

Meeting of:	Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 05 November 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Annual Reports for Sports Development, Play Development, 60+ Active Leisure Scheme and National Exercise Referral Scheme
Purpose of Report:	To advise Committee of the work of the Sports Development and National Exercise Referral Teams.
Report Owner:	M. Punter, Director of Environment and Housing
Responsible Officer:	D. Knevet, Operational Manager, Neighbourhood Services – Healthy Living and Performance
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Accountant Environment and Housing – Gemma Jones Legal – Committee Reports Prevention and Partnership Manager – Mark Davies
Policy Framework:	This Report is within the Policy Framework and Budget
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report details the work carried out by the Council’s Sports & Play Development Teams and National Exercise Referral Team for the period April 2023 – March 2024, which have positively impacted on the health and wellbeing of residents. • The report highlights many of the successful initiatives undertaken during the past year to support the least active residents in the Vale to become more active and to support the community to play. These include assistance to clubs, schools and community organisations, a Play Streets pilot, community play sessions, delivery of the leadership and education projects, and targeted projects such as the National Exercise Referral Scheme, the 60+ Golden Pass project, Energise YOUTH and disability inclusion initiatives. • More than 268 partners have positively impacted on the plans. • A short presentation will be made at Committee detailing some of the projects. 	

Recommendations

1. That Committee notes the information contained within the Reports.
2. That a further Annual Report on the activities of the Council's Sports and Play Development, Exercise Referral and the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Teams be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in 2025.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To note the current good practise being undertaken by the Sports and Play Development, Exercise Referral and the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Teams.
2. To keep the committee informed of the work of the Council's Sports and Play Development, Exercise Referral and the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Teams.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Sports and Play Development, Exercise Referral and 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Teams are responsible for the planning, delivery and evaluation of the Council's sports and play development projects and the National Exercise Referral Scheme. The service is heavily dependent on external funding that also significantly shapes the work undertaken. For sports development the main funder is Sport Wales, with additional funding provided by Cardiff & Vale Public Health Team via the Prevention Funding stream. The main funder for the Exercise Referral Scheme is Welsh Government via Public Health Wales, with support also from the Cardiff & Vale Public Health Team via the Prevention Funding Scheme. The Play Service receives funding from the Welsh Government through the Children and Communities funding, Families First funding and Playworks funding.
- 1.2 The main objective of the Sports and Play Development Team is to support the health and wellbeing of residents through increasing confidence, motivation and opportunities to participate in sport, physical activity and play, developing sustainable opportunities in partnership with a range of internal and external providers. Whilst there is some element of universal provision, there is a focus on developing opportunities for targeted groups with lower participation rates who are facing barriers to participation. The projects developed by the Sports Team have been insight led, targeted at tackling inequalities, focussing on areas/groups including:
 - those affected by low resources;
 - closing the gap between male and female participation rates;
 - targeting specific age groups where participation rates are lower supporting:
 - those affected by rurality;

- individuals with additional needs and disabilities;
- individuals lacking in confidence;
- the least active older adults to become more active.

- 1.4. The Play Team lead on overseeing the Vale Play Action plan which forms part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process. This is a statutory duty placed on all Local Authorities (LAs) by Welsh Government. Within the play service there is a focus on providing playscheme provision during school holidays to disabled children, and also to increase opportunities for those who are disadvantaged. This focus is partly due to the criteria for the grant funding the service receives, however it does also meet the aims of the LA and the Public Service Board (PSB) plans. The service is also keen to provide opportunities for all children to have access to quality opportunities and is fostering new partnerships to allow this to occur through projects such as the Play Friendly Schools project and play training initiative.
- 1.5 The National Exercise Referral scheme has been operating for approximately 20 years and has had a significant impact on the health and well-being of the population of Wales. It is a local exercise referral scheme to improve the health and wellbeing of referred patients aged 16 and over who are sedentary and at risk of chronic disease or with an established disease - providing a tailored exercise programme to support them to participate in regular physical activity on a long term basis.
- 1.6 The 60+ Active Leisure Scheme aims to reduce health inequalities and social isolation amongst the over-60 year population by providing residents with the opportunity to engage in physical activity initiatives. The scheme positively impacts on the Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing Society and contributes to the Age Friendly Vale status that the Vale has achieved.
- 1.7 The Sport & Play Development Team and the Exercise Referral Team work with a range of internal and external partners with the aim of developing sustainable opportunities and supporting positive behaviour change. In addition to positively impacting on corporate plan and wellbeing plan priorities, they also positively impact on the PSB Cardiff & Vale Good Food & Movement plan, with the team actively involved in the multi-agency Implementation groups linked to this.
- 1.8 Sport Wales have been progressing a regionalisation model for Sports Development for approximately 5 years. The geographical model follows that established for the Regional Educational Partnerships with the Vale of Glamorgan placed within the Central South region. A partnership has been established in this region with partners including LAs, Health Boards, Police Commissioners Office and regional educational establishments. The establishment of a company limited by guarantee (with an option to explore charitable status later) has been established as the operating model for the partnership. The Vale of Glamorgan have a representative on the board that has been established. This organisation will now be used to distribute Sport Wales funds to LAs and other relevant organisation, rather than directly being received from Sport Wales as currently occurs.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

2.1 Attached at Appendix A is a report for Vale of Glamorgan Sport & Physical Activity Plan 2023 – 2024 which is led by the Vale Sports Development Team. This outlines the initiatives carried out by the Vale of Glamorgan Council, along with numerous external partners, as part of the Vale Sport & Physical Activity plan to enhance the health and well-being of Vale residents through sports and physical activities. Key headlines for the year include:

- Over 42,500 participations in the Active Young People programme which includes the Active Schools initiative encompassing areas such as leadership opportunities, festivals, whole school challenges, afterschool opportunities as well as developing school to club links to support community based opportunities.
- Delivery of projects including Playmakers, Creating Confident Coaches, Coaches of the Future and Young Ambassadors within the Vale Active Learning Pathway – supporting coaches, volunteers and leaders to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to organise and deliver engaging, inclusive opportunities, whilst developing transferrable skills. 501 individuals attended 64 different courses with a total of at least 2,502 training hours, impacting on thousands of sessions with an additional 3,432 voluntary hours to impact 26,101 participations. 135 primary age pupils trained to deliver peer led opportunities in their schools to support active breaktimes. 68 young leaders trained and mentored to support extra-curricular and community settings.
- Supporting families to access affordable / no cost activities through different ways including free equipment loan schemes set up at identified libraries and food hubs, free school holiday sessions and informal training/awareness raising through events and family engagement days. All with the aim of introducing and developing fundamental skills - providing information and developing confidence amongst families to continue their engagement in activities with the aim of setting a pattern for a lifetime of participation.
- 39 primary schools, Ysgol Y Deri and all secondary schools engaged and supported to increase physical activity opportunities.
- Development of projects targeted at identified residents including the Energise YOUth pilot project to support young people with wellbeing challenges and disability inclusion programme with a focus on supporting pupils within resource bases to increase their confidence to access activity.

2.2 Attached at Appendix B is an overview report for the Vale Exercise Referral Scheme. The scheme has continued to provide a vital service to support residents with health conditions to improve their health. The team received 1,380 referrals from medical professionals. 97% of clients who completed the scheme are still exercising, highlighting the positive impact on sustainable activity for those who take the big step to follow through with the programme. The report includes case studies which highlight the cross-cutting impact of the scheme.

- 2.3** Attached at Appendix C is the Vale of Glamorgan 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Annual Report 2023 – 2024. The scheme involves a range of internal partners including the Age Friendly Vale Officer and external partners such as community activity providers, independent living schemes and health partners. The report highlights how the delivery of the scheme aims to engage the older generation into sport and physical activity, increasing their confidence and motivation to participate to positively impact on their health and wellbeing and increase socialisation opportunities. Projects included the Golden Pass which saw 107 residents accessing a menu of activities, the Independent Living Scheme project and the creation of a new walking group in St Athan.
- 2.4** Attached at Appendix D is the Vale Play Team Annual Review. Demand for the Families First Holiday Club (playscheme for disabled children) has continued to grow and demand is exceeding capacity. As a result, a review has taken place which has resulted in the need to streamline the referral process to prioritise spaces to those most in need and identified by Social Services. Key headlines for the year include:
- Delivery of a community play package, supporting the diverse needs of children and families, with a focus on supporting families to access low cost/no cost play. Included community play sessions; specialist provision for children with disabilities and additional needs and family events.
 - Successful delivery of a pilot Play Streets project undertaken in partnership with Highways, Legal and Play Wales which saw two streets closed to traffic at identified times to create a safe space for children to play freely together on their doorstep, whilst supporting communities to engage and socialise with each other – developing cohesive communities. Following the success of this, a Play Streets Policy is being progressed to enable expansion of the project.
 - Delivery of pilot Outdoor Wellbeing sessions with the wellbeing group at Whitmore High, seeking to support increased confidence and self-esteem through outdoor play/activities.
 - Creation of Prescription to Play Family Sheets, which are a series of sheets highlighting ideas for making places more playful. This supports families to access no/low cost play opportunities whilst exploring their communities.
 - Organisation of a play training programme to support Vale staff, local residents and external partner staff/volunteers with the development of skills and knowledge to deliver engaging, inclusive play provision.
- 2.5** A short presentation will be made at the meeting highlighting the impact some of the projects have brought to residents.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** Sports, physical activity and play development work is a significant contributor to the Wellbeing Outcome of 'An Active & Healthy Vale', particularly to the objective of 'encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles'. However sports, physical activity and play development is cross cutting and can impact across all of the well-being goals including tackling inequalities, supporting an ageing well community, education/learning goals and enabling people to participate and contribute in their local communities. In delivering the actions identified in the Play Action Plan and the Vale Sport & Physical Activity Plan, the Council are also contributing to the national well-being goals, in particular 'a Healthier Wales'.
- 3.2** Throughout the play and sports/physical activity planning and delivery process consideration is given to the five ways of working. Partnership working is an essential element to identify priority areas for development, to share resources and expertise and to successfully implement the identified actions. The team work with more than 300 statutory and non-statutory organisations / groups to maximise the impact of the respective sports, physical activity and play plans.
- 3.3** Participation in sport, physical activity and play has known long term preventative health and wellbeing benefits and the inclusion of play, sport and physical activity in key corporate and partnership plans highlight this contribution.
- 3.4** An integrated multi partnership approach to the development of play and sport/physical activity services in the Vale of Glamorgan is the only way in which a service can be realistically delivered within the current climate, where resources within both the voluntary and statutory sector are reducing. This continues to be the basis on which sports, physical activity and play opportunities are being developed. There are examples throughout the attached reports where internal departments and external organisations such as the Public Health Team, schools and community groups have worked collaboratively with the Sports & Play Development Team to benefit sports/physical activity and play provision.
- 3.5** The way in which the teams works, and the philosophy of the plans ensure that equality themes are consistently taken into account in all projects. The identification of priority areas to progress is underpinned by insight, consultation and engagement, with project development supported by a collaborative approach.
- 3.6** This ensures that a variety of insights gathered by partners are taken into account, along with data from the School Sport Survey, National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government, Wellbeing Assessment, and Healthy Living Team consultations. See Appendix A for further information around insight used.
- 3.7** The Sports and Play Development team consult with existing and potential participants about future requirements through a variety of mechanisms including surveys, consultation at events and through links to partner groups

/organisations. Consultation with targeted groups take place to ensure the services planned/delivered meets their needs and works to overcome barriers faced. A variety of insights gathered by internal and external partners are also taken into account, along with data from e.g. the School Sport Survey, National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government, Wellbeing Assessment.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** The Sport and Play team place a great deal of emphasis on ensuring the services offered are sustainable, do not impact on the environment and do not contribute to climate change. Examples include re-purposing waste for play purposes during provision and encouraging/educating families to do the same; collaborating with the Project Zero team and partners such as Enfys around encouraging reuse and recycling of play equipment.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The LA is heavily reliant on external funding for the Sport and Play Development and National Exercise Referral Scheme service areas. Current external funding sources for staffing include Sports Wales, Cardiff & Vale Public Health Early Years & Prevention funding, Public Health Wales and Welsh Government Children and Communities grant and Families First funding. Funding from Sport Wales, Early Years & Prevention Funding and Welsh Government Families First and Playworks funding also supported programme costs. Additional internal funding was secured to support Youth Wellbeing work as part of a partnership with Social Services and the Corporate Resources Team. The identification of funding and opportunities to pool resources with partners is an ongoing process to ensure the delivery of the actions identified in the sport, physical activity and play plans are achievable.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no direct employment implications associated with this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

6. Background Papers

None

VALE SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN OVERVIEW REPORT

APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024



MORE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

**SUPPORTING PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELLBEING
THROUGH SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

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ACTIVE LEARNING

1. OVERVIEW

The Council's Healthy Living Team collaborated with a range of partners to deliver the Vale Sport & Physical Activity plan to support the health and wellbeing of Vale residents. More than 268 organisations and departments have positively impacted on opportunities.

**268 partners impacting,
40 new links developed**



**124 sports clubs
involved**



**Over 42,500
participations in Active
Young People
programme**



**39 primary schools
engaged (87%)**

**All 8 secondary schools
and special school
engaged**

**£18,952 AYP funding to
26 schools**



**3650 pupils from 22
schools participated in
whole school challenges**

**107 60+ age
Golden Pass
participants**



**63 training
opportunities,
501 individuals trained,
2502+ training hours**

**Additional 3432
volunteer hours by
leaders impacting on
local activities**



**64 young leaders
supporting extra-
curricular and
community settings**

**135 primary age pupils
trained to deliver peer
led opportunities in their
schools to support
active breaktimes.**

**£256,389 Be Active
grant funding
to 31 clubs**



**£77,076 Sport Wales
energy saving
grants to 5 clubs**



**£9278 Letter to Santa
funding to 11 clubs**

**"The potential benefits of physical activity to health are huge.
If a medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be
regarded as a 'wonder drug' or 'miracle cure'".**

*Sir Liam Donaldson (2009)
Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer*

The projects developed within the plan are insight led, using consultation and engagement with residents and partners. The partnership network has been essential to considering the 'What Matters' question – contributing to the identification of priority areas of work and a collective approach to targeting individuals and groups identified with low participation rates in the Vale. Whilst there are a range of sport and physical activity opportunities in the Vale, there are marked differences in activity levels across residents, which is contributing to health inequalities. Therefore, whilst there has been some universal provision developments, projects have mainly been targeted at tackling inequalities, focussing on areas/groups where participation rates are low and/or where barriers to participation are faced - this includes those affected by socio-economic factors, to close the gap between male and female participation rates, targeting specific age groups where participation rates are lower, supporting those affected by rurality, supporting individuals with disabilities, additional needs and those lacking in confidence.

The focussing of resources supports the priorities identified in the Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan, Wellbeing Plan, Leisure Strategy and the Move More, Eat Well Plan. Lessons learnt have also been a key part of the insight process.

