



Helping Hand to Volunteer Project Report January 2024 - March 2025



"Without the project, I don't think my mental health would be anywhere near as good as it has been lately, I would recommend Gwynedd Volunteer Centre services to anyone who needs help with volunteering based on my experience with Jordan."





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Jordan Thomas

SWYDDOG GAFAEL LLAW I WIRFODDOLI
HELPING HAND TO VOLUNTEER OFFICER

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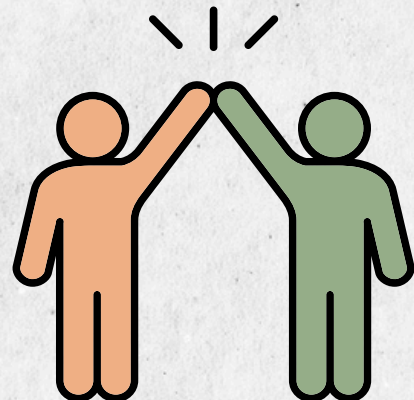


1. The role of the Helping Hand to Volunteer Project

The Helping Hand project is managed by the Gwynedd Volunteer Centre based in Mantell Gwynedd. The project has been funded through the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) for the period between January 2024 and March 2025 to support individuals with volunteering opportunities. As a charity that supports local communities, Mantell Gwynedd bridges the gap between individuals, organisations and resources, fostering cooperation for a stronger and more inclusive society.

The main aim of the project is to provide one-to-one support for individuals with additional support needs who could benefit through volunteering. The support is an extension of the existing brokerage service of the Volunteer Centre where individuals receive intensive support throughout the volunteering process.

The provision and support is based in accordance with the needs of the individuals. This includes finding suitable volunteering opportunities, support to complete forms, visits to the volunteering locations, and above all to give the volunteers an initial helping hand.





2. Individuals who have received support

The project has supported **86** individuals between January 2024 and March 2025.

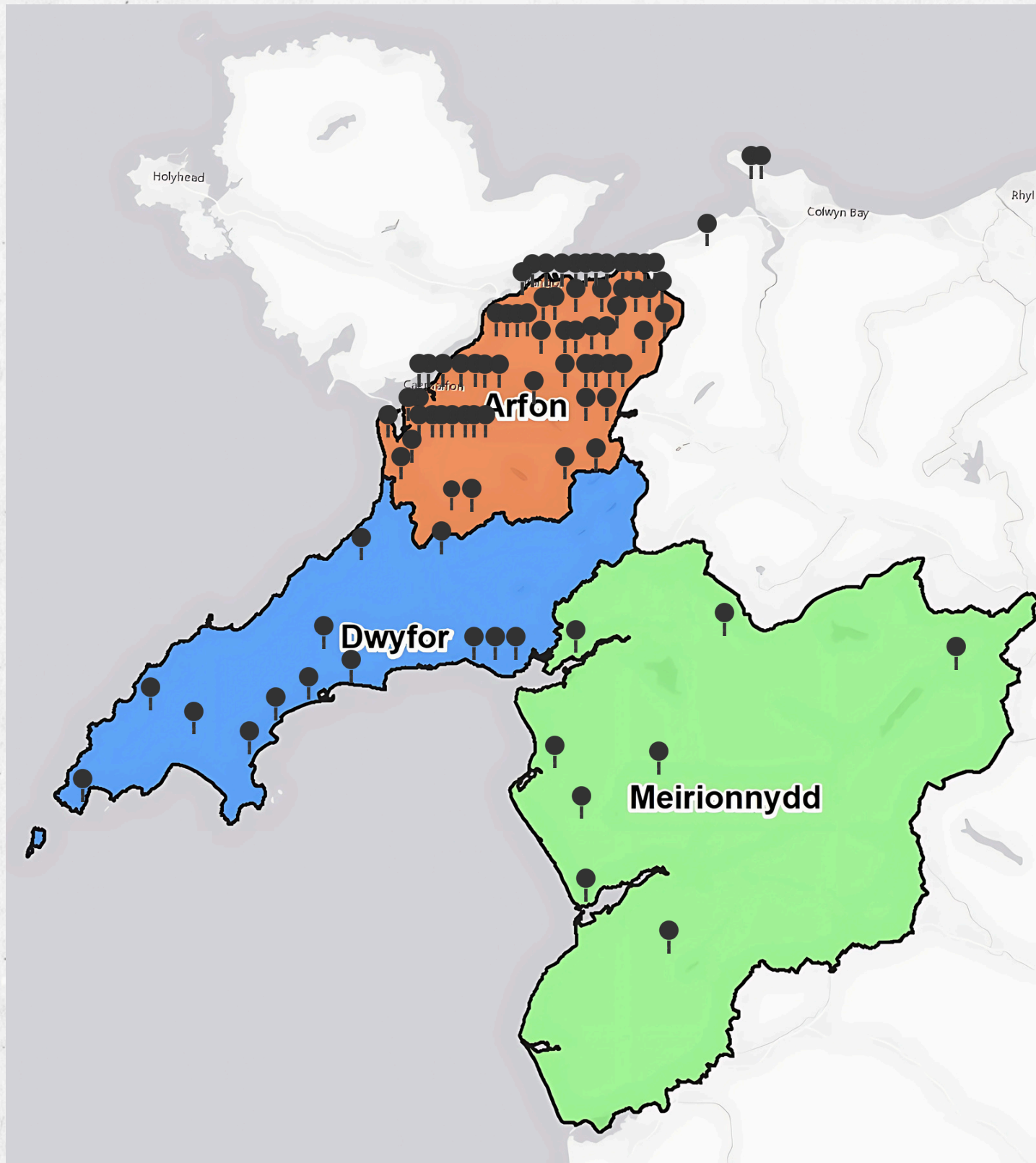
Referrals to the project have mainly come from the project's target area of Arfon, Dwyfor and north Meirionnydd.

