



A Guide to Youth Engagement & Services

At a glance:

The cost-of-living crisis has significantly impacted young people in Wales in various ways, affecting their financial security, mental health, housing stability, & access to education & employment opportunities

IMPACTS:

Financial Strain

Young people in Wales, particularly those entering the workforce or still in education, have been hit hard by rising costs of food, housing, and energy. Many report struggling to afford basic necessities, with wages not keeping pace with inflation.

Quality of Life

Increased living costs mean many young people are cutting back on non-essential spending, social activities, travel, & leisure. This reduction in quality of life has also contributed to feelings of isolation & dissatisfaction.

Mental Health:

Financial pressures have led to increased stress, anxiety, & mental health problems among young people. The uncertainty about their future, whether related to housing, employment, or financial security, this has exacerbated feelings of instability.

Barriers to Education

Rising costs has made it harder for students to cover education expenses such as travel, accommodation, & course materials. Some young people may have had to take on part-time jobs alongside their studies, adding to the pressure of balancing work, education, and personal life.

Challenges:

Young people may not always be interested in a traditional engagement process as they don't feel it aligns with their interests; they often feel unheard and that their voice is undervalued. Negative perceptions of young people often create a barrier and discourages them from becoming involved.

Key Opportunities & Solutions

Youth Councils

- 1 Establish a youth council where a group of young people can hold regular meetings to discuss issues, propose initiatives and feedback on council decisions.

Youth Engagement Events

- 2 Organise events specifically aimed at engaging with young people or find out what is already organised in your area and identify opportunities to engage.

Communication

- 3 Regular communication and outreach can keep young people informed and engaged. Using digital platforms and social media can help councils connect.

Recognising & Celebrating Youth

- 4 Acknowledging the contributions that young people make in their communities can motivate and inspire others

Partnerships & Educational Programmes

- 5 Partnering with schools, colleges, and youth organisations can integrate civic education into the curriculum and extracurricular activities. Working in partnership with other youth groups can build relationships..

Engage with Duke of Edinburgh & Welsh Baccalaureate students to provide volunteering opportunities

Provide Grant funding to other organisations that support young people in your community

Collaborate with existing providers to deliver services on your behalf

Why should you do it?

By actively engaging with young people, community & town councils can ensure that their decisions are more representative & effective, leading to stronger & more resilient communities. Young people offer unique insights & innovative solutions to problems, often seeing things from a different angle than adults.

Useful Information

Powers

Power to appoint Youth Representatives – Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 ss 118–119

Power to provide a wide range of recreational facilities – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s 19

Power to provide premises for the use of clubs or societies having athletic, social or recreational objectives – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s 19

Powers & justifications can differ, councils should consider their specific circumstances. For advice & guidance, councils may wish to contact their One Voice Wales Development Officer.

admin@onevoicewales.wales

Safeguarding

Community and Town Councils must meet a duty of care when working with children and young people. It is best practice to have a Safeguarding Policy relevant to your Councils activities.

[Wales Safeguarding Guidance](#)

Children’s Commissioner for Wales engagement team also works with adults whose work affects children and young people, including Councils and offer for an introductory session to the UNCRC, and how rights can help shape services for children.

[Welsh Government Update on the Children and young people’s plan: January 2024](#)

[Planned GWBR Project: Youth Engagement Toolkit](#)

Existing Services & Projects:

Pembrey & Burryport Youth Council, composed of 11–18 year olds, collaborates with the Town Council to ensure their views are considered.

Many councils across Wales, including Van Community Council, offer summer activities for young people, like free skateboarding sessions

In 2023, Llanelli Town Council launched a new Sports, Youth, and Activity Service, collaborating with community groups, schools, and sports clubs to enhance and create new free activities for young people.

Offa Community Council fund playworkers in partnership with Wrexham Borough Council to deliver holiday activities

Blaenavon Town Council organised photography workshops with the World Heritage Youth Ambassadors to create a book and exhibition showcasing their work, fostering pride in their environment.

Neath Town Council has appointed a local student as Youth Engagement Officer, serving as a key link between the Council and Ward schools. She has established a student network to inform the Council on youth issues and suggest initiatives like social hubs and more youth events.

Funding Information & Potential Opportunities

- The National Lottery Community Fund Moondance Foundation
- BBC Children in Need
- Postcode Community Trust

One Voice Wales offer a training module on ‘Making effective grant applications’



Watch our One Voice Wales Guide to Youth Engagement Webinar

Want to Find Out More?

For more information on the One Voice Wales Cost-of-Living Crisis project contact the team at:



CoLC@onevoicewales.wales



<https://bit.ly/3KYHftK>