Whilst there are a range of opportunities in the Vale, there are marked differences in activity levels across residents, which is contributing to health inequalities. There are a number of barriers that can impact on participation including:

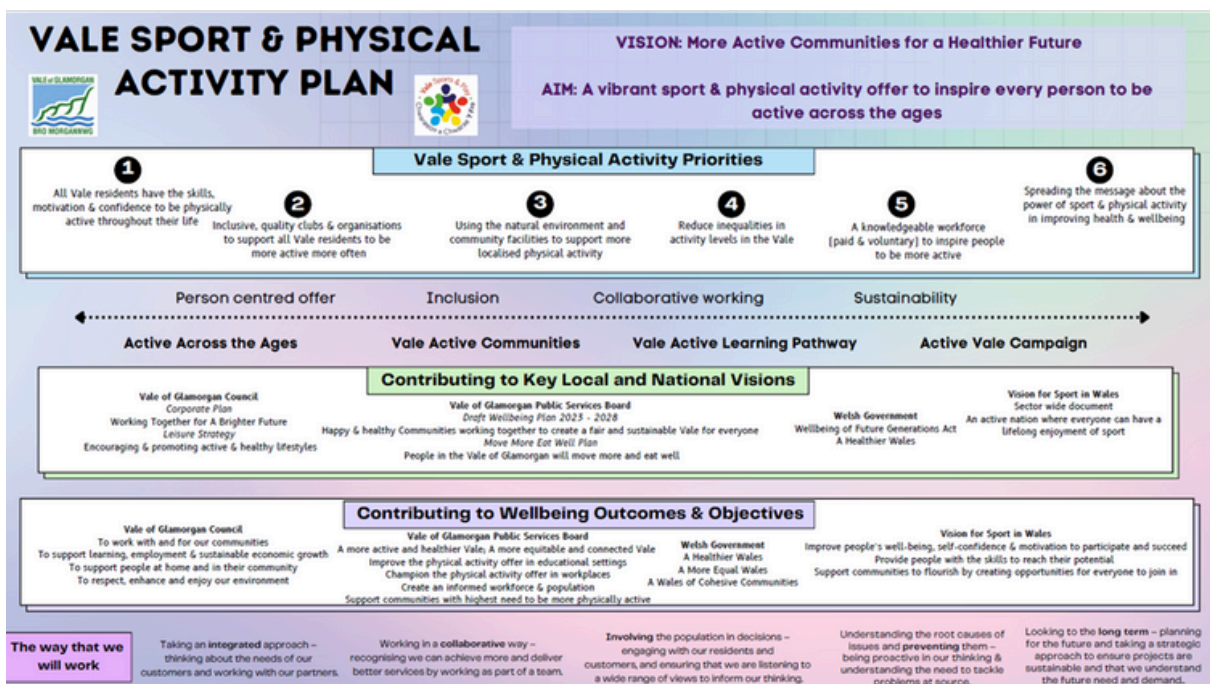
- cost
- time
- access to opportunities
- availability of and access to space that supports physical activity
- lack of confidence
- perceived lack of ability
- awareness of the benefits of physical activity
- awareness of opportunities available

It is because of this range of barriers that there is no easy solution to improving activity levels across all residents - and why a range of partners have been working together to develop projects with the aim of positively impacting on participation amongst targeted groups and individuals, promoting behaviour change to a more active lifestyle.



When developing and implementing the projects within the action plan, the following themes were considered:

- **Affordability** - focus on trying to ensure opportunities are at a price that is affordable to the target group long term.
- **Sustainability** - a focus on developing skills, motivation and confidence amongst residents to support participation on a long-term basis, whilst ensuring opportunities are sufficiently developed to continue to take place past initial pilot phase - whether that be ongoing opportunities within local community clubs and organisations, leisure centres and schools or giving children, young people and adults the skills and confidence to participate on their own, as a family or groups of friends in a local space.
- *Inclusive and thriving clubs and community organisations* - supporting local organisations to develop and thrive in the most appropriate way to meet the needs of the community.
- *Building a confident and motivated workforce* - to ensure people who participate in sport and physical activity have the best possible experience, the workforce (young people and adults, voluntary and paid) must be recruited, developed and supported in the right way. Therefore, building a confident and engaging workforce is essential across all developments.
- *Partnership working* - supporting others to develop sustainable opportunities by creating capacity and capability within the community and school offer. Developing opportunities in conjunction with local providers on the basis that opportunities will be available in the community long term to enable residents to continue their participation in the future.



2. ACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE

- Children and young people develop the skills, motivation and confidence to be physically active throughout their life
- Children become physically active in their early years to give them the best start in life
- Children & young people with low participation rates are supported to access sport & physical activity opportunities



Impact of Active Young People Programme

Over 42,500 participations in sport & physical activity through opportunities created through the Active Young People Programme working in partnership with over 133 organisations, clubs, school, national governing bodies and training partners.



Leadership and Training

501 individuals (adults and young people) from 118 different organisations involved in 63 different leadership & volunteer training opportunities. 2502 training hours and at least a further 3432 volunteer hours by leaders impacting on activities to local individuals and communities.



Best Start in Life

Partnership working as part of Cardiff & Vale Move More Eat Well plan, Healthy Schools and Healthy Pre-schools to encourage physical activity.



Motivating Primary Children to Be Active & Develop Foundation Skills

Approximately 3650 children took part in primary challenges including Daily Mile challenge and challenges to develop fundamental Foundation skills to be active for life.



You asked..... we supported to develop....

26 schools supported to develop new extra-curricular sports / physical activity clubs in response to pupil led consultation.

As a result of consultation with young people, opportunities developed in partnership with local organisations including skateboarding, golf, basketball, football, disability sports.



Targeting Inequalities

Projects including Equipment loan bags within food pods/food pantries/libraries.
Projects increasing opportunities for young people with additional needs / disabilities.
Projects to increase physical activity for those inactive and accessing additional support to help wellbeing.

PRE-SCHOOL - The Best Start in Life

- Training delivered to 34 pre-school staff and childminders from 15 organisations in partnership with Healthy Pre-school scheme, who now have the knowledge, resources and equipment to deliver and support their service users to become physically active – positively impacting on more than 300 people. Integrated Quick Change movement into training to support new project introduced to promote good foot health.

100% of staff and childminders increased their confidence to support children and their families to become more active.

- Family pre-school physical activity sessions facilitated in partnership with P.L.A.Y Active community organisation.

100% of families felt more confident to become more active within other environments.

- Worked with Flying Start to trial physical activity sessions for parents accessing service. A series of yoga sessions were organised. Following lessons learnt from the pilot Flying Start have continued to organise Parent & Toddler yoga activity for 2-4 year olds.
- Family based pre-school holiday activities organised in partnership with local providers to raise awareness of locally based opportunities and to increase knowledge amongst families of activities suitable for pre-school age.

100% of families reported an increase in confidence with activities

"Sessions have given me ideas so I can do more activity at home with my little one with things we have at home, as classes are quite expensive all the time".

ACTIVE SCHOOLS

- Supporting schools to ensure a range of opportunities are available in both school and community settings for children & young people
- Pupil voice and inclusion at the heart of the programmes
- Working with schools to develop bespoke actions to meet the needs within each school and tackle inequalities



- 87% of primary schools (39 schools) and 100% of secondary schools and special school engaged. More than 25,047 participations in over 1105 sessions delivered within schools and through school-club links in partnership with a range of community clubs and coaches.
- You Asked...We Supported: £18,952 was awarded to 26 schools who were supported to develop afterschool projects following consultation with pupils including targeted girls provision, increasing opportunities for disabled young people and targeting Foundation Phase where there are limited current opportunities.
- Working with primary and secondary schools with resource bases (physical and autism) bases to support children with disabilities or impairments to participate.





CASE STUDY



ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES - DISABILITY INCLUSION
DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SCHOOLS AND PATHWAYS INTO COMMUNITY

- Strategic Priority 1: Establish effective partnerships for an inclusive sector
- Strategic Priority 2: Empower an inclusive workforce
- Strategic Priority 3: Enable robust inclusive pathways

Project Background

The Active Young people team have been working with resource bases within local primary and secondary schools (physical and autism) to increase confidence, motivation and opportunities to access physical activity. Insight highlighted that young people in the Vale with a disability or impairment were 10% less likely to participate in organised sport outside of the curriculum three or more times per week, compared to 44% of pupils without disabilities or impairments. Consultation with children and young people explored activities they were interested in, as well as identified barriers that affected them taking part in activities.

Projects and Impact

As a result of the consultation and further discussions with support staff from bases, a series of at least 31 taster sessions have been organised across four different schools (primary and secondary) to expose 71 children and young people to at least 6 different activities. The increase in confidence as a result of attending sessions has been noticed by both support staff and parents, and ultimately the follow up actions of young people through involvement in additional activities outside of the base.

Additional developments:

- Young Ambassadors from a secondary school have been linked into autism base and now visit the base on a weekly basis to provide an extra-curricular lunch time club
- A pupil from an autism base at a secondary school has been selected to become a Young Ambassador to act as the pupil voice
- Healthy Living Officer attended parent-school sessions to give information around physical activity opportunities
- As a progression to sessions at the bases, a series of community sessions were developed to support continued involvement on a weekly basis. These sessions were supported by Young Ambassadors from the Vale to act as a 'familiar face from school' in transitioning from school to community
- Organised Disability In Education course to upskill resource base staff to support further development of physical activities



Taekwondo Tuesday! Thanks @ValeSportsTeam for delivering a great session to our base students, who thoroughly enjoyed taking part yesterday.



Great first autism multi-sport session today @outsporthub. The children thoroughly enjoyed trying new sports. Big shout out to @walsworth Sports Ambassadors who gave up their Saturday morning to help deliver at the session. @Pencoedre_Base @WalsworthBase @AdoCoFFCoM



'TACKLING INEQUALITIES CASE STUDY

SO WHAT HAS BEEN THE REAL IMPACT? WHAT HAS IT REALLY MEANT TO THE PEOPLE TAKING PART?

Skateboarding

Skateboarding has been an activity identified by pupils that they wanted to try within autism bases. As a result, skateboarding instructor attended bases to introduce himself, explain skateboarding, skills they would develop etc. As a result of trust gained, all pupils were motivated to take part in sessions. Next step was to encourage pupils to become more involved on an ongoing basis. Two pupils joined the ongoing after-school skateboarding sessions as part of school enrichment programme. The Healthy Living Team also wanted to ensure community provision was inclusive. As part of holiday activity programme, spaces were reserved for pupils from autism bases to book onto. As a result of this, 50% of spaces on a skateboarding provision during Easter holidays were attended by pupils from the autism base.



Dance

Within primary resource base, a dance taster session proved immediately popular. As a result, a series of additional 12 sessions were delivered to give the opportunity for pupils to develop their skills and confidence to be part of a Vale wide schools dance show. The dance group facilitating the sessions have also secured additional funding to promote community sessions for participants.

From playscheme to base to after-school rugby....

Pupil A has been involved in an inclusive playscheme setting run by the play section of the Healthy Living Team for a number of years and became more familiar with sports staff within these schemes. As a result of attending the playscheme and a recent INSPORT series event within the Vale, an interest in rugby was identified. Upon transitioning to autism base within secondary school, this interest was built upon with pupil being encouraged to attend extra-curricular sessions. Due to the ethos of the school PE staff to ensure all pupils have access to opportunities and with encouragement of cluster Healthy Living Officer, pupil A joined after-school rugby sessions and has been part of school team in inter-school matches.

From taster session to after-school club....

Pupil B was part of the resource base in a primary school with overall low participation levels and a school in one of the more deprived areas of the Vale who were taking part in weekly sport sessions to increase physical activity levels. As a result of partnership working with school Family Engagement Officer, resource base teacher and parents, plans were put in place for Pupil B to be supported to attend extra-curricular weekly basketball sessions. This transition was further supported through a 'familiar face' leading session as coach leading session was also part of sports team delivering in inclusive holiday provision. As a result of increased interest in basketball, this has also been introduced as a sport within inclusive community holiday play sessions.

WHAT HAS IT REALLY MEANT TO THE PEOPLE TAKING PART?

Pencoedre High School Autism Base @PencoedreBase · Feb 26
A Year 7 trip to @PrydCourse for our first golf session today! The students were shown stance and swing techniques. They were all fantastic ambassadors for PHB and the ASC base! We are so proud!
@NidSportsTeam @Nid_knesh @NidInceBase @PencoedreBase



Thank you to @MCDance for our creative dance taster session this week! H. J. and M. Payne thoroughly enjoyed using the sub! @NidSportsTeam @TheNidiesPHB



"Well, where to start.

Having access to the sessions that you arranged for us provided our students with access to activities that they would not have even considered or thought of. Some of our students are reluctant to leave the ASC Base but having these activities gauged their interest enough to enable them to overcome some anxieties to try them outside the Base. The huge variety of activities available meant that more students were able to try different things. The sessions were exceptionally well received and many students really enjoyed the sensory feedback from getting 'hands on' and following instructions that were spoken and shown helped to visualise what they had to do.

The skateboarding & archery went down a storm with our students. It was an excellent session that helped them use their core strength and balancing skills. They loved racing downhill!

The archery session was loved! Practicing indoors before going outside helped to students be intrigued and be willing to try new things.

Another huge development is that during recent PCP meetings for students, parents have been asking for further details of activities to pursue these as extra-curricular activities.

Thank you for arranging these. It has been amazing to see our students thrive while trying new things."

Autism Resource Base Specialist HLA

"The golf was very fun, I got good hits. The teacher was really nice too".

"Yea, golf was fun. I missed a few times but I listened to the teacher and then I hit it so far. Was pretty cool"

Mrs K - It was lovely to see the pupils enjoying the outdoors whilst learning how to handle a golf club. The rules were simple and clear and all pupils were able to follow these instructions. I love how the instructor had patience with the children and praised them throughout. It was a lovely activity.



- Working with Youth Service Wellbeing Team to promote physical activity within the Youth Service Afterschool Wellbeing Club in Llantwit, with the Healthy Living Team undertaking consultation with the pupils and forging links with the community clubs in respective sports in demand.
- Whole school engagement through activity challenges – 3650 children from 22 schools took part in Daily Mile and/or virtual cross country primary school challenges developing fundamental foundation skills to be active for life.

“Whole school challenges increased participation, reached and engaged the less active pupils and those not motivated by competitions. They remove costs for schools unable to attend multi-sports festivals”.

- 1352 children participated in 7 primary multi-sports events held across three different cluster areas, responding to improving school-club links, promoting opportunities and targeting least active with positive opportunities. 50% of all Vale primary schools engaged. Event organisation was supported by Young Ambassadors.

Pupil A is not usually physically active and was not looking forward to the day. However, with encouragement he took part and then became fully engaged and motivated, and keen to try more”.



Case Study: Signposting Multisport Events



Strategic Priority: Vale residents having skills, motivation and confidence to be physically active through life

Project Background

Multisports events aimed at schools have been very popular and beneficial in introducing children to a variety of sports and local clubs.

Consultation with schools identified format schools preferred, year groups where they considered there were gaps in provision / participation and a format that would encourage inclusion. Sports were aligned based on requests by schools and School sport insight data.

Insight to overcome barriers

- Following consultation, Multisports were extended from half day, to a full school day, to add value and justify travel costs - as shorter opportunities had prevented cluster schools attending official transition events at their comprehensive.
- Using secondary school facilities on INSET days decreased facility hire costs and also increased transition links.
- Schools suggested that more flexibility in which year groups to bring to the event and dates availability would support more targeting and prioritisation of children to take to the events, to maximise impact.
- Expanding festivals to bring whole class increased number of schools attending. Feedback indicated facilitating attendance of whole class meant school didn't have to find budget for supply teachers etc.

Impact

- Across the Vale, 1324 pupils from 25 schools (60% of total schools in authority) attended Multisports events / had mini event within school. All pupils attending were provided with local information relevant to clubs that delivered tasters / activities taken part in.
- Feedback indicated that pupils who were hesitant about attending events returned to school more confident and motivated.
- Where transport was an issue with more rural based schools, the most appropriate sport based on interest and link to local area, was offered at the school-site, allowing the majority of pupils to experience it.
- Attendance of whole school classes meant that events were more inclusive.
- Using secondary schools as hosts for events during INSET days, also facilitated attendance of Young Ambassadors who were willing to give up their free day to support day.



Further Information please contact
Healthy Living Team:
healthylivingteam@valeofglamorgan.gov.



@valesportsteam1

See Active Communities for more projects and the Active Learning section for information around upskilling of staff and the leadership programme for pupils within schools.

3. ACTIVE ADULTS

- **Engage the older generation into sport and physical activity, to positively impact on their health and wellbeing**
- **Older adults have the confidence and motivation to participate in physical activity**

THE 60+ ACTIVE LEISURE SCHEME

Funded by Welsh Government and managed locally by the Council's Healthy Living Team, the scheme aims to reduce health inequalities and social isolation amongst the over-60 years population by providing an opportunity to engage in physical activity. Funding has also been secured from Welsh Government Prevention stream to support the project.