Each individual has received intense support at every stage of their journey towards volunteering.

86



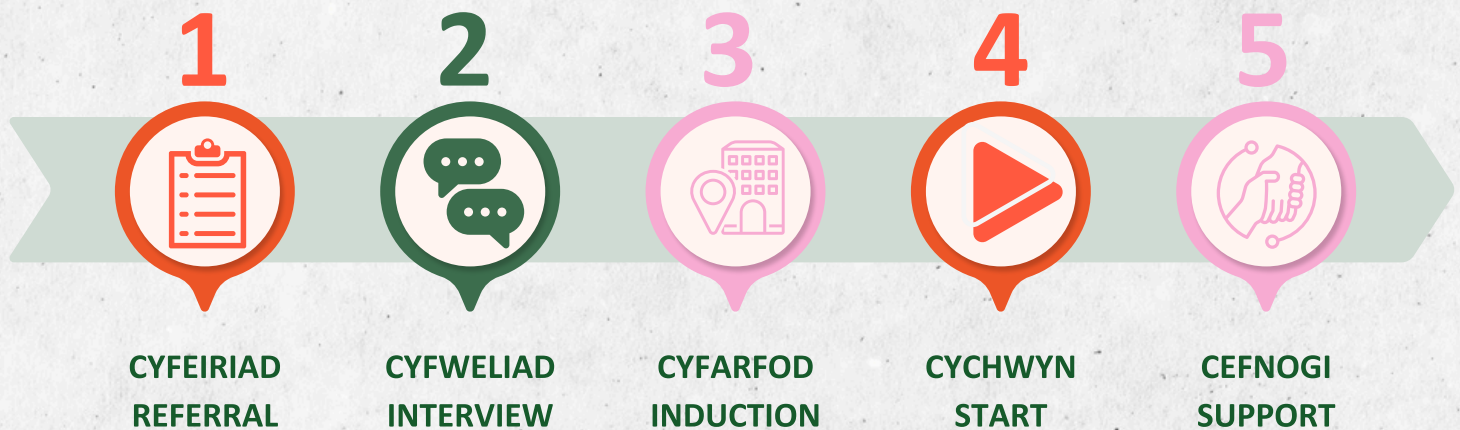
Here is where the referrals came from in Gwynedd.





