



RESIDENTIAL REPORT – OVERVIEW

Monday 8th – Wednesday 11th April 2013

Elan Valley Lodge

Another packed residential with an agenda so big it would make your toes curl. It will take some time to write a full report as so much happened so here is an overview report to give you a snapshot of all the hard work that went on.

1. Welcome and interesting fact

- We had a few young people that didn't know everyone else plus one new face so we all introduced ourselves and shared an interesting fact about ourselves. This resulted in some very entertaining answers from a pet Lamb called Terminator to a childhood fear of Noddy! More details to follow in the full report.

2. Updates and CYPP and re-structuring

- After the last residential we recorded some individual feedback as an experiment. It was a good idea but we thought it would be better to do short bursts of feedback throughout the residential rather than all at the end. For this task we enrolled the expertise of a forum member who will also be editing the video for us. This video could then be shown at the CYPP meetings, uploaded onto TOWIP and used by the forum members for their feedback to the groups they represent. The forum were filled in on the current re-structuring in Powys.
- They were introduced to the concept of the "One Plan" and reassured that, although there may be no more CYPP, there will still be a structure for the forum to feed in the voice of the huge number of young people they represent. They were also reminded that it is a statutory requirement for Powys to have a Youth Forum so they won't disappear in the new structure.
- The "back to the floor week" has been organised for July and the forum were very interested in the concept and quickly came up with some good jobs for a number of people to do as a break from their normal routines. More to follow in the full report! It was suggested to the young people that they may like to be involved in interviewing some of the managers during this week and a number of people volunteered.

3. Individual feedback by PYF members

- As usual, it was amazing how much the forum members are involved with issues in their groups and communities. Members had been involved in all Wales forums, Estyn inspections, youth group workshops, school assemblies, fundraising and much more.
- There had been a few negative bits of feedback around concerns with school staffing levels, reduced budgets and ineffective school councils. In particular the issue around school councils was something they still felt they wanted to work to improve.

4. Home Ed workshop

- Three of the forum members are Home Educated and one of the parents had come along to support the young people in running a workshop. Alex, Faye and Alice had all put a lot of time into preparing a presentation to the group and Alex's dad, Pete, had come along to facilitate and ease their nerves. The forum found the presentation very interesting and it brought up a number of questions. A lot of the questions were predicted by the Home Ed group but as usual, the forum still managed to come with some new ones.
- The main points gathered from the session were that there is no standard method of Home Educating and every family has their own twist on things. The school day is not structured like mainstream school except for a couple of hours a day, usually in the morning, and the emphasis seems to be on identifying an interest the young people have and working to develop this which naturally incorporates a number of the mainstream curriculum topics. Young people do have the opportunity to sit exams if they wish and quite a number of young people do end up going to college when they reach their late teens or early twenties.
- There is a general consensus among Home Ed groups that the county council and the departments within can be seen as "the enemy" and trying to break this stigma is a target for the Home Ed reps on the forum.
- The conclusion for this session was to try and set up an information network for young people within the Home Ed environment so they know where to go to find information on a range of topics as well as receive and share enough information to make informed decisions and to ensure that their "Rights" are being met.
- The general consensus on this session was that it was excellent and the forum look forward to future developments around this issue.

5. Participation officer feedback

- The participation officers spoke about the new plans for a Children and Young person's conference in the Autumn. The date had moved to November and the Forum needs to decide on a working group to discuss the agenda, organisation and general aims of the conference. This working group will meet next week with reps from the LSCB group to start the ball rolling.
- The officers also pointed out that the schools council event will be separate from this conference as it was felt that there was not

enough time in one day to cover the issues that would be highlighted in both events.

- Feedback was shared with the forum from the last CYPP meetings and ideas shared about how the forum can be involved without the extra cost of attending every meeting. Possibly an overview report, a DVD or video conferencing where suggested. If there were specific relevant items to the forum then they would still like the opportunity to attend to voice their thoughts and ideas. It was highlighted that getting the agenda out as soon as possible would facilitate this.
- As part of this feedback we explained for the benefit of the newer members the role of the participation officer and the many different tasks they carry out as well as running the Youth Forum.

