

GISDA

CEFNOGAETH A CHYFLEOEDD I BOBL IFANC
SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

ABOUT US

GISDA was established in 1985 to provide shelter and support to homeless young people in the area. We are a charity that provides intensive support and opportunities for homeless and vulnerable young people who live in Gwynedd, we do this through our homelessness and accommodation, employability, equality and diversity, voice and therapeutic projects.

623

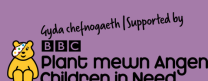
**young people
received direct
support during
2023-24**



3 Offices across Gwynedd

- Caernarfon
- Pwllheli
- Blaenau Ffestiniog

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AWARDS 2023-2024



SWYDDFA COMISIYNYDD HEDDLU
A THROSEDD GOGLEDD CYMRU
OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER NORTH WALES



North Wales Police Crime Commissioner
Community Awards 2023
Winner of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion
Award for GISDA LGBTQ+ Youth Club Project



Mental Health and Wellbeing Awards
2023
Silver Award for
Best Mental Health Support Service



Youth Work Excellence Awards 2023
Winner
Welsh Language Innovation Category



Arts & Homeless International Award 2023
Shortlisted in Co-Creation Champion
of the Year Category
the only organisation from Wales on the list!





A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Llinos Angharad Owen

On behalf of the GISDA Management Board, we are pleased to present the annual report which outlines information about the charity during the year. The past year has been very busy and successful for the charity.

All GISDA staff work hard and tirelessly to ensure that young people receive support, sustenance, and the best opportunity on their journey in life. The young people were given invaluable opportunities through the work of all the projects and the trips abroad.

Listening to the experiences of the young people at our meetings has been an eye-opener for all of us as board members. This allowed the young people to share their experiences with several very emotional meetings. Everything on paper doesn't always give the full picture but when a young person tells the story of their life and how the charity has helped them, the paper and what's on it mean nothing. The lives of these young people have been a rollercoaster of difficult, emotional and very poignant experiences. We don't know until we hear the stories.

The work being done by GISDA is invaluable. If GISDA's provision were to end, Gwynedd would be a much poorer County. We would like to sincerely thank all the staff at all levels. The work being done is invaluable. It is very nice to see energetic, enthusiastic and dedicated staff working to achieve one goal which is to help the young people of Gwynedd.

Together we can make a difference to the lives of young people in Gwynedd.

Llinos Angharad Owen

Chair GISDA Management Board



A WORD FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Siân Elen Tomos

We have reached the end of another year at GISDA and once again it has been incredibly busy and exciting. It was also a year where we reflected and thought meaningfully about the demand for us and realized that that is increasing rather than decreasing. We have been co-producing with young people to try to shape the company moving forward, always listening to their feedback. Among some of our biggest successes during the year we strengthened the Academi Cyfleon project, bought a house for care experienced young people, moved to our new head office in Caernarfon and won two national awards for our work namely Youth Work Wales Awards 'Innovation in Welsh' and Mental Health and Wellbeing Wales Awards 2023 'Best Mental Health Support Service'.

It is a great privilege to support our most vulnerable young people and play our part to enable them to secure a better future. Our priority is to provide accommodation and support for homeless and vulnerable young people and enable them to feel confident and happier to move on to live independently. We do this by working closely and in partnership with Gwynedd Council, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board, Mantell Gwynedd and Local Housing Associations. We also collaborate with various social enterprises and local charities all sharing the same values and a similar vision. The demand for our service increases from year to year and therefore we hope to focus on ensuring that our resources are maximized for the benefit of young people.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our funders for their commitment and support to us during the year. We are proud that we have been able to exceed our delivery targets and meet their needs as commissioners. I hope that we can continue to work together over the next few years.

My biggest thanks go to the staff. We are extremely fortunate and grateful for our extremely dedicated and hard-working staff who always go the extra mile for the benefit of the young people. GISDA would not exist without our staff so thank you from the bottom of my heart for their hard work. The young people have also been a great pleasure to support and I would like to thank them very much for their significant contribution to GISDA.