3. Actions to support individuals to volunteer

These are the steps that are followed before the individual starts volunteering. These steps ensure intensive support throughout the process by ensuring a suitable placement for the individuals and any additional support that is required.





4. Agencies that have referred individuals to the project

The project has collaborated with a large number of referral agencies during this first year.

The project has received referrals for individuals over the age of 18, including those who have left education or who are unemployed and have lost confidence while being out of the labour market, retired individuals, or individuals who are simply looking for something to do day to day.



5. Where the individuals have been referred to volunteer



Siop elusen Ambiwylans Awyr Cymru
Wales Air Ambulance charity shop,
Bangor & Caernarfon.



Yr Ysgwrn,
Trawsfynydd.



Castell Harlech castle,
Cadw.



Siop elusen Sense
charity shop,
Bangor & Caernarfon.



Asynnod Eryri
Snowdonia Donkeys,
Tregarth.



Together with Trussell
Banc Bwyd Arfon
Arfon Foodbank,
Caernarfon.



Rheilffyrdd Ffestiniog ac
Ucheldir Cymru
Ffestiniog & Welsh
Highland Railways.



Siop elusen Age UK
charity shop,
Bangor.



Siop elusen Cats Protection
charity shop,
Porthmadog & Caernarfon.



Freshfields,
Nebo.



Siop elusen Scope
charity shop,
Bangor.



Galeri,
Caernarfon



Canolfan Abbey Road
Abbey Road Centre,
Bangor.



Siop elusen Oxfam
charity shop,
Porthmadog.



Siop elusen Ymchwil Cancer Cymru
Cancer Research Wales charity shop,
Caernarfon



BYWYD GWYLLT
GLASLYN
WILDLIFE
Bywyd Gwylt Glaslyn
Glaslyn Wildlife,
Porthmadog.



With Gobaith,
Dolbenmaen.



Yr Orsaf,
Penygroes.



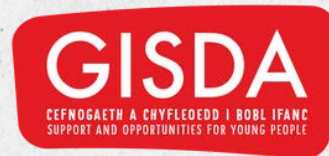
Porthi Dre,
Caernarfon.



Llaisiau o Ofal Cymru
Voices from Care Cymru.



M-SParc #ArYlon
M-SParc #OnTour,
Bangor.



Gisda, Caernarfon.



Siop elusen Tenovus
charity shop
Bala & Pwllheli.



Ymddiriedolaeth
Genedlaethol
National Trust
Castell Penrhyn
Penrhyn castle,
Bangor.



Siop elusen Hosbis Dewi Sant
Saint David's Hospice charity shop
Porthmadog.



Age Cymru.



Banc Bwyd De Gwynedd
South Gwynedd Foodbank,
Barmouth.



children's hospices
Siop elusen Ty Gobaith
Hope House charity shop,
Bangor & Pwllheli.



Y Robiniaid
The Robins,
Bangor & Porthmadog.



Cymdeithas Eryri
Snowdonia Society.

Cymdeithas Eryri
Snowdonia Society



Siop elusen Croes Coch Prydain
British Red Cross charity shop
Bangor, Caernarfon &
Porthmadog.



AbilityNet,
Caernarfon.



Ymddiriedolaeth GIG Prifysgol
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru.
Welsh Ambulance Services
University NHS Trust.



GIG
NHS
Ymddiriedolaeth GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
NHS Trust

Ffrindiau Pier
Garth Bangor



Ffrindiau Pier Garth Bangor
Friends of Bangor Garth Pier



Siop elusen O Law i Law
charity shop,
Caernarfon.



6. The social impact of the project



Social value is a way for us to understand the change in people's lives as a result of our activities. By asking people what has changed in their lives, we can begin to understand the impact of our activities. If these changes are the result of our activities, then we are creating social value, and by measuring these we can understand how much of an impact we have had on people's lives, and how that impact can be increased for the better.

Social Value has been an important area of research for Mantell Gwynedd since 2016 with the establishment of Social Value Cymru. Mantell Gwynedd are proud partners of The Institute of Social Value (formally known as Social Value UK) and through Social Value Cymru team have been helping organisations across the UK understand, measure and manage their social value. In 2023 Mantell Gwynedd was awarded the level 2 'implement' by Social Value International;. One of the main advantages of reaching Level 2 is that it enables us to understand, manage, plan and adapt our activities and services more effectively and to improve them for the benefit of the users and our partners. The whole process takes place continuously following the eight international principles of social value as set by Social Value International.

