

Matter which the Chair has decided is urgent by reason of the need to allow the Committee to consider the report in a timely manner

Meeting of:	Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 27 January 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	CELT+ Volunteering Project
Purpose of Report:	To inform members of the progress of this Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) funded project
Report Owner:	Rachel Connor – Chief Executive Officer, Glamorgan Voluntary Services
Responsible Officer:	Rachel Connor – Chief Executive Officer, GVS
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Click here to enter text.
Policy Framework:	Click here to enter text.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report demonstrates the success of the partnership between VOGC and GVS in delivering the supported volunteering element of the Shared Prosperity funded CELT+ employment initiative. • It highlights the successful volunteering placements and the numbers of individuals that have benefitted from this additional support approach. 	

Recommendation

1. That the Committee receive the report and support the continued funding from the remaining SPF allocation for this element of the CELT+ project. CELT stands for Connect Engage Learn Transform.

Reason for Recommendation

1. The project has demonstrated the clear need for support for difficult to place individuals into volunteering opportunities that can lead to increased employability, decreased social isolation and increased well-being.

1. Background

- 1.1 GVS are partners with the Vale of Glamorgan Council on The CELT+ Project and became involved in March 2023.
- 1.2 CELT+ gives one to one support to disabled individuals including those with physical or sensory impairment, learning difficulties, autism or mental health conditions, as well as those who have had a long career break due to caring responsibilities or illness and need support to improve their confidence.
- 1.3 The main purpose of the project is to support these individuals with training, work experience, work trials, job searching, creating and updating CV's and volunteering with a view to eventually gaining paid employment.
- 1.4 The Vale of Glamorgan Council's CELT+ Employment Mentors who assess them and identify those who would benefit from volunteering support participants to the project.
- 1.5 Those that are identified and would find volunteering beneficial in gaining work experience are referred to the GVS Volunteering Coordinator who works on the CELT+ Project.
- 1.6 Individuals looking for volunteering placements and come directly to GVS are also assessed with some being identified as suitable for the CELT+ Project and are dealt with directly.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 With the changes to the Shared Prosperity Fund, moving forward there will not be sufficient funds for all elements of the CELT+ project.
- 2.2 It is likely that the supported volunteering element of CELT+ will be reduced by 50% for the year 2025-2026, which will have a significant impact on what can be

achieved by this successful part of the project which is understandably very disappointing.

- 2.3** GVS will look for alternative funds to continue the project post March 2026.

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

- 3.1** GVS aligns it works to the objectives of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** GVS is a signed up member of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Charter

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** CELT + is financed by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Employment

- 5.2** The CELT+ project employs one part time (3 days per week) role

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, maintaining good relations with GVS will benefit the community in terms of improvement to human rights. The Council's position on equality of opportunity is put into daily practice through the funding of GVS's work with the voluntary and community groups operating in the Vale of Glamorgan

6. Background Papers

GVS' CELT+ Volunteering Report



CELT + is financed by the UK Government through the
UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Glamorgan Voluntary Services
CELT+ Volunteering Project



BACKGROUND

GVS are partners with the Vale of Glamorgan Council on The CELT+ Project and became involved in March 2023.

CELT+ gives one to one support to disabled individuals including those with physical or sensory impairment, learning difficulties, autism or mental health conditions, as well as those who have had a long career break due to caring responsibilities or illness and need support to improve their confidence.

The main purpose of the project is to support these individuals with training, work experience, work trials, job searching, creating and updating CV's and volunteering with a view to eventually gaining paid employment.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's CELT+ Employment Mentors who assess them and identify those who would benefit from volunteering support participants to the project. Those that are identified and would find volunteering beneficial in gaining work experience are referred to the GVS Volunteering Coordinator who works on the CELT+ Project. Individuals looking for volunteering placements and come directly to GVS are also assessed with some being identified as suitable for the CELT+ Project and are dealt with directly.

Once the Volunteer Coordinator receives the referral from the Mentors a discussion takes place as to what sort of volunteering is required so the Coordinator can look for suitable roles. An appointment is between the Coordinator, Mentor and the participant to meet so they can be assessed in person. The Coordinator is able to discuss any interests or hobbies as a way of identifying what volunteer roles may be of interest.