Finally I would like to thank the Management Team and the GISDA Management Board for their time, support and enthusiasm throughout the year. Working in a team is essential to the success of any company and I am proud of and grateful to everyone who plays their vital role in the smooth running of GISDA. I really look forward to continue working with you during the year and many years to come

Siân Elen Tomos

Chief Executive of GISDA

HOUSING SUPPORT

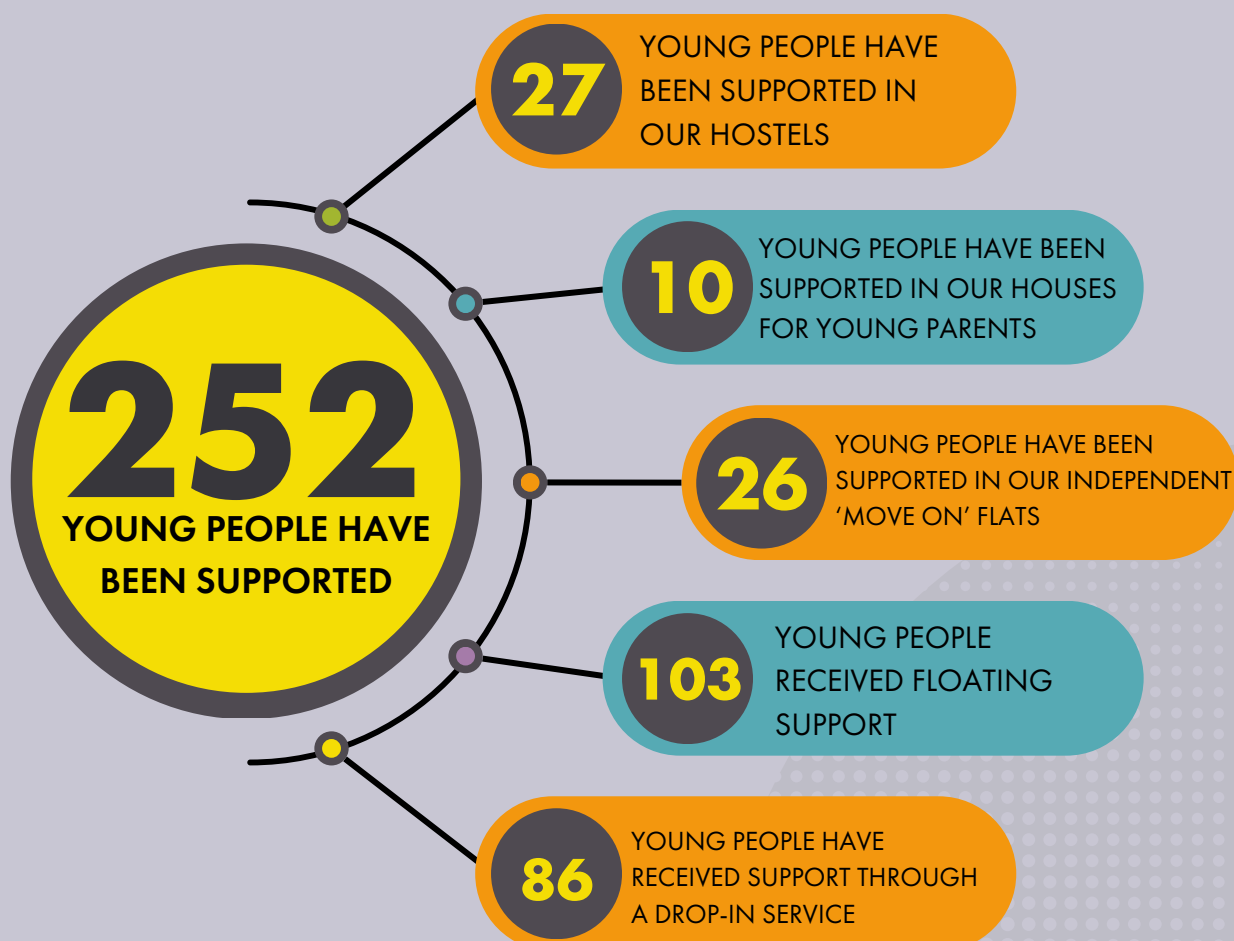
The Housing Support project provides specialist support for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This is GISDA's biggest project, with 62 young people receiving support from us across Gwynedd at any one time.

We currently have homes in Caernarfon, Felinheli, Llanrug, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Dolgellau which accommodate and provide a home for 31 young people

26 of these are single, and five are young parents in supported housing.

We also support 31 other young people in our communities with referrals from every area in Gwynedd.

All our staff provide a tailored support package that focuses on the needs of the individual, delivered through our own therapeutic support model (Model FI). The main objective of our support is to help young people develop the skills, understanding, responsibility and become aware of their rights to be able to move on to live independently. We deliver these objectives by meeting the specific needs of our young people, developing their strengths and helping them to build resilience to enable them to move on from our support services.