The partnership network is increasing with links to groups including the 50+ Forum, Ageing Well Co-production forum, Home Instead Memory Café, Independent Living Schemes and Volunteering Matters, which is helping with consultation, engagement and identification of gaps in provision.

The Golden Pass

The Golden Pass is part of the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme. Residents aged 60 years+ who participate in less than 150 minutes of physical activity per week are eligible for a Golden Pass which provides them with either an 8-week free pass to their local leisure centre or 8 sessions of free physical activity in community organisations. The aim is for them to try out activities in their area and hopefully inspire residents to continue to participate.

- 222 individuals were awarded a Golden Pass since the relaunch in August
- 55% chose the leisure centre route, 45% chose the community route
- 107 of 222 participants used their Golden Pass
- 72% of participants completed at least 8 sessions on the Golden Pass.
- 92% of participants plan on continuing to attend session or other physical activity
- 64% of participants who completed the programme reported an increase in confidence in taking part in physical activity.
- 30% increase in confidence score on average across participants who completed the programme
- 54% of participants who completed the programme reported an increase in social connections from taking part in physical activity
- 28% average increase in social connections score as a result of participating in the programme
- 83% of participants reported to have some form of disability, health condition or impairment

Participant Quotes

Below are a selection of quotes pulled from the feedback completed by participants who finished the Golden Pass programme.

"It was a marvellous opportunity to kick start my get fit and strengthen life. I found the staff at Barry leisure centre to be approachable and supportive. Other participants were friendly and helpful. All in all an extremely useful, pleasurable and positive experience. I am planning to join the leisure centre in February to ensure I continue to get fitter stronger and more flexible. Thank you"

"Lara the teacher is patient and understanding. Been every week since joining. Balance has improved and feel more supple. Also made friends and we enjoy a coffee and a chat after class".

"An excellent scheme and I encourage anyone who is inactive to take part".

"Amazing experience and in hard times financially this really helped me".

"The Golden Pass helped me to learn about what exercise classes were available within walking distance of my home. As I am not driving currently this has been important to my use of the Pass. I am hoping to join Elderfit Strength and Balance for the first time today".

"It has been great to discover these activities and to join friends and participate in classes. I have felt welcomed and supported when attending. Bowls, for instance, gave me a one to one session and confidence that I could become a skilled player, dance has been lots of fun (if challenging) and pilates has complemented the aerobic activities well".

"Positive experience. A permanent scheme welcomed, perhaps with concessions rather than free entrance. I preferred community activities to the Leisure Centre, much nicer environments and easier to book".

"The scheme gave me the desire to try the activity as it was free with nothing to lose, now I am glad I did join and have continued going to the class since and feel better and healthier for it. There should be more such classes made available which are as reasonably priced, i.e. can be afforded on a pension/low income. It worked for me, and others were interested and hoping the scheme was still going.

"It was good to be able to try out classes, but the most useful aspect was the list of classes that came with the Pass. I found out about activities that I didn't know existed, and having the Pass encouraged me to go. I would add though that as this is aimed at older people I'd say that ease of attending a class is also a factor. I liked that I could turn up (or not) without booking, and was put off trying a class at the leisure centre as it required me to book in advance and via an app etc.



Links to the National Exercise Referral Scheme

A positive partnership has been formed with the National Exercise Referral scheme, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of referred patients aged 16 and over who are sedentary and at risk of chronic disease, by increasing their physical activity participation levels through supported delivery. The Golden Pass programme acts as a useful 'next step' for individuals who have finished their 16-week NERS programme, providing the opportunities to access Golden Pass to integrate into further leisure centre activities or diversify into community-based sessions. This relationship will be further developed moving forward.

St Athan Walking Group

Following discussions with St Athan Community Council it was established that more age friendly activities were required in the area. St Athan is a rural area which has limited physical activity opportunities and alongside this, transport links are limited. An interest was highlighted in organised walking opportunities. As there were no current local opportunities, anyone interested in joining a walking group had to travel a significant distance, presenting a barrier to participation. Therefore, the Healthy Living Officer worked in partnership with Valeways (a free walking group club) to create a new fortnightly walking group in St Athan. The sessions are targeted at inactive residents, taking place on an easy, flat route. As a way of engaging residents and encouraging them to stay and socialise after the walk, refreshments were provided for the initial 10 weeks. This group continues to meet, and it is now a regular walk in the Valeways schedule, providing a pathway for local residents to start being physically active once again.





Independent Living Schemes Project

In consultation with residents, it was identified that there was a gap in the Golden Pass 60+ offer. Many of the residents living in Independent Living Schemes have mobility issues which hinders engagement in community-based activities. Due to this, some individuals are unintentionally excluded from engaging in the Golden Pass programme. Therefore, a different approach was developed for these residents. With funding from the Active Leisure Scheme, five different activity kits were purchased and loaned to each of the five independent living schemes, with each scheme having access to a different kit for a block of ten weeks before the kit being swapped and passed to a different home for the next ten-week period. Throughout this process, the Healthy Living Officer helped facilitate the initial activity sessions showing staff, volunteers and residents how to set up the activity and provided progression and regression opportunities for each activity.

By providing a variety of activities, the aim is for residents to develop an enjoyment for physical activity and work out which activities they prefer. Once this is established, they will be provided with appropriate equipment to keep and facilitate the activities themselves. Since January, the Healthy Living Officer has visited each scheme on a monthly basis and introduced a new activity. Attendance at these sessions varies across the venues with between 2 and 14 residents attending each week at each venue. This large range in attendance is in partly due to the staffing challenges each scheme has faced - the Scheme Co-ordinator plays a pivotal role in promoting sessions that the Healthy Living Officer delivers. Longmeadow Court is the only scheme that has had no change or disruption in staffing, and they have consistently had the highest attendance.

Walking & Home Activity Packs

In an attempt to encourage identified adults to take part in free physical activity either from home or through walking, funding was secured to purchase equipment which has been used to create a number of activity packs. This includes walking poles, resistance bands, exercise booklets and other items to form a small pack which will be distributed to residents. Currently the Healthy Living Officer is working in consultation with other departments including the Ageing Well team to identify individuals who would benefit the most from these packs.

Active Adults Showcase

In conjunction with the National Exercise Referral Scheme, an Active Adults Showcase event was held in Barry Library enabling residents to meet local physical activity providers to discuss what opportunities are available to adults in the area. This event also enabled residents to meet the Healthy Living Officer and NERS Development Officer to discuss other local provision and to find out about the Golden Pass and Exercise Referral Scheme.

Pickleball

The Healthy Living Team have worked in partnership with Legacy Leisure, providing funding to introduce Pickleball into the leisure centres. This has proved to be popular, bringing a different type of activity to the centres.

"Thank you to the Vale of Glamorgan Council for providing us with funding to get this amazing activity off the ground and make an impact on so many people's lives, not only improving physical but mental wellbeing".

"I am so happy that we have pickleball at Penarth Leisure centre, this has made such a difference to my overall health and fitness".

"I must say I am a bit competitive, I love pickleball as it is not as hard as tennis but you still get a good workout from it"

"This is fantastic, we have created a community group that meet up twice a week, I look forward to coming every week".



4. ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

- **A network of inclusive, thriving clubs and organisations delivering quality opportunities to increase regular participation**
 - **Using the Vale's natural and built environment to support more informal physical activity opportunities**
 - **Support access to low cost / no cost activities**
 - **Extend reach to residents who are not part of clubs, using activity to support wellbeing**
-
- Healthy Living Team have assisted Sport Wales with assessing Be Active Funding applications from Vale sports clubs and organisations, which aims to improve access to physical activity by supporting projects that promote equality, sustainability and innovation in sport. £256,389 has been distributed to 31 Vale clubs. Where requested, clubs have been supported by the team to apply for the funding. The team also liaised with the Stronger Communities Funding lead to support a joined up approach between the funding streams to avoid duplication of funding and try to achieve maximisation of funding available.
 - Local clubs have been supported with areas such as access to funding, training, membership development and promotion of opportunities through e.g. school club links and taster activities. 90 clubs registered on the free club database to support this. 11 clubs were provided with a total of £9278 through the Letter to Santa project to support coach developments to help increase inclusive opportunities, targeted girls developments and club development.
 - Supporting Youth Wellbeing through the Energise YOUth project – targeting the least active 11–18 years facing wellbeing challenges, to build on positive wellbeing through physical activity. Delivered in partnership with Youth Service and community sports organisations, a pilot was completed which saw 49 referred young people registered on the scheme, who were supported by youth workers from Vale Youth Service to access community activities. Healthy Living Team created a programme of suitable activities in partnership with community clubs and Legacy Leisure to enable the participants to have a choice of activities. Funded by Sport Wales, the pilot has highlighted many positive impacts, with young people indicating a noticeable improvement in their overall wellbeing.

Participants report experiencing enhanced moods, increased energy levels, and, in some cases, better sleeping routines because of their participation in the various activities provided by the programme. Energise YOUth serves as a valuable initiative, providing young people with opportunities to access a wide range of sports activities, contributing positively to their physical and mental health.

- Funding secured through Council’s Youth Wellbeing funding to support universal and targeted youth wellbeing through delivery of additional free provision in partnership with Legacy Leisure, Arts Development and Youth Services. Sports activities included:

- 18 skateboarding sessions and a series of golf sessions organised by the Healthy Living Team
- equipment bags and separate pieces of equipment given to targeted young people through Social Care Officers, Youth Workers and via Santa’s Cause Christmas initiative to support access to physical activity at home and in their communities.

- Legacy leisure – 2529 participations in youth outdoor fitness sessions, informal Basketball sessions and free Swim/Inflatable sessions. As a result of popularity, junior basketball sessions continue to be delivered in Barry Leisure Centre on a weekly basis.

- Working in partnership with community clubs to provide free sports and physical activities during school holidays and afterschool to support access to sport and physical activity. Activities included skateboarding, social football, dodgeball, basketball and ‘try a sport’ multi-activity sessions. Particularly targeting those not part of a club, supporting those who cannot afford to pay to attend activity, female participation and inclusion. This also supported the clubs to engage with prospective new members, acting as a promotional tool. Analysis of data highlighted the inclusive nature of the provision with approx. 20% of all session participants having an additional need.



“My daughter did the skateboarding session. She came out bouncing. She had a great time and loved it so much I’m now looking for a skateboard on EBay for her. She went into the hall having never been on a skateboard before. In the space of an hour she’s going down a ramp and having the best time. The instructors were lovely”.

“My child loved this session and finds everything the Vale of Glamorgan run is very fun and inclusive”.

“My child said ‘it was amazing, I had so much fun’ and wanted to stay longer. She wanted to know if she could go all through the holidays. I was personally impressed about how happy excited and motivated she was after the session. Thank you as it’s so nice for her to have this experience 😊”.

“The paddleboarding was brilliant - would welcome more opportunities similar to this. Thank you so much for giving my son the opportunity to experience something new. Fantastic experience, with great coaches. Great initiative for low-income families”.

- Partnership working with the Vale Play Team saw free sport and physical activity opportunities delivered across the Play Rangers sessions, in outdoor spaces in local communities to reduce barriers to access activities due to cost and transport issues, supporting doorstep opportunities and making use of local natural outdoor spaces. Free sessions also delivered within playschemes. 2035 participations accrued between the two schemes.
- Worked collaboratively with the Youth Service to deliver 'Try a Sport' sessions to encourage young people to use the local sports facilities in their area and give them the opportunity to explore new sports activities in a casual, no commitment environment. Also to deliver Street Football sessions during half terms offering the opportunity to engage in sporting activities in a casual setting, as an alternative to team sports or formalised clubs. The Healthy Living Team also delivered activities at the 3 Mini Youth Fests organised by the Youth Service over the summer period offering access to casual sports activities. The Team also supported the 'Girls Rights Fest' hosted by Her Voice Wales with the aim of encouraging and supporting girls to become more involved in sport activities.
- Continued partnership with University Health Board and Disability Sport Wales around the Disability Health pathway project with the Healthy Living Team signposting 18 young people and adults, referred by health professionals, to locally based activities to increase physical activity levels and support their health and wellbeing.
- Continued representation on the multisector 'Improving the Life Experiences of Families & Communities group' which focuses on developing a collaborative approach to supporting children, young people and families in the Pencoedtre cluster. Physical activity and leadership actions have been included within the plan which will be progressed in 24/25.



- Supporting families resettling in Vale - as a result of developing relationships with food pods in Western Vale, Afghan families resettling in the area have been supported to access activity. Also, as a result of building relationships with Resettlement Officers, work has commenced on setting up an equipment loan scheme and links to the Healthy Living Team to develop informal opportunities for families living at Ukranian resettlement site in Western Vale.
- Worked in partnership with Cardiff City Community Foundation to deliver the Premier League Kicks Football project in Cadoxton, Castleland and Colcot. Kicks is a youth outreach programme that aims to create safer, more inclusive communities and provide diversionary activities for ages 11 – 19 years. It also supports provision of informal opportunities and provides regular activity for those that cannot afford to join local football opportunities (free to access). 60 young people attended over 38 sessions. Identified that many young people attending sessions did not own a football so all participants given football at end of project to continue being able to play.
- More than 25 disabled people tried a range of activities during an Insport event organised as a partnership between the Healthy Living Team, Disability Sport Wales, sports clubs and National Governing Bodies of Sport to raise awareness of activities available. Activities included boccia, bowls, dance, polybat, rowing, table tennis. See page 10 for case study impact.
- In partnership with Vale libraries, a pilot project has seen sports equipment bags placed at libraries so families can loan them free of charge to support them to be physically active together. Taking away the barrier of cost to participating and encouraging families to make use of the various outdoor spaces available in the Vale. Sport specific equipment bags have been provided at targeted sites (e.g. tennis bag at Barry Library to support residents accessing new tennis court provision). A similar project has been established at food pods in Llantwit and St Lukes, Penarth where the Healthy Living Team visit on a monthly basis to engage with the community to see what other support is required to help participation.



- A partnership has been developed with Llamau to support participation in physical activity of young people at risk of being homeless – understanding the positive contribution physical activity can make to mental wellbeing. Taster sessions have taken place at leisure centre, as a result there has been an increase in physical activity levels and motivation to continue. Equipment has been provided to Llamau for young people to access year round, and the support workers are being encouraged to use physical activity when engaging with young people. Discussions have also taken place around linking young people to the Energise YOUth project.
- A partnership between the Healthy Living Team and the Vale Adoption Team is progressing actions to support participation of children and young people in care. Sports equipment has been provided to the Adoption Team to introduce physical activity to the weekly support sessions and a calendar of activities is being developed to enable more children to access regular activity and develop confidence to be more active.
- Through funding provided by Welsh Government, the Free swim programme is delivered by Legacy Leisure providing free opportunities to Under 16's during school holidays and on weekends and to 60+ age group year round.
- The Healthy Living Team worked in partnership with local community clubs, Legacy Leisure, National Governing Bodies of Sport to develop sports specific opportunities in sports that were in demand by residents including pickleball, social football, basketball, skateboarding, cycling, golf.
- A partnership between Tennis Wales, the Healthy Living Team and local tennis clubs has seen junior tennis opportunities developed on the newly refurbished parks courts in Barry and Penarth. Tennis specific library loan bags have been placed in key libraries where developments have taken place to remove barrier of equipment required to access courts.



CASE STUDY - LEISURE CENTRE YOUTH TAKEOVER

In partnership with Legacy Leisure, a Youth Takeover was organised in Barry Leisure Centre to showcase the opportunities available in the centres. 75 young people participated. The event took place after centre opening times so the young people had sole access to the spaces, where they were able to try out a range of activities such as gym inductions, football, swimming, dance and badminton. The Youth Service delivered archery at the sessions and supported with promotion of the events.