To understand the changes experienced by the volunteers we conducted a number of interviews with volunteers in 2023, the outcomes listed below are what the volunteers said are the changes they experienced through volunteering with the support of the Gwynedd Volunteer Centre. The volunteers are the once who are best placed to describe the outcomes they experience. There is a social impact report on the Gwynedd volunteer centre available to show the methodology and evidence of the outcomes we are measuring and the reasons why. These outcomes will be measured on a ongoing basis for the next few years in accordance with the level 2 criteria.





THE PROJECT SOCIAL VALUE AND IMPACT



The graph shows the impact of the project in terms of the 6 outcomes above.

These six statements are scored out of 10, where 1 is low and 10 is high. The project officer measured the change before the individual started volunteering and after the individual had volunteered for 3+ months with the relevant organisation.

The graph shows a change in each statement. The biggest change was mainly seen for statements of self-confidence, mental well-being and that individuals feel less alone.



7. Case studies of individuals who have received support from the project

Case Study 1

This is Evan!

Evan Langford from Cwm-y-glo came to the Volunteering Centre in Mantell Gwynedd with his mum and dad to look for volunteering opportunities. Evan attended Ysgol Pendalar in Caernarfon prior to attending Coleg Menai. Unfortunately, he was having a difficult time at college, so his parents made the decision to remove him from the course.



Evan came to Mantell Gwynedd to meet Carwyn (Gwynedd Volunteer Centre Coordinator) and Jordan (Helping Hand to Volunteer Officer) for an initial conversation. Evan's mother, Eira, mentioned that he wanted something new to focus on in the week and to make new friends. Evan has autism and can be shy at times. However, when music is the topic of conversation, Evan comes out of his shell and his awareness of the music world is incredible. During the meeting Evan mentioned that he had over 500 different albums at home.

Eira mentioned that Evan likes to go to charity shops looking for different music albums. So, Jordan decided to contact charity shops in Caernarfon and found the shop that was more suitable and had a lot of music album. Sense is a charity that believes that everyone should be able to take part in the day to day activities of life, regardless of their disability. The money raised in the shops goes towards individuals who are deaf, blind and have complex disabilities to ensure that they are able to fulfil their potential in life.





Jordan accompanied Evan to Sense, Caernarfon to meet Claire Silverwood (Shop Manager). Evan and Jordan completed the application form and within a week, Evan started volunteering at the shop. Claire has given Evan the important task of keeping the CD shelves tidy and he has been busy organising the albums into the right genres.



Evan's incredible knowledge of music is a great help. Evan started his volunteering journey by helping out between 10-12pm every Monday, but now as he enjoys it so much, he goes every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Evan has also registered for the Gwynedd Volunteering Scheme, where he will receive certificates after reaching 25, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 hours of volunteering. Well done Evan and everyone from Mantell Gwynedd is proud of you!

"I have seen a big difference in Evan, he is much happier in himself. Jordan at Mantell Gwynedd and Claire at Sense, Caernarfon have been Evan's lifeline. We are so thankful for both of their support. I appreciate everything that Jordan has done for Evan, he has made Evan's life a happy one."

Eira Langford (Evan's mum)

Eira Langford (parent)



Volunteer

Your charity shop.
Changes lives.
Be part of a great
community.
For everyone.



Case Study 2

Shannon- Volunteering with Snowdonia Donkeys



Shannon was referred by Careers Wales to the Helping Hand to Volunteer project which is funded by the U.K Government. Jordan, the Helping Hand to Volunteer Officer, arranged a meeting with Shannon to see what she was interested in doing.

Shannon was a student at Coleg Menai and completed a Level 3 course in Art and Design. After completing the course, she was looking for the best career path but struggled with her anxiety and lack of work experience. During the meeting, Shannon mentioned that she really likes animals and that she has fish, frogs, dogs and a cat as pets.