108 YOUNG PEOPLE MOVED ON FROM GISDA HOUSING SUPPORT

Internal GISDA Projects

43%

Staying with Friend

4%

Home to Family

7%

B&B

1%

Housing Association

17%

Floating Support

15%

Private Rental

6%

Other

7%

79%

OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED HAD MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

32%

OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION IDENTIFIED AS LGBTQ+

27%

OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED WERE YOUNG PARENTS

48%

OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE REFERRED TO GISDA WERE IN A B&B OR SOFA SURFING AT THE POINT OF REFERRAL



DROP IN SERVICE

Caernarfon

Blaenau
Ffestiniog

Pwllheli

Our drop-in service is an important service that responds to young people in crisis. Although we run a "drop-in service" each young person receives on average 3 support sessions to get them on their way. 3 sessions are held across the county weekly and it is a safe warm space to receive advice and support with;

- Housing and homelessness
- Income and benefits
- Contacting other organisations
- Mental and physical health
- Sexual health; free condoms,
- Education and training
- Grants and financial support;
 - Food packs and food bank vouchers
 - Clothing
 - Fuel vouchers
 - Move on grants for furniture
 - External grants

86

Young People have
received support

HOUSING SUPPORT IMPACT

YOUNG PEOPLE NOTED THAT GISDA HAD HELPED THEM:

Manage their accommodation

100%

Lead an active lifestyle

74%

Manage mental health

86%

Felt they could communicate issues to staff easily

100%

Felt they could see staff quickly when needed

98%

Rate the quality of support very good / good

98%



"WITHOUT GISDA I DON'T KNOW WHERE I WOULD BE RIGHT NOW. I WOULD BE ON THE STREETS STRUGGLING NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO"

"MY KEYWORKER IS LOVELY AND HAS OFFERED ME ALL THE SUPPORT SHE CAN. I'M EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR HOW MUCH SHE/GISDA IS HELPING ME"

*ERIN'S JOURNEY: FROM ADVERSITY TO UNIVERSITY

*A vibrant young woman, Erin has come a long way since she first sought help from GISDA four years ago. Erin's life was marked by bullying and discrimination. At home, she endured domestic and mental abuse stemming from her parents' rejection of her identity. To escape an unsafe and unsupportive environment, she had no option but to leave home, rendering her homeless and vulnerable.

Erin turned to GISDA and was accommodated at our hostel. While initially withdrawn, she soon built the confidence to interact more with staff and other residents, allowing her warm and outgoing nature to shine through. A talented artist, Erin began participating in creative activities and engaged in GISDA's LGBTQ+ group sessions. She also committed to volunteering at the GISDA Café where she gained essential skills and experience. Soon afterwards, her dedication paid off and she secured a job at a local café, working tirelessly to save for university education.

Thanks to GISDA's support and her own determination, Erin was able to progress from the hostel to independent living accommodation where she thrived. She was then offered her own accommodation through ADRA housing association, further reducing her financial outgoings and allowing her to focus on her dream of attending university.

Erin successfully adapted to living independently and continued to receive GISDA's support and guidance with her gender transition and university applications. The pinnacle of her journey came with life-changing gender transitioning surgery and following a successful recovery, she proudly began a new chapter at University armed with the confidence and determination she has developed over the years.

Erin has since settled in well to student life and is optimistic about the future. Her story highlights the life-changing impact of GISDA's support on the life of a young person facing challenging circumstances, and we are proud to have played a role in her journey towards securing a brighter future.

We have disguised Erin's name to protect her identity



"The support I was given when I was under GISDA's support proved invaluable to me as a young adult. They gave me advice and constantly helped me to achieve my goals and helped me in learning how to live independently. Over the years I was supported by GISDA my life improved dramatically as I gained independence, as well as achieved some of my life goals"

CARE LEAVERS PROJECT

130

of care leavers have
had specialist
support from us

Leaving care can be one of the most difficult times in a young person's life, so it is essential that they are properly prepared and ready for the challenge.

This service is funded by Gwynedd Council's Social Services. The project offers support to individuals between 16 and 25 years of age who have been in the care of the Local Authority and where there is a responsibility to continue to support them after they have left their care setting. The Personal Advisers offer support, advice and guidance to prepare the young person for their journey to become independent adults. All young people will receive a pathway plan which focuses on accommodation, education, training, health, family, social relationships and their rights. The Education and Employment Worker ensures that these young people who leave care get the extra support to support them to continue to keep their job, attend college or any training.

CROESO - ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

A project developed in 2023 in partnership with Cyngor Gwynedd to support young Asylum Seekers and refugees.