Young people indicated a range of reasons why they attended the event including the opportunity to try new activities, as the activities were free, to have more social interaction and to try activities specifically within a leisure centre.

87% indicated they felt more confident, whilst the remaining 13% indicated they partly felt more confident to take part in more activities as a result of the event.

80% of young people want to take part in more activities at the leisure centre whilst the remaining 20% would be dependent on the cost of the activities, highlighting how affordability is an important factor to support physical activity participation.

"I know there isn't much money in the pot, but it was lovely to see so many young people come together and be A) off the streets or B) off their consoles. It would be great if this could be done again every so often. If you told the schools so that more children could attend, maybe even incorporate them so you could use their premises alternatively to see if that can cut costs and remove the swimming from the sessions".

"Absolutely amazing idea to help young teens socialise, get healthy and get out. My child loved it and cannot wait to try more activities because of the session".

"I think these events should be on more often, there was a lot of kids there so that shows the event was good for all".

"It was a really good event, there is a lack of evening activities for teens in the area".



5. ACTIVE LEARNING

- **Vale Active Learning Pathway – developing the coach, volunteer & leadership pathway**
- **Individuals have the skills, knowledge and confidence to organise and deliver engaging, inclusive sport and physical activity opportunities**
- **Developing transferrable skills that will support future employability and general life skills**

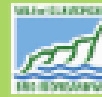
501 individuals attended 64 different courses with a total of at least 2502 training hours, impacting on thousands of sessions with an additional 3432 voluntary hours to impact 26,101 participations.

- 79 individuals from preschool groups, play staff and leisure centres upskilled to support thousands of pre-school children and their families to be active, giving more children the best start in life.
- The Playmakers project has seen 135 children from 9 primary schools receive training to develop their skills to deliver physical activity opportunities to their peers, supporting them to be more active at break and lunch-times.
- 54 Young Ambassadors based in schools to encourage and support their peers to participate in physical activity and represent pupil voice in decision making (see below for case study).
- The Coaches of the Future project has seen 14 young people aged 16-24 years who are motivated to contribute to school, club or community sports sessions selected to receive training, upskilling and mentoring to cascade knowledge, good practice and increased capacity into community and school sports clubs. This has impacted on more than 225 people across 78 sessions with the coaches contributing 93 voluntary hours in addition to 182 training hours, with the coaches then continuing delivery within community and schools settings.





Case Study: Young Ambassadors



Strategic Priority: Workforce development, inclusion and targeting low activity levels



What are Young Ambassadors?

The Young Ambassador programme aims to empower young people as inspirational role models so they can encourage their inactive peers to enjoy sport and physical activity, ensure the voice of their peers are heard and harness the positive power of sport and physical activity to improve wellbeing, confidence and build friendships. The Young Ambassadors take on a range of roles including volunteering at events, coaching younger pupils, consulting with their peers and encouraging others to love sport as much as they do.

There are three levels of Ambassadors in the Vale:

- Bronze - Primary age
- Silver - Year 9
- Gold - Year 10 +



55 Sports Ambassadors across Vale



1800 voluntary hours undertaking consultation, community activities, events and extra-curricular clubs



Impacted on at least 1500 children



12 young people completed community sports leaders level 2



Celebration event to recognise involvement of young people

Further Information please contact Healthy Living Team:

healthylivingteam@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



@valesportsteam1

Impact and Feedback

What has it really meant to young people and schools, and what has the wider impact been?



98% participants felt more confident as a result of involvement in YA programme



100% felt valued as a result of being part of YA programme

"Having an intake of 12 in one school has had a massive impact on many more pupils. The are more effective together and work as a team. We have introduced special ties that YAs wear as part of their uniform and have Plaques in visible area of school highlighting previous YA's"

Mr Manley Director of Extra Curricular Activities Whitmore High School

"This year YA's at one school were linked to the autism resource base. As a result, there has been increased participation by young people in sport resulting in increased confidence and motivation....."

The YA's that have been coming to the base have been great. They have really engaged the pupils into extra curricular activities as they now feel confident to attend, something they never have before".

Miss E. Takle Head of Autism Base Whitmore High School.

"The Sports Ambassadors were amazing - in particular the Tennis team. They saw that one of our children was not keen to participate and so 'E' made a role for him as a referee. This was greatly appreciated by both the child and us as staff. 'I' and 'F' who were assigned to my class were fab - they ensured all children knew what they were doing during the circuit session and were knowledgeable about where we needed to be and what we were going to be doing. They participated with all the activities and were super role models".

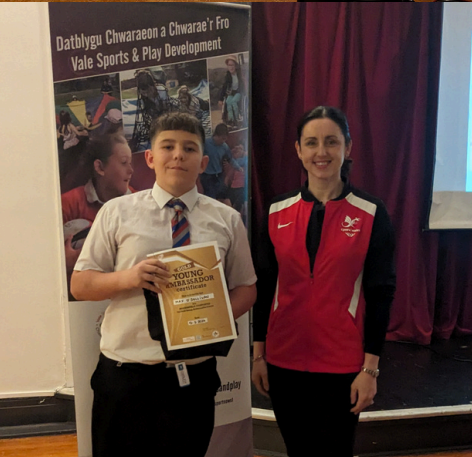
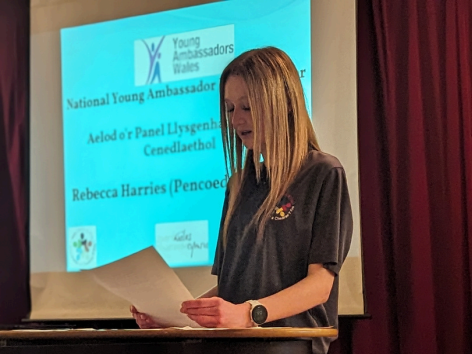
Jenner Park Primary School

Z formed part of the June 2023/2024 intake of Young Ambassadors. He went through the application and interview process. There were reservations around appointing 'Z' as a YA due to behaviour in school, so it was agreed with the Head that this would be a trial basis and if his behaviour in school did not improve, he would be removed from the program.

Z was appointed as a YA for the autism base as he often frequented the base and was familiar with many of the pupils there. He understood his role was to act as a role model and to engage the pupils into mainstream extracurricular activities. From the outset he fully engaged with the YA role and helped to engage the base pupils into physical activity. Along with other YA's he has helped organise weekly multi-sport sessions, organising the equipment and activities and making the sessions fun for the base pupils, who really look forward to having the weekly sessions with the YA's. Having the YA's deliver the sessions has really engaged the base pupils and they look forward to being active.

Z has not only helped at the base sessions every week, he has also helped with the primary basketball programme and the primary multi-sport events. He is always punctual and gives 100%.

Since joining the YA programme his behaviour has improved beyond recognition. Both the Head of School and Executive Head have commented on the change in him and the fact that he is no longer being reprimanded for poor behaviour. They have commented that being a part of the YA program has supported this and given him a role that he has thrived in.



- A celebration evening was held to recognise the contribution of the Coaches of the Future and Young Sports Ambassadors in supporting residents to become more active and pass on their passion about sport and physical activity. Suzy Drane who is Wales most capped International Netball player attended the event to talk about the great impact her coaches had on her career and congratulating the young leaders on their valuable work. Whitmore and Pencoedre executive headteacher and the Director of Extra-curricular activities were also guest speakers illustrating the impact of the Young Ambassador programme on pupils from their school and on the schools themselves. Rebecca Harries who is a pupil from Pencoedre School was selected to sit on the National Young Ambassador Panel representing the Vale and she gave an inspiring presentation about her involvement in the scheme.

- 18 individuals from 10 clubs funded to upskill in sport specific coaching through Letter to Santa to increase quality and availability of community based opportunities.

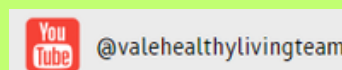
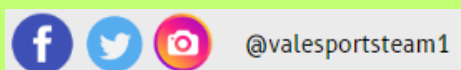
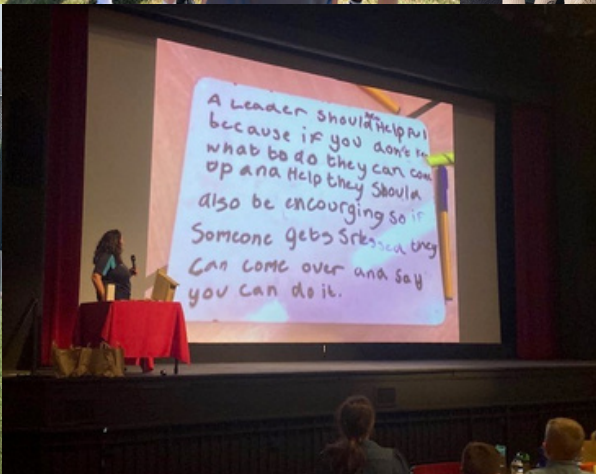
- 117 different individuals from schools and community settings including sports clubs attended generic training to help deliver quality sessions. Sessions included disability awareness training, safeguarding, first aid and some specific teachers courses.

- Staff from Legacy Leisure supported to increase knowledge through access to Building Foundations training and additional training delivered by Healthy Living Team to support delivery of activity sessions within the centres.

- 28 Vale Play staff received physical activity training to support delivery of activities within free play provision. Informal mentoring also provided via attendance by Vale sports staff at schemes to showcase activities that can be delivered by the Play staff.

- Organisation of Disability Inclusion Training from Level 1 to Level 3, which resulted in 30 individuals involved in community delivery of sport to increase knowledge and become more upskilled at inclusive practices.

- Disability Inclusion training and Autism Awareness training held for schools to support development of inclusive opportunities in response to lower participation by disabled children in School Sport Survey. Also organisation of tennis teachers course to promote tennis as an extra-curricular activity.
- Rights Ambassadors members from the Vale Youth Service delivered an Introduction to Children’s Rights and the National Participation Standards to 28 Healthy Living Team staff members – as a result 97% of participants had increased knowledge of children’s rights and 100% had increased knowledge of the National Participation Standards.
- The Healthy Living Team delivered Sports Leadership training to the STRIVE team within the Vale Youth Service enabling them to use sport and physical activity to engage the young people they work with. to engage in various physical activities. Staff feedback was very positive – “I now feel confident I could run a sports session”; “I think we could look at team events more for the summer term”.





Vale of Glamorgan Exercise Referral Scheme

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



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Introduction

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has operated the National Exercise Referral scheme since its inception in 2007. Firstly, under the guidance of Welsh Government, then the Welsh Local Government Association and as of this year under Public Health Wales.

The Healthy Living Team within the Council is responsible for the implementation, delivery and maintenance of this locally delivered exercise referral scheme to improve the health and wellbeing of referred patients aged 16 and over, who are sedentary and at risk of chronic disease, in line with the following aims to:

- engage those who are sedentary and at risk of or with established disease to participate in regular physical activity
- increase levels of confidence in engaging in regular physical activity
- contribute to reduced risk of disease progression or recurrence of acute events
- improve mental wellbeing and motivation for self-care

This is achieved by providing tailored exercise programmes and support to meet the needs of individuals with a range of health risk factors and conditions, who meet the specific inclusion criteria for accessing the scheme.

The scheme relies on medical practitioners in the Vale of Glamorgan to refer clients to the Healthy Living Team of the Council for a prescription of exercise. The prescription usually lasts for 16 weeks, with the intention to provide the clients with the necessary knowledge and motivation to remain active once they complete the scheme to support their health and wellbeing in the long term. By doing this, it is hoped it will contribute to reducing their need to access future health care and subsequently reduce health care costs.

"The potential benefits of physical activity to health are huge. If a medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be regarded as a 'wonder drug' or 'miracle cure'."

**Sir Liam Donaldson (2009)
Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer**

The Referral Process

1. The client is referred from a medical practitioner.
2. The referral form is received by the Co-ordinator who ensures the relevant information is on the form and then input onto a tracker and the National NERS database.
3. The Co-ordinator sends a Welcome Text to greet clients to the scheme and ensures that the client understands the scheme has a waiting time to be seen.
4. Over the course of the waiting time, the Co-ordinator sends another text with a link to the Vale NERS Youtube page, which contains videos of classes that take place at Vale leisure sites - this is to ensure that people understand a little more about the scheme and what it entails. It also lets the individual know that they are still on the list to receive the service.
5. Further to this, a link to a Pre-Activity Questionnaire is also sent out to collect relevant data which allows the staff to spend more time with the client discussing important information and building a rapport at the first assessment.
6. Once the questionnaire is completed, the client is contacted when a space becomes available in the Instructors' schedules. The first assessment is then scheduled.
7. After the first assessment is complete, an appointment is made for the client to attend their first session.
8. The client is then tracked over the course of 16 weeks.
9. The client is offered an assessment at 16 weeks and an exit strategy from the scheme is advised. The Exercise Referral Development Officer helps the client to continue exercise with the most appropriate route for the client.
10. If the client withdraws or does not attend, they are contacted to see if they wish to return to the scheme.

Scheme Uptake



1380 referrals made by medical professionals

Of those who met the criteria and were invited to initial assessment, 678 attended assessments (49% of those referred)

571 of those who attended their assessments then attended their first session of exercise (84% of those who were assessed)

219 clients completed the scheme (38.4% of those who start exercise)

Scheme Impact



97% of the people who completed the scheme are still exercising

87% of the people who completed the scheme increased their activity levels (pre to post)

76% of the people who completed the scheme achieved an increased fitness level

49% of the people who completed the scheme achieved a weight-loss.

Patients Success Stories

I recently completed my 16 week scheme having been referred by my GP due to mobility issues, aches, pains, fatigue and muscle loss in my back, hips and legs all of which started suddenly in June 2022. I rapidly went from being fairly active; walking 6 miles a day, swimming and aqua aerobics to having to lie down three times a day to rest, struggling to walk around the supermarket clinging on to a trolley and struggling with simple everyday tasks. I had various tests over the next ten months with a few minor health problems highlighted but no explanation as to why I was having these issues. My GP referred me for the NERS which I started in July 2023.

At first I was very anxious about stepping in to a gym and nervous to start exercising as I didn't want to aggravate my problems but Craig took the time to listen to my concerns and to devise a programme which would help me. I attended your referral Open Gym class once a week. The class was perfect for me, a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere with group members who were most friendly and inspirational in what they had achieved in spite of some very serious medical issues. This gave me the confidence to push myself a little bit further each week and I added a second session every week where I could continue to work and make progress at my own pace, always under Craig's expert guidance.

I have benefited enormously from the scheme and am seeing huge improvements in my physical health and mental well-being. As a result, I have taken out a gym membership and continue to attend the gym twice a week with every intention of trying out some new activities. I think that the NERS is amazing and a huge asset to the NHS and I hope that future funding will be available to continue the fantastic work. I believe that the success of the scheme in Penarth is down to Craig's hard work, dedication and compassion for each and every one of his clients and I cannot thank him enough for all he has done for me personally.

Long may the scheme continue!

I have absolutely loved going to the gym for the last 4 months. Prior to my NERS referral I was always intimidated about going to the gym, I really couldn't see the point. I believed that if you were active, and went jogging then that would be enough to keep healthy. But after developing a chronic pain condition I found that I wasn't doing that.

I stopped exercising. I felt pain so I reduced my activity, but the pain kept coming. I reduced my activity further and over the past few years stopped playing badminton, stopped the 5k runs that I started during the pandemic, stopped working, became sedentary, spent more time sitting, more time in bed. This combined with my increasing age, and my medication meant that I lost fitness and strength, and started putting on weight for the first time in my life. I hit 47, and realised I had a dad-bod, and I hated that. I felt old and no longer felt like myself. All of this coincided with the breakdown of my long-term relationship, which hit my self-image hard. I lost my passion for life, felt depressed, anxious, lonely, unattractive and undesirable.