Travelling with public transport can be a problem due to her anxiety and lack of confidence, so it was agreed to stay local to her home near Bangor. Where better to direct her than Snowdonia Donkeys! Jordan arranged a meeting with Ruth and Shannon, where Ruth talked through the work of Snowdonia Donkeys. She mentioned that Snowdonia Donkeys was originally established to promote the health and well-being of the donkeys but also the individuals who go there to volunteer.

"We referred Shannon to Jordan and I would like to thank the Gwynedd Volunteering Centre for working in partnership with us to support individuals to go out and volunteer which helps towards their career paths."

Arwel Owen
(Team Manager, Careers Wales)



Jordan helped Shannon fill out the application form and sent it to Ruth so she could start her path to volunteering.

Shannon, Ruth and Jordan agreed she would volunteer every Monday afternoon from 1-3pm as a starting point. Shannon helps Daniel and the team in the stables with brushing the donkeys, cleaning their hooves and give them the care they need. Every week, Shannon volunteers with a different donkey from Winifred to Walter to Dwynwen - each donkey has its own personality and seeing Shannon's relationship with them grow is nice to see.





"Jordan is very friendly and approachable. He has really helped me to find a volunteering role that suits me and something I would enjoy and I really appreciate it."
Shannon (Volunteer)



During one of the visits, Jordan had an informal interview with Shannon about her volunteering experience at Snowdonia Donkeys. Jordan joined Shannon and the crew taking the donkeys for a walk around Moelyci-farm.



Here is the interview between Jordan and Shannon:

Jordan: How are you getting on here at Snowdonia Donkeys?

Shannon: Everything is going great. I've been helping with looking after the donkeys and managing the stables. I attend every Monday from 1-3 and again thank you for helping me to be here.

Jordan: What difference has volunteering made to you for example, happier, better mental health, more confident, more friends?

Shannon: Volunteering here has helped me with my confidence when working with people. Coming here weekly and meeting new people has really helped with my social skills. I volunteer my time to help at Snowdonia Donkeys which is important to me as I love working with animals.



Well done Shannon! Everyone is very proud to see the development you are making!





Case Study 3

This is Cerys who volunteers at Yr Orsaf

Cerys is from Penygroes and she is on her volunteering journey. She was referred to the Helping Hand to Volunteer project in Mantell Gwynedd, which is funded by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, by Careers Wales. Cerys attended an initial chat with Jordan, Helping Hand to Volunteer Officer, over at the Llwy a Mwy cafe in the village to discuss volunteering options in the area.



At the start of the process, Cerys was open about her mental health and mentioned that her self-confidence was low. She mentioned that she wanted to get out into the world of work but there were obstacles that could hold her back. During the conversation she mentioned that she wanted to volunteer in the community, where she would meet new people to develop her self-confidence. Jordan mentioned Yr Orsaf and that they have many different sessions taking place there. Cerys was happy with this option and Jordan proceeded to arrange a meeting with Llio Wyn - Community Hub Manager, Yr Orsaf. Llio and the team were extremely welcoming there and made Cerys feel welcome.

"Many thanks to Jordan for introducing us to Cerys and opening the door for us to work collaboratively. Without volunteers it would be impossible to carry out our activities, so we are extremely grateful to people who are willing to give their time and contribute in such a positive way."

Llio Wyn
(Community Hub Manager, Yr Orsaf)





It was agreed that Cerys wants to volunteer in the following projects:

Llond Bol.

This session is a free hot meal for the community. Cerys' role here is to help set up the tables and chairs, tidy up and wash dishes. This is also an opportunity for her to chat and socialise with the community.



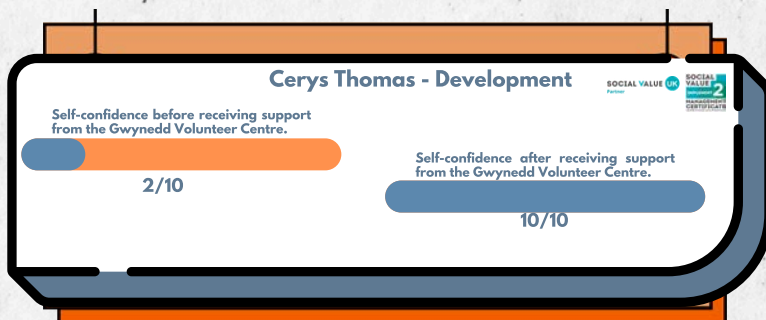
Be Nawn Ni?