K is a young person who escaped from Afghanistan and is seeking asylum in the UK. He left his country when he was still a child, and embarked on a dangerous journey - for many miles he had to travel on foot.

After arriving in the UK he lived in England for a while. As he was under 18, he was considered an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, and therefore the government had a responsibility to look after him. The Home Office, under its National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers Children Scheme, decided to transfer K to the care of Gwynedd in order to ensure a more even distribution of caring responsibilities across the UK; and so he moved to Wales.

K came to live in one of Gisda's houses. He had arrived in an area which was completely foreign to him, with hardly anyone understanding his language, Pashto. The way things were done in Gwynedd was a little different to how things were done back in Afghanistan... he was not used to the need to fill in long forms in all aspects of life! He needed support to attend medical appointments, understand the benefits system, and apply for a bus card.

Despite this, he was determined to get to know the area and engage with the community. With the support of Gisda, this is exactly what happened.

Initially, staff took him to places of interest - shops, the local Mosque, and a trip to the Snowdonia mountains. K got a place on an ESOL course at Coleg Menai to improve his English, and he also showed an interest in Welsh, often greeting us with "prynhawn da". He started volunteering in the community, helping with a community garden and also in the kitchen with Porthi Dre. He joined a local cricket club - a great bowler.

After about 8 months living with Gisda, K, now a young adult, was ready to move on. He decided he would like to move to London to live with a friend. He was more confident with life in the UK, having been granted refugee status by the Home Office. He now has the right to work, and K wishes to go to university in the future. K still faces challenges, but Gisda's support has helped him understand how to settle himself in his new surroundings and how to deal with future challenges.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE



VOICE is one of GISDA's strategic aims and we work hard to ensure that the voice of young people is central to our work, is heard and to co-produce new ideas together

We employ a Young People's Voice Coordinator who runs our Young People's Board. The Young People's Board was established to ensure that the young people's voices are a central part of the service they receive and to create opportunities for them to build their self-confidence by expressing themselves about their experiences, the community and learning more about local and national politics and policies.

Who are our members? Service users from the hostels and flats, floating support, young care leavers and members of the LGBTQ+ Club



35

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD
SESSIONS HELD**



**THEMES DISCUSSED -
MENTAL HEALTH, TRANSPORT, HOUSING, COST OF LIVING, HATE CRIMES**

ACTIVITIES

- Working with Bangor University on a podcast about vulnerable young people's experiences
- Visit from North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- 'Democracy for All' session at Lloyd George Museum in Llanystumdwy funded by UK Parliament Speakers Art Fund which supports creative engagement projects across the UK to promote an understanding of democracy
- Visit from Welsh Parliament Education and Youth Engagement Office
- 2024 General Election Hustings



WELSH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Keira's term as GISDA representative in the Welsh Youth Parliament came to an end during the year.

We are so proud of Keira and what she has achieved in raising the voices of GISDA's young people about matters that affect them including mental health issues.

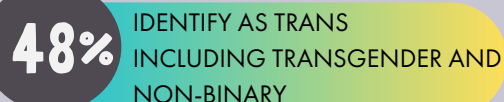
Thank you Keira for doing such amazing work



GISDA's LGBTQ+ club was established in 2017 as it became clear over the years that a high percentage of young people who were referred to the main homeless service were young people who identified as LGBTQ+ but there was no specific support for them. By now the project has gone from strength to strength with clubs established in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Blaenau Ffestiniog together with assisting and advising schools and communities to start their own clubs

In addition to the clubs, the project offers support on LGBTQ+ issues to young people and to other projects within GISDA. They have also been working to raise awareness across the county.

The National Lottery Community Fund has funded the project for the past two years and we have recently secured further funding from The National Lottery Community Fund , to continue for the next 3 years.



"I've enjoyed the educational and creative sessions that we've had in club"

"I'm a little more comfortable expressing myself the way I want to, and dressing the way I want to"

"I've found myself feeling much less isolated, since it's nice to be around a group of people who consider my mental health, and also I have been able to make changes at my school with GISDA which makes my experiences at school much easier."



141

Club nights and trips have been held including a trip to Chester Pride



58

Regular club members



201

Key Worker sessions



21

Individuals received specialist 1-1 support

Along with our clubs, we offer accredited training and awareness sessions on LGBTQ+ issues and present them to schools, colleges and other organisations that support young people.

