

GISDA

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

SPRING 2024

NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO GISDA'S SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER!

As the days grow longer, we're excited to share some news and updates that have unfolded at GISDA in recent months. We've been busy supporting our young people and making a positive impact in the community, and we can't wait to share the stories with you!

GISDA CELEBRATES WELSH LANGUAGE INNOVATION AWARD!

Cymraeg

We are thrilled to announce that GISDA recently scooped the Welsh Language Innovation Award at the Youth Work Excellence Awards held on 22 February at Venue Cymru, Llandudno. This award recognises our commitment to providing essential youth support services in both Welsh and English.

As the only charity across Wales offering our services fully bilingually, we strongly believe every young person should have the choice to access support through the medium of Welsh should it be their preference. We understand that feeling comfortable and confident is crucial for young people when reaching out for help, and being able to communicate in their native tongue is fundamental to building trust and ensuring a positive experience.

Moreover, as a proudly Welsh-first organisation, all GISDA staff speak Welsh, and we operate with Welsh as our primary language. We provide resources and support for those wishing to learn or improve their Welsh, including the guidance of our dedicated Welsh Language Coordinator.

This award demonstrates our commitment to the Welsh language and its role in empowering young people. We want to thank our dedicated staff, the incredible young people we serve, and our devoted supporters.

◆ Gwobrau Rhagoriaeth
Gwaith Ieuenctid 2023
Youth Work Excellence
Awards 2023





IT'S BEEN A BUSY START TO 2024

This year has already seen several important visits to our projects. During February, we welcomed Minister for Finance & Local Government, Rebecca Evans MS, to our ambitious Y Maes development. The Minister was impressed by the project's potential to provide a comprehensive support network for young people, offering housing, training, opportunities, and a community hub, alongside much needed office space for GISDA staff. Construction of the flats and offices is complete, and we look forward to the commencement of the final phase – the cafe and hub.



February also saw a visit from Deputy Minister Julie Morgan MS, accompanied by representatives from Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and the Welsh Government, to our ICAN Hub in Caernarfon. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to showcase the project's services, which include confidential counselling, therapeutic workshops, and social activities. Our guests participated in a therapeutic Valentine's Day card-making session alongside the young people we support. Creative sessions such as these are especially effective in helping young people to relax and open up about their challenges.



In March, we welcomed Liz Saville-Roberts, Plaid Cymru MP for Dwyfor Meirionnydd, Hywel Williams, Plaid Cymru MP for Arfon, and Rhun Iwan Iorwerth, Plaid Cymru's leader, for a tour of our Y Maes development. Their visit offered a chance to discuss the project's wider impact on Caernarfon's youth and wider community. They expressed their strong support for GISDA's mission and work, and we look forward to their return visit to see the completed training cafe and hub, which will be a valuable resource for the entire community.



We are grateful to everyone who took the time to visit us and learn more about GISDA's work and the vital role we play in supporting young people in Gwynedd.

GISDA'S YOUNG ARTISTS GIVE TAN Y BONT A CREATIVE MAKEOVER AS PART OF CANFAS

GISDA's young people have been busy making their mark on Caernarfon as part of the exciting new CANFAS project, managed by Galeri Caernarfon. This initiative aims to breathe new life into forgotten corners of Caernarfon by transforming them with art installations that reflect the town's unique identity and history.

GISDA's young creatives, alongside local artists, are leading the way in the Tan y Bont area. Their creation will be a vibrant tribute to the legendary Canolfan Tan y Bont music club, drawing inspiration from the stories and memories it holds. During the process, the young people have enjoyed creative sessions with artists Rhys Grail, Lleucu Non, Lynwen Lloyd and Ffion Pritchard, honing their skills and collaborating on the final art-work.

The installation be unveiled on April 20th. We can't wait to see the amazing results of GISDA young people's hard work, creativity, and collaboration firsthand!



A WARM WELCOME TO GLAIN, OUR WELSH LANGUAGE COORDINATOR!

We're pleased to introduce Glain Hughes, who joined GISDA in January 2024 as our Welsh Language Coordinator! The role is funded through ARFOR 2, a collaborative initiative between the counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, and Carmarthenshire which aims to empower Welsh-speaking communities.

Building trust and open communication is paramount when young people seek help. With Glain on board, we can further strengthen our already comprehensive Welsh language offering. Her expertise ensures young people across Gwynedd, particularly those in areas with high concentrations of Welsh speakers, can confidently access our services and express themselves in their preferred language.