6. Morning with favourite song

- A new day and a fresh start, with a rating of 1 to 10 on how you feel and your favourite song at the moment. The completed playlist will make for interesting listening but I don't think it will be a number one album. The majority of young people were feeling between 7 and 10, and were clearly raring to go

7. Funky Dragon Feedback

- The first item for today was the feedback from our Funky Dragon (Now Youth Assembly for Wales) reps. Lucia led the way with a description of how it all works on a national level for those young people that were new to the workings of the forum. Lucia had attended two residentials in the last few months. The Feb event was based around the re-structuring of the organisation in line with the budget cuts that they are facing. The number of reps from each county is to be cut from 4 to 3 to help in this process and the new titles for these three reps are yet to be decided. They also looked at improving the website, utilising the skills of certain staff before they leave due to the cuts. At times a sombre occasion.
- The March event was based around Funky's United Nations Challenge (FUNC) and Lucia is part of the team that were looking at the results from the national survey and compiling the report for the UN. One highlighted but not surprising stat was that Powys is the safest place to live.

8. ACRF reporting and RBA statistics around Social Services referrals

- Shelley Davies and Sandra Coles ran a workshop on Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF). Looking at RBA (Results Based Accountability) statistics around social services and the referral process of young people in need. The forum were split into small groups to look at individual family case studies and decide what support or services they might need. They were encouraged to ask the questions, what did it look like, feel like and sound like. As always the forum were very thorough in their findings and threw up some very interesting topics for discussion around services, support and need. The completed flipcharts and more detailed responses will be in the full report.
- The second part of the workshop was to describe the referral process and show the "wiper" style diagram to explain the tiers of need instead of the previous pyramid. It was felt that this imagery would imply an improvement in communication between the services as individual cases may move forward and backwards along the Tiers as their circumstances change. The new approach should mean that doors aren't closed when they are moved from tier 2 to tier 3 and vice versa.
- It was clear from the questions that the forum understood the process very well and they showed a lot of interest in the referral statistics for the different regions of Powys and why they differ so much. The forum also suggested that we use an annual RBA report card and forum members were happy to engage with this.

9. Powys One Plan

- Dominique Jones had come along to run a workshop on partnership rationalisation and the One Plan. The title of the workshop wasn't catchy but Dominique's methods were. After we had all introduced ourselves, our mood rating and our favourite place to be, Dominique's produced the black bag of knowledge full of interesting prizes for anyone that came up with a good question or high level of understanding. This went down very well and the bag was soon nearly empty as the forum as usual had grasped the concepts Dominique was talking about and the questions were coming thick and fast.
- Dominique explained about how the county has been split into 7 areas and each of these will have a neighbourhood management team to work to improve the networking of services. There is a pilot of this scheme starting in Newtown.

- The changing demographic in Powys over the next 10 years was very interesting. We are an ageing county and in 10 year's time there will be about 1000 less school places and almost 10,000 more people over 65 years old. This is something that has to be considered when looking at the future of services for example the school rationalisation as empty places cost money. The forum had a very in depth discussion around the implications of this on services in their areas.
- The forum asked, What role can PYF play in the new LSB structure? It was suggested that the forum sits at the same level as LSB - So they are able to scrutinise work of LSB + have influence over the decision making (so we aren't ignored).
- Another question was what is the future role of PYF in LSB? This depends on whether we will still have partnerships - two way accountability.
- LSB is made up of the health board, police, local authority and 3rd sector (PAVO)
- PYF may have a strong involvement with these sectors/organisations.
- PYF may have closer links with the LSB - further up the strategic ladder.
- Dominique's guaranteed that there will be a support structure in place for the PYF in the new structure. It will not be lost!

10. Mental Health Alliance

- Freda Lacey joined us today from Powys Mental Health Alliance (PMHA) which is a network of groups and individuals from across Powys who share an interest in mental health issues and a commitment to strengthening connections between services, organisations and individuals by promoting partnership working across local organisations. Freda also brought two guests with her who have experienced accessing mental health services and now support the PMHA in delivering an improved network of services.
- The main reason for their visit, as well as to share their vision, was to see how the "spotlight Debate" process works and to see if it is something they could use. They want to improve how service users are involved in the designing, developing and feedback methods of the services they use. They hold regular meetings called "light the way" which is the PMHA version of our forum. The venues are rotated to encourage engagement, attendance and the county is split into regions similar to the neighbourhood management scheme.

- We could all see how the spotlight debate process could be useful and Freda explained how she is trying to improve links with management structure and create a feeling of service user involvement on all levels.

11. How the Forum works

- To look at the way the forum works we split into three groups to share thoughts on three statements. 1. What we should do. 2. What we would like to do. 3. What we shouldn't do.
- This was an interesting exercise into the workings of the forum and how it should function.
 1. Create an even balance between consultation work and young people's issues.
Hold other people/agencies to account around the work we do for and with them.
Create a better link with the council and other organisations.
 2. Engrain PYF into the LSB.
Promote and raise the profile of the forum in the council and other organisations.
Follow through on actions and hold people accountable.
Hold more meetings in between residential.
Have an activity residential as a reward for our work.
 3. Be tokenistic.
Have people talk down to us.
Do dead end work that amounts to nothing.
Not be expected to run events.
Take on too much work.
- What was really interesting about this exercise was that all the groups came up with very similar suggestions. Plenty of food for thought around the future of the PYF.