A socialising session for people over 60 to enjoy a cuppa, cake and chat. Cerys prepares and serves light refreshments and chats with the individuals in this session.



Clwb Clebran Cymraeg?

Informal chat sessions to help Welsh learners. Cerys helps make cups of tea and chat with the attendees.



The development in Cerys within a few months has been great to see. Only a few months ago she felt that she couldn't come out and socialise. Now she leads conversations and discussions with individuals which is a pleasure to see.



"The Gwynedd Volunteer Centre has helped me in a lot of ways such as building my personal confidence and also having someone who supports me through the process. Jordan has been kind and professional since the beginning and I am grateful for getting help and meeting with Jordan".

Cerys (Volunteer)

Cerys Thomas



This is Cerys' personal score after completing a few months at Yr Orsaf. Well done Cerys! We at the Gwynedd Volunteer Centre are extremely proud of how far you have come. Keep it up!



Impact on your personal development = 5

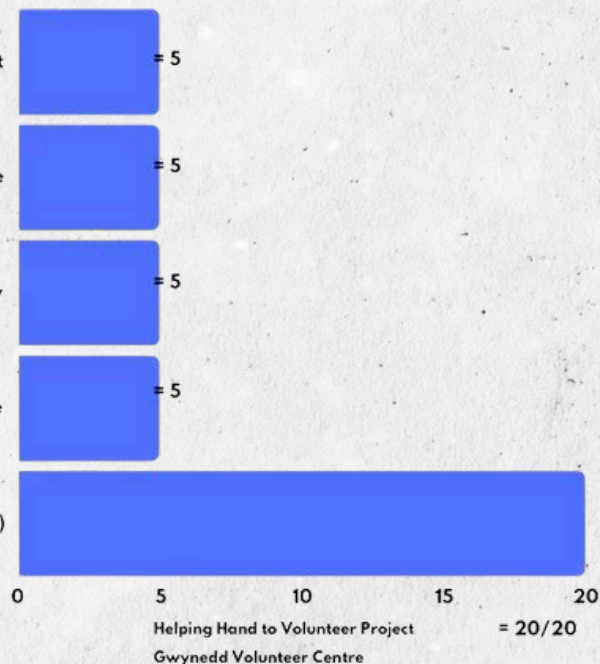
Impact that your volunteering has had on other people = 5

Your volunteering impact on the local community = 5

Impact of the Volunteer Centre = 5

Total (max. 20)

Volunteering impact scoring - Cerys Thomas



Scoring volunteering impact out of 5

- 1 - No change
- 2 - A little change
- 3 - Some change
- 4 - Quite a lot of change
- 5 - A lot of change





8. Quotations from agencies and organisations

"This project is a great help to us in Gwynedd Youth and the fact that an individual can get help on a 1-to-1 standard makes a big difference. Jordan has been extremely professional in his role and a great help thank you for Jordan himself."

Glyn Price (Youth Worker 16 – 25).



"I have worked closely with Jordan from Mantell Gwynedd in the last couple of months, I have directed three individuals to receive support with volunteering opportunities. These were individuals with mental health difficulties and a lack of confidence in the community. Personally, I have seen a great improvement in these individuals, Jordan has worked with them in a way that focuses on the individual by looking for opportunities that would promote their interest / hobbies. Jordan has supported them throughout the journey by accompanying them to visit the location, and providing practical and emotional support, which has been extremely beneficial as the individuals struggle with low mood and anxiety. Jordan has been sensitive in his approach by understanding their difficulties, and he has kept in close contact with me to give me the latest information and is always available to give advice. Two of the individuals have gone from being secluded in their home, to volunteering which has increased their quality of life, and confidence in the community. Working alongside Jordan and Mantell Gwynedd has been beneficial for me, but most importantly it has been a positive experience for the individuals we support. I am not aware of any other service that provides this practical support, which is essential to building confidence."