At the end of 2023 I attended a pain management course, where I learnt that with my health condition the pain does not indicate that tissue damage is occurring. And that if I push back gently against my neuropathic pain it will, over time, retreat. Despite this new knowledge I struggled to motivate myself: I've lived opposite the gym for a year, but other than a single visit to the pool was making no use of the facilities. Knowing that there was somebody there, who was expecting me, and ready to support and work with me made the difference.

I met Craig and was immediately caught up by his enthusiasm and charisma. He clearly understood my pain condition, and where I was at in my life. We talked about my aims and set realistic goals, then at my first actual gym session he began to introduce me to the gym. Craig explains things clearly, concisely, demonstrates where necessary, gives positive feedback when you get it right, gives gentle adjustment when things need to be corrected. He's introduced me to cardio, resistance machines, free weights, and now the physio ball. But nothing has felt rushed, or pressured. He can tell when I am ready for something new, or when I can tweak an existing exercise to get more from it.

I'm now 16 weeks into the referral and Craig is still there for me. He catches my eye every single time, and takes the time to say hello, and check in with me. I feel so welcome in the gym and I look forward to going not only the physical exercise, but also for the enormous benefits that it's had to my mental health, my self-image. I've seen my body start to change, and although I'm not where I want to be quite yet I have taken the first steps. I am stronger, fitter, more toned, and am confident that regular exercise will now be a life-long habit.

The structure the exercise regime has added to my life has become the backbone of my week around which I have built numerous other activities. I have signed up for a stand-up comedy course, a counselling starter course at CAVC, and been dancing for the first time in a decade. I have thrown out my old wardrobe, and invested in new clothes that make me feel comfortable and confident. My mood has improved, and I am engaging with the world, making eye contact with people and smiling. I talk about the referral constantly to anyone who will listen, citing all the benefits that I have experienced over the past few months, encouraging them to seek a referral to help with their own mental health issues, or physical ailments. It is too early to tell how my neuropathic pain will be affected, it certainly is no worse, and I feel confident to challenge the pain, while also knowing that I am being gentle and taking care of myself. I look forward to seeing how it reacts in the long term.

The NERS referral and Craig's support have changed my life, and given me a wonderful foundation from which I can build my bright new future.

I joined the exercise referral scheme because I had been living with Atrophy of the Cerebellum for 8 years. I know the ataxia and other symptoms are incurable, but I wanted to see if it was possible to improve my strength and balance with the aim of achieving a better quality of life.

When I first started the classes I wasn't able to walk across the room without the aid of a stick and I couldn't do even the lowest step exercises without holding onto a rail. Within a few weeks I was leaving my stick in the car and doing all of the exercises with a confidence and strength that I didn't think were possible. Max is a brilliant trainer, he is very attentive and aware of each individual's needs. By the time we were halfway through the course he had encouraged me to start using the main gym and given me a program of exercises. I now have full gym membership and I attend several times a week. The course is excellent in itself, but the way Max manages and delivers it takes it to a different level. The scheme has totally changed my life in ways I couldn't have imagined, and Max deserves much of the credit for that.

(NERS client attending Barry Leisure Centre)

I was referred to the NERS programme by my GP, due to lower back pain. My goals were to reduce this pain through improved fitness and to increase my physical activities with my six-year-old son.

I have recently completed the 16-week programme and have achieved my goals. My back pain is significantly reduced, I have lost weight and am more confident in my activities with my son.

Craig at Penarth Leisure Centre has helped me with learning how to use the gym equipment suitable for my goals and steadily increase my fitness. I am continuing to attend the gym since completing the programme and thoroughly enjoy it.

The results, along with Craig's support, are keeping me motivated.

(Roger, Penarth)

Resourcing the Scheme

The Council receive funding from the National Exercise Referral funding stream via Public Health Wales to employ 3.6 full time equivalent Exercise Referral Professionals who directly work with and deliver activities to the clients referred to the scheme. A contribution from this funding is also used to employ an Exercise Referral Co-ordinator, with the remaining funding for this post funded through the Council. Other costs associated with delivering the scheme such as venue hire costs are funded by the Council.

Additional funding has been secured through Welsh Government Prevention Funding to employ an Exercise Referral Development Officer who is involved with increasing uptake and retention, and supporting clients who have completed the scheme with exit strategies to encourage sustained participation. This funding was also used to purchase new equipment to extend the range of activities available to keep the clients engaged in activity and to cater for the differing needs.

The cost of attending the NERS scheme is set nationally. Prior to June 2023, the cost was £2 per session. This was raised nationally in June 2023 to £2.50 per session. As part of the Leisure Management contract, this charge is paid directly to Legacy Leisure who retain this income, it is not directly invested back into the NERS scheme. This does limit the opportunity to generate income to invest into increasing capacity and opportunities within the scheme.



On a national level, Public Health Wales have recently taken over the national management of the scheme. Following a full review of the scheme, they have created a national development plan which in its first year focussed on the creation and implementation of a new national database to streamline the referral and administrative procedures, and support more effective monitoring and analysis of scheme participation. Both the local Exercise Referral Teams and the medical professionals have been familiarising themselves with this new system and the new methods of referring clients, with some medical professionals adjusting their procedures better than others. There is still some work to do with partners to ensure that the process of referral is suitably adjusted for all those who wish to refer.

The Exercise Referral Team staff have been working hard to communicate with the large numbers of clients referred, and have employed different methods to increase effectiveness with this, whilst also trying to cost save wherever possible due to increasingly stretched resources. The national funding allocated to the local partners who deliver the NERS scheme has not grown since 2013, however delivery costs such as staff wages has increased year on year due to e.g. cost of living increases. This is placing increasing pressure on the financial management of the scheme with additional internal Council funding having to be identified to support.



Moving forward, unless there is increased national funding invested into the local level delivery of the scheme, there will be a need to reduce the capacity offer of the scheme, which would have a very detrimental effect, especially given that there is already up to an 8 week waiting list for commencement on the programme due to the high level of referrals received. This information has been relayed to Public Health Wales, who are trying to seek ways to increase funding to the local delivery organisations.

Actions to Develop the Service

Actions to counteract drop off in participation following referral

There is significant drop off at each level of the process. This is historic and found across the scheme nationally. The largest drop is seen between the point of referral and the first assessment and is something that is being focused on to improve take up rates. There are a number of possible reasons for this including:

- the waiting time that we now have within the Vale - up to 8 weeks from the date of referral.
- a lack of information supplied by the referring health professional to the client around what the scheme entails, the referral process and the waiting time.
- a negative impression of exercise by the client gained from their previous experience with exercise.
- the costs involved in the scheme.
- a combination of the above factors.

To overcome some of the above potential barriers, the team implemented a 'post referral/pre-scheme take up' text message service. An initial holding welcome text is sent to inform the client they have been successfully referred to the scheme and there is an expected wait time to commence on the scheme. When a space becomes available, they are then sent a text which includes information around the Pre-Activity Questionnaire and details of the Exercise Referral Professional (ERP) who they need to contact to start on the scheme. This slight change has helped in identifying those potential clients who are still motivated to start the scheme, as they need to complete the paperwork and contact the ERP to make an appointment.

If a response is not received from the client then, in most cases, we can assume that motivation is lost. As a standardisation for contact 21 days (3 weeks) are given to the client to respond to this message. If we do not hear from the client in this time-frame it is assumed they are not interested in the scheme and their case is closed on the database. This information is kept on file and retained.

In 23-24 the text service was slightly modified to try to increase client participation and engagement with the programme. The first text message now includes the sentence “Please text back either YES or NO to show your interest.” With this sentence we are testing the client’s motivation with the simplest of responses. Out of 82 text messages sent we had a response from 61 of those clients in the first month of testing. This 74.4% response rate may help increase the attendance of clients to the first assessment and improve the likelihood that these clients will attend the programme. Unfortunately with the current limited staffing capacity, it would be difficult to follow up with every client who has not responded. It is hopeful that the new national database will eventually have the capability to send text messages to clients - this module is currently in development so currently texts are manually sent.



The above steps have helped the team to concentrate on the clients who are motivated to start the scheme. Motivation is key to starting and completing the scheme as behaviour change is hard and exercise can be difficult for those who are currently inactive. By using the text messaging service, it is hoped that the more motivated individuals can be identified to focus the limited resources to. Staff within the Exercise Referral Team have undertaken Motivational Interviewing training and are using the techniques to gather more pertinent details and help the clients with behaviour change. Since undertaking this training and implementing the techniques, the completion rate has increased by 8%. This was one of the aims identified, however the data at this stage may be overlapping due to the switch from the old to the new database. A clearer picture will be given in 2024 when the new Theseus database system is in full use.

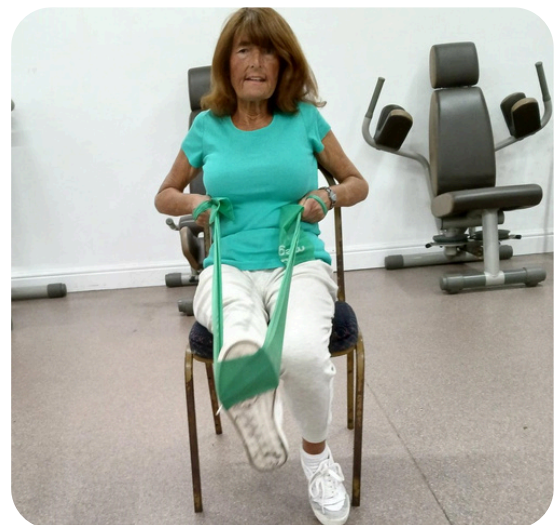
Improvements have been made to the NERS webpages on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website to increase the clarity of information that is provided on the scheme, allowing residents who are interested or have been referred to the scheme to find further information prior to commencement. These pages require continued review.

Actions to support clients to move into community provision

A partnership has been developed with Legacy Leisure which enables clients who have completed the NERS scheme to a reduced cost leisure membership of £20 per month which provides access to activities across the Legacy Leisure managed sites.

There are currently a number of residents who have completed the 16 weeks NERS scheme, who still attend NERS classes. The reason is they enjoy the sessions, have built a good rapport with the ERP and there are no similar classes available outside of the NERS scheme. This does cause a capacity issue with them taking up spaces that could be used by existing NERS clients. Discussions have taken place with Legacy Leisure to establish the feasibility of adding next step classes to the Legacy programme which will be suitable for those residents who have completed the NERS scheme to access appropriate activity in a familiar environment. Discussions regarding this are ongoing with the hope of developing new classes in 2024.

To assist with raising awareness around suitable community opportunities available to clients who have completed the NERS scheme, a community Showcase was organised at Barry Library, in partnership with the Vale's Active Adults Officer, community clubs and organisations. This provided residents with the opportunity to talk to local providers and find new activities that can inspire them to become more physically active, sustain and increase their participation levels. Due to the success of this Showcase, it is the intention to organise similar events at different locations in the Vale.



Challenges for 2024 - 2025

Financial Challenges

There will be financial challenges moving forward with the costs of wages increasing, but the grant settlement from Public Health Wales increasing below the rate of wage inflation. This is placing a strain on the service due to the increased pressure on the Council's budget position.

There is a necessity for scheme management to work with other internal departments and external organisations to increase awareness of the NERS scheme and its impact. With the increased awareness and understanding of how the scheme positively impacts across many corporate and national agendas, and the realisation it can ultimately help reduce pressures in other areas of the Council's work and within the NHS, it is hoped that this may lead to more funding streams being made available to support the scheme within the Vale. This is particularly important given the increasing referrals being received.

A Co-ordinated Approach between Health Programmes

There are an increasing number of 'Health' programmes operating within leisure centres and community settings since 2022, delivered by different organisations who are funded through a variety of mechanisms. There is little connection between these programmes, some of which offer similar services and are targeting the same residents. This has caused some confusion for referring health professionals and residents who are often unclear as to which programme they are attending, and which programme is most suitable for them. It also may not be the most effective use of limited resources. The Healthy Living Team have therefore made contact with the University Health Board to initiate discussions around how to progress with a more co-ordinated approach.

Transition to Community Provision

With increasing referrals being received, the impact on subsequent waiting lists and the high drop out rates between referral and first assessment, it is essential that capacity is created within the classes by ensuring those clients who have finished the 16 week scheme progress out of the NERS classes and into community settings. This is proving challenging as the clients are comfortable with these classes, however it does need to be a focus moving forward.



PRIORITIES FOR 2024 - 2025

1

Increase awareness of the NERS scheme with health professionals in identified areas of the Vale and support professionals with the modified referral process using the new national database.

2

Focus on reducing the drop off of clients at each of the levels following referral. Work with health professionals to ensure referred patients are fully aware of what the scheme entails prior to referral.

3

Increase the progression of clients onto the low-cost leisure membership.

4

In partnership with Legacy Leisure, develop new community-based exercise classes targeted at the clients who have completed the NERS scheme and support them on the next step to sustainable participation.

5

Organise Activity Showcases in additional areas of the Vale to increase knowledge around existing appropriate community physical activity opportunities available for clients post completion of the scheme.

6

Increased awareness of the scheme within the locality to help build links with potential new partners to include on the list of suitable activity providers for clients once they have completed the scheme.

7

Discussion to take place with University Health Board and organisations delivering health based exercise programmes within the Vale with the aim of achieving a more collaborative approach.

8

Review NERS webpages on the Council's website and update where relevant



Email

ExerciseReferral@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Phone

01446 40300 - Exercise Referral extension

Website

Exercise Referral Scheme
(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

You Tube

<https://tinyurl.com/Exercise-Referral-Sessions>





Vale of Glamorgan 60+ Active Leisure Scheme

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



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1. Overview

The 60+ Active Leisure Scheme (ALS) is funded by Welsh Government, is overseen nationally by Sports Wales and managed locally in the Vale of Glamorgan by the Council's Healthy Living Team. The aim is to reduce health inequalities and social isolation amongst the over-60 years population by providing residents with the opportunity to engage in physical activity initiatives. The scheme positively impacts on the Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing Society (Age Friendly Wales) and contributes to the Age Friendly Vale status that has been awarded by the World Health Organisation.

Funding has been secured from the Prevention stream of Welsh Government funding which has been used to contribute to the employment of a Healthy Living Officer, part of whose role includes leading on the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme.

Following the sad passing of the original project lead in the Vale of Glamorgan in January 2023, the 60+ programme was paused until the appointment of a new Healthy Living Officer in May 2023. This provided an appropriate time to review the programme.

The Healthy Living Team work with a diverse range of more than 40 partners to support the project including community providers, Cardiff & Vale Public Health Team, University Health Board, Housing Services, Legacy Leisure and the Age Friendly Vale Officer.

Throughout all aspects of the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme, each physical activity opportunity has an element of social interaction as that has been proven to increase the likelihood of individuals continuing to participate. Alongside that, the more social opportunities that are available helps reduce the risk of residents becoming socially isolated. Opportunities have been shared and promoted through several age friendly groups, the Vale of Glamorgan 50+ forum, Cardiff & Vale Ageing Well Meeting and Co-Production forum. These groups have provided great opportunities to speak with targeted individuals who the programme targets, alongside organisations who support 60+ adults. This collaborative process has allowed the Golden Pass to reach more individuals within the Vale, has helped to understand flaws in the programme and identify barriers to accessing the scheme. The Healthy Living Officer is then able to react and develop further initiatives to support those individuals identified who are experiencing barriers.

2. The Golden Pass

The Golden Pass is a project within the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme. Residents of the Vale of Glamorgan who are 60+ years and considered to be inactive (participate in less than 150 minutes of physical activity per week) are eligible for a Golden Pass. This takes the form of either an 8-week free pass to their local leisure centre or 8 sessions of free physical activity at local community organisations. The Healthy Living Officer subsequently pays for their membership or the sessions once they have been attended.

After gathering feedback from activity providers and residents the Golden Pass was redesigned to become streamlined and easier to manage. The Golden Pass was relaunched in August 2023 with minor changes and an updated list of physical activity providers. The Golden Pass has been received positively by residents and has provided a good opportunity for older adults to participate in physical activity and has helped with challenging common misconceptions about exercising in older age.

