

Extending the Reach — Newydd Housing Association

Newydd has 21 young people participating in the DofE programme from across two local authority areas, Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and Neath and Port Talbot. Leader **Jackie Holly** gives her views of the programme

What have been the biggest benefits for the young people participating in the DofE with Newydd Housing?

The biggest benefits are that a lot of our young people have had the confidence to do activities that they would never have thought of doing or achieving before. Since starting the DofE they have really taken on the concept of volunteering and have now all signed up to the Millennium Volunteer programme.



Would you recommend the DofE to other Housing Associations and what tips can you give?

I would definitely recommend this to other Housing Associations, but I would make them aware that it's not an easy option.

We encountered problems getting the young people to use the online system and had to find ways around this. It's not easy for a Housing Association to try to make the young people commit to a year long project, we tended to do the units one by one in turn. The initial drop out rate can be quite alarming and worrying when a lot of time and effort has been invested into supporting two youth groups in 2 different local authorities.

What progress have you and the young people made?

After starting our first group in RCT; Newydd Xplore, some of our other young tenants in Neath and Port Talbot asked if they could participate too.

This new group, Newydd in-site, started in October and have now already completed their Bronze Award and are working towards their Silver. I am so impressed with this group.

The young people are now



learning new gardening skills in the Rheola Walled Garden and once completed have asked if they can do some volunteering in the school summer holidays.

They are going to be making hanging baskets and will be entering Newydd's gardening competition in the summer.

How would you describe the life circumstances of your young People and how has doing the DofE helped them?

All of the young people are from areas of deprivation (Community First areas).

Two from in Neath Port Talbot have been highlighted by their schools at risk of becoming not in employment, education or training (NEET), but both have flourished in

the DofE environment. Another young person has ADHD and has been in trouble with the police for criminal damage. This boy has completed the Bronze Award and we are all very proud of him.

Two girls in RCT were both being bullied in school and as a result refused to attend school. Both are now in a new school, but the eldest will be leaving school with no qualifications at all apart from her DofE Award she is dyslexic which has effected her education but she is now in the process of completing her NVQ level 2 in Community Development and this has been made possible because being involved with the DofE has boosted her confidence and inspired her to learn a new skill. Additionally, in the summer Newydd will be helping her with a basic Maths and English course to try and help her achieve her ambition of joining the army. All this has been made possible from her involvement with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Can you give an example of two young people who you can see have really benefitted from positive engagement with the DofE ?

Jamie and Joe are two young people that instantly spring to mind. Both boys (brothers) have completed their Bronze Award and are now working towards their Silver, but this is where the similarities end. Jamie is working towards his A levels as he wants to go to university to do Criminal Forensics. Jamie realises that as this is a very popular

course to get on, he needs the DofE Award as something extra to put on his CV, showing that he's a good well rounded person and someone who gives something back to the community.

Joe on the other hand has been identified as a future NEET, he has a disability as he wears hearing aids in both ears and struggles in the school environment. Joe was the driving force behind us doing the DofE in Neath Port Talbot and he was also instrumental in setting up the 5 aside football team to help the young people complete the physical of the DofE. The boys have managed to source funding for the 5 aside team for a new football strip and footballs .

Newydd has relied on Joe when it comes to helping with the DofE administration, e.g. consent letters, setting up a messenger service on Facebook to engage with the young people.

Joe also made sure that the In-site boys turned up weekly for their Shelter Cymru "Housemate" life skill workshops.

Newydd has been so impressed with Joe that we are

now nominating him for the young tenant of the year award with The Tennant Empowerment Organisation (TPAS).

The DofE is committed to extending its reach to all young people.

Times continue to be tough for young people in Wales, there are 200,000 children and young people living in Poverty. The DofE in Wales operates in the 15 most deprived areas in Wales where communities often feel isolated and disengaged. Limited opportunities lead to a lack of self-esteem, aspiration and motivation . The DofE challenges this directly by providing a flexible programme for positive development that can be adapted to the specific needs of any community. The DofE is recognised nationally as the most valuable non-formal programme for young people with the highest impact on mobility and employability.

It is those young people facing the biggest challenges for whom The DofE represents the most significant achievement.