The Coordinator also assesses any issues relating to accessibility or adjustments that may need to be put in place prior to volunteering to account for the individuals needs.

Once potential roles are identified the Mentor and Coordinator works with the participant to prepare them for their volunteering role. We discuss the importance of time keeping, personal hygiene and how they present themselves just as they would as if they were in a paid position.

THE PROJECT

GVS has a bank of volunteer roles where organisations send us information on the roles they have. These roles are then promoted on the Volunteering Wales Website and through our database by the Volunteer & Development Manager. The Coordinator works with the Manager to decide which roles are suitable for the individual's needs. This can sometimes

mean contacting organisations directly if we have a participant with a specific skill or interest.

Once a role is identified the Coordinator arranges to escort the participant to their first meet up with the person responsible for volunteers at the potential organisation.

Traditional volunteering requires the Coordinator to refer a potential volunteer to an organisation who in turn contacts the volunteer and takes over the recruitment process from that point. With CELT+ the Coordinator is able to escort individuals to their initial meet up with the organisation and is able to accompany them for a few sessions until the volunteer is confident to attend alone which has been very successful.

Many participants suffer with extreme anxiety and for them going into an organisation/shop for the first time can be very overwhelming. Having the Coordinator with them to reassure them and perhaps explain things they don't quite understand makes a huge difference.

For some who may have autism or a learning disability, the preparation prior to the initial meet up is essential. Being able to prepare them so they know what is expected of them is key. On some occasions participants who have been previously socially isolated and withdrawn have found a purpose and have adjusted well with this hands on approach. After working on this project for 16 months, it is apparent that this hands on approach is definitely working. We have seen some great examples of volunteers who were so deeply affected by their confidence, or lack of understanding and experience, become very capable and valued members of a volunteer team.

Case Study 1—Participant A

Background

Participant A is a young man who has a troubled background and has had difficulty engaging with others. He has a learning difficulty and anxiety and has had an unstable family life.

Intervention

After an assessment it was noted that he would need a lot of support to get him to a point where he could volunteer alone.

It was decided that a volunteer role would be sourced in a placement that would be able to meet his needs. The Coordinator was able to secure a role and preparations were made to work with the participant to ensure he was ready.

The first meet up went well although the participant was very nervous but with help from the Coordinator he was able to understand the role. There were issues in his first few weeks with personal hygiene issues but eventually he was able to attend the placement

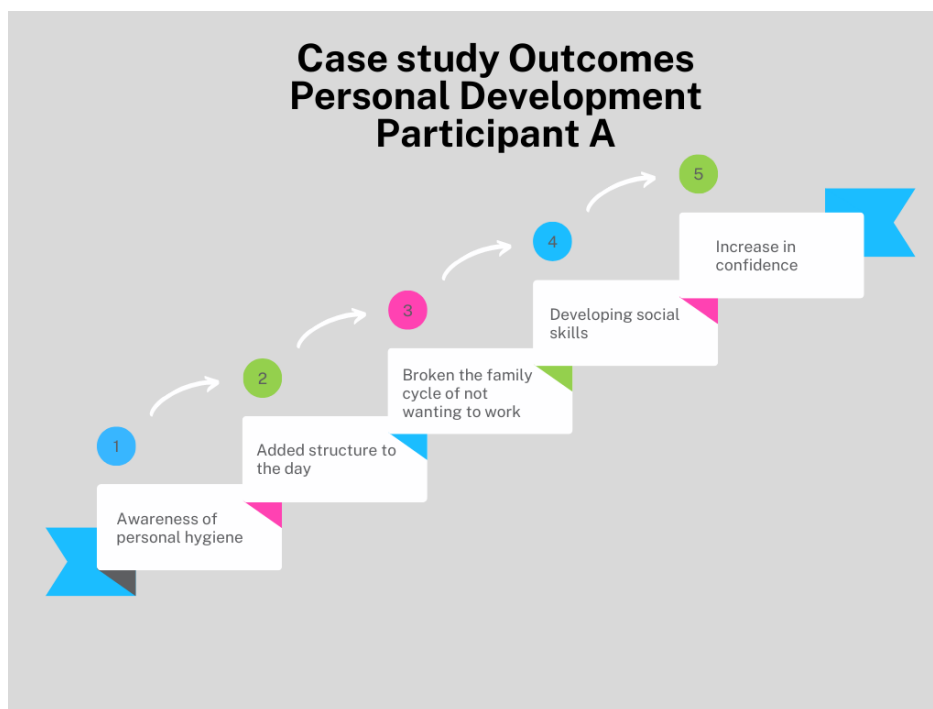
without support.

