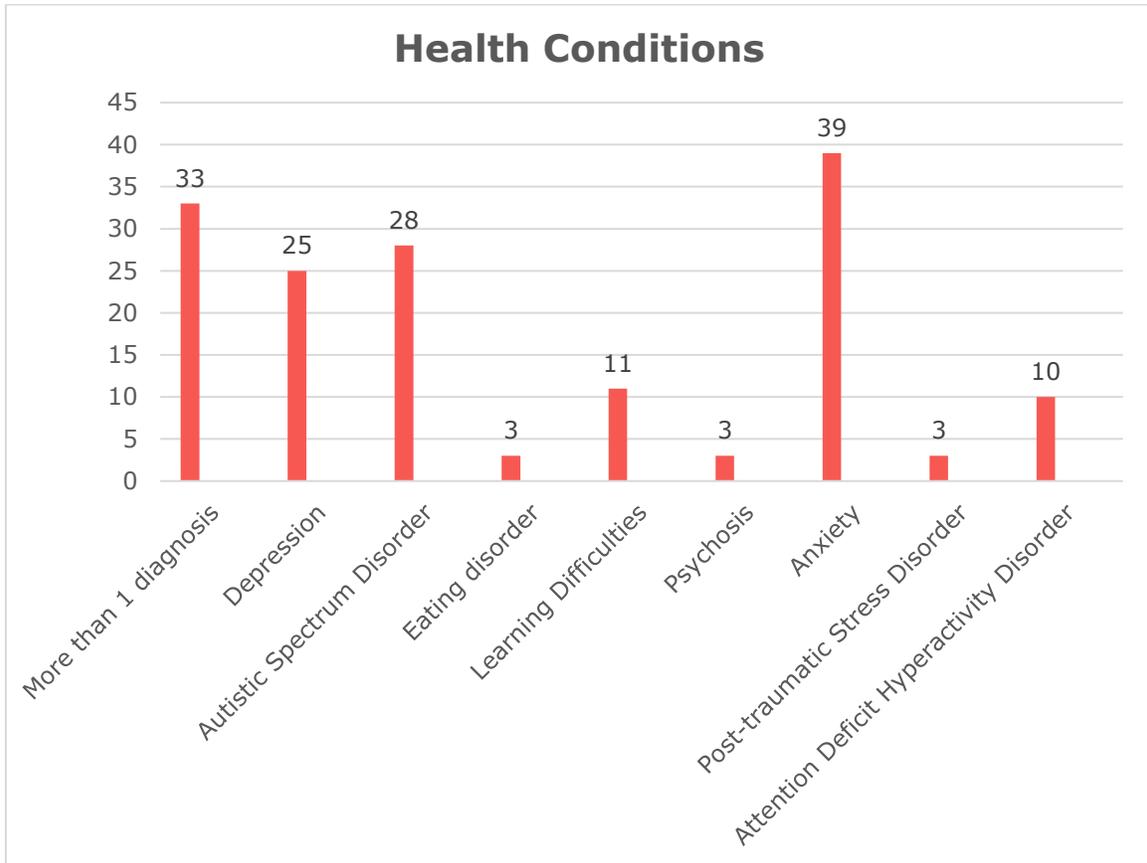
We worked together on her confidence and self-esteem and her future goals. She began college, doing really well and is now in her second year attending the Level 2 course, and feeling much more comfortable in her own skin.

We only worked with her for 4 months but it was enough to give her time to have someone to listen and give her options.

FINDING FUTURES HEALTH SUPPORT FOR SOME

Some of our young people needed more support with health conditions.

The graph on the next page shows the common conditions, with anxiety been the most common condition. It should be noted that over a third of all our young people with a medical condition had multiple conditions, for instance a combined diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Depression.



An unintended consequence our work highlighted the gap in the support available for young people on the Autistic Spectrum. At least 3 young people were identified and referred for an assessment, with a further 6 young people linked to the Integrated Autism Service in Powys. It should be noted that some young people are highly functional, as such it may not have become apparent during our work they had or needed a diagnosis for ASD, so this figure may be higher.