Scheme Uptake & Impact

222 residents were awarded a Golden Pass since the relaunch in August 2023

122 participants chose the leisure centre route, 100 participants chose the community route - a 55% - 45% split across the different routes

107 of 222 participants used their Golden Pass

(this data was recorded through registers provided by activity provider and the end of programme feedback form)

At the end of the programme, all participants who were accepted onto the programme were sent a feedback form to complete. This feedback form asked participants if they used their Golden Pass, how many times and whether they planned to continue being physically active now that the Golden Pass had been completed.

Finally, participants were asked to score themselves on the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) highlighted at the start of the programme. These are (A) Confidence in participating in Physical activity and (B). Social connections, which related to an individual's risk of Social Isolation. Individuals scored themselves at the entry point for the programme and once again in this feedback form. Of those 222, 139 completed the feedback form which has provided interesting data regarding the success of the programme. Below are some headline statistics:

78% stated that they used their Golden Pass

72% of participants completed at least 8 sessions on the Golden Pass

92% participants who used their Golden Pass plan on continuing to attend session or other physical activity

64% of participants who completed the programme reported an increase in confidence in taking part in physical activity

30% increase in confidence score on average across participants who completed the programme

54% of participants who completed the programme reported an increase in social connections from taking part in physical activity

28% increase in social connections score on average as a result of participating in the programme

Supporting Residents with Differing Needs

The Golden Pass project has positively supported residents with additional needs to access activity. This highlights the importance of having a range of opportunities and an understanding amongst the providers on how to adapt activities to cater for varying needs.

- 83% of participants who completed the survey reported to have some form of disability, health condition or impairment
- The most reported categories were:
 1. Long Standing illness or health condition - 45
 2. Physical Impairment - 26
 3. Other – 25
 4. Hearing impairment – 20
 5. Mental Health – 19



Links to the National Exercise Referral Scheme

A positive partnership has been formed with the National Exercise Referral team. The National Exercise Referral Scheme is locally delivered by the Healthy Living Team. It aims to improve the health and wellbeing of referred patients aged 16 and over who are sedentary and at risk of chronic disease, by increasing their physical activity participation levels through supported delivery. The Golden Pass programme acts as a useful 'next step' for individuals who have finished their 16-week NERS programme, providing the opportunities to access Golden Pass to integrate into further leisure centre activities or diversify into community based sessions. This relationship will be further developed moving forward.

To assist with raising awareness of the Golden Pass, the NERS scheme and suitable community opportunities available, a community Showcase was organised at Barry Library in partnership with the NERS Development Officer, community clubs and organisations. This provided residents with the opportunity to talk to local providers and find new activities that can inspire them to be physically active, sustain and increase their participation levels. Due to the success of this Showcase, it is the intention to organise similar events at different locations in the Vale.



3. Participant Quotes

"It was a marvellous opportunity to kick start my get fit and strengthen life. I found the staff at Barry leisure centre to be approachable and supportive. Other participants were friendly and helpful. All in all an extremely useful, pleasurable and positive experience. I am planning to join the leisure centre in February to ensure I continue to get fitter stronger and more flexible. Thank you".

"Thoroughly enjoyed the class. Lara the teacher is patient and understanding. Been every week since joining. Balance has improved and feel more supple. Also made friends and we enjoy a coffee and a chat after class".

"An excellent scheme and I encourage anyone who is inactive to take part".

"The scheme gave me the desire to try the activity as it was free with nothing to lose, now I am glad I did join and have continued going to the class since and feel better and healthier for it. It worked for me, and others were interested and hoping the scheme was still going".

"I have 'advertised' the scheme when I have had the opportunity both to friends in the VoG and Cardiff and to English colleagues who are invested in health inequalities and their remediation".

"The Golden Pass helped me to learn about what exercise classes were available within walking distance of my home. As I am not driving currently this has been important to my use of the Pass. I am hoping to join Elderfit Strength and Balance for the first time today".

"It has been great to discover these activities and to join friends and participate in classes. I have felt welcomed and supported when attending. Bowls, for instance, gave me a one to one session and confidence that I could become a skilled player, dance has been lots of fun (if challenging) and pilates has complemented the aerobic activities well".

"Positive experience. A permanent scheme would be welcomed, perhaps with concessions rather than free entrance. I preferred community activities to the Leisure Centre, much nicer environments and easier to book".

"The Golden Pass has operated over a very wet, cold winter period and sometimes getting to and from classes in suitable exercise gear has been challenging. But overall I think the Pass is a great initiative and hope it continues and the scheme has been successful in achieving its objectives".

"Amazing experience and with hard times financially this really helped me".

"I had to choose community or leisure centre. Would be better if it was both".

"The scheme gave me the desire to try the activity as it was free with nothing to lose, now I am glad I did join and have continued going to the class since and feel better and healthier for it. There should be more such classes made available which are as reasonably priced, i.e. can be afforded on a pension/low income. It worked for me, and others were interested and hoping the scheme was still going".

"Great way of trying different activities without committing. It might be useful to contact people on the programme in the early stages so they can be encouraged if they haven't yet started".

"Excellent classes offered....popular ones could do with more than 1 a week as often cannot get into a class".

"It was good to be able to try out classes, but the most useful aspect was the list of classes that came with the Pass. I found out about activities that I didn't know existed, and having the Pass encouraged me to go. I would add though that as this is aimed at older people I'd say that ease of attending a class is also a factor. I liked that I could turn up (or not) without booking, and was put off trying a class as it required me to book in advance and via an app etc.

"Excellent classes offered....popular ones could do with more than 1 a week as often cannot get into a class".

"Positive experience. A permanent scheme would be welcomed, perhaps with concessions rather than free entrance. I preferred community activities to the Leisure Centre, much nicer environments and easier to book".

"Loved using it to try as many different classes as I could, would not have been able to try these on a pay as you go basis as the popular classes get booked out a week in advance".

I regret not using the Gym, so maybe a personal invitation for an induction would have helped.



4. OTHER 60+ ACTIVE LEISURE SCHEME DEVELOPMENTS

In addition to the Golden Pass, the 60+ ALS has also supported other initiatives.

Walking Project

Following discussions with St Athan Community Council it was established that more age friendly activities were required in the area. St Athan is a rural area which has limited physical activity opportunities and alongside this, transport links are limited. An interest was highlighted in participating in organised walking opportunities, however as there were no current local opportunities, anyone interested in joining a walking group would need to travel a significant distance presenting a barrier to participation. Therefore, the Healthy Living Officer worked in partnership with Valeways (a free walking group club) to create a new walking group in St Athan that takes place fortnightly. The sessions are targeted at inactive residents, taking place on an easy, flat route. As a way of engaging residents and encouraging them to stay and socialise after the walk, refreshments were paid for the initial 10 weeks. This group continues to meet and is now a regular walk in the Valeways schedule and has provided a pathway for local inactive residents to start being physically active once again.



Independent Living Schemes Project

In consultation with residents, a gap was identified in the 60+ offering. Many of the residents living in Independent Living Schemes (ILS) have mobility issues and are unable to engage in community-based activities. Due to this, individuals who are 60+ and physically inactive, are unintentionally excluded from engaging in the Golden Pass programme, therefore a different approach was developed for these residents. Five different activity kits were purchased and loaned to each of the five independent living schemes, with each scheme having access to a different kit for a block of ten weeks before the kit being swapped to a different home for the next ten-week period. Throughout this process, the Healthy Living Officer helped facilitate initial activity sessions, organising the first session, finding a suitable time and day for residents, showing staff, volunteers and residents how to set up the activity and provided progressions and regression opportunities for each activity. As the residents have a chance to try out a variety of activities, the aim is for them to develop an enjoyment for physical activity and work out what activities they prefer. Once this is established, they can begin to facilitate these activities themselves.

Since January, the Healthy Living Officer has visited each scheme on a monthly basis and introduced a new activity. Attendance at these sessions varies across the schemes with between 2 and 14 residents attending each week. This large range in attendance is in part due to the staffing challenges each scheme has faced - the Scheme Co-ordinator plays a pivotal role in promoting sessions that the Healthy Living Officer delivered. The only scheme that has had no change or disruption in staff, Longmeadow Court, has consistently had the highest attendance with a regular 12 participants each month.

Walking & Home Activity Packs

To support identified adults to take part in free physical activity either from home or through walking, funding was used to purchase equipment to create a number of activity packs. This includes walking poles, resistance bands, exercise booklets and other items to form a small pack which will be distributed to residents. Currently the Healthy Living Officer is working in partnership with other departments including the Ageing Well team to identify individuals who would benefit the most from these packs. The aim is to provide these to residents of the Vale of Glamorgan in time for Winter 2024

5. Challenges

- The Independent Living Scheme programme is reliant on buy in and commitment from each Scheme Co-ordinator. This commitment ranges between schemes, which is reflected by the attendance and engagement from the residents. As an example, in Longmeadow Court, Cowbridge, the Scheme Co-ordinator regularly promotes the sessions which reflects in higher participation numbers. The ability to fully commit to the programme within some settings has been impacted by staffing issues and changes across 4 out of 5 schemes. This has meant a lack of consistency and thus low promotion of the sessions. Moving forward, more promotional materials will be distributed through the Healthy Living Officer and each Scheme Co-ordinator each month to encourage residents to engage. Alongside that, partnering with local sports clubs, including bowls clubs to host taster days away from the schemes could act as an exciting trip for the residents and a chance for them to engage with their local community and build stronger social links.
- 92% of participants who used their Golden Pass intend to continue to be active after the pass has finished. The 8% of those who indicated they would not continue participating was largely due to financial reasons. Alongside that, the main reason reported as to why individuals did not use their pass was illness, injury or other medical reason, with another largely reported reason being care responsibilities.

*“I enjoyed the session & met new people
but cannot afford to continue”*

- A key demographic highlighted they were unable to access the Golden Pass to the full effect were unpaid carers. Often unpaid carers struggle to find the time to attend any physical activity as the carers will prioritise errands such as essential shopping or other care duties in their free time rather than attending an exercise group. In order to engage this demographic, it is important to ensure that the care needs are met of those who require it and as such the unpaid carer will be able to engage in physical activity. This is to be a priority in the next financial year.

- Data gathering proved to be challenging. With the targeted individuals being 60+, sometimes digital literacy can be a barrier within this age group, making mass data collection difficult. The feedback form was an online form sent via email at the end of their 8 weeks Golden Pass, however there was a significant lack of completion of these forms by those who were accepted onto the programme. As a result, the Healthy Living Officer completed many phone calls to individuals who had not completed feedback form to support them to complete it over the phone. This was time consuming and not an effective use of time and resources. Because of this, not all participants on the Golden Pass completed the feedback form leading to incomplete representation of statistics and impact of the Golden Pass. Moving forward there will be a mixture of email and physical letters used for the feedback forms to gather data.
- Some participants reported that the leisure centres classes were difficult to book onto due to spaces already being fully booked by other members.

“I would have taken part in more (over-50) classes at Penarth Leisure centre, had they not been fully booked. Since completing the Golden Pass, I have taken part in the Escape Pain programme, which has opened up suitable circuit training opportunities that I couldn't use on the Golden Pass programme”.



6. PRIORITIES FOR 24/25

Moving forward, the Golden Pass and Independent Living Scheme programme will continue. 92% of participants who used their Golden Pass intend to continue to be active since the pass has finished and this intention highlights how the Pass and the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme generally is working as a motivational tool to inspire continued participation, supporting behaviour change to a healthier lifestyle. As a scheme, it provides those who are inactive and unsure of the physical activity opportunities available to them a chance to try a variety of activities and discover a potential new hobby, whilst improving their confidence and overall mental wellbeing. In 24/25 other initiatives will be developed to further support adults to become physically active. Key priorities for 2024 – 2025 include:

- Unpaid carers
- Winter walking activity packs
- Targeting more community groups including those affected by socio-economic factors, and extend reach by working in partnership with charities and other support groups
- Further links with Vale Homes including increasing participation in Independent Living schemes and new projects working with those in social housing and other Local Authority schemes

The potential benefits of physical activity to health are huge. If a medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be regarded as a 'wonder drug' or 'miracle cure'."

**Sir Liam Donaldson (2009)
Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer**



VALE PLAY TEAM ANNUAL REVIEW

APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024



A PLAY FRIENDLY VALE

SUPPORTING PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELLBEING THROUGH PLAY

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A SKILLED &
KNOWLEDGEABLE
WORKFORCE

1. OVERVIEW

The Welsh Government is the first Government in the world to legislate for children's play – they acknowledge that children have a right to be able to play and want Wales to be a country where children are increasingly seen outside enjoying the benefits of play.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council and their partners also acknowledge and support a child's right to play. They want to create a play friendly Vale which provides the time, space and permission for children to play as they chose – promoting positive attitudes towards children playing in their communities.

To do this it is important that parents, families, community members and decision makers, who impact directly or indirectly on play opportunities, recognise that play is of great importance in children's lives and for their future development. Play is one of the most important aspects of children's lives and when asked about what matters to them, children consistently mention playing and meeting up with their friends. Consultation undertaken with children, young people and adults in the Vale has identified a range of benefits from playing, including the opportunity for children and young people to:

- have fun
- develop relationships
- build confidence
- develop their imaginations and creativity
- relax
- develop resilience
- develop their problem-solving skills
- have time away from the stresses and challenges they may face in everyday life
- supporting family engagement

To demonstrate their commitment to supporting children to play, in November 2012 the Welsh Government placed a duty on all Local Authorities to assess the level of play opportunities in their area through completion of a Play Sufficiency Assessment every three years, and produce an annual action plan and progress report to improve play opportunities available.



The Play section of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Healthy Living Team coordinate the Vale Play Action plan in collaboration with more than 40 partners, to support the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people through play. The Play Team usually consists of two full time staff members and casual Playworkers who support the programme when funding allows. Due to maternity leave and the lack of financial resources to provide full cover, staffing capacity was reduced during the period of this report which impacted on the ability to progress all intended actions. Therefore, actions were prioritised, with those that could not be progressed being carried forward into the 24/25 action plan.

The Vale of Glamorgan is blessed to have a natural environment that supports play, with a range of beaches, woodlands and green spaces available, in addition to the built spaces such as play areas. Children and young people can turn almost any space into a play space. There are aspects of today's society that can limit children's freedom, time and space for play. It is essential there is a partnership approach to help create play friendly communities where children can freely play.



2. VALE OF GLAMORGAN VISION, PRIORITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Play Action plan sit within the Vale's Leisure Strategy 2017-2027, which sets out the approach to sport, play and recreation provision in the Vale of Glamorgan. They also align to, and feed into key corporate plans including the:

- Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan
- Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan – including priority workstreams and a number of the 'steps' identified in the Wellbeing plan

VISION FOR PLAY IN THE VALE

A Play Friendly Vale

OUTCOMES

Inclusive opportunities to play safely in the Vale

A network of staff, volunteers and parents who have the skills and knowledge to support quality, fun play

The natural and built environment in the Vale is supporting a range of play experiences

Everyone recognises and values the health and wellbeing benefits from participating in play

OBJECTIVES

Active involvement of children and young people in the decisions around play in their communities

Local communities are interesting, welcoming and safe places where children and young people can play freely

Our communities are supported to enhance and promote the play opportunities in their area

Individuals are supported to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to support fun play opportunities for all

There is acknowledgement of the benefits of play and recognition of all children's right and need to play

Professionals involved in the planning, designing and management of communities understand their role in, and the need to create child friendly places

The focussing of resources supports the priorities identified within these plans. The way in which the Healthy Living Team works, and the ethos of the plan means that equality themes are considered across the projects. The main financial resource to deliver the actions in the Vale Play Action plan was secured via Welsh Government investment streams of Families First, Playworks and Children and Communities grant, which were pooled with investment from the Council and Welsh Government Prevention Funding to deliver projects that meet the aims of the various partners involved.

