

The Outdoor Partnership Case Study – Young Carers Residential at Llandysul Paddlers



Background

With thanks to additional funding from Short Breaks our big idea of hosting a residential for Young Carers in Wales came to life bringing together 68 young carers from 6 different counties across Wales during May Half Term 2026. We have been successfully strengthening our relationships with Young Carer organisations across Wales over the past 3 years, organising activity sessions, residentials and courses, and we wanted to develop this into a bigger residential with more activities, more regions involved and exploring somewhere new (for many of the groups).

Discussions started with our partners to see if there was a need for something like this, when the most suitable time would be, what activities to include and what support they would need to attend. Our partners on this were;

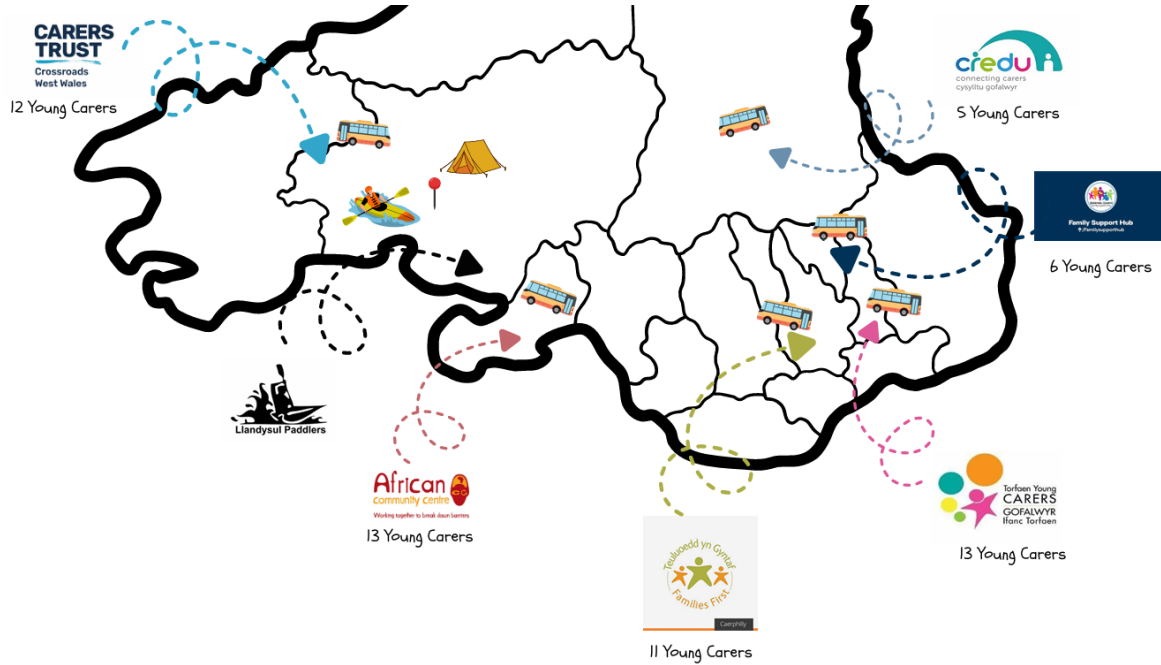
- Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales (*Carmarthenshire*)
- African Community Centre (*Swansea*)
- Credu Carers - Ystradgynlais (*Powys*)
- Torfaen Young Carers
- Caerphilly Young Carers
- Blaenau Gwent Young Carers

We decided to host the residential at Llandysul Paddlers on the border between Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire as it's a beautiful venue, that offers multiple different activities and has accommodation and transport.

Website Link – [Llandysul Paddlers Club and Canoe Centre.](#)



Here is a visual map of all the partners involved in this residential, where the young carers travelled from and where the residential was held –



Activity



We decided that a two-night, three-day residential (Wednesday – Friday) would provide an appropriate length of time for the Young Carers. To ensure the residential was inclusive and accessible to all, we also offered flexible participation options, with one group staying for one night and another attending for a single day of activities.

Each young person had the opportunity to try 6 different activities, these included outdoor climbing, paddle boarding, kayaking, river swimming, bushcraft and team building. We ensured everyone got a chance to try everything and that the groups were mixed with young carers from different regions to give them a chance to connect with new people.

We utilised the evenings to squeeze in even more activities and headed to the park for some football and a play on the swings, and then on the second evening we headed to the pool for an inflatable fun session! Both evenings the group winded down with hot chocolates, before heading to bed. While half of the group were tucked up in the bunkhouse, the other half of the group got settled into their tents outside which was made more exciting by some rain, thunder and lightning!



The fantastic staff at Llandysul Paddlers ensured that the young people felt at home, had opportunities throughout the 3 days to try new things, push themselves out of their comfort zone, practise skills learnt on previous sessions, as well as plenty of free time to rest and connect.

The Young Carers residential was a huge success and a fantastic experience for everyone involved. It gave so many young people the opportunity to spend time away from home, with some enjoying camping and others staying in the bunkhouse. The weather was amazing, which certainly added to the experience, and it was wonderful to see young people from a wide range of backgrounds and different areas coming together, making new friendships, building confidence, and enjoying the outdoors in such a positive environment.