Some young people still require further support from medical professionals for mental health conditions that have life-long impact and will require long-term support. Our project has supported these young people through being able to develop professional relationships and support them to access the support that they need. For these young people, they can now receive the correct support starting them on a pathway which may ultimately lead to personal independence and a career pathway, instead of descending further into the need for crisis team support.

***“Passed driving test!
Working 4-5 days a week.
Moved in with uncle and
auntie, now a better
situation. I really can’t
thank you enough for
clearing up things I didn’t
understand about my past. I
don’t now feel like things are
my fault.”***

CASE STUDY 3

Referred by the Community Mental Health Team, this young man has Asperger's and schizophrenia. They were seeking advice on how best to support him and help him with becoming a self-employed drone pilot.

We worked with him looking at getting a drone licence and support for his recently diagnosed Asperger's.

Since working with him, he has volunteered on a film using his drone and is still thinking about taking this further.

We also worked with him on living independently in his flat and he started college doing catering to help with this.

At our last meeting with him he said he is making friends, coping with his conditions and is happier than he has been in ages.

CASE STUDY 4

Social Services referred a young woman to us suffering from extreme anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. She lives at home with her very supportive mum but who is at her wits end. Unable to be alone without her mum, she required treatments from the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) home crisis team due to her suicidal ideation. Continuous bullying at school meant she began home-education and was referred to us to help with gaining qualifications.

When we first met we listened to both her and her mother's needs. It became apparent that she loved to dance and also needed some way of getting her thoughts out. Money was a real barrier for this family as mum had to leave work to care for her daughter. Our project brought

a term's dancing lessons and a book with her name on it for her to write her thoughts in. We took her and her mum to meet the dance coordinator.

The outcomes of our working together were the young person did summer work experience, with a possible follow-on apprenticeship. Also, she achieved Agored Cymru units on self-esteem and numeracy with our project.

We were allocated her lead worker by the statutory Team around the Young Person. With the family's agreement we stopped CAMHS intervention for 3 months to give a break: the organisations are on standby to take back over when the family feels ready again.

We believe that this has been so successful because we listened to the family and their wishes and worked in partnership with all the organisations involved.

We also didn't just look at medical ways of supporting the family: we looked 'outside the box' and asked different questions. We believe this flexibility is one of our project's strengths.

FINDING FUTURES SHARING OUR LEARNING

We want to make sure what has helped these young people is not lost, that others can use our experiences and learning.

We have learnt **accessibility and engagement is a barrier in Powys for many young people getting support**, with many services expecting young people to go to them, despite Powys being a large rural county, and often to foreboding formal offices.

We addressed this by taking the young people there, helping them to get to know the professionals and providing future transport. We provided the essential physical and mental/emotional linking for our young people.

We have learnt **peer support and social interaction is crucial to young people's mental health and well-being. Their support cannot only be about education, employment and training: happiness and hope are part of the mix.** Our support centres on asking "what is most important to you and what makes you happy?" We found that once a young person is happier and has an idea about what they can do then they can move forward. Our work influenced the Powys County Council's detached youth services team to change their working: a great success sustaining best practice not only for current but future young people.

We have learnt **1-1 support works well but only when it goes at the pace of trust.** 1: 1 work is far more effective than group work, as it frees the young person from peer pressure and responding to "having something to live up to".

Facebook group time is more productive than trying to promote a physical once a week group meeting: Facebook enabled people to share views and experiences widely and influence others to engage with the project in 1:1 work.

We have learnt there also needs to be a clear exit strategy to avoid dependency and we improved this during the project.

"We have learnt to be person-led and were continually impressed and excited by the young people we worked with as we got to know them."

Partnership working with expert professionals is essential, both with statutory agencies and third sector organisations, and we have been lucky to have wonderful partners working with us to help the young people move forward: without these we would not have had the success that we did.