There is a partnership network within the Vale, which can continue to be built upon to further support and encourage children and families to play. This network brings together a range of partners from sectors such as Play, Social Services, Family Engagement, Education, Parks, some Town & Community Councils, third sector groups, and organisations who work with residents. These networks have been integral to the identification of priority areas of work and working towards a collective approach to targeting individuals and groups who would benefit from increased access to play opportunities. The priorities identified were as follows. These are long term priorities that will continue across annual Play Action plans.

- a collaborative approach to collection and analysis of insight to inform planning and the active involvement of children and young people in decisions around play in their communities
- targeting resources and provision, including supporting play amongst those affected by socio economic factors, rurality and children and young people with additional needs
- the delivery of staffed play provision
- supporting families to undertake no cost / low cost opportunities themselves
- increasing the play workforce (voluntary and paid) to support the delivery of increased community provision
- supporting organisations and community volunteers to deliver quality play opportunities - providing a training and mentoring package to new and existing play staff and community volunteers to increase knowledge and skills
- encouraging and supporting residents to play in their local communities, including progressing with the Play Street initiative to support the development of a road closure policy for communities
- increasing access to play within school settings through the Play Friendly Schools initiative
- promoting positive attitudes towards children and play

The Vale Play Team have been involved in a number of authority level, cross county and national partnerships. Examples include:

- Representative attending the All Wales Strategic Play Network meetings, the Regional Play Sufficiency Assessment network meetings and relevant meetings hosted by Welsh Government. These have provided a good support mechanism to facilitate the sharing of information and good practice relating specifically to the PSA, and more generally around play matters. This continues to be important for the Vale of Glamorgan, as the play infrastructure at a local authority level is limited.
- Links to Play Wales - workshops, advice and guidance on Play Streets pilot in the Vale; support with developing Play Friendly Schools project; attendance at their national engagement sessions and workshops
- Links to Adult Learning Wales: Partnership tutoring – delivery of playwork training by the Vale Play Team in the Vale on behalf of ALW.
- Part of the Welsh Government Ministerial Play Review working group that helped shape the report and action plan. Team representatives also attended the recent Review launch.
- Attendance at meetings and workshops raising awareness of the positive impact play can have on wellbeing agenda and corporate priority areas.
- Representation on both the Move More Eat Well Implementation Group and the Move More Eat Well Educational Settings group ensuring that play is considered in discussions and hopefully secured within future plans.



3. PROVIDING FOR DIVERSE NEEDS

- ***Collaborative working to support children with additional needs to access play***
- ***Supporting wellbeing through play***
- ***Supporting children to play through the medium of Welsh***

Supporting Disabled Children to Access Play Opportunities

The Families First Holiday Club

The Families First Holiday Club has continued to be successfully delivered during school holidays, providing a valuable service for both the children/young people, their families and referring partners. The Families First Holiday Club (FFHC) was developed to meet the play needs of disabled children aged 4 – 11 years and their families during school holidays, whilst also providing a respite opportunity for parents and carers of disabled children. The Vale Play Team has been commissioned by the Vale Families First Management Board to deliver the FFHC. The provision is funded via Welsh Government Families First funding.

The FFHC provides a fun, happy and caring environment where children with a disability and additional needs have access to a well-resourced play space, that can meet the individual needs of those attending. The provision is aimed at children requiring up to a certain level of support – it cannot cater for all children with the highest level of need, particularly those displaying challenging behaviour which requires specialist intervention. Play sessions Up to 40 children per day accessed the sessions. The benefits of the Families First Holiday Club include:

- Children with additional needs are able to access quality play opportunities, playing with other children during the school holidays, supporting their enjoyment and social interaction
- provides a supportive setting where staff have the knowledge and skills to cater for additional needs including 1:1 support, personal care, specialist equipment
- families are able to spend time with other siblings during the school holidays
- provides respite for parents and carers
- children are able to maintain a routine during the holidays. This is particularly important for children with ASD.
- vulnerable Children and families are supported during the school holidays - particularly important during the long summer holidays

During the provision:

- 81 disabled children accessed the FFHC
- there were 597 participations across the year
- 50 children required personal care support
- 5 children required the administration of medication

A number of children required 1:1 support whilst one child required 2:1 support. There are a variety of reasons children would be offered 1:1 or 2:1 support which includes for the first introductory attendance at the scheme, to support transition and for children who require additional support due to various conditions.

The Play Team worked with a number of partners on this project including the Child Health and Disability Team, the Specialist Health Visitor, the Early Help Team and the Foster & Adoption Team, who all referred children into the scheme from families who require support during the school holidays. The Team also worked in partnership with The Vale Index and Vale Family Information Service who supported with promotion of the scheme.

Palmerston Community Learning Centre was successfully registered with Care Inspectorate Wales as a registered setting for the Families First Holiday Club supporting full day provision. The staff at the centre were supportive of the scheme.

It is recognised that play provides a positive contribution and release for children experiencing adverse childhood experiences (ACES). Ongoing partnerships with internal Council departments has seen children experiencing ACES being supported through the Families First Holiday Club.



Feedback from parents around benefits:

What benefits does your child get from attending?

● Opportunity to play	52
● Socialisation – play with others	51
● Access to outdoors	34
● Fun	44
● Other	17



Other benefits identified by the respondents were:

- Specialist staff support to access a social setting that would be beyond child's capabilities if they tried to attend a mainstream setting
- Parent identified child as vulnerable, holiday club lets them play whilst being safe
- Safe environment where child is not judge or picked on for having a disability
- A break from / time out of the home
- Independence
- Additional needs are met, which would not happen in traditional play settings e.g. child can be tube fed
- Keeping routine, maintains some structure and assists with return to school after break
- Stimulation from new environment
- A safe environment where the staff know child's needs

"Having a team of very lovely adults who know how to support and engage with my child is amazing!"

• "Caters for children with additional needs. He cannot attend mainstream summer/holiday clubs. Gives him the opportunity to socialise in the holidays and sees friends from his school in the holidays. Both parents work full time and this allows him the opportunity to mix and socialise rather than being with a grandparent".

"The move to a new community venue has been a positive move for both my child who attends and for us as a family. Knowing that my son, aged 10, can successfully transition into other venues provides reassurance that we can try this with other things".

"A bit of a routine and structure for my child, and so I can spend time with his sister".

Considerations:

- Demand for FFHC provision currently exceeds the spaces available e.g. 123 children requested spaces within the 12 days of provision during summer holidays. The cost of living increases being experienced has meant that delivery costs have increased, resulting in less spaces available. This coupled with increased demand for service means that there is a need to prioritise spaces.
- In addition to the actual organisation and delivery of the play provision, a considerable amount of Co-ordinator time is taken up with processing referrals, contacting parents to discuss individual child's need to ascertain if the provision is suitable and completing relevant paperwork such as Helpful books, One page profiles & Parent and carer contracts. There continues to be a high level of administration needs linked to this project (there is no dedicated admin within the Healthy Living Team to support this). The level of support required by a child / family can change throughout the year depending on family circumstances and possibly the time of year, so ongoing dialogue with the families and professionals is required.
- The full day sessions are charged at £10.00 a session, which is an attractive cost for full day provision, especially for working parents, some of whom see this as childcare as opposed to play provision. If a family is experiencing financial hard ship, there are instances where this fee can be waived, although it is difficult to confirm financial hardship without asking for proof (which is not done). The cost of living crisis has impacted on some families being able to pay the fee. The money obtained from the £10 charge is reinvested back into the scheme to cover some of the running costs.
- Staffing is an issue across Wales with many childcare and play settings struggling to identify and retain staff. Many qualified staff have left the sector due to low pay rates and lack of consistent work. A lack of qualified staff impacts on CIW registration and on the ability to deliver the level of service desired. Therefore, there has been a constant need to recruit and train, which takes up valuable financial resources and time. The casual nature of these posts contributes to these difficulties.
- Whilst the FFHC is providing a positive service to support disabled children to access play provision, the scheme is not able to cater for all needs. The provision is child led and play based and therefore caters for children who thrive in this type of play setting. Due to a lack of alternative respite opportunities, children with complex needs are being referred into the service, which is not necessarily appropriate for their needs.

- The way the scheme is resourced means the staff are employed on a casual basis, only working on limited days during school holidays, this means retention of staff is difficult. Whilst play training along with other relevant training, is provided to the staff members, as a play setting priority is given to play relevant training.
- As a result of the above and due to the demand being higher than space availability, a review of the FFHC has taken place. Consultation has taken place with professionals who refer into the scheme and a survey undertaken with families to establish demand for the FFHC, the reason why children are being referred, the needs of children referred and other information to help inform future decision making. An Overview report was produced with recommendations including changing the referral process to prioritising Social Services referrals to ensure families most in need are supported - the recommendations will be progressed in 24/25.



Keycreate Inclusive Family Sessions

The Play team has been supporting community organisation Keycreate to successfully provide weekend inclusive family-based play activities for children of all ages, covering all disabilities, mental health and anxiety issues, additional and medical needs - supporting participants to enjoy wheelchair accessible sand and water play, sensory activities, mud kitchens and play equipment. This is helping to fill a gap in provision as there is limited opportunities for supported play for disabled children and family-based play for families with disabled children.

Playworks funding secured by the Vale Play Team has supported the provision of a Playworker at these weekend sessions. This has provided a good opportunity to engage with the families and develop a link to support transition into the Families First Holiday Club. The sessions also provide a relaxed environment for families to support each other. Approximately 50 families are registered for the Keycreate sessions.



Kids Day Out at Barry Island

The Vale Play Team worked in partnership with the Rotary Club of Barry to deliver play activities to disabled children and young people within the annual Kids Day Out event held at Barry Island. More than 300 children attended and experienced the range of activities on offer.

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing within schools

A series of 5 outdoor sessions were delivered to young people aged 12+ who are part of the wellbeing group at Whitmore High School. The aim of the sessions was to increase the confidence and self-esteem within the group through outdoor activities with the Vale Play Team delivering sessions including activities such as knot tying, den building, tug of war and clay models. As a celebration of achievement, an end of project event was held inviting parents, teachers and the headteacher so the young people could showcase what they had achieved on the project, with the young people delivering a presentation themselves.

"Thank you to the Play Team for a very worthwhile wellbeing course. It has really helped to raise the confidence and self esteem of the young people who attended, which will hopefully positively impact on other areas of their lives".

Quote from School representative

The young people enjoyed being outdoors and working together as a team, which has been beneficial as they are not normally confident enough to work as a part of a group.

Quote from Play Team

The Vale Play Team have been involved with the Pencoedtre Cluster partnership working group seeking to support health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families in the area. Plans are progressing in partnership with the Vale Sports Development Team to deliver Introduction to Play and Playmakers leadership training to pupils from the 5 primary schools in the cluster with the aim of them facilitating play and physical activity opportunities to their peers. It is also hoped involvement in the group will support access to school facilities out of school time for play and sport provision.

Supporting Welsh Language Provision

Partnership meetings have taken place with Menter Iaith Bro Morgannwg who have been provided with funding from the Equalities section of the Council to deliver Welsh language play provision through their Bwrlwm sessions. They have been offered free accredited play training by Vale Play Team and a representative from their organisation has attended the Vale's Quarterly Play Catch Up sessions.

Partnership working with the Fostering & Adoption Team

Around 150 people participated in the play activities provided at the Family Fun Day organised by the Social Services Fostering & Adoption Team for families who have fostered or adopted children. The event also provided the opportunity for the play team to meet the families to promote the school holiday play provision available.



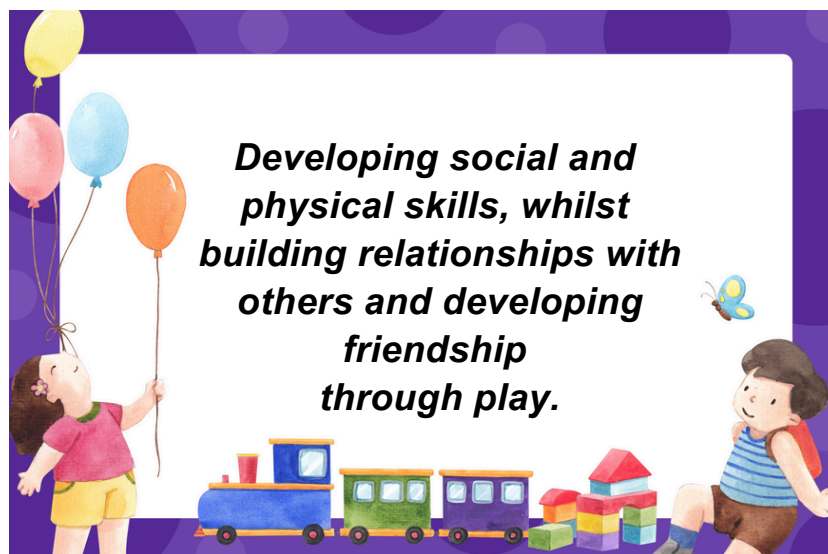
4. PLAYFUL COMMUNITIES

- *Supporting access to low cost / no cost community based play opportunities where children feel safe and welcome to play*
- *Using the diverse natural and built environment to support more children and families to play*

The Vale Play Team has worked with a range of partners to support children, young people and families to experience improved play opportunities in their communities. They have also continued to develop and deliver their community play package, which supports the diverse needs of children and families, with a focus on supporting families to access low cost/no cost play. This includes:

- Community play sessions
- Specialist provision for children with disabilities and additional needs
- Family events and activities

Different promotional mechanisms have been used, as well more targeted promotion through links to specific organisations who support families in need.



Community Open Access Play

- Free open access playscheme and Play Ranger sessions delivered across school holidays (with exception of Christmas) – 90 sessions delivered accruing 2035 recorded participations with additional unrecorded. The Welsh Government Holiday Hunger programme was integrated to provide healthy snacks and hydration to children and young people, particularly in areas where families are affected by lower resources. This helped work towards the aim of making sure no child goes hungry during the school holidays. Sessions took place in locations across the Vale, utilising parks, open spaces and Palmerston Community Learning Centre, particularly targeting areas where families were experiencing less resources and those affected by rurality. Funding secured from Welsh Government to deliver the sessions with support from Welsh Government Holiday Hunger funding, Tesco & Asda for the snacks. Participation numbers were affected by particularly poor weather this year. There are further opportunities for services such as Social Services to make more use of these sessions to support families.

“The Holiday Hunger funding provided by Welsh Government has enabled children to access a range of healthy snacks that they may not have experienced previously, provides a level opportunity for children to access healthy food and provides a great mechanism for bringing children together”.





- Play Ranger sessions were delivered as a partnership between the Vale Sports & Play Team supporting access to free, informal activities and extending reach to those not part of clubs. In addition to the range of play activities available, sports staff were routinely scheduled to deliver at the provision during the school holidays - providing an opportunity to participate in informal sport and physical activity and provide a platform to increase awareness to attendees of what sports are in local area and provide opportunities to be active in a no cost environment.




VALE PLAY TEAM SUMMER 2023



Our 2023 was made possible by funding from the Welsh Government. The aim to increase free opportunities for children and young people, to help support their social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing.

<p>263 Children registered for Play Rangers</p> 	<p>44 Hours of Play Rangers</p> 	<p>347 Total Play Rangers Participations</p> 
<p>6 different venues</p> 	<p>22 Play Ranger sessions held</p> 	<p>3 Family Fun Days</p> 





PARTNERS

Vale Sports Team, Recreate Scrapstore, Dinas Powys Community Library, Palmerston Adult Education Centre, Vale Family Information Service, Vale Flying Start, Vale Community Adult Learning, KeyCreate, Flying Start, Vale Parks Department, Foster and Adoption team, Vale PCSOS, United Welsh housing, Tesco, Asda and Morrisons.

