

## Children and Young People Committee

# Safe places for children and young people to play and hang out in

**We are submitting this information alongside the 50 plus papers that young people completed while involved in our activities.**

Rhyl Youth Action group (RYAG) is a young people's organisation in Rhyl, North Wales. Providing programmes, services and activities for young people which are developed and implemented based on the needs of those involved. We annually consult with around 60% - 70% of the young people who live in Rhyl that are within our target age group. This is done by training groups of local young people as community consultants then enabling them to undertake their own audit of the priorities for their peers. This process is called the "no frills consultation"(paper 1c). Recommendations are then built into the groups business plans and funding applications. RYAG has a current membership of over 1100 local young people. Our activities / programmes and facilities engage with over hundreds of young people every week.

### **Aim:**

To make Rhyl a better place to live for our peers and all others by working with local and statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and inhabitants to advance education, promote facilities and ensure genuine meaningful involvement of young people in the towns decisions.

### **Objectives:**

- To Establish, Manage, deliver/provide social, leisure and informal learning facilities for our peers.
- To be a sustainable youth led project that encourages youth to participate in decision making by genuinely listening to their views.
- Improve the prospects of young people by offering training, volunteering and work experience via our programs.
- Work closely with local and national groups with the same ethos to share good practice learn new skills.

RYAG owns and run the Rhyl HUB, a network of 5 buildings in the heart of West Rhyl that had been derelict for between 7 and 25 years before the group acquired the premises with WAG grants and a WCVA Mortgage. The premises have been redeveloped using local firms who had been subject to allowing young people on Llandrillo College construction courses, RYAG members and young people employed under the future jobs scheme to be involved in all works.

The HUB houses:

### **Youth Café**

(See last year's report attached -paper 1a) which is now a 6 day a week provision from Monday to Saturday 50 weeks every year.

### **YouthBank**

(see attached report - paper 1b) which allows young people from Rhyl to distribute grants to their peers for community projects.

### **Digital media Suite**

Our media suite which was initially funded and supported by Credu / Canllaw Online has enabled RYAG to run film making and digital story sessions for a number of years; our recent work has won the group national awards for documentaries made by young people.

### **Infohop**

Our newest project establish this year which, the infoshop is a free drop-in facility open during evening hours and staffed by qualified, youth workers and social workers where young people can access information in a number of format based around the WAG's extending entitlement (the 10 entitlements), specialist agency drop-ins are facilities along with the onsite facilities such as Internet / Computer & internet Access, Printing, Photocopying, Telephone, Leaflets, Books, Magazines, and Newspapers, Fax Machine, Private Room for Talks Jobs Board and leaflets. The infoshop also runs our text messaging service which allows RYAG to send upto 1000 daily text messages to young people on local events activities, jobs and courses. Contraception and baby changing facilities are also onsite.

### **Virtual-Shop**

Working with Rhyl City Strategy our HUB also contains the "virtual shop" a fully fitted out general store used to train people looking to move into retail and teach independent living skills, the facility is current being used by North Wales Training, DCC Pupil Referral Unit, Llandrillo College, Ysgol Tir Morfa amongst others.

## **Offices for youth support agencies**

As a means of financial sustainability and creating opportunities for joint working RYAG provides office and training space to the following agencies, all of whom have an impact of the lives of young people we engage.

A4e, APNC, CAREERS WALES, CANNLAW ONLINE "INFOSHOP", LLANDRILLO COLLEGE, MENTYR IIATH, NACRO, NORTH WALES TRAINING, PRINCES TRUST CYMRU, RATHBONE CYMRU, REMPLOY, RHYL YOUTHBANK, SERCO, TAPE, WANT 2 WORK, WORKING LINKS, YSGOL TIR MORFA

More space is currently being developed to house up to 12 more groups who will have similar aims (regenerating Rhyl and supporting young people).

## **Accommodation**

RYAG lease 3 apartments to Nacro housing that are used to house local young people with complex support needs. The new Apartments built for young people from Rhyl at our HUB are a recent development and as yet we have not evaluated the impact. However North Wales Energy Assessors conducted Energy Performance Tests on the 3 properties and produced EPC scores of over 82. From a 92 maximum score, 82 is extremely efficient compared to the average score for properties in the UK of only 46; and in North Wales a considerably lower average score than the UK average.

John Hearn (DipHI) recently commented "The report writing system automatically generates any recommendations for improvements. The fact that it hasn't made any is testimony to how efficient you've made them."

## **Additional Projects**

RYAG run a number of other projects but these are not based / run from our facility, they include environmental projects, alcohol intervention, sports and residential training.

## **If the opportunity presented itself for RYAG to ask a number of questions or highlight issues we would like decision makers to address that could improve the quality of facilities for young people these would be:**

Provision of revenue funding for qualified youth and community workers is becoming more difficult, in Rhyl we have seen the recent closing of a number of facilities young people accessed as revenue sources have dried up, in Rhyl this has left RYAG extremely stretched trying to cope as one of only a handful of groups not facing significant financial problems. Resources in the form of revenue for staff needs to be increased across the 3rd sector, to often we lose the ability to deliver "good youth work" as we are overwhelmed with numbers.

Provision of facilities for young people needs to be dynamic, changing its priorities layout and use with the ever changing needs of young people, this requires capital investment from Assembly and others.

Voluntary groups quality is often "with respect" extremely varied and sometimes inadequate, we would ask that a kite marking system is created for the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, this should be supported with a training and development package for groups staff and volunteers to ensure the facilities are providing quality to young people.

Third sector groups need additional "competency" support from health and safety; this should be addressed as soon as possible as a support system.

resources to support young people with complex and extreme needs must be invested into facilities, often the needs of many are being missed for fear of the few being onsite (exclusion of those most in need is often necessary but not ideal or effective, however limited resources are forcing groups to make less than ideal decisions.)

Duplication is often a "concern" of WAG and stakeholders, but used in a generalising manner this can have a negative affect. Local mapping & evolutions should be undertaken if need is clearly showing to be above the capacity of facilities and groups then special measure should be in place cope with demand.

Lighting at outdoor facilities should be controlled by young people. Many feel unsafe the Local Authorities turn out lights.

Recreational facilities led by Local Authorities should be made more accessible to young people; poverty excludes many young people from engaging in sporting facilities.