ANNA - GENDER AND DIVERSITY COORDINATOR



I have been working with a trans man aged 18+. He had already started on testosterone gel and done his first consultation with the Welsh Gender Service. He had also changed his name by Deed Poll and started the process to get his Gender Recognition Certificate. We have been meeting for an hour most weeks, either in a café or out and about building confidence and skills. We have worked together on the support organisations available to him, the laws that protect his trans rights, and what to expect when he goes for surgery. We have also worked together to source the missing information for his Gender Recognition Certificate application. He was isolated, living with his cat and only leaving his flat to occasionally see friends or to go to the Caernarfon LGBTQ+ club. I was able to connect him to a local social group (Tails in Wales) and North Wales Trans, Intersex and Non-binary Network, which are now important in his social life.

He did most of his education in a special needs school and the Independent Living Skills part of Coleg Menai, with taxis provided. He has very little self-belief, considering himself too disabled to volunteer or get a job and expecting support services to be by his side for any task that he finds challenging. Building independence has therefore been really important for him, even though he hasn't always been enthusiastic about it.

He wanted to switch from gel to testosterone injections (Nebido) but he was very anxious about travelling to the local gender clinic in Cricieth for an injection he had heard was especially painful. I have accompanied him for the three loading injections (separated by 3 months). The first consultation he needed my help to communicate, speaking very quietly and worrying he would go non-verbal. He quickly started to bond with Dr Kate Phillips, the gender doctor, but got very tense and took a long time to feel he could consent to the injection. The first time he was lying there for well over an hour before he could consent. The second time he tensed and panicked but was able to consent after about twenty minutes. Both times I helped him communicate by moving his thumb or nodding, as he was going non-verbal from the stress. We have just been for his third injection, this time he was able to consent immediately, saying "just do it". He wanted me in the room but I kept my distance and stayed quiet, he did all the talking and realised he no longer really needed me there. The next time he will either do it all independently or Elain may meet him at the bus stop or the clinic.

The first two Cricieth trips we did in my car. This time we got the bus together from Bangor to Cricieth to help prepare him to travel there independently. He worries that he won't know when to get off so he practiced strategies to help: setting an alarm on his phone to go off 5 minutes before the ETA and checking the journey progress on Google Maps. He now feels he should be OK to do the bus journey and walk to the clinic by himself.

We have done the bus trip to Ysbyty Gwynedd together, to get his blood tests done. This last trip he decided that he no longer needed help for either the bus journey or the blood test.

Initially he insisted on going in my car to his GP, quite a long way by road but much nearer walking. More recently we walked there together from his flat. In the last week he has walked alone there twice, once to see the GP and once to get a prescription from the pharmacy.

As most of his gender goals have been met we are considering reducing the frequency of our meetings but he knows he can always contact me if something comes up.

GISDA ICAN HUB

LOW LEVEL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD

GISDA's ICAN project plays a crucial role in supporting young people in Gwynedd struggling with mild to moderate mental illness. Within welcoming hubs in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Bangor, individuals can easily access a range of early therapeutic interventions and support. By complementing NHS services, ICAN bridges the gap ensuring the right support at the right time. In complex cases requiring more comprehensive support, the ICAN team can help young people navigate the wider network of services and connect them with the most appropriate care.

ICAN offers a diverse range of interventions tailored to each young person's needs, including:

- Confidential counselling sessions to address specific concerns and develop coping strategies.
- Regular well-being phone calls from our trained volunteers.
- Engaging workshops covering a range of topics such as managing debt, navigating relationships, drug or alcohol problems, employability, housing issues, and bereavement.
- Art and creative writing workshops that nurture self-expression and help address painful feelings or experiences.
- Various hobby and activity classes, including sports, gardening, walking, and special interest groups to help boost social interaction and improve mental well-being.

166 REFERRALS TO THE PROJECT

100% Had mental health needs

69% Had a mental health diagnosis

56% Were at high risk of self harm and/or suicide

86%

Had visited their GP with their mental health needs

34%

Had visited A&E with emergency mental health needs

265

INDIVIDUALS
RECEIVED SUPPORT

70%

Noted an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing

59%

Noted that they can now cope better with difficult situations

77%

Noted an increase in awareness of the support available

A'S EXPERIENCE WITH ICAN

I attend the hub in Pwllheli every week and I'm a young mother. I take part in the 'Never Not A Mum' sessions which are group sessions where I and other young mums can talk about the challenges and problems we are facing. We can discuss past traumas too. I've taken part in other therapeutic sessions too like art and cooking where I enjoyed being part of a group and helping others. I've been part of choosing which activities I'd like to do, I enjoy things like cooking and art because they make me feel quiet and relaxed.