Outcome

When the Coordinator checked his progress with the placement Manager he said the following:

“Can I just say that Participant A is doing so well. He is really coming out of himself and his customer service is amazing!”

The Coordinator has visited the placement and observed the volunteer who is doing an amazing job, at this visit the placement Manager said *“Participant A is going from strength to strength and I’m sure in time could find himself a paid job that we have also offered to support him with”*. The Participant is now volunteering 3 times a week at the placement with very little support.



Case Study 2—Participant B

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Background

- Participant is a 19 year old female who enrolled with CELT+ in July 2023.
- Participant was always brought to appointments with mum, who spoke on behalf of her daughter.
- Participant and mum were in the process of being evicted from their house.
- Participant spoke very little in front of mum about what she wanted to do as a career. Mum often mentioned they had to be careful what participant earned as it could negatively impact their housing situation/prospects.
- It was suggested that participant undertakes voluntary work, which would not impact on finances/housing situation but would provide social skills, purpose, routine, career opportunities and encourage independence. Participant and mum agreed.

Intervention

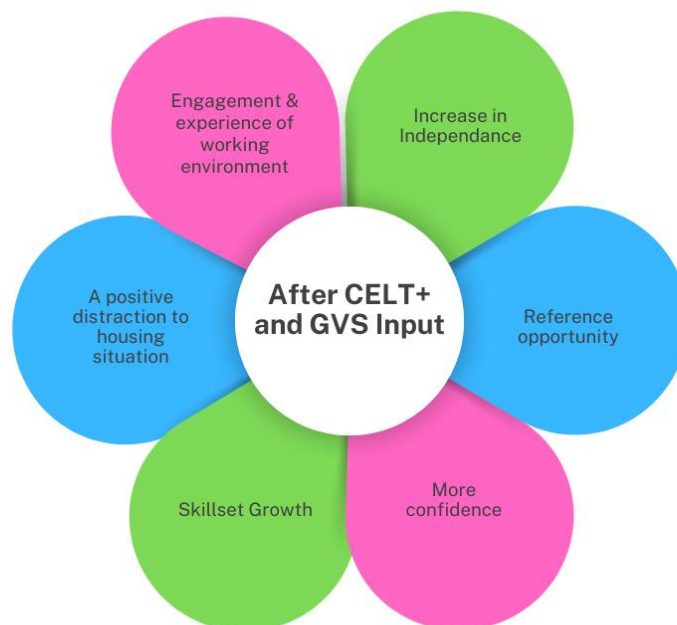
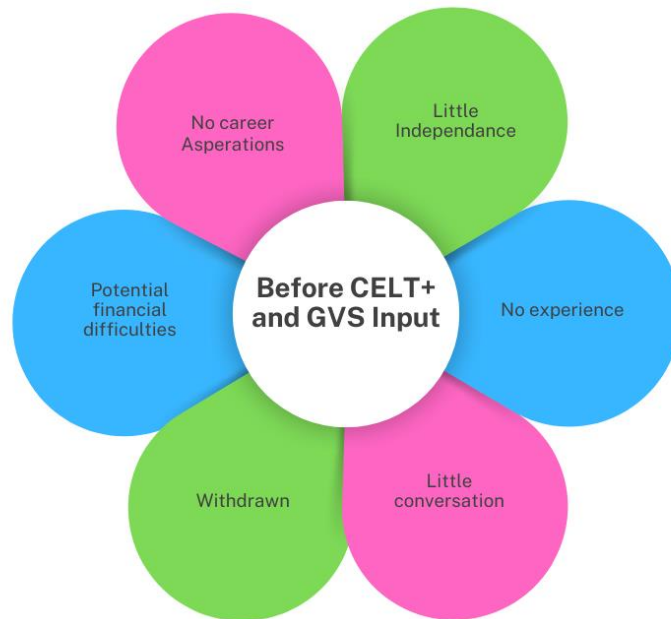
- A meeting took place between the participant and her mum and GVS.
- Discussed the benefits of volunteering and the types of roles available. Questioned participant to understand her hobbies and interests to establish a link to available volunteering opportunities.
- Mum was reassured volunteering would have no impact on their financial situation but the benefits of volunteering were reiterated.
- Participant was presented with volunteering roles in different sectors.
- It was established that participant likes fashion and enjoys shopping.
- GVS have a good relationship with a placement in Penarth and knew it would be a supportive environment that could meet the needs of the participant.
- Participant was offered a taster session at the placement and later attended with the GVS Co-ordinator where she was introduced to the staff, shown around the placement, briefed on health & safety and supported to complete the necessary forms and learn a variety of tasks.
- Participant was happy and comfortable at the placement with the support of GVS.
- Participant completed the taster session, enjoyed the opportunity and asked to return the following week.