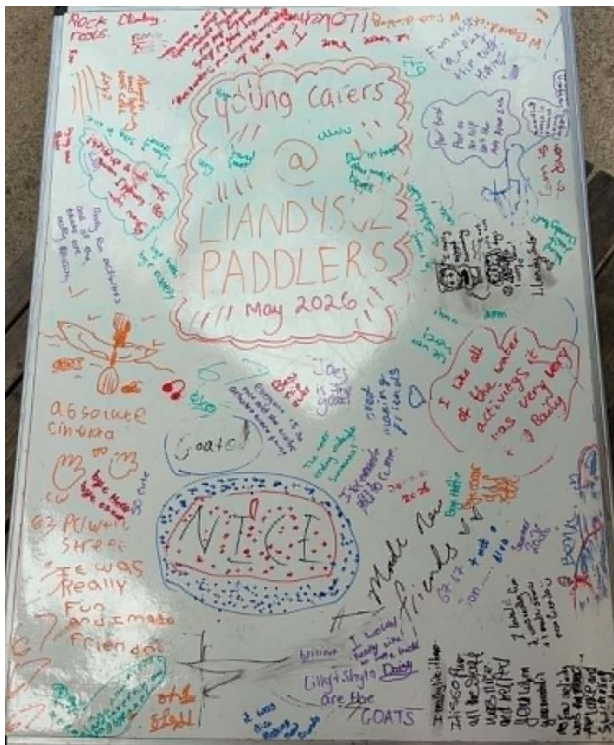
It was a pleasure to be part of this activity residential, and we look forward to working with the group again.

- Gareth Bryant - Watersports Development Officer CCC & CW
Centre Manager - Llandysul Paddlers Canoe Centre

Feedback / Outcome

As Outdoor Activity Development officers, we believe we have put the work in to build strong relationships with these partners making the event run smoothly as all the young carers and staff had trust in us that we had chosen the correct location, activities and put a significant amount of effort into the planning. I also believe that preparation and planning before hand allowed young carers staff and The Outdoor Partnership (TOP) staff to enjoy the 3 days together.

Setting up a whats-app group with everyone involved became a vital form of communication for the weeks leading up to the stay and for the duration of the stay; for asking questions, chasing up any paperwork, sharing photos and communicating any important messages during the 3 days.



“Amazing staff”, “fun activities”, “everyone is so nice”, “made new friends”, “funniest camping trip ever” and “I would like to come back” are only some of the thoughts captured on this white board from the young carers as they had their final lunch of the residential together on the Friday.

Using a whiteboard has become one of our primary methods of collecting feedback from young people, as it provides an accessible and creative way for them to express their thoughts through words, sentences, and drawings.

Our young carers had the best time in Llandysul over the half term. Due to there being activities, I feel that the young carers from our area and the other areas all mixed so well, and made so many new friends. No activity was forced upon the young carers, although encouragement was given to try and help their confidence. One of our young carers was really scared and nervous to do the water activities, but thanks to the wonderful staff and the confidence that they instilled in the young carers she fully embraced every activity. I heard this young carer on the way home say to her Mum that she was no longer scared of water after being in Llandysul. It truly was a wonderful experience for

them all, none of them wanted to come home and they were all asking when is the next one and whether they could go.

*Becky Forward - Gweithiwr Cymorth Gofalwyr | Carers Support Worker Cyngor
Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili | Caerphilly County Borough Council*

Blaenau Gwent was so grateful to be given the opportunity to attend the residential. From our perspective it was amazing! Such a lovely, enclosed environment where the young carers were able to make friends and have respite.

I have done a few reviews and the feedback from the young people has been that they LOVED IT!! And really hope to get the chance to attend again. The staff were amazing and it was so lovely seeing all the young carers bond and make friendships along with amazing memories.

Kirsty Lloyd - Community Engagement Support Worker - Teuluoedd yn Gyntaf | Families First Blaenau Gwent

"I had a great time, enjoyed meeting the other young carers and I exchanged numbers with two of them and we still speak"

Young Carer – Carmarthenshire

Our Young Carers had the most incredible time at the camp in Llandysul Paddlers, Wales. It was so much more than just a few days away—it gave them the chance to step away from their caring responsibilities, relax, have fun, and simply enjoy being young people.

They made new friends, met other young carers who truly understand their experiences, built lasting memories, and grew in confidence through the amazing activities and support.

A heartfelt thank you to The Outdoor Partnership for organising such a wonderful experience. The care, dedication, and opportunities you provide mean so much to our young carers and their families. Thank you for giving them the chance to laugh, connect, and create memories that will stay with them for years to come.