“ I would just like to thank the friendly, kind staff who played with my children. They loved playing the parachute games and my youngest could not stop playing with the drain pipes and balls. ”

“ Can I say a massive thankyou for providing the free Play Ranger sessions. My family and I are also so grateful for the free fruit and water you provided on this very hot day. We rushed out of the house this morning and did not pick anything up. ”

- 53 free play sessions delivered in outdoor community settings after-school or on weekends during term-time via Play Cubes projects accruing 732 participations. Play Cubes consist of shipping containers filled with play equipment which are used to deliver doorstep play opportunities. Sessions were delivered in Meggitt Road (Colcot), Stratford Green (Barry), Caerleon Road (Dinas Powys). Numbers were affected by particularly poor weather and also by parental concerns in some areas of their children playing out in the community. Moving forward the project will be combined with the Play Friendly Schools project as the funding used to deliver the project in 23/24 (identified Council funding) is no longer available. Therefore alternative sustainable delivery options need to be sought for term time community play provision. Also, by being located within school settings, this will hopefully allay some of the concerns from parents around allowing their children to play within the community.
- Provision of free play activities to over 1500 people through 7 events including Flying Start Family Fun Day in Pencoedtre Park, Autumn and Christmas events with Dinas Powys Library, Halloween event with Barry Town Council and Easter event in Victoria Park, Cadoxton with Flying Start.
- Play opportunities delivered at 7 Family Fun Days accruing more than 1500 participations across more than 1000 families. Delivered in partnership with Flying Start, Foster and Adoption Team, Dinas Powys library, Barry Town Council and Rotary club. National Play Day event had to be cancelled due to adverse weather warnings.
- Creation of video to promote the range of open access provision and Vale Inclusive Play provision
<https://www.facebook.com/valeplayteam/videos/107486759017951>
- Play to Go – free play equipment hire packs made available to groups seeking to expand play opportunities for children, young people and families. School, community groups, Street Play families, Home Education group, KeyCreate and Youth Service accessed these resources.

Benefits of community based open access play include:

- Ability to deliver in areas of need, supporting families with less resources and those affected by rurality.
- Localised opportunities delivered directly in children's communities supporting them to play in an area where they feel safe, to play with their peers – taking away the barrier of travel & enabling children to participate without need for their adults to be present.
- Localised venues meant children with additional needs could attend, with parents reassured they are close by if their child needs them.
- Low cost /no cost activities were delivered, providing ideas to families to continue in their own time, which is very relevant given the cost of living crisis. Most play sessions utilise some form of recycled materials, repurposed to support play activities, such as junk modelling. The community play sessions provide an opportunity to educate the residents around how recycled materials can be used within play.
- Aimed to encourage outdoor play and the benefits that being outdoors brings - whilst this was successful, the poor weather impacted on participation at quite a few sessions.
- Encouraged residents to use their community spaces in their leisure time.
- Supported children to be visible playing in their community. At times some adults can see children playing outside as a nuisance - by having supported play, albeit very child led, it is helping to raise awareness within the community that children are entitled to play outdoors without fear of being told off.



Play Streets Project

Play streets are neighbour-led short road closures, creating a safe space for children to play freely together on their doorstep, whilst supporting communities to engage and socialise with each other – developing cohesive communities. Many children face barriers to play, particularly playing outside - not everyone has access to a garden and some children cannot get to public parks or open spaces so easily and there are often safety concerns and fears around traffic. Play Streets seek to help take the fear away from parents allowing their children to play outside, whilst also taking away the worry that many children feel around busy roads and disapproving adults. The key features of the model are:

- Resident-led and organised
- Short road closures – typically on a monthly basis
- Free, child-led play
- All neighbours consulted and included
- Road legally and safely closed to through traffic
- Stewarded by residents
- Car access at walking pace
- Simple, ‘normal’ – not a street party!

Following enquiries from Vale residents around street closures to support safe play, the Council’s Play Team have been working with Highways and Legal Teams and Play Wales to develop a Play Streets project in the Vale, following successful projects in Bristol and Cardiff. There were many considerations needed when drafting up the Play Street processes including the understanding that it is not appropriate for all streets to be closed, hence the importance of Highways being involved in the Steering Group from the outset. Play Street packs were created which included signage, hi-vis wear, a small play-kit, and information cards to carry out the road closure, with a Community Play Development Officer from the Council also available for support during the scheme, helping communities champion the Play Streets sessions.



“For a child, the most accessible everyday space is the one right outside their front door. By introducing a temporary road closure where possible, we can ensure that children have a safe space to engage in outdoor play, establish friendships, and build confidence. The intended outcome of this scheme is for more children to enjoy the health, social, cognitive and emotional benefits that outdoor play provides which also aligns with the Council’s goal of creating a healthy Vale and a healthy Wales”.

The pilot was launched in May 2023 in two streets: Romilly Road and Dunraven Street in Barry, led by residents with support from the Vale Play Team and Play Wales. Both streets were closed to through traffic for two hours on one Sunday a month so children and residents could engage in outdoor play and socialisation. With the dedication of the residents from these streets, a successful year of monthly sessions took place with residents from both streets indicating they would like to continue with the Play Street sessions.

Aoife Blight, a resident who coordinates the Romilly Road sessions initially engaged with neighbours to gauge demand and support for the pilot, which then progressed from there. She said:

“The traffic-free space means the kids have the freedom to safely explore their street and have mini-adventures with their neighbours.

We’ve seen kids learning to cycle, develop their skateboarding and skating skills, drawing beautiful chalk pictures on the road, sharing food (real and imaginary) and generally just having fun with the people they are going to grow up with.

My kids really look forward to it and so do I – it’s a great chance for our community to get together and to get to know each other, too. Now, when we see neighbours on the street, people quite often stop for a chat, rather than just a hurried nod.”



The Play Streets pilot has been recognised by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales in his quarterly newsletter (link below), who acknowledges the positive outcomes that can be achieved. The pilot was also showcased on ITV Wales (link below). Whilst positively impacting on play opportunities which supports wellbeing, it is also recognised that the introduction of Play Streets should also have a positive effect on air quality by reducing carbon emissions during the road closure period. This contributes to the Council's Project Zero initiative to become carbon neutral by 2030.

[Future Generations Newsletter April 2024 \(cloud.microsoft\)](#)

<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2024-03-03/how-play-out-sessions-are-helping-towards-net-zero-targets>

“The pilot Play Street projects have had a huge impact on their communities, not only increasing opportunities for children to play but also for neighbours of all ages to come together. The team is excited at the prospect of now supporting similar initiatives elsewhere in the Vale.”

Vale Play Team representative

Moving forward, following the successful pilot, the Play Streets policy and processes have now been agreed. This will allow additional streets to be considered to become Play Street. It is essential that any developments are resident led and are in streets that are appropriate for closure.



Play Friendly Schools Scheme

The Play Friendly Schools scheme aims to support schools with a passion for play and a commitment to increase play opportunities for children and young people within their school, as well as the wider community. It also seeks to encourage the opening up of school grounds for play out of school time. School grounds are a fantastic resource which should be available for community use across the year as encouraged by the Welsh Government through the Community Focussed Schools commitment, which is a key part of its policy for tackling the impact of poverty on young people's attainment.

IMPROVE COMMUNITY ACCESS FOR PLAY IN YOUR SCHOOL GROUNDS

Throughout Wales many school grounds offer a significant resource for children's play. School grounds often represent the only area of open space where children can play within their local community. Likewise, some schools offer the only flat surface locally where children learn to ride bikes and play with their scooters and skateboards. By becoming a Play Friendly School, you will commit to opening your school grounds, outside of school hours, for the purpose of community play



INTRODUCE PLAY CHAMPIONS IN YOUR SCHOOL



Play Champions will advocate for play across your school, they will be the lead contact for all things play! Play Champions can be any adults and children within your school with a passion for play.

PLAY WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Parents and carers are important supporters of play for children - no matter how old they are. Facilitating play workshops can help parents and carers give children time, space and support to play at home and in their local community.



   @valeplayteam

BECOMING A PLAY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

INCLUDE PLAY IN SCHOOL POLICY



Play Wales recommends that schools that wish to provide a rich play environment for children adopt a play policy. A school play policy states the value that the school places on children's play and commits itself to supporting children's play opportunities.

Play Wales have produced a sample school play policy that may be used in its entirety or adapted to suit the needs of the school.

INCREASE PLAY TRAINING FOR STAFF

Raising awareness of the importance of play within your school. Vale Play Team work alongside Adult Learning Wales to deliver accredited Playwork training, we can offer the following training opportunities to your staff team, including teachers, learning support assistants, caretakers, lunchtime supervisors, volunteers:



- Introduction to Playwork (Level One)
- Level Two Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)
- Award in Transition to Playwork (Level 3)
- Managing a Holiday Play Scheme (MAHPS Level 3)
- Playwork: Principles into Practice (P3 - Level 3 Playwork Diploma)

   @valeplayteam

Through the scheme the Play Team can share their knowledge and experience within the playwork sector with schools, and help them to expand access to play by supporting with areas such as:

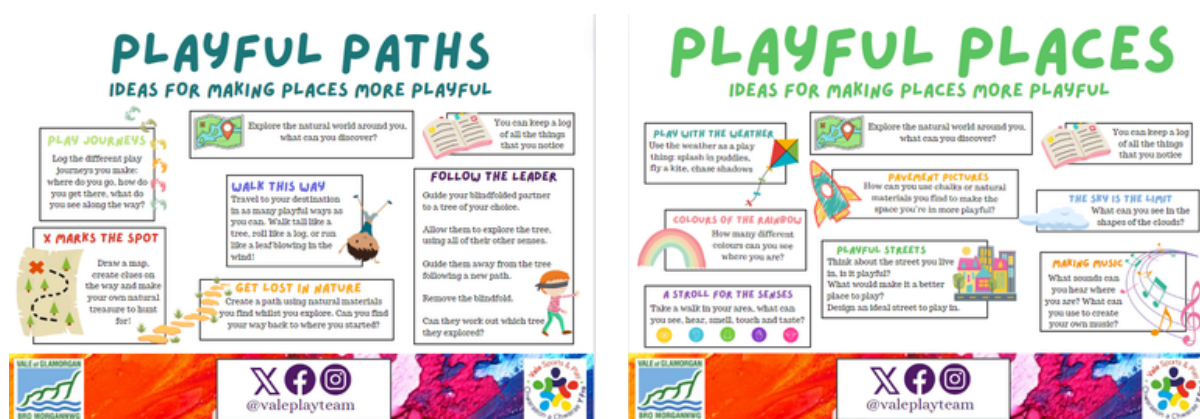
- including play in school policy
- increasing play training for school staff
- improving community access for play in school grounds - opening up access to school grounds to enable open access play sessions during school holidays
- introducing Play Champions
- offering Play workshops for Parents/Carers

Of the 21 schools who initially expressed an interest in the scheme, St Helen's, High St, Colcot & Jenner Park Primaries are being progressed onto the pilot. St Helen's and High Street have already demonstrated their commitment by sending ?? staff members on the L2App training course. In September 2024 the next step in developments will take place which includes surveying the children at the schools to gain a baseline around areas such as current participation levels in play, where children currently like to play, what type of play they enjoy and if there is anything preventing them from playing as much as they would like/where they would like to. This data will then be used to develop a bespoke plan of action for each school.

Funding was secured from Welsh Government Prevention Funding to support the purchase of equipment for the Play Friendly Schools project.

Prescription to Play Family Sheets

A series of sheets have been created highlighting ideas for making places more playful. This supports families to access no/low cost play opportunities whilst exploring their communities. Themes for the sheets are: Playful Places, Playful Paths, Playful Prints, Playful Parks, Playful Bingo. With funding secured from Welsh Government Prevention Funding, 'tear off pads' have been printed which can be distributed to families at events and during sessions.



Mud Kitchens in Country Parks

Through funding secured by the Vale Play Team via Welsh Government Prevention Funding managed by the Public Health Team, two large portion stations (mud kitchens) have been purchased and placed at Porthkerry Country Park and Cosmeston Country Park to encourage families to forage for sticks, leaves, stones etc to use with the mud kitchens (free of charge) to encourage imagination play in the outdoors.



5. A SKILLED & KNOWLEDGEABLE PLAY WORKFORCE

- *Grow the play workforce across the Vale, to meet the play needs of children, families and communities, and to support the resilience and wellbeing of future generations*
- *Individuals have the skills, knowledge and confidence to organise and deliver engaging, inclusive, fun play opportunities*
- Vale Play Team are an integral partner in a multiagency project to train new and upskill existing playworkers to build a playworkforce. Other partners include Clybiau Plant Cymru and other local authorities. The Vale Council are signed up to be tutors within this programme. Vale Play staff are members of the Education Workforce Council as part of the requirements of training. Vale Play leads completed Agored Cymru Introduction to Assessment and Introduction to Internal Quality Assurance to support training delivery.
- Vale Play Team delivered two Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice courses, working with partners Palmerston Adult Education Centre and Agored Cymru. 20 participants consisting of Vale Play staff, individuals from eight childcare settings including the Bridge Between nursery and schools (St Helen's, Cadoxton, Colcot, Ysgol Y Deri), Forest School organisation Ignite and local residents successfully attended the L2 App play course. The course provides a broad introduction to playwork including information about the importance of play, inclusion, playwork theory and creating spaces for playing and will support those who attended with working in holiday playschemes and play provision.
- A recruitment drive and training programme for casual playworkers was undertaken to support capacity within the Play Team to effectively deliver community opportunities and increase the number of qualified staff members to support Care Inspectorate Wales registration for the Families First Holiday Club. 40 staff members received induction training (for new staff), general and specific training including manual handling, facilitating play activities, Safeguarding, Introduction to sports, team building and supporting behaviours – there is a challenge around staff retention as there is uncertainty of future funding sources to be able to encourage people to commit to playwork as a career.



LEVEL TWO AWARD IN PLAYWORK PRACTICE (L2APP)
Wednesdays, 6pm - 9pm
26th April, 3rd May, 10th May, 17th May, 24th May,
7th June, 14th June, 21st June, 28th June & 5th July

LEVEL THREE
MANAGING A HOLIDAY PLAYScheme (MAHPS)
Tuesdays, 6pm - 9pm
9th May, 16th May, 23rd May, 6th June, 13th June, 20th June

These courses will be held at:
Palmerston Adult Learning Centre,
Cadoc Crescent, Barry, CF63 2NT

If you would like to undertake the training,
but are unavailable on the dates above, please get in touch.

To book your place on any of these sessions, please email
playwork@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



- Vale Play representative involved in Playwork Education Training Centre national working group to discuss standards of training and availability, to ensure meeting needs and standards of playwork force. The PETC group act as advisors to Welsh Government around play training and education.
- Vale Play representation on Welsh Government Play Sufficiency Assessment national working group and Welsh Government Play Advisory group.
- Quarterly Playwork Catch Up sessions organised which provided an opportunity for organisations and individuals involved in playwork to come together to discuss good practice, share information and ideas, develop new skills, discuss areas for development talk all things playwork.
- Additional training opportunities were organised by the Council's Childcare Workforce Development Officer including Safeguarding, Paediatric First Aid and Additional Learning Needs, which benefitted the play programme.
- The Vale Play Team organised quarterly play Catch Ups open to anyone involved in playwork (for people from the Vale and outside of the Vale). The sessions provided the participants with the opportunity to share ideas, develop new skills, discuss areas for development and support each other. Also used as a forum to identify training needs.

Consideration:

A significant amount of time and financial resource is invested in recruiting and training staff by the Vale Play Team - however the casual nature of the posts, and the reliance on securing external funding (and the uncertainty regarding this), means there are difficulties with retaining staff who move elsewhere for more consistent hours and secure job opportunities. This does impact on the ability to meet CIW requirements for staffing, with ongoing actions having to be implemented to ensure these requirements are met. This is an ongoing challenge faced by all delivery partners within and outside of the Vale. Continued consideration is given to this challenge, although immediate and longer-term solutions are difficult to identify unless dedicated long term funding is available to be able to plan longer term provision and make playwork a viable profession.