12. Easter Egg Hunt

- This is quickly becoming an annual event, the Easter egg hunt. It was a chance for the forum to stretch their legs and gives their brains a rest. The hunt was inside as the weather is always a risk at this time of year. Nearly 100 counters of different colours were hidden around the centre and only when one of each colour was found could you exchange them for your eggs. Great fun was had by all but I

have a feeling that there may be a couple of counters that will turn over the coming year.

13. Workforce Registration

- It was thanks to this consultation that the forum received the Easter Eggs for the hunt mentioned above so big thanks to Nigel Dyer for his gratefully received donation.
- The consultation was on the young peoples views on the registration of the education workforce in Wales. It looks at the issues around people that work with children in Wales and how a number of them are not actually registered with a governing body. All teachers have to register with the general teaching council of wales. We want to make sure that all staff that teach and educate children and young people have to register.
 - This includes:
 - all further education teachers;
 - workplace tutors and skills trainers;
 - unqualified teachers;
 - classroom and learning assistants;
 - all learning support staff; and
 - youth workers.
- This will help staff working in education to work to the same high standards and get the support they need for training and skills. It will also make sure that children and young people have a even better education. The register would be updated every year so that all information is up-to-date.
- The forum where asked to complete 8 questions encouraging them to give their opinions on the proposal.

14. Morning with favourite colour

- Day three was started with an excellent breakfast as usual and an introduction of 1 - 10 on how you feel and what is your favourite colour? The average feeling was 7.5 and the majority colour was purple or blue with a hint of benefit cuts.

15. Family Behaviour Support

- Amanda Lewis (Head of Childrens Services) and Shelley Davies (Senior Partnership Manager) delivered this workshop on the new structure. We looked at the previous referral model for agencies

involved with childrens services and the problems that were encountered for example too many referrals directly to social services rather than a more relevant organisation that could deal with the issue and save time and money. It all seemed to stem around improving communication and the setting up of a one stop referral hub where trained staff would be able to refer callers to the relevant agency or organisation. It is expected that this new model of service delivery will save a lot of time and money.

- The first part of the process was to look in detail at the data so far. Analyse what is happening then set up a thematic group to design a new service. Then identify outcome indicators for example a reduction in referrals to social services and an increase in referrals to tier two services. This would all lead to the Integrated multi agency workforce delivering the right support at the right time by the right agency.

16. Young Inspectors

- The young inspector team met up to discuss the recent inspections that they have been involved in. It was agreed that the process had worked well and we had all learned a lot. We looked at the reports to be sent out to the organisations involved and in particular the Welshpool School Council report. We were aware that we were setting a standard for School Councils as well as inspecting the council against the standards so we arranged a twilight session in the following week to further work on this report.
- It was agreed by all that we will need to train more young inspectors soon as there is the expectation that the inspection process will snowball in the coming months.

17. Equality Workshop

- Rob Beardell came back to deliver a workshop on disability rights. He re-introduced the equality agenda from the last residential to show how it relates to today's more hands on session about how our opinions/views are shaped.
- Rob showed a DVD on disability discrimination act then asked three questions of the group.
 1. What did you think of the film and how did it make you feel?

2. What key messages do you think the film was trying to portray?
3. What disabled Robert in the film?

- Everyone agreed that it was a very powerful film. Some forum members were shocked that this sort of discrimination happens and others could relate their own experiences to the things in the film. It opened up a great discussion around the phrase "normal". There are social norms that exist in society but it depends where you are and with whom as to what is "normal". In a room with 10 blind people and one that can see it is "normal" to be blind.
- We then did an exercise on assumptions using a conundrum sheet. The majority of the forum got this right but it is assumptions that led us to presume that the surgeon was male in the conundrum. The final exercise saw us paired with the forum member we didn't know very well and were then asked to answer questions about them just from looking at them. This is a Morris Massey workplace psychology exercise and it was surprising how many observations were correct.

A very enjoyable interactive workshop to end the residential.

It was then time to pack up and head off into the corners of Powys from whence we came. It was again a very enjoyable residential with an unbelievable amount of work completed again and with even more organisations and individuals coming to understand the brilliance of the forum members who all have a work ethic that is second to none.

Well done guys and roll on July