The cooking sessions and 'Never Not A Mum' sessions have been fantastic, I enjoy them a lot and I feel it helps me to talk more and get advice from others in the group. I hope our stories will be shared in the future through the 'Never Not A Mum' project.

Coming to the hub lets me talk to others and makes me feel comfortable. The group sessions have helped me a lot but having the option of 1-1 support is also great. I've learnt that it's okay for me not to be okay and to ask for help



"I FEEL I CAN COPE BETTER WITH GROUP ACTIVITIES NOW. I HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE IN TALKING ABOUT MY MENTAL HEALTH. I HAVE MORE AWARENESS OF WHEN I AM DETERIORATING AND WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE, AND I FEEL LIKE I CAN REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT INSTEAD OF LETTING MYSELF GO INTO CRISIS. I'M ALSO MORE WILLING TO TRY NEW THINGS TO HELP ME."



"I WAS IN A WORSE PLACE THAN I AM NOW, AND TALKING TO ICAN HELPS ME PUT THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE, AND I FEEL LIKE I HAVE SOMEONE WHO WILL LISTEN TO WHAT I NEED TO SAY, AND GIVE ME TIME TO TALK, AND BE THERE FOR ME. THE ICAN CONTACT HELPED ME BY ACCOMPANYING ME TO THE POLICE STATION WHEN I WANTED TO DECLARE SOMETHING, AND WAS THERE FOR ME AT A DIFFICULT TIME. THEY ASK QUESTIONS AND UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE FEEL WITHOUT JUDGEMENT."

A strong foundation in education is crucial, but many young people face challenges that hinder their academic and professional futures. Academi Cyfleon (Opportunities Academy), a key initiative within GISDA, steps in to bridge this gap.

Through drop-in centres across Gwynedd, Academi Cyfleon offers vital support to young people aged 16-25. Our dedicated team works closely with each participant to create a personalised plan addressing their specific needs and challenges. This comprehensive approach empowers young people to develop the skills and confidence needed to reach their potential.

Academi Cyfleon provides a supportive environment where young people can:

- Build confidence and essential employment skills like writing a CV, interview techniques, workplace behaviour and communication and social skills.
- Develop independent living skills like time management, budgeting, and navigating public transportation.
- Gain valuable exposure to the working world through work experience and volunteering opportunities.
- Earn relevant training and qualifications to enhance their employability.

The Academi Cyfleon team also remains a source of support as young people transition into the workforce, helping them smooth out any challenges they encounter in their new roles.



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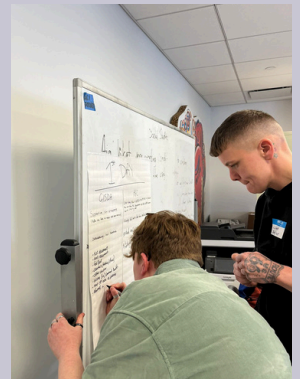
YOUNG PEOPLE
RECEIVED SUPPORT

155

INDEPENDENT LIVING AND
EMPLOYABILITY SESSIONS

192

TRAINING AND
ACCREDITATION SESSIONS



54%

Young People
have increased
confidence



74%

Young People
have increased
employability skills



47%

Young People have
increased motivation
to find a job



54%

Young People have
increased knowledge
of where to get
support

GISDA VOLUNTEERING

Over the years, volunteering has become an essential part of GISDA's daily operations. Our services thrive with the support of young people and people from the community who are ready to give their time to support vulnerable young people in Gwynedd.

Through this project we have encouraged young people to volunteer among our projects and assist with the work of LLAIS, create campaigns, assist with daily tasks in the hostels, hold sessions, assist staff with workshops, peer mentoring and more. We have also focused on trying to encourage young people to volunteer in the community. We believe that this is extremely important, especially after the covid period, in order to integrate young people into the local community and create new connections.

The GISDA Volunteering Project also encourages people from the community to volunteer with us here at GISDA, acting as mentors for the young people and support for the projects.



105 of people have volunteered their time in the past year



1,948 hours of their time



69 volunteers completed training



45 volunteers with increased wellbeing



"Volunteering at GISDA isn't just about lending a hand; it's about igniting hope, nurturing potential, and empowering young vulnerable people to rewrite their stories with resilience, courage, and the unwavering belief in a brighter tomorrow."



CREATIVE GISDA



139

sessions have been held in a mixture of theatre, visual art, trips to different galleries, animation, creative writing, music, production and much more!