Outcome

- Participant has since attended on a weekly basis, initially being met at the placement by GVS but now attends independently.
- Participant has increased her hours, completed her Induction and the Manual Handling training and is now able to use equipment available. Tasks have increased to working across the placement and being around customers.
- Mum is comfortable to leave participant at the placement (allowing her to focus on

their housing situation) in the safe knowledge that her daughter is occupied, gaining social skills, confidence, life experience and building new relationships whilst in a working environment.

- Participant is continuing to enjoy her role at the placement and is keen to add in another voluntary role in the near future.



Case Study—Participant C

Background

- Participant is a 35-year-old male who contacted GVS directly after seeing our advertisement for volunteering opportunities.
- After a telephone discussion it was identified that he was a candidate for the CELT+ Project.
- He explained that he was dealing with extreme anxiety and had become completely isolated as a result.
- After some reassurance and discussion about potential roles, he decided that he wanted to be outdoors so we decided upon a gardening project.
- The participant could not attend for a few weeks so the Coordinator agreed to ring him the day before to remind him.
- After much persuasion he attended the following week but was very nervous and needed a lot of support.
- After a few weeks the participant was able to catch the train alone, take on tasks and complete an hour per session.
- A few months on and he has completely integrated himself into the gardening group, is really hands on, is eager to suggest new ways of working and can use all the equipment required.
- He is completing full sessions and now brings his lunch so he can mix with the other volunteers socially.
- The group makes sure that there is a social aspect to each session with tea breaks and time to chat. He now mixes well and has even brought his daughter along during the school holidays.
- After 6 months, he has become an integral part of the gardening team and is heavily relied upon on a weekly basis.

GVS - CELT+ PROJECT – END OF FIRST QUARTER

The first quarter of the project started quite well with a flurry of referrals, with several from CELT Mentors, 1 person from the NHS Mental Health Team and 1 person from Pobl. We also had 1 person who came to GVS directly via an event who was identified by GVS staff as requiring more support throughout the application process and physical support when volunteering commenced.

We worked with 6 individuals via the Mentors, assessing each one to ascertain their needs and requirements. This will enable us to source suitable opportunities or sign post where appropriate.

GVS - CELT+ PROJECT – END OF SECOND QUARTER

The second quarter of the project went well with a steady increase in referrals. 4 candidates were placed in volunteering roles. At the time of the report we were working with 7 individuals, 3 of which were placed within 3 weeks. 3 new volunteers were waiting to be assessed and have already identified roles for them.