Glain will also play an important role in supporting GISDA staff in their Welsh language journeys and ensuring our commitment to the language and culture continues to thrive.



GISDA has a long-standing commitment to providing a fully bilingual environment for young people in Gwynedd. Here's a glimpse into our ongoing initiatives:

- We have a strong foundation of Welsh-speaking staff and actively support staff through training and personalised language plans.
- We host events like Dydd Miwsig Cymru and creative writing sessions – initiatives that showcase the richness and vibrancy of Welsh culture, demonstrating its importance outside of educational and professional settings.
- Our LGBTQ+ project has developed Welsh-language training materials – a unique resource that allows us to support other youth organisations in providing specialised LGBTQ+ guidance in Welsh.
- The Café and Hub within our Y Maes project is being designed with the Welsh language at the forefront to create a space that reflects GISDA's values and promotes the language and culture to all visitors.



MEET THE PROJECT MANAGER

We're pleased to launch a new feature in this newsletter – "Meet the Project Manager!" In each edition, we'll chat with one of GISDA's dedicated project managers to learn more about their work. For this first instalment, we spoke with Gruffydd Williams who leads our ICAN project. Let's delve into their world and discover the exciting initiatives underway at ICAN!

TELL US ABOUT ICAN

ICAN offers early intervention and support for young people in Gwynedd (aged 14-25) facing mild to moderate mental health challenges. The project complements NHS services and acts as a safety net for young people in need who might otherwise fall through the cracks. From our dedicated hubs in Caernarfon, Pwllheli, and Bangor, we deliver:

- Informal drop-in sessions hosted by our ICAN Connectors where young people can chat about anything that might be bothering them over a friendly cuppa.
- Regular well-being phone calls from our trained volunteers.
- Confidential 1:1 counselling provided by 5 trainee counsellors.



- 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 classes, including sports, gardening, walking, and special interest groups to help boost social interaction and improve mental well-being.
- Collaboration with different services and agencies, for example, we are currently running drop-in sessions with an Occupational Therapist.

In more complex cases where additional resources and support are required, our team can connect young people with the most appropriate care for them.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?

There is a strong link between creative expression and mental well-being, therefore ICAN also features a dedicated creative programme, GISDA Creadigol (Creative). Led by experts within their respective fields, the project provides young people with a safe and supportive space to explore their creativity, promoting confidence and self-worth.

ICAN has also received a grant via Gwynedd Council's Community Support Fund which has given the green light to our new GISDACTIF project. We're currently working hard on putting a plan in place for this project which will provide a variety of physical activities to GISDA's young people. Keeping active is integral to staying well mentally so this is an important development for ICAN.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2024?

I am looking forward to seeing all of the projects come together, especially CANFAS and GISDACTIF. CANFAS will be a fantastic opportunity for our young people to witness their hard work proudly displayed as public art in Caernarfon. This will not only raise awareness of their skills but also showcase what can be achieved through passion and collaboration. GISDACTIF is particularly exciting. This project will offer a unique and engaging program focused on youth health and fitness, with a fun and varied approach. I can't wait to collaborate with local companies, our staff, and the young people themselves on this project.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE?

The biggest hurdle we face is the volume of referrals we receive. This unfortunately results in a waiting list, which undermines what ICAN stands for – providing accessible support.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU ABOUT THE PROJECT?

The privilege of managing these projects is incredibly rewarding. While the challenges within mental health services can be tough and frustrating, seeing the positive impact ICAN has on young people in Gwynedd is inspiring. It's amazing to witness how simply participating and enjoying these ICAN sessions empowers individuals to learn, develop confidence, and showcase their talents.



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101

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FROM ICAN DURING THE LAST QUARTER

iCAN

NHS GIG

GISDA'S YOUNG PEOPLE ARE JETTING OFF TO NEW YORK CITY!



This April, a group of young people from GISDA will embark on an incredible adventure across the Atlantic to explore the LGBTQ+ community in New York City! This incredible adventure, made possible thanks to the Welsh Government's Taith programme, is part of a broader 3-way project comparing the lives of LGBTQ+ young people in Wales, New York and Poland. Accompanied by GISDA staff members, including some who are involved in our LGBT Project, the young people will have the chance to connect with their peers in the Big Apple. This immersive experience will allow them to compare their experiences and gain an understanding of the lives and challenges of LGBTQ+ individuals worldwide.