Edith Melendez – Project Co-ordinator - African Community Centre, Swansea

"Thanks for this amazing camp, I have so much fun and made friends, please organise more activities like this"

Young Carer – African Community Centre, Swansea

Conclusion

Hosting a 3-day residential for 68 young carers and 12 staff at Llandysul Paddlers allowed the young carers to explore somewhere new, meet new friends and try new activities as well as providing them with respite from their caring roles during May Half Term. Many of them learnt new skills like how to light a fire, as well as experiencing camping, climbing and floating down a river for the first time.

In the weeks following the residential, we gathered feedback from both staff and the young carers who attended. Several key themes emerged from their reflections, highlighting the impact of the experience; encouragement, confidence, wonderful staff, respite, new friends and amazing memories.

We would be keen to secure funding again next year to establish this residential as an annual event. This would enable a wider range of groups to participate each year, while also providing opportunities to diversify the activities offered. We are also in discussions with other TOP regions in different countries (Ayrshire in Scotland) about doing a joint residential bringing together young carers from Wales and Scotland.

For now, our main goal is to keep working with the young carers organisations and providing them with fantastic outdoor activity opportunities while also raising awareness of our work through stakeholder meetings and our social media accounts (please see some examples below.)

Y Bartneriaeth Awyr Agored - The Outdoor Partnership's post

Y Bartneriaeth Awyr Agored - The Outdoor Partnership
1 June at 14:51

Gofalwyr ifanc yn cymryd Llandysul Paddlers drosodd am 3 diwrnod yn ystod arhosiad preswyl! 🥰👏👏

Dwi ddim yn siŵr y gallem fod wedi ffioio llawer mwy i'r 3 diwrnod; padllyrddio, nofio yn yr afon, caiacio, dringo, gwneud popcorn a thostio malws melys, taith i'r parc a'r pwll nofio, gwerysyla mewn storm o feilit a tharanau, barbeciw, hufen iâ a chreu cysylltiadau a chyfeillgarwch diddiwedd rhwng gofalwyr ifanc a staff!

Diolch yn fawr i bawb a wnaeth y 3 diwrnod hwn yn bosibl; [Llandysul Paddlers Canoe Centre and Club](#) am ddarparu gweithgareddau, llety, bwyd anhygoel a gofal mor dda, ac i [Peggy Beer](#) am ddarparu gweithgareddau hyfryd.

Ac i [Credu Supporting Young and Adult Carers Torfaen Young Carers Blaenau Gwent Family Support Hub Caerphilly Families First Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales African Community Centre Wales](#) am ghehogi eu pobl ifanc i fynychu! Roedd hyn yn caniatáu i dros 80 o ofalwyr ifanc o 6 sir wahanol ar draws de / canolbarth / gorllewin Cymru gael cymryd rhan!


Rydym wir yn gobethio y gallwn droi hwn yn ddigwyddiad blynyddol!!

Young Carers take over Llandysul Paddlers for a 3 day residential 🥰👏👏👏

I'm really not sure we could have fitted much more in to the 3 days; paddle boarding, river swimming, kayaking, climbing, making popcorn and toasting marshmallows, trip to the park and to the swimming pool, camping in a thunderstorm, BBQ, ice creams and endless connections and friendships formed between young carers and staff!

A massive thank you goes out to everyone who made this 3 days possible! Llandysul Paddlers for providing activities, accommodation, awesome food and such good care, to Peggy for providing...

Y Bartneriaeth Awyr Agored - The Outdoor Partnership's post



Boost this post to get more reach for Y Bartneriaeth Awyr Agored - The Outdoor Partnership **Boost post**

15 👍 2 🗨️ 7 🔄

Most relevant

Carers Trust Wales
Wow! Sounds and looks incredible 🥰

4w Like Reply

Trig fan Credu Siány
We had the best time 🥰 Thank you all so so much ❤️ we cant wait for our next visit 🥰

3w Like Reply

Comment as **Sioned Thomas**

You're commenting as Sioned Thomas.

Examples from our Facebook account

Credu Siány added 50 photos and 17 videos from 29 May — with [Bethan Logan](#) and...
29 May · Llandyssul

We enjoyed a fantastic activity day yesterday...

Started with fun in the lake where we enjoyed Paddle boarding, canoeing and generally just messing around in the water.

We were treated to a lovely tasty lunch -

Our afternoon consisted of Rock climbing, then back to centre for some fire lighting/ whittling skills, clay modeling, natural craft making, toasting yummy marshmallows & popping popcorn on the camp fire 🥰

Everyone had the best time; laughed loads but also had time to chill and relax and just enjoy spending time together.... we all really want to return and to do it all again very soon 🥰

Massive thanks to [Bethan Logan](#) & [Sioned](#) from @The Outdoor Partnership for being so amazing and offering Young Carers [Credu Supporting Young and Adult Carers](#) these wonderful exciting opportunities 🙏 We are all Very Grateful to you lovely ladies 🙏

Huge Thank you to everyone at [Llandysul Paddlers Canoe Centre](#) for being so lovely, friendly and making us feel so very welcomed....hopefully we will see you all again soon.

Thank you [Erin Britain](#) for coming along and supporting for the day ❤️

Diolch 🥰👏👏 See less



Examples from a partner's Facebook account