Our various arts activities encourage young people to express themselves and their feelings in an informal creative way. GISDA strongly believes in giving young people various taster sessions and long-term opportunities to gain confidence, gain new skills, broaden their horizons and meet others!

BBC Children in Need funds the NABOD project which is a joint project with Frân Wen. NABOD is a long-term project that will offer young people various opportunities to co-create theatre that elevates the voice of the individual and brings about social change.

CANFAS CREATIVE PROJECT

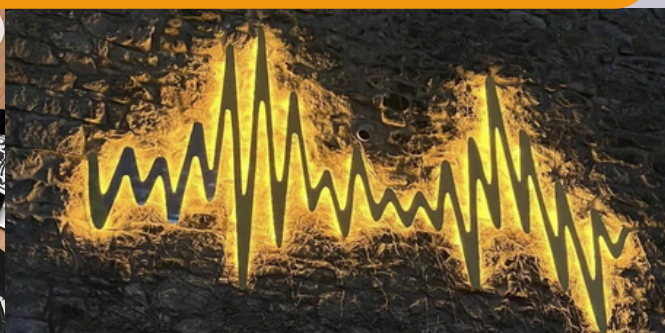


An artistic project in partnership with Galeri. The concept of the project was to give the whole community an innovative opportunity to record its unique identity in the spaces and fabric of the town's own construction and an opportunity to hear voices that had not been heard before. Canolfan Tan y Bont was once a popular destination for all ages and for young people especially with groups and individuals from the Welsh rock and music scene performing there regularly. Established in 1976, it was the venue for many momentous evenings in the history of the Welsh rock scene. The building has now been destroyed, and the site is currently occupied by the Ffordd y Felin car park.

The intention of the CANFAS project was to create artwork that pays tribute to the buzz that used to be there in Canolfan Tan y Bont, with all the work being inspired by the songs and albums, and the musicians who performed at the Centre.

Working closely with GISDA's Creative Team, young people from GISDA worked hard to discover the history and stories behind Canolfan Tan y Bont.

The young people from GISDA chose a team of artists to collaborate with them on this project, producing a collection of artworks currently on display across the Tan y Bont area – all influenced by various elements associated with the iconic Centre.



OPPORTUNITIES

LIVERPOOL

As part of the consultation work for the GISDA Cafe and Young People's Hub, which is being developed on the Maes Caernarfon in partnership with Gwynedd Council, a group of young people from GISDA went to Liverpool to visit two similar projects; Paper Cup Project and Thrive Hub.

The trip gave our young people a chance to learn valuable skills including mastering train travel and navigating a big city.

They also had a chance to learn more about Liverpool's rich history and culture with a visit to Albert Dock and the Museum of Liverpool.



YNYS ENLLI

Earlier this year a group of young people and staff went on a trip to Ynys Enlli, funded by the Bardsey Island Trust and the Lottery Heritage Fund.

It was a unique off-grid experience and they took part in all kinds of activities, kindly organized by the island's wardens. They:

- created embossed aluminum artworks in a workshop with the resident artist,
- went litter picking and gardening with the wardens,
- took part in a yoga session one morning
- went without a mobile phone and internet!



MOEL FAMAU DONKEYS

A group of young people visited Moel Famau Donkeys recently.

They learnt more about the center and the animals, and had hands on experience with the donkeys by taking them out for walks and clearing the shed. Many of our young people are interested in volunteering with animals so this was a great experience for them.

Spending time with animals is proven to be very therapeutic and everyone enjoyed the day.



TAITH PROJECTS



We have been extremely fortunate to receive support from Taith funded by the Welsh Government to run trips for vulnerable young people.

Taith is an international learning exchange programme established to create life-changing opportunities for people in Wales to study, train, volunteer and work in the four corners of the world. The programme is committed to improving access for people with disabilities, additional learning needs, underrepresented groups, and people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The aim is for ALL learners across Wales to have access to Taith funding and opportunities.

During 2023-2024 young people traveled to New York, Poland and Cornwall as part of this project

WALES, NEW YORK AND POLAND!

Our collaborative project involving Poland and New York focused on examining and comparing the lives of LGBTQ+ young people in each region. This initiative allowed young individuals to connect with their counterparts, facilitating the sharing of experiences and fostering a deeper understanding of LGBTQ+ lives globally. We are dedicated to creating a world where all young people, regardless of their identity, feel safe, supported, and empowered. This vision was the primary goal and outcome of our adventure!