Outreach sessions were not successful. Our learning is that we needed additional staff resource: we were overstressing our project's capacity whilst wanting to meet need. We are clear that for any future work/projects we require **more than one frontline worker for Powys** which is such a large rural area.

Greater prevention through extending the age range to pick up younger people (14, 15 to 16 years).

CASE STUDY 5

A young man was referred by a tutor working for a training agency, who felt that he needed some help outside his studies. The young man was suffering from anxiety and depression and had tried to take his own life a few months earlier. He was seeing health professionals but felt that they just said what they wanted him to hear.

After our working with him for a while, he came out as LGBT to his friends and then his family. He went to visit family abroad for 6 weeks which he said he would never have been able to do before. He feels much happier in himself and is now working part-time.

CASE STUDY 6

The People Referral Unit gave us the name of a young woman as they were worried about her. She had left their Unit after being excluded and they were concerned about how she was. We managed to track her down and started working with her.

When we first met, she was homeless and living with her boyfriend. She had no qualifications and at 16 was too young to claim any benefits. We gave her lots of options to try to help. We took her to the local supported housing who offered floating support and a roof over her head; we took her to the Job Centre to see if they could help and we took her to Careers Wales to be referred onto a training programme.

With all her complex needs, her main concern was her well-being. She wasn't eating and had medical needs. We put her in touch with her local Food Bank and they said she could go weekly. We made appointments with a GP that she didn't keep. We were also concerned about her partner abusing her: we gave her details of local domestic

abuse agencies and did work with her on healthy relationships and her self-esteem. Then we lost contact with her for 8 weeks.

She contacted us with wonderful news: she had started a Powys Training placement in a supermarket and she now had a flat in supported housing. She had been to her GP and was feeling a lot better. She had left her abusive partner and was working with the Police about it.

When we met this young woman, she was hungry, alone, sad and lost. Now she is happy, confident and healthy. She said that we gave her the courage to do something about her situation because there was a way out.

CASE STUDY 7

This young man was referred to us by the Family Information Services after his mum had rung up to get support for him. He lives in an isolated community and was not doing any activities. He has a medical condition that was affecting his life.

We worked with him on how to manage his medical condition and now he has met others with the same condition. We also worked with his family on how best to support him.

He's now taken part in many activities including pottery, film projects and our peer support group. He volunteers 3 days a week and is happy to be making new friends and having things to do. We helped him to claim Personal Independent Payments which help him to have his own money and fund his travel to the activities. He feels happier now that he understands himself better and has things to do.

CASE STUDY 8

In 2015 a young woman was referred by Powys Young Carers. Our worker met with this young person for a year and a half in a cafe discussing her hopes and plans for her future, qualifications and relationships. Then in 2017 our worker was invited to go to her home and meet with her social worker, as she didn't understand why she was on medication.

The house was in darkness with all the curtains closed: her mother hadn't been out of the house for 3 years. During the conversation the mother spoke about a brother and his girlfriend who lived upstairs and never came down: the girlfriend had moved in a year ago after been thrown out by her mother, never left upstairs and had Autism. The young person we were working with said that this all impacted on her life massively.

By seeing the full context, going into the home, we were much better able to support the young person, finding people and services to help her and her family. We also worked with the young couple and took them to the doctors and other meetings: they now each have a support worker and are being supported to live independently. The mother has been given mental health support. The young person we were working directly with is now linked to the detached youth work team to move forward with what she needs to do, as she has help with her family.

If this project had not afforded the time to work with this young person at her pace of trust the whole family would have continued to suffer. We succeeded because the project enabled us to be flexible and work with the whole family to support our young person.

FINDING FUTURES

Dyfodol Powys Futures is continuing to work with young people:

- *a project in Newtown with Powys Drugs and Alcohol Centres*
- *Touch Trust sessions for children, young people and adults in central and north Powys*

And we will continue to seek to respond to and work with our communities.