A highlight of the trip will be a visit to the Ali Forney Center, the largest organisation dedicated to LGBTQ+ homeless youth in the United States. Here, our young people will have the opportunity to discover the resources and programs offered by the organisation, gaining valuable insights into how things are done compared to back home in Wales. There will also be visits to similar organisations, and, of course, an opportunity for the group to explore some of New York's iconic landmarks.

At GISDA, we are passionate about creating a world where every young person, regardless of who they are, feels safe, supported, and empowered, and are incredibly excited to see our young people embark on such an impactful journey. We're busy finalising the plans for this unforgettable experience which will provide an opportunity for them to discover a new city, gain confidence, broaden their understanding of the world and create memories that will last a lifetime. We are incredibly grateful to Taith for their support, which has made this life-changing trip possible.

Stay tuned to our social media channels as we share updates and stories from the trip! **#GISDANYC**



PRIDE IS COMING TO CAERNARFON!

Save the date! This June, Pride is coming to Caernarfon! Join us for a fun-filled day packed with love, celebration, and community spirit.

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

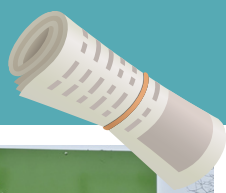
Parade: We'll be marching through the historic streets of Caernarfon, showing off our colours and spreading messages of love and acceptance.

Entertainment: Enjoy live music, performances, and other entertainment throughout the day. Dance, sing, and celebrate with friends old and new!

Stalls: Learn about organisations, projects and support in your local area

Volunteer Opportunities: Want to get involved and make a difference? We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help make Caernarfon Pride 2024 a success. Whether you're interested in event planning, logistics, or spreading the word, there's a role for you! If you would like to learn more, please get in touch today by emailing gisda@gisda.co.uk





GISDA RECEIVES KIND DONATION FROM SCOTTISH POWER

We're incredibly grateful to have received refurbished laptops courtesy of Scottish Power! They were received as part of a brilliant initiative that not only supports charities but also gives a new lease of life to tech items that could otherwise be discarded. A special thanks to Dylan Wyn Herbert, Head of Resources & Planning at the Caernarfon Depot, for nominating us to receive them and to Andy Sturgeon for the kind delivery from Liverpool. The laptops will be gratefully received by GISDA's young people who might not otherwise be able to obtain one, enabling them to access essential resources for education, training, job searches, and more.



VOICES FROM CARE CYMRU SCARF CHALLENGE

The GISDA team in Blaenau Ffestiniog recently joined Voices from Care Cymru's Scarf Challenge. Hundreds of people across Wales have knitted squares for a giant scarf symbolising warmth & inclusion for children in care (7,983 squares, each representing a child!). The scarf will be wrapped around the Welsh Parliament to raise awareness. Thank you to the Blaenau Ffestiniog community for their contributions!



GISDA ON THE ROAD

It's been a busy couple of months for GISDA on the events front, with visits to Freshers Fairs, Jobs Fairs, Networking Events and Workshops. It has been great to get out and about meeting all kinds of individuals and spreading the word about GISDA's work. We hope to see you all out and about soon!



A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR INCREDIBLE DONORS!

We're incredibly grateful for the generosity of our donors. Thanks to your support, we can continue to provide vital services and projects that empower young people in Gwynedd to reach their full potential. Whether you donate a one-time gift or choose to give monthly, every donation makes an impact. We also understand that some people wish to give discreetly, so if you prefer to keep your contribution anonymous, your generosity is no less valued.



HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOUR DONATIONS HELP:

Safe Spaces: Donations help us create and maintain safe and welcoming environments, like our hostels and hubs, where young people facing homelessness and other challenges can find refuge and support.



Support Projects: Your generosity helps fund vital projects like ICAN and the LGBTQ+ Youth Club. These projects provide a safe space, peer support, and valuable resources.

Empowering Young Parents: Your donations contribute towards ensuring young mothers and fathers can navigate the challenges of parenthood via our Young Parents Project.



Connecting Young People to Opportunities: Donations help us connect young people with education, employment, and personal growth opportunities, opening doors to brighter futures.

Donate today and help us continue our vital work! Scan the QR code to visit our JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/gisda