CELT+ PROJECT REPORT DECEMBER 2023

The project had a steady increase in referrals. Since the beginning of the project 22 candidates have been referred to GVS for volunteering some via the CELT+ Mentors, some directly to GVS or via other organisations. 9 were placed in volunteering roles and we were working with 5 individuals to find placements. 2 of these require specific roles due to wheelchair access and a request for a computer programming role.

CELT+ PROJECT QUARTERLY REPORT APRIL 2024

Since the beginning of the quarter 13 candidates were referred to GVS for volunteering support, 5 came directly to GVS, 3 have been placed in volunteering roles.

2 candidates who had started volunteering within quarter 2, deciding to change to other roles therefore doubling the workload. These individuals have now also been placed. I am currently working with 7 individuals to find placements, 5 of which have identified and applied for roles. We are currently waiting on the organisations concerned to complete their application procedure so these candidates can start their volunteering.

1 candidate decided to finish their volunteering for the foreseeable future due to health issues. 1 candidate mentioned above had his start date postponed on numerous occasions due to poor management at a charity shop. GVS are working with this placement Manager to improve best practice in volunteering.

CELT+ PROJECT QUARTERLY REPORT DECEMBER 2024

GVS received 9 referrals with 2 from CELT+ Mentors with 7 received directly by GVS for this quarter.

One of the referrals directly to GVS was from a fostering organisation. GVS are working to find a volunteer role for a young mother with learning difficulties who is herself being fostered along with her child. We have not worked with this organisation previously or with an individual in the foster system so we envisage that there may be some challenges to overcome. We are also very hopeful that this will encourage more referrals from this organisation in the future.

One referral has been placed in a volunteering role and we are currently working with 10 individuals to find placements, some from the last quarter who are taking time to place. We have been actively recruiting organisations who are willing to offer volunteering placements to those candidates with additional needs and have been in contact with them regularly.

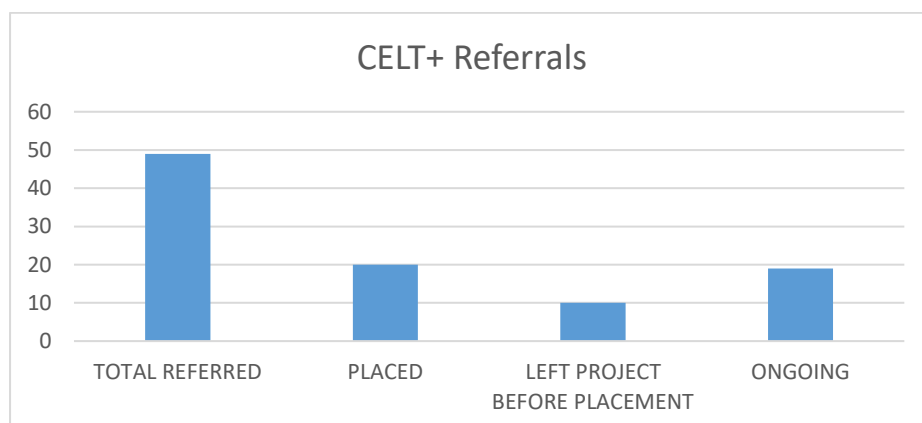
One participant has been moved by the organisation to another location due to the original role no longer existing and the project being closed.

CELT+ was promoted at the following events:-

- Volunteer promotion event – Barry Library
- Volunteer promotion event – Penarth Library
- Platform Launch Event - Barry
- Older Workers Week event – Penarth Job Centre

Referrals March 2023 December 2024

TOTAL REFERRED	PLACED	LEFT PROJECT BEFORE PLACEMENT	ONGOING
49	20	10	19



Conclusion

As we move forward into the final phase of the project, it is expected that numbers of potential volunteers will increase and more volunteer roles will become available that are deemed suitable for CELT+ volunteers to be placed with.

GVS are very happy with the amount of referrals received and the amount who actually took up volunteering roles.

Although some candidates have moved away from volunteering due to health issues or a change of circumstance the vast majority have progressed into training, other voluntary roles or paid employment.

GVS would highlight that this type of hands on approach with one to one support from the Volunteer Coordinator has made a huge difference in these people's lives and futures and hope that this continues in the future.