Tanya Williams (Mental Health Social Services Team).



"This project is a great. Stepping into the world of volunteering can sometimes be scary, and having this specialist 1-1 support to be able to do so helps break down potential barriers and provides an opportunity to have further discussion and raise awareness about the positive aspects of volunteering. Jordan is professional in his role and giving genuine volunteers that extra helping hand is essential."

Kevyn Owen (Project Officer, Age Cymru).



"We are grateful to Jordan for referring volunteers and his support enables individuals to have the confidence to join the sessions."

Ruth Stronge (Chief Officer, Snowdonia Donkeys).





"I believe that the Helping Hand to Volunteer project is an excellent project to provide volunteering opportunities for individuals who lack confidence and support when looking for opportunities. I have seen with my own eyes how the support offered by the project has supported a volunteer throughout the process of searching for an appropriate volunteering opportunity and during the interview process. It is clear that the side-by-side support offered by the project empowers individuals to explore opportunities independently while also receiving support and guidance. This undoubtedly increases the confidence of individuals to apply for opportunities in the future. We are currently in the process of joining a volunteer through Mantell Gwynedd. The communication and support with Jordan has been excellent throughout this process."

Vicky Wilkes (Participation Officer, Voices of Care Wales).



"I have already referred my client's friend to Jordan and I would use him again too. He is so positive and listens to the individuals and their concerns and is always ready to help. My client's friend was struggling with some training and needed help to understand and move forward and Jordan was very willing to visit and help him solve the problem. He has also discussed her needs with the setting so that they have a better understanding of the help she needs to succeed in the setting."

Melanie Jones (Case Manager, CCMS).



"I met Jordan during a volunteering event in Caernarfon and he was upbeat and positive about the role of volunteering in North Wales. Since then, Jordan has been great with communication and recommending suitable people for volunteering roles within the Ambulance Service. He has been instrumental in helping people who may not believe they can take on these roles and has empowered and guided them through the process. Jordan is a great guy and makes a difference in people's lives. He is a great asset to the volunteering team."

Stephanie Young (Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust).



Ymddigiedolaeth GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambwlans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
NHS Trust

"The work Jordan does is excellent in terms of supporting clients I have referred who have mental health concerns. I have seen a big difference in the individuals who have been supported with a big development in their self-confidence and self-esteem."

Delyth Parry (Community Mental Health Nurse, Alltwen CMHT).



GIG
Cymru
NHS
Wales





9. Conclusion and next steps

This report gives an insight into the successes of the project during the first year including the need and the difference that volunteering has on the lives of the individuals. The need for the provision and support is clear for those who would not have taken part in volunteering otherwise due to lack of confidence, anxiety, low self-esteem, but above all who need the helping hand to volunteer.

The aim is to look for additional funding in order to be able to continue with the support and capacity that has borne fruit and show its value in such a short period of time.

By now, in order to safeguard the future of the work, an application has been submitted to the national Lottery Community Fund. The application has already managed to go through phase 1 successfully and is working on phase 2. If this application is successful it would protect the work for a period of four years.

Mantell Gwynedd has also submitted a project to the Gwynedd community resilience application consortium, this is where the funding came from 2024-25 and we have submitted the same application for funding in 2025-26.

It is worth noting that work is ongoing nationally within the Welsh Government in order to approve new policies and vision for volunteering in Wales. Mantell Gwynedd has been part of the discussions themselves and has been able to feed some of the principles of this project into that work. A vision for volunteering and a volunteering policy for Wales is currently in a period of consultation (May 2025).

"The Helping Hand to Volunteer project has been such a help to my son Harri. We came to the Volunteer Centre, and we were supported by Jordan. My son looks after animals at college, and he has autism. Jordan was very good with his communication with Harri and we all went to Freshfields where he volunteers weekly." **Racher Turner, Harri's mother (Volunteer).**





Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU



Funded by
UK Government

Cefnogir y prosiect hwn gan Gyngor Gwynedd o gyllid Llywodraeth y DU drwy Gronfa Ffyniant Gyffredin y DU.
This project is supported by Cyngor Gwynedd from UK Government funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