NEW YORK



GISDA staff and young people traveled to New York visiting organisations such as the Ali Forney Center which provides LGBTQ+ Youth Shelter and Services and the historic Stonewall Inn where Pride began in 1969, Center Youth: Clubhouse Music Group and explored the many sights of New York!



"GOING TO NYC WAS A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE FOR ME. IT WAS FUN LEARNING HOW DIFFERENT YET HOW SIMILAR OUR EXPERIENCES ARE DESPITE GROWING UP IN VERY DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS"

POLAND



GISDA staff and young people traveled to Poland visiting Krakow, Warsaw and Lodz. Thank you very much to our colleagues from Lodz University who introduced us to many wonderful organisations including: V Liceum Ogólnokształcące (a LGBTQ+ friendly school), Equality Factory, Warsaw House and ProDrugie.



"IT HAS TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT MYSELF. I WAS MILES OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE. I'M MORE CAPABLE THAN I THINK AND IT HAS TAUGHT ME INDEPENDENCE"

CORNWALL



GISDA staff were proud to work in partnership with Adra housing association travelling to Cornwall to forge connections and share experiences regarding the impact of tourism and second homes and how it affects the language, culture and young people being able to live in their community

WELSH LANGUAGE

CYNNIG CYMRAEG WEEK

Gallwch ddefnyddio'r
Gymraeg gyda ni.

You can use Welsh
with us.



GISDA was selected as one of five organizations across Wales to take part in the Cynnig Cymraeg week in 2024.

As holders of the recognition since 2021 we are proud to be a leading example of a bilingualism in the third sector and to be able to share the benefits of using the Welsh language when working with young people.

It gave us the opportunity to promote and celebrate the recognition and encourage other organizations to work towards receiving the Cynnig Cymraeg.

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES FUND

This year we made a successful application to Literature Wales' Inspiring Communities fund. This enabled us to hold four creative writing workshops with two authors, Sioned Erin and Megan Hunter in our hubs in Caernarfon and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

It gave our young people the chance to ask questions about their work, discuss ideas and write their own pieces.

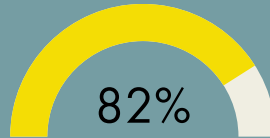


STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff were asked to answer a questionnaire with questions about the opportunities to use Welsh at work, their confidence using Welsh and their feelings about GISDA's Welsh identity:



91% strongly agreed that there were enough opportunities for them to use Welsh at work



82% strongly agreed that they felt confident communicating in Welsh internally



91% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt that GISDA's Welsh identity was obvious to people

GISDA 'ON THE ROAD'



GWYL FWYD CAERNARFON



EISTEDDFOD GENEDLAETHOL



YOUTH WORK WALES
CONFERENCE

VISITS

NORTH WALES POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Andrew Dunbobbin the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner visited our Young People's Board to listen to their concerns. We are grateful to the Commissioner for his continued support and interest in our work and the young people we support



JULIE MORGAN MS VISITS OUR ICAN PROJECT

In February the Deputy Minister Julie Morgan AS visited GISDA's ICAN Project. Joined by Gareth Williams (Vice Chair) and Klare Jordan (Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board) & Dr Sally Rees (Welsh Government). They discussed the positive impact of ICAN's early intervention Mental Health support for young people. Funded by BCUHB, ICAN provides crucial support to young people in Gwynedd.

BBC CREATIVE PRODUCTION TEAM VISITS GISDA

In October 2023 The BBC Creative Production team visited GISDA to learn more about our work. The purpose of their visit was to learn more about their audience and communities, and it allowed us to present our current and upcoming projects, including the work on the Young People's Hub. It was a great opportunity to discuss how the press plays a role in raising awareness of current issues that affect young people.



VISITS TO THE MAES PROJECT

We had the pleasure of welcoming several visitors to our exciting Maes project which is being developed in partnership with Cyngor Gwynedd and is being funded by Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government

We were glad to have the opportunity to show the progress of the project which already has four new flats for young people and offices for GISDA staff. Upon completion the project will include a young people's hub, providing a 'one stop shop' for young people seeking support, as well as a community cafe providing training and work experience opportunities for young people



WELSH GOVERNMENT

Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government

PLAID CYMRU

Liz Saville-Roberts MP, Hywel Williams MP and Rhun ap Iorwerth MS



CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Cyngor Gwynedd Senior Officers and Cabinet Members



The background of the entire image is a sunburst pattern composed of numerous triangular rays in various shades of blue, radiating from the center. In the center of the image is a red rounded rectangle containing the GISDA logo.

GISDA

CEFNOGAETH A CHYFLEOEDD I BOBL IFANC
SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE