

University of Wales, Newport
School of Sport, Health and Applied Social Sciences

TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE AFON YOUTH FORUM'S
ALTERNATIVE HOUSING PROJECT IN TORFAEN, TO ENSURE IT
MEETS THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IT
WORKS WITH.

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the BA/BSc
(Hons) programme in the School of Sport, Health and Applied Social Sciences.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree

Signed **(Candidate)**

Date

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of BA/BSc

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STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. A reference list is appended.

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ABSTRACT

TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE AFON YOUTH FORUM'S ALTERNATIVE HOUSING PROJECT IN TORFAEN TO ENSURE IT MEETS THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IT WORKS WITH.

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(2013)

The Afon Youth Forum's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen is the renovation of an eight bed property into a transitional style property for homeless young people. The purpose of this study is to evaluate and monitor the project to ensure that it provides what young people who will reside there need, to reach their aspirations.

The research findings have confirmed that the property named Tŷ Cyfle (translated from Welsh to English, as House of Opportunity) to be reflective of young people's needs, and endorse that the provision is accurate in aiming to providing independent living space, combined with nine to five support structures, education and training opportunities and qualified Youth Workers to provide the specific support needs of its residents

Furthermore, the findings highlighted that the engagement in education and training opportunities should be a condition of the properties tenancy agreement to ensure that residents maximise the opportunities being offered, as this will aid their ability to sustain independent living in the future, and thus have positive impacts on their ability to reach their aspirations.

[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS]

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate and monitor the Afon Youth Alternative Housing Project, to ensure that on completion it is successful in meeting the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with (National Occupational Standards. LLUK. 2008, p. 45: 4.4.1). The Afon Youth Forum was developed in 2009 within Bron Afon Community Housing and currently has over one hundred and seventy members, who are between the ages of eleven and twenty five years who reside in the Torfaen area. Bron Afon Community Housing is situated in the Torfaen area of South Wales and was established in 2008, specifically set up to own, manage and improve the stock transfer of properties from Torfaen County Borough Council.

The organisation provides over eight thousand affordable rented homes and almost one thousand leasehold flats as well as shared ownership flats and rented retirement housing for older people. It runs as a Community Development Model and a Community Mutual Model which is owned by its '1,393 shareholders who each own one share and who are either board members or individuals who reside in Torfaen' (Bron Afon. 2013). Although the organisations main focus is on providing high quality homes, it also emphasises its work on the whole community, providing Torfaen's residents with the chance to be involved in the decision making process' of the organisation.

I began working as a youth and community worker within Bron Afon over two years ago, in support of my learning on the BA (Hons) Youth and Community Studies degree. As a result I have been involved in many programmes which include the participation of young people. The ethos of the organisation very much supports the ethos of youth work, 'as its vision is to work with young people to develop services that meet their needs and aspirations' (Jones. 2011, p. 9).

My role is to facilitate the work of the Afon Youth Forum, which comprises of young people from all backgrounds including individuals who have previously been and are currently homeless and have taken part in the Own Two Feet Project. This Project sees me building relationships with young people who reside in a homeless hostel (LLUK. 2008, p. 6: 3.1.1) during the delivery of educational, themed based workshops which include a skills taster session, which provides participants with opportunities to gain voluntary work placements within Bron Afon or partner groups (LLUK. 2008, p. 8: 1.1.1). It is primarily used as a pre-tenancy tool, to encourage participation, build confidence and skills so the participants are able to sustain future tenancies (LLUK. 2008, p, 41: 1.3.1). I also provide one-to-one support/mentoring sessions throughout the process from homelessness to independent living for as long as the young person requests it.

Homelessness is defined by part 7 of the Housing Act (1996), as:

'A person is considered homeless if he or she, together with any person he or she lives with, has no accommodation which he or she is entitled to occupy and which it would be reasonable for he or she to continue to occupy.' The Act places a statutory obligation upon local authorities to provide accommodation for any person who meets its

four criteria. The person must be eligible for assistance, homeless, in priority need of accommodation, and not intentionally homeless.'

(Robinson. 2008, p. 16)

I am committed to working with and supporting young people, and aim to complete this dissertation to gather further evidence to support the Afon Youth alternative housing project. The Afon Youth forum, have made visits to models of best practice in other areas of the United Kingdom as part of their research to date, and their learning has and will continue to inform their practice. They are currently in the process of re-developing a property in the Garnsychan area of Torfaen which was due to be demolished, into a temporary transitional style accommodation for homeless young people. This is the first phase of their New Beginnings Housing Project, and they are committed to ensuring that on completion Tŷ Cyfle (aptly named by them) which translates from Welsh to 'House of Opportunity' will be reflective of the needs and aspirations of homeless young people who will reside there.

As a youth and community worker within a housing organisation, I contend that it is of great importance that I conduct my dissertation in this topic area, combining the work of both housing and youth work disciplines, as I support some of the most vulnerable people in the area, due to their inability to secure appropriate housing (LLUK. 2008, p. 20: 1.1.5). This work is of vital importance to me, as I am at the core of both the Afon Youth Forum and Own Two Feet Project, so I have loyalties and responsibilities to all parties. As a professional I am compelled to support the Curriculum Statement Wales (Standing Conference for Youth Work In Wales. 2007), Extending

Entitlement (Welsh Assembly Government. 2001), and the values and principles defined in the 'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work document' (National Youth Agency. 2004), 'Ethical Framework for Research' (National Youth Agency. 2005) and the National Occupational Standards (LLUK. 2008). On a more local level the Torfaen Participation Strategy (2009) policy, will be acknowledged to ensure that all the young people I work with are respected and able to contribute in decision making processes of this project (LLUK. 2008, p. 56: 2.1.1). The Welsh National Homeless Strategy (2003) identifies a key principle:

'Responses to homelessness should reflect the views of homeless people, who should be encouraged to contribute to the development of appropriate services, and enabled to take more control, in meeting their own needs (WAG. 2004, p. 5).

My research will be based on consultations with homeless young people who have not participated in previous research, to define their needs and aspirations in terms of housing options for them whilst they are homeless, and will also determine the support they require throughout the transition to independent living ((LLUK. 2008, p. 9 & 44 & 30: 1.3.2, 4.1.1 & 4.2.6). I suggest that this research will determine the most productive way of helping them and their peers to provide a housing facility that will meet their needs and aspirations, and may have the capacity to reduce some of the challenges that they face which has such huge, negative impacts on their lives (LLUK. 2008, p. 47: 1.3.3). Therefore my findings will offer additional data which will not only be of significant interest to myself but the forum and others, and has the capacity to inform practice which is vital, due to

increasing numbers of homeless young people needing support (LLUK. 2008, p. 15: 4.2.1).

Robinson (2008, p. 34), Lepper (2012), and Shelter Cymru (2006) all contend that numbers of homeless young people is rising and those aged between sixteen and twenty five years are causing a significant problem. Statistical evidence will be explored to determine the significance of the problem based on a National and Local figures, so that comparisons can be made. Irrespective of whether numbers are rising due to structural or individualistic behaviour, research has shown that 'more research into the perspective of young people and housing is crucial in order to fully understand the transitions and challenges that young people face in relation to housing' (Garthwaite. 2012, p. 84 & Welsh Assembly Government. 2004, p. 5).

In order for me to conduct a comprehensive piece of work, an in depth literature review will present information in relation to housing and its legislation, homelessness, its causes and the impact on young people. Housing options will be explored with a focus on transitional style housing, as this is what previous research has defined as a priority from its consultations with young people in this area. It has been suggested that the benefits system presents barriers to homeless young people, which will be explored, as well as suggestions that the pending welfare reform changes will have a massive impact on what is already a crisis situation for homeless young people.

Discussion will also be presented in relation to the revolving door syndrome. This syndrome reflects when a young person 'loses the tenancy of a suitable home, almost as soon as they secure it' (Robinson, 2008, p. 50), therefore discussion will be presented on the support required to enable them to sustain the tenancies they have fought so hard to secure. I will be making reference to both published and unpublished work to ensure that my research is up to date and relevant to the needs of homeless young people in the Torfaen, area as this is my area of work and where those I work with reside.

1.1 LIMITATIONS

The weakness' of this research was due to my in-ability to ascertain parental consent from the participants who are under eighteen years and have no family contact. Many of these are now living independently, and are no longer receiving floating support from the hostel, therefore in order for them to be able to participate and not be excluded from this research personal consent will have to be accepted. Another consideration is the number of participants who will agree to be involved, as combinations of other commitments, life-style choices and voluntary engagement may impact on my research. My involvement and passion in both youth practices, my relationship with the participants and my determination to do well will present an element of bias. However I maintain that my loyalty to all, will aid my determination to conduct an honest and comprehensive report, and via the completion of regular reflective logs I will monitor and evaluate my work to safeguard against any bias, to ensure it does not impact on my research as much as possible (LLUK. 2008, p. 51: 5.1.1).

1.2 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The methodology chapter will discuss my choice of using the mixed methods approach detailing why I contend that this will provide me with both quantitative and qualitative data, which will present findings appropriate to the research I am carrying out. I will also describe any strengths and weaknesses that these methods presented, predetermined or not throughout the process. I will highlight my choice of sample size acknowledging the ethical considerations I made during every aspect of my work to guarantee that it coincided with University and professional guidelines. I will provide evidence of how I aimed to protect all parties to the best of my ability at all times.

The following chapter will focus on the presentation and analysis of my findings. I will use graphs to evidence quantitative data and will use quotes to illustrate qualitative data, whilst frequently referring back to the literature review to compare and contrast with previous research carried out by other parties. I will also refer back to youth work policies and legislation, as to evidence their presence in my research and the Tŷ Cyfle project. The next and final chapter will provide a conclusion of my work. This will include not only a summary of my findings, but also an acknowledgement of any unanswered questions, priorities and any recommendations for the future (LLUK. 2008, p. 12: 4.1.2). I will also provide a brief reflective contribution detailing how I contend this research process has contributed to me as a practitioner and also to how my work will or has impacted on mine and others practice (LLUK. 2008, p. 51: 5.1.1).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will acknowledge the work of others and will reference various sources which will include both published and unpublished work which will derive from books, websites and journals. It will encompass literature from the disciplines of both housing and youth work as although my work is from a youth and community work perspective my practice incorporates the two.

2.1 HOMELESSNESS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Although much is documented about homelessness and young people, there are contrasting views on the numbers that are affected by it. Skoura (2004, p. 39) and Hart (2006) the Welsh Minister of Social Justice and Regeneration, all suggest that they are often an evasive population, who are non-visible and immeasurable, maintaining that figures are not accurate as 'many young people will be deemed as not in priority of need, defined as homeless or will be viewed as intentionally homeless, and therefore will not be included in statistics'.

Lepper (2011), claims that the overall numbers of homeless young people in the UK rose by fifteen per cent between 2010 and 2011 according to government figures, thus evidencing the biggest recorded year on year increase. This is supported by the findings of Campbell & Mackie (2011) who conducted research in Torfaen and make reference to the Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise (2010) that identifies the 'lead need of people needing support from the local authority, as being those who are homeless or

potential homeless as a priority for the fifth consecutive year' (Torfaen Supporting People Operational Plan (2012 – 2013, p. 66). Nationally, Welsh Government statistics (Welsh Assembly Government. 2013) of young homelessness evidences decreasing numbers, in 2006, 865 people between the ages of 16 and 25 years were accepted as homeless compared with 740 in 2011, which evidences a 14.5% decrease. In comparison however, local figures are not so positive. The Torfaen Supporting People Operational Plan (2012 – 2013, p. 38) acknowledges that of the 421 people presented as homeless in 2011, 204 were between the ages of 16 – 25 years, which evidences an increase of 34 per cent in the number of vulnerable young people needing assistance in the same five year time scale.

2.2 HOUSING LEGISLATION

Robinson (2008, p. 16) and Garthwaite. (2012, p. 21) both make reference to the Housing Act (1996) which governs housing allocations and duties towards homeless people, as well as the changes that were introduced by the National Assembly of Wales 'Homeless Persons (Priority Need) (Wales) Order (2002) and the Homeless Act (2002). The Southwark judgement (2009) presented councils with a legal obligation to provide support and accommodation to young people under the age of 18 years, and is based on them requiring accommodation compared to them just needing assistance in securing a property (Cooper. 2010).

The Young People's Welsh Charter for Change on Housing (Shelter Cymru. 2010) and The Welsh Assembly Government , Ten Year Homelessness Plan for Wales (2009 – 2019, p. 19) all illustrate the need for housing and related

services to be accessible to young people and focused on meeting their needs, to ensure that local authorities provide a safe environment and access to opportunities to gain life skills and vocational training. It also aims to reduce homelessness to a minimum within the ten year plan, via prevention, intervention and access to services to minimise the trauma experienced by homeless people. It acknowledges 'that young people should not face unnecessary barriers when looking, or trying to keep a place to live' (Shelter Cymru. 2010).

The Children's Act (1989) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) as cited in Garthwaite (2012, p. 83) contend that local authorities have a respective duty to provide priority access to supported living, alongside appropriate move-on accommodation if required for homeless young people. (Move on accommodation will be explored). The Torfaen Corporate Plan (2012) and the Torfaen Children and Young Peoples Plan (2011 – 2014) have responded to this commitment and aims to ensure that young people have a safe home and community which supports both their physical and emotional well-being. They also aspire to ensure that young people with high complex support needs are able to receive appropriate supported housing options by 2016. The Afon Youth Project responds to these principles, and aims to provide these options to homeless young people by the development of Tŷ Cyfle.

2.3 CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Robinson (2008, p. 29, cites the work of Clapham & Evans. 2000) who argue that between one fifth and one half of all homeless young people are

those that have been in care, contending therefore that care leavers are much more likely to become homeless compared to other young people. A Torfaen Housing Worker (as cited in Campbell & Mackie. 2011, p. 41) supports this perspective, claiming that care leavers struggle more as opposed to other homeless young people, due to the lack of stability in their lives. In contrast however another Housing Worker (cited in the same research) and Hart (2006) both argue that all young people are vulnerable and all need the same level of assistance. Literature will confirm if this is accurate or not.

Davies (2011), Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 28), Ravenhill (2005, p. 3) and Quilgars et al (2008, p. xii) all share the view that most young people become homeless due to individualistic behaviour such as relationship breakdown, generally between parents and step-parents, and which often involves some kind of violence. In contrast however, Garthwaite (2012), Roche et al (2004, p. 113) and Robinson (2008, p. 147) argue that it is the cause of structural activity, such as the lack of affordable housing particularly in relation to a higher number of people who now chose to live alone in single bed properties, thus resulting in lower numbers of one person sized properties are available. Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 52) also highlight the impact of the high cost of housing which prevents them from the luxury of purchasing a home as they are unable to earn a wage that provide this option.

2.4 THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

The impact on a young person's life when they have been homeless has been well documented, Rowntree (2010), Higgs. (2012), Robinson (2008, p. 109), and Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 60) contend that those who have experienced insecure accommodation suffer increased mental and physical health problems, with many finding themselves isolated and socially excluded, thus impacting on their ability to access support or information.

'The thing is when you have young people who have had a difficult upbringing, sometimes they are care leavers and y'know they are living on their own, often they don't know where to go for help or what help is out there...'

Director of Housing, cited in Garthwaite (2012, pp. 77 - 80).

Robinson, suggests that homeless young people are often vulnerable due to past experiences, are traumatised, scared and pessimistic, having to overcome the stigma, prejudice and shame they feel which causes them to withdraw (2008, pp. 76 & 108) . Brandon et al (1980), Roche. (2004, p. xiv) and Robinson, 2008. pp. 71-108) adds to this perspective, suggesting 'that homeless young people are seen as needy, immature and impulsive', and that this combined with low confidence and lack of motivation or aspirations, leaves them unwilling or unable to participate in education, training or employment opportunities.

Maslow's, hierarchal of need (2006) presents another possible explanation for this, he contends that it is not possible to move forward to engage in higher needs (such as education, training, employment) in the absence of

food, warmth, shelter and safety. He argues that an individual's survival tactics will consume all their time and energy (as cited in Ingram & Harris. 2001, p. 31). In contrast Quarriers (1991, as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 32 & 68) argues that almost all the young people who participated in their study, had aspirations of gaining employment. This is re-enforced by a report conducted by the homeless charity Centrepont (2010) which also found that homeless young people have 'modest ambitions and aspirations, both in terms of getting a job and securing independent living and although these ambitions have been lowered since becoming homeless, they aim to go the extra mile and challenge others' expectations of them'.

Research carried out by Barnardos Cymru (2006), Garthwaite (2012, p. 77) and Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 51) suggests that the lack of motivation and aspirations in terms of young homeless people engaging in education, training or employment opportunities is due to the benefits system as it not only provides support but also barriers. They maintain that there is no incentive to work or access training as homeless young people would be financially worse off as benefits would be affected. Homeless Link charity (2013), endorse this perspective suggesting that rent and benefit changes are needed that will make work pay for homeless people.

Robinson (2008, p. 27) and a Torfaen Housing Worker as cited in (Campbell & Mackie. 2011, p. 52), argue that the high level of rent paid by housing benefit for those living in hostels or other temporary accommodation combined with living expenses results in a disincentive. They suggest that this is a barrier with which the young people or their support workers cannot

overcome, as 18 – 24 year olds do not get enough financial assistance. According to The Torfaen Supporting People Operational Plan (2012 – 2013), Lepper (2011 & 2012), Davies (2011), and Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 65) and Purfett (2010) the proposed benefit cuts in relation to housing benefit for young people will result in an increase in young homelessness and greater numbers seeking support. In response, Monsort (2010) is urging the Government to make young people living in supported accommodation to be exempt from other pending policy changes.

The results of the pending consultations on the United Nations Convention for the Right of the Child (UNCRC.1989), by the Welsh Government, may also impact on numbers as they define a young person as anyone up to 25 years, unlike the agreement only affects the rights of those under the age of 18 years. The considerations will determine if the UNCRC should apply to older young people too (Welsh Government. 2012). All of these factors have the capacity to significantly impact on homeless young people and will increase the numbers being affected by the revolving door syndrome.

2.5 THE REVOLVING DOOR SYNDROME

This syndrome has a massive effect on young people. Mackie & Campbell. 2011, p. 43), Robinson (2006, p. 147) & Davies (2011) illustrate, that homelessness cannot be solved by housing alone, support is needed to ensure that tenancies do not fail, so the cycle can be broken.

As one Torfaen Housing Worker pointed out:

‘...its not just about preventing the first case of homelessness, ... but also about preventing the second and third application. We’ve seen

people present ten times, its not uncommon for people to re-occur as homeless... (cited in Campbell & Mackie. 2011, p. 50).

A Youth Offending Team Worker in Torfaen, (as cited in Campbell & Mackie. 2012, p. 48) also points out that, 'when a young person's accommodation breaks down (for whatever reason) the person is made intentionally homeless, then there is no support after that'. The Own Two Feet Project has proven to be effective in the prevention of the syndrome, via pre-tenancy support which continues for the long term and through the transition to independent living for as long as the young person needs or requests it. Prior to the projects introduction there was a high incidence of young people failing in their tenancies within the first year of leaving Hales House. During the pilot, no tenancies failed in the first year, and this success has continued (Jones. 2011, p. 2 & 58). The Afon Youth Project aims to build on the success of this work, to create additional support via the provision of Tŷ Cyfle.

2.6 HOUSING OPTIONS FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

2.6.1 FOYER SYSTEMS

Shelter Cymru (2007, p. 28) describes foyer systems as single unit, temporary accommodation which offers support and access to education, training and employment services to aid independent living. There are currently no models of this type in Torfaen, however research carried out by Campbell & Mackie (2011), Jones (2011) and Torfaen County Borough Council's Children and Young Peoples Plan (2011 – 2014), during their

consultations with homeless young people in the Torfaen area, all highlighted that elements of this model as being needed in the authority.

2.6.2 BED AND BREAKFASTS

These are often used to provide temporary accommodation to young people in many areas. Although evidence from research by Jozwiak (2010) suggests that government does not consider bed and breakfasts as suitable accommodation for vulnerable young people, many are forced to reside in them for longer than the six weeks target that the Suitable Accommodation Order (2006) permits. A Torfaen Project Support Worker within the Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 39 - 74) research confirms the position, but adds, that in Torfaen 'in the past year the hostel (Hales House) has been full and there aren't any bed and breakfasts, they were placing young people in private rented flats, unfurnished with no support'.

2.6.3 HOMELESS HOSTELS

Shelter Cymru (2007, p. 14) defines a hostel as a temporary accommodation used for emergencies that should provide support to its residents. They do acknowledge however that they are not designed to house people for the long term. Robinson (2008, p. 135) agrees with this view, maintaining that they are 'unable to replicate ordinary life for the residents, and the longer a young person stays in one the more difficulties they will face when adapting to a more independent lifestyle when they secure their own tenancies'.

Hales House is the only provision in Torfaen that offers this style of housing and has the capacity to hold twenty young people, and offers intense twenty

four hour support to its residents for the duration of their stay and floating support for a six month period after. The recent research carried out by Campbell & Mackie (2011. p. 38)) illustrated that young people and service providers in Torfaen agreed that temporary accommodation for young people is inappropriate and of an insufficient standard, and suggest that a transitional style option is required following their consultation with service users and providers.

2.6.4 TRANSITIONAL

Transitional style housing is also recognised as temporary move-on, and two tier accommodation, which all relate to housing provision for young people that provides lesser support than the hostel provides (Campbell & Mackie. 2011, p. 48). Although this model, much the same as the foyer, bestows the responsibility that living independently presents, it also offers a step up and step back element between hostels and independence if needed, thus presenting a half-way house (Mackie & Campbell. 2011, p. 12). This style of accommodation can also combines elements of education, training or employment support.

It is this sort of provision that has been recognised as being of crucial need in Torfaen following research by Jones (2011) and Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 74), and it is this model that the Afon Youth project aspires to deliver in Tŷ Cyfle. This research combined with that of Quarriers (as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 136), Garthwaite (2012, p. 83), Robinson (2008, p. 135), Puffett (2012) and Barnardos Cymru (2006), all agree that greater resources in terms of transitional style accommodation and support, adapted to occupants

individual needs are vital to reduce the difficulties that are experienced when young people are homeless, and through the transition period to independent living, thus to reduce eviction and further episodes of homelessness.

2.7 SUPPORT

Support structures have been discussed throughout this review in various contexts, as it a key element of any provision that works with homeless young people. As Garthwaite (2012, p. 82 & 84) and The Welsh Assembly Government (2010) point out, supporting and guiding young homeless people is vital, acknowledging that they require support that focuses on more than just housing related issues. Research carried out by the National Youth Homeless Scheme (as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 12), Quilgars et al (2008, as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 71), Jozwiak (2010) and Davies (2011) all illustrate that provision that sits between the twenty four support of hostels (Hales House) and the no support that independent living presents, is what is needed. They maintain that this will allow the young people to test and develop their living skills in an environment which offers support by trained staff.

On a local level, Campbell & Mackie's research (2011, p. 46 & 48 & 74) and the Torfaen Supporting People Plan (2012 - 2013, p. 33) highlighted that homeless young people and service providers all agree that appropriate supported provision is a priority need in Torfaen to reduce the impact of homelessness and the revolving door syndrome on young people. Robinson.(2008, pp. 77 -146), Phillips & Schucksmith (2004, as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 140), Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 74) and Jones (2011,

p. 59) all maintain that an holistic approach is needed and that key workers are integral to the success of enabling young people to sustain tenancies. Shelter Cymru (2006) take this one step further by contending that qualified youth workers need to empower young people and allow them to engage in the planning and delivery of such resources. These comments further compel me to use my knowledge and skills as a youth worker, via adherence to the principles of the National Occupational Standards (LLUK. 2008), Curriculum Statement Wales (Standing Conference for Youth Work In Wales. 2007), the Ethical Conduct of Youth Work (National Youth Agency. 2004) and the Ethical Framework for Research (National Youth Agency. 2005) throughout the research process.

The next chapter will discuss my choice of using the mixed methods approach, explaining why this decision was made. I will also describe any weakness' and strengths these methods presented, as well as evidence of ethical considerations throughout the process, to ensure my work aligns with all necessary guidelines.

3. METHODOLOGY

My research will present an empirical piece of work, as I am compelled to respect key youth work principles, such as opportunities for young people to participate, be empowered, educated and expressive in terms of their needs and aspirations to support the Alternative Housing Project and the Curriculum Statement Wales (Standing Conference for Youth Work In Wales. 2007) (LLUK. 2008, p. 44: 1.3.2). The National Youth Service Strategy for Wales (2007. p. 6), article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights for the Child and the Torfaen Participation Strategy (2009), illustrate 'that young people have the right to become equal partners in learning and decision making processes, and are able to participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities' (Alderson. 2008) & (Rose. 2008) & (LLUK. 2008, p. 47 & 53 & 56: 1.3.3 & 1.4.2 & 2.1.1). Therefore participation has been offered to young people from both practices of which I am professionally involved.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

This research provided three Afon Youth Forum Board Members with an opportunity to be peer researchers, as they have up to date and adequate knowledge of the project to be of benefit to the study, and I suggest that this will provide a greater sense of ownership on the project and will instil further confidence (LLUK. 2008, p. 35 & 30: 1.2.3 & 4.2.6). Their contribution was the recording of verbal responses and a background discussion of the Forum and the Alternative Housing Project to date.

Participants from Hales House expressed an interest in participating prior to the session, however none attended on the day, due to what was claimed to be existing commitments. I suggest that a key factor was that they have no relationships with myself or Bron Afon at this point, as they have all very recently moved into the hostel.

The nine participants that attended comprised of five who have previously lived in Hales House, have attended the Own Two Feet project and are receiving support from myself or a colleague and four have never been homeless, but have been involved in the Youth Forum and have expressed an interest in being involved. My research aimed to encompass the opinions of those who the Afon Youth Forum could find impossible to reach (LLUK. 2008, p. 29 & 11: 1.2.1 & 5.3.1). Therefore my research encompassed the participation of twelve young people, of both gender, and between the ages of sixteen and twenty five years, and all residents of Torfaen.

3.2 PARTICIPANT PREPARATION

A focus group session was arranged at the convenience of the participants, and was conducted in Bron Afon Community Housing. A private room was allocated for this purpose and all refreshments and transport was arranged by myself. A risk assessment was also carried out, to ensure my accountability for the safety and welfare of all (Appendix 1) & (LLUK. 2008, p. 5: 5.4.1). Consent was also received from the University via a RE1 form (Appendix 2), and my placement Supervisor (Appendix 3) alerting them to my intended research, in order to gain their agreement and support. Final

decisions were made about the focus group session, which included the delivery of the research process as can be seen in Appendix 4.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

My research evidences the mixed methods approach combining the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, as Davies (2007, p. 26) and (McQueen. 2002, p. 27) illustrate 'that these can be used the same time, depending on the question they seek to answer and the type of evidence they aim to collect, as they both explore, describe, explain and predict, however do so in different ways'. These methods were implemented via the use of a questionnaire and semi-structured interview which were introduced during a focus group setting.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

A focus group setting was arranged, instead of one to one interviews as previously planned, due to the fact that some participants would not be known to me, and I felt that a group work setting would be more informal (Choak. 2012, as cited in Bradford & Cullen. 2012, p. 93), and therefore the participants would be less likely to view me as an authority figure (LLUK. 2008, p. 11: 1.1.2). This also assured continuity of questions, thus creating greater reliability of responses overall. Time was also a factor, as one to one interviews require greater time resources which I did not feel I had, to gather and analyse my findings. As Ingram & Harris (2001, p. 74) time is a resource that needs to be managed effectively, and (the researcher) needs to be realistic in terms of their own ability (LLUK. 2008, p. 54: 5.1.2).

As the researcher I was mindful however of the need to ensure that all participants had the 'opportunity to talk, and that no-one was drowned out or silenced by stronger individuals' (Choak. 2012, as cited in Bradford & Cullen. 2012, p. 93), therefore the significance of the Afon Youth as peer researchers as scribes, guaranteed that body language was monitored by myself, so I could focus on facilitating the process and group dynamics. Not all participants were known to each other so the need for them to feel comfortable and relaxed to present their opinions freely was introduced, via an ice-breaker.

An introductory discussion was then delivered by myself, providing an overview of literature on the topic, so to ensure that terminology and definitions were presented to ensure understanding of questions via the use of asking secondary questions (Choak. 2012, as cited in Bradford & Cullen. 2012, p. 94). The Afon Youth Forum then provided a background of their Alternative Housing Project to date, (evidenced as Appendix 5), which was followed by semi-structured interview which can be seen as Appendix 6. This is recognised by Choak (2012) & Clark & Bell. 2012 (as cited in Bradford & Cullen. 2012, p. 104 & 128), 'as the most commonly used method when working with young people as it allows participants to answer on their own terms, yet enabled the researchers to seek clarification and elaboration'. This presented Qualitative data in response to both open and closed questions, and was used as an exploratory tool, which focused on the experiences and feelings of participants which would not have been presented via numbers and statistics in quantitative methods alone (Grix. 2004, p. 113).

Quantitative data was recorded via a questionnaire (Appendix 7), which asked closed questions and collected responses that can be analysed via numbers and statistics, such as age and gender etc. Literacy skills were not assumed, therefore all questions were also presented orally. As Burton et al (2008, p. 74) points out, questionnaires are advantageous as they gather a great deal of information, quickly and easily and can result in participants remaining anonymous. The disadvantage of low response rates was eliminated by the fact that all participants completed these together during a focus group setting resulting in a one hundred per cent response rate.

All verbal responses throughout the session were recorded by the Afon Youth Members on flip chart paper, and an audio device (at the agreement of participants) for later use if needed to clarify understanding during the analysis stage (Choak. 2012, p. 98). Some responses were also collected via provided multiple choice cards, where participants were asked to choose the card that corresponded with their agreement or disagreement on a range of topics. Discussions followed these methods so greater and more in-depth responses could be made available.

As a student researcher, I was mindful of researcher pressure and the fact that I had been known some of the participants for a considerable amount of time. As Roche et al (2004, p. 227) and McQueen & Knussen (2002, p. 15 & 16) highlights, 'adults have considerable power and influence over young people, and it is not to be assumed that young people will want to participate, particularly if you already have relationships with them'. I suggest however, that these relationships have been built over time and are based on trust and

respect therefore responses were more likely to be presented honestly and confidently knowing that our relationship offered a safe environment. My awareness of the ethical values and principles of the National Youth Agency (2006) also ensured that ethical considerations were made throughout the process in order to protect myself and others.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the research starting, information sheets (Appendix 8) were presented to all participants, detailing the aims of the project, the research being carried out and the need for consent to be obtained from both themselves and a parent or guardian if under the age of eighteen years (Roberts. 2009, p. 138). Copies of these consent forms are presented as Appendix 9 and 10. This evidences my awareness and respect of the 'Professional Code of Research Conduct (British Sociological Association. 2002, as cited in Choak. 2012) and University of Wales guidelines, and more youth specifically, the Ethical Framework for Research (National Youth Agency. 2005) and the Ethical Conduct for Youth Work (National Youth Agency. 2004). At this time I also alerted all young people to the fact that my work would be presented to the University of Newport in support of my degree, and that it may be used or shown to others.

All participants were informed that my research would be conducted on an anonymous basis, so their identity would be protected as much as possible (Allan. 2012, as cited in Bradford & Cullen. 2012, p. 81). They were also informed that it was their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and any work collected from them personally would be destroyed (British

Educational Research Association. 1992, as cited in Roberts. 2009, p. 138). It was highlighted that on completion, all work would be destroyed effectively and during the process it would be stored in a locked or password protected location. Details were provided for a point of contact should they have any concerns throughout the process of my work.

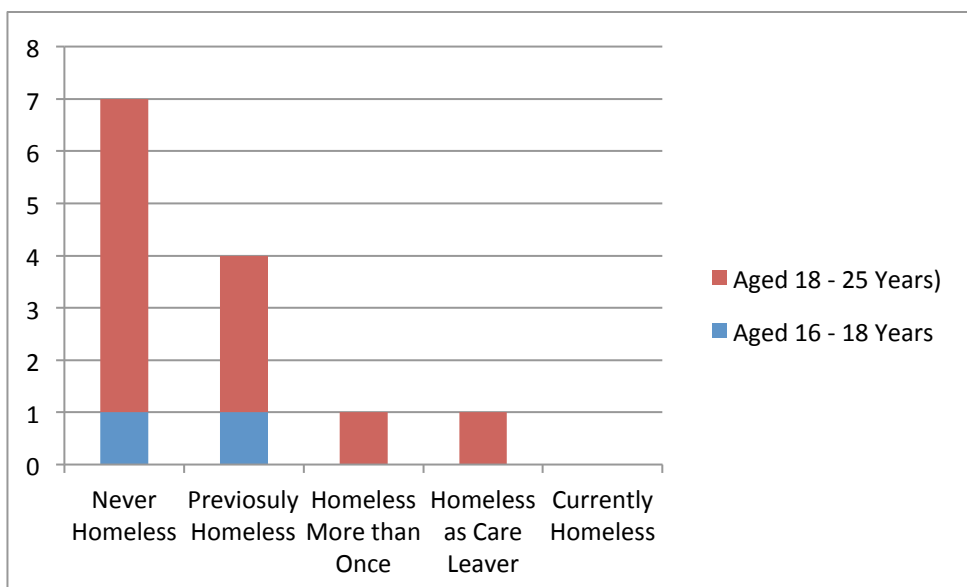
This chapter has focused on the methods that I have used whilst conducting this research process. The next chapter will present my findings, which will be compared and contrasted with the findings in the literature review, and will present additional data in relation to that previously conducted by others.

4. REPORT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter will focus on the findings of my research and the emerging themes from my focus group discussions. These findings will be compared to the literature review which has evidenced previously conducted research that has informed the Afon Youth Forum's, Alternative Housing Project to date. This will enable me to evaluate and monitor the Tŷ Cyfle provision, to determine its success in meeting the needs and aspirations of the young people, for whom it aims to serve. The data analysis process was conducted via the colour coding of emerging themes in relation to the more descriptive qualitative material from the semi-structured interview, which will be presented via reference to the verbal responses made during the session. The quantitative data which was collected via the use of pre coded closed questions from the questionnaire, and from the provided choice cards will be presented using graphs.

4.1 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Figure 1 PARTICIPANT PROFILE



The quantitative data presented in Figure 1 above, was gathered via closed questions on a questionnaire, and evidences that of the eleven participants seven of these young people have never been registered as homeless, and four had all been previously. No representatives of currently homeless young people took part in the consultation (however were invited). The questionnaire also revealed that the four previously homeless young people had all resided in the Hales House Homeless Hostel, but are now living independently in Bron Afon properties. Three of these young people also recorded that at some point they had sofa-surfed with friends or family members, and one recorded that he had spent time in a homeless B & B. The duration of their homelessness was primarily between six and twelve months, with only one participant (aged 18 – 25), having stayed in Hales House for between twelve and eighteen months.

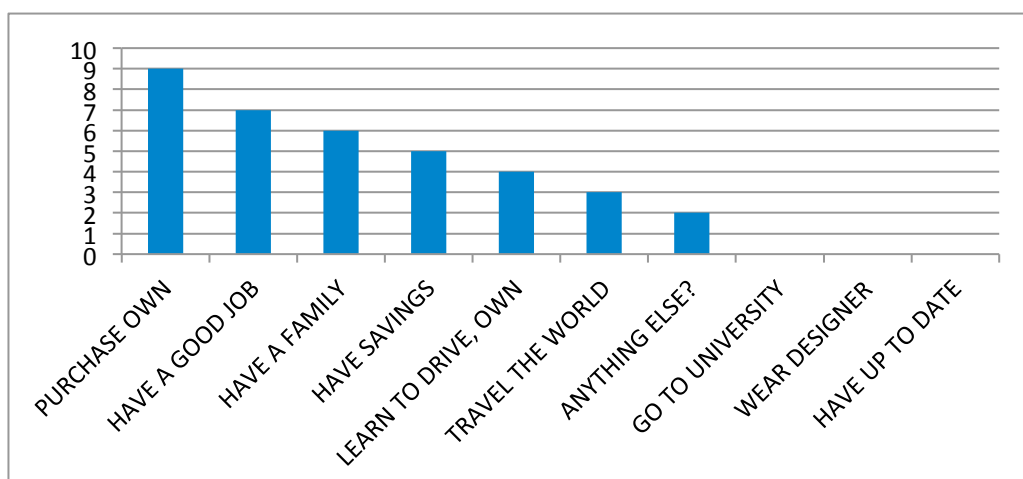
The questionnaire's findings also highlighted, as detailed in Figure 1, that one young person had been registered homeless more than once. Discussion within the focus group, recorded that this participant (aged 18 – 25) "has been registered homeless three times", therefore supporting the comment of a Torfaen Housing Worker in the Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 50) research, as having been affected by the 'revolving door syndrome'. In contrast to the opinion of one Housing Worker in the same Campbell & Mackie (2011) research however, my findings recorded that only one female participant (aged 18 – 25) in my study was presented as homeless as a result of being a care leaver, as can be seen in Figure 1. Her comments during the focus group session, mirrored the responses and experiences of her peers, therefore supporting the comment of Hart (2006), who states that

'all young homeless people are vulnerable, and all require the same level of assistance and support'.

4.1.1 ASPIRATIONS

A key aim of this study was to determine if homeless young people have aspirations for the future, and what impact being homeless has had on their ability to achieve them (LLUK. 2008, p. 9: 3.1.2). This provided an opportunity for them to later explore if Tŷ Cyfle could provide or offer resources that could assist them in reaching their aspirations. Participants were asked to choose four aspirations from nine suggestions that were recorded on blue cards. One presented an opportunity to highlight another response that had not already been provided. Two of the peer mentors were responsible for writing the responses given during discussions on flip chart paper, therefore data was not collected from them. The graph below (Figure 2) therefore, will evidence only thirty six responses (Four for each of the nine participants). Qualitative data recorded during this exercise is discussed later.

Figure 2 PARTICIPANT ASPIRATIONS



As can be evidenced from the graph above (Figure 2), the majority of participants recorded aspirations of purchasing their own home and getting a good job. My findings therefore fully support the point illustrated by Quarriers (1991, as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 32 & 68) and Centrepoint (2010), that homeless young people have 'modest ambitions and aspirations, both in terms of getting a job and securing independent living'. The next highest responses were that participants 'wanted a family' and to 'have savings'. The more materialistic choices of 'wearing designer clothes', and 'having up to date technology' were not an aspiration that any participants had. One participant (aged 18 – 25) acknowledged to the agreement of his peers that "to be honest I would love to have all that" and "there are people who can have all of these things whenever they want, and there are the less fortunate ones who cannot".

4.1.2 NEEDS

The focus of this data gathering was to determine what provision (if any) the Tŷ Cyfle project 'needed' to offer or provide, to aid the process of enabling homeless young people to sustain their future tenancies and work towards reaching their aspirations (LLUK. 2008, p. 9: 4.1.1). Red cards were provided to each participant, and each was asked to choose the one from each area that best corresponded with what they identified as a 'need' for Tŷ Cyfle to offer or provide. The options related to five key areas:

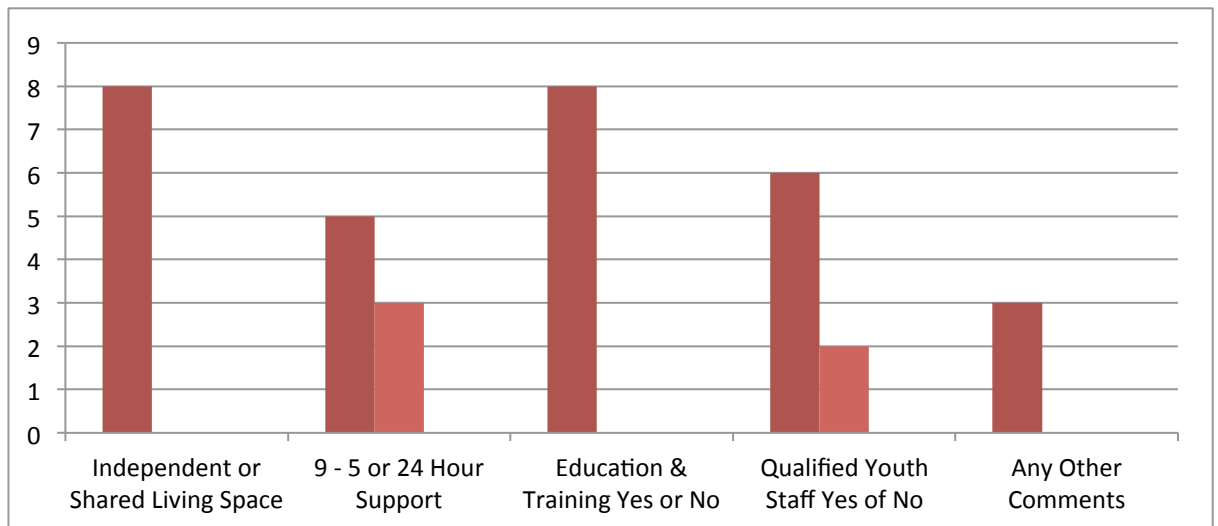
- a) Living Space
- b) Support
- c) Education and Training

d) Qualified Youth Staff

e) Anything Else?

As three of the group are Afon Youth members who were participating in the role of peer mentor, their contribution in terms of this data was not collected, as their opinion would present a bias in this work, as it is their project that I am evaluating and monitoring. As a response to this, Figure 3, will represent that of only the eight other participants, within each question area.

FIGURE 3 SUMMARY OF Tŷ CYFLE 'NEEDS'



4.1.2.1 Living Space

The 'living space' cards, provided the option of independent or shared living spaces. The Afon Youth forum background of the project, had earlier highlighted that a shared kitchen area would be accommodated for group work sessions, so the young people knew that this facility would be included within the redevelopment. As participants contemplated which card to choose, clarification was provided of what each represented. The

'Independent' card illustrated a self-contained property, each with its own kitchen and bathroom facilities, with all residents being accountable for their own electric and gas usage. The 'Shared' card represented living spaces that had shared kitchen and bathroom areas, and a design that would require gas and electric charges being incorporated as a top up on rent payments.

As Figure 3 evidences, the findings were unanimously in favour of 'Independent Living Spaces', with all eight participants choosing that option. These findings illustrate that the participants in my study maintain that in their opinion the Tŷ Cyfle accommodation should replicate what Shelter Cymru (2007, p. 28) describes as a foyer systems, 'a single unit, temporary accommodation to aid independent living'. This also evidences that my research findings correlate with the findings of research carried out by Campbell & Mackie (2011), Jones (2011) and Torfaen County Borough Council's Children and Young Peoples Plan (2011 – 2014), who all maintain that it is this model that is being needed to accommodate homeless young people in Torfaen.

4.1.2.2 Support

In terms of the support element, the two choices were either 9 – 5 support or 24 hour. Figure 3, highlights that of the eight, five chose the 9 – 5 support option and three the 24 hour. While participants were contemplating their choice, discussion was presented of the many different styles of support mechanisms, which will be offered to Tŷ Cyfle's residents, all of which would not be appropriately needed on a twenty four hour basis, such as one to one mentoring, other than in the case of an emergency. In depth discussions

during this exercise resulted in much qualitative data being recorded as will be explored later.

4.1.2.3 Education and Training Opportunities

Education and training opportunities for the residents was another choice area, and as can be evidenced in Figure 3, all eight young people responded with the 'Yes' option. This evidences that there was a strong consensus on the need for Tŷ Cyfle to offer these opportunities for the young people who reside there, as will be discussed via qualitative material later.

4.1.2.4 Qualified Youth Workers

I was keen to determine if the participants felt that qualified youth workers should be in post to provide support within Tŷ Cyfle, and cards illustrating either a Yes or No answer were provided. As can be seen on the graph, six participants responded with a Yes answer, compared with two who responded No.

4.1.2.5 Anything Else?

Finally the graph evidences that three responses were made in relation to the 'Anything else' area. These were explored in depth during the qualitative gathering of the exercise, and will be discussed later.

4.2 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The semi-structured interview stimulated much qualitative data. Transcription from the recorded session can be viewed in its entirety as Appendix 12. This data was recorded following the secondary questions that

were asked to provide an overview of homelessness and young people, and following discussions during the collection of quantitative material as described previously. These discussions presented an opportunity to ensure that terminology and legislation was acknowledged to ensure the understanding of questions and responses. Discussion around legislation and statistics enabled responses from participants in terms of their awareness of the significance of the problem, the shortage of housing provision for young people, and therefore the importance of the Tŷ Cyfle project, and the Afon Youth forum's work to tackle this problem (LLUK. 2008, p. 20: 1.1.5).

4.2.1 CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Discussion on the topic of the causes of homelessness highlighted their understanding of key factors. The participants responded with acknowledgments of the effects of those "with difficulties at home", "people with no family support", "ex-offenders", as well as "people from the military". The participant (aged 18 – 25) who had travelled the foster route, offered that it also happens to, "people who have been in foster care". The findings from the research of Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 52), were replicated, as one participant (aged 16 – 18) pointed out that people are also homeless because they are "not being able to afford a house". These findings confirm that in their opinion, young people experience homelessness as a result of both structural and individualistic activity, and all participants recognised that people of all backgrounds and cultures are affected by homelessness. One participant (aged 18 – 25) highlighted that "elderly people sometimes live in

hostels too”, therefore evidencing that the overall consensus of responses recorded that they recognise that homelessness affects a diverse range of people.

4.2.2 IMPACT OF HOMLESSNESS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

The question of ‘the impact of homeless on young people’ stimulated much conversation with most verbal responses being presented from the participants who had experienced homelessness first hand, compared to those who never had. Responses of “depression”, “lack of confidence” and “low self-esteem”, were recorded which supports the findings of Rowntree (2010), Higgs (2012), Robinson (2008, p. 109), and Campbell & Mackie. (2011, p. 60), who suggest that the impact of being homeless on young people, will result in them suffering increased mental health problems.

A strong theme that emerged from the experiences of those who have been homeless, resulted in discussion of feelings of “being stuck in a rut” with “no support”. One participant (aged 16 -18) commented that “you cannot look forward”, as “you don’t care (when you’re in a hostel)”. Another participant (aged 18 -25) took this one step further by responding that “when you are homeless, you don’t think you can do anything”. Two participants (aged 16 – 18 & 18 – 25) commented of the stigma of residing in the hostel. One pointed out that when homeless they wondered “what is the point?” because...”you get dirty looks ‘cos you live in the hostel”. Another participant made a statement that I have heard on countless occasions from many homeless young people over the past two years, contending that they were frequently asked “what you have done wrong?” claiming that people are

under the illusion that “you must be a slut to be in the hostel”. This reflects the position of Robinson (2008, pp. 76 & 108) who suggested that ‘homeless young people often have to overcome the stigma, prejudice and shame of being homeless which causes them to withdraw’.

Low motivation levels, was a very strong theme from participant discussions, throughout the session, with all participants agreeing that when homeless “your motivation is low”. One participant (aged 18 - 25) acknowledged that they were “not motivated or encouraged to continue going to school”, and others agreed that they “did not want to go to school or training”. A number of participants maintained that this is something they now regret as they “realise that they missed out on qualifications”. Other group members (aged 16 – 18 & 18 – 25) discussed how that being homeless results in “some turn to drugs, drink” and “self-harming”.

During these discussions, one young person admitted that “I know, I took it, drugs, like cannabis ... and I became lazy when I was in the hostel” (Young Person. 18 – 25). These comments coincide with what Brandon et al (1980), Roche. (2004, p. xiv) and Robinson, 2008. pp. 71-108) who contend, that low confidence and lack of motivation leaves homeless young people unwilling or unable to participate in education, training or employment opportunities.

In contrast however, the group discussions also focused on those who claim that “sitting around bored doing nothing, turns you cuckoo” (Young Person. 18 - 25). One participant maintained that when homeless he “used as much support as he could get”, claiming that he “wanted to go and do my work,

training and education... You actually do get good people who want to move forward and make an effort...” (Young Person. 18.- 25). All participants agreed that they did have aspirations for the future whilst being homeless, however being without a secure place to live did impact on their ability to move towards them. This supports the statement from Centrepoint (2010) who suggest that ‘homeless young people’s ambitions (aspirations) are lowered since becoming homeless’.

4.2.3 ASPIRATIONS

No request was made by myself for individuals to identify their personal choices, as this I felt could be seen as an intrusion, therefore awareness of professional ethics guided the process (National Youth Agency. 2004) and (National Youth Agency. 2005). An opportunity to discuss their choices was presented generically however during the collection of quantitative data via the choice cards provided, and this also provided an opportunity for me to seek clarification for what participants viewed a ‘good job’. The replies highlighted that a good job is one that earned them ‘good money’ and provided ‘enjoyment’. This was something that all participants agreed on, irrespective of any diversity within the group.

One participant responded that their career aspiration is to be a “support worker”, and as this comment was made from an individual who is known to me following their participation on the Own Two Feet program. I question if such a response reflects a true aspiration or whether he felt that this was a response that I wanted to hear. Marvasti (2004) defines this phenomenon as the ‘social desirability effect’ where participants ‘may distort their ‘true’

feelings in order to answer the questions presented in a way in which they perceive as 'socially acceptable'.

During the data analysis process the existence of responses on the 'any other ideas?' cards highlighted that one participant had a very modest aspiration 'to be able to buy their own nice treats' and the other much more ambitious 'to have my own respite centre'. As these aspirations were not verbally offered during discussions, and blue card choices collected for analysis later, clarification on the sort of respite centre and the participant who recorded this is unknown. As detailed earlier however, it was a conscious effort of mine to allow participants the privacy of presenting answers via the card system in the hope that this would stimulate honest responses and would reduce barriers that verbal responses alone may have presented.

4.2.4 ASPIRATION BARRIERS

Conversation was prompted to determine if participants felt there were barriers and challenges that homeless young people face in response to my question "When you are homeless are you able to work towards your aspirations?". One participant (aged 18 – 25) pointed out that "if you are stuck in the hostel, then no, but if you get out from there, then maybe you can". The young people who have previously resided in Hales House, discussed once again their experiences of residing there, much of which was negative. Comments, such as "in the hostel, some people just "want to take drugs, drink and sleep", and "peer pressure stops you from doing anything" (Young Persons aged 16 – 25 & 18 – 25). These comments were supported

by the other members who had experience of this environment. Such strength of conviction in the discussions, strongly support the work of Robinson (2008, p. 135) who argues that ‘homeless hostels are unable to replicate ordinary life for the residents, and the longer a young person stays in one, the more difficulties they will face in seeking a more independent lifestyle...’

Participants also pointed out that finance and benefits served as a barrier to them moving towards their aspirations when homeless, however acknowledged that this did not change when independent living was secured. One young person (16 – 18) argued that “we haven’t got enough money to do it full stop”. Another young person’s response evidenced a greater understanding for the complexity of the issue in this, his response:

“With the way the economy is going with the prices going up and everything, and taking money off people who are trying to help themselves out of benefits etc. With making them pay their benefits direct, then people aren’t able to do that. Like people keep going back to the same things. Alcohol, misuse of drugs, people ain’t gonna be able to support themselves. If they have to pay their own rent and council tax payments then they will end up spending it all and losing their tenancies”
(Young Person. 18 – 25)

This statement accurately reflects the opinion of The Torfaen Supporting People Operational Plan (2012 – 2013), Lepper (2011 & 2012), Davies (2011), and Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 65) and Purfett (2010) who all acknowledge that the proposed benefit cuts in relation to housing benefit for young people will result in an increase in young homelessness and greater numbers seeking support.

The impact of the proposed welfare reform was also referenced by one respondent (aged 18 – 25) who dominated the discussion on the role of the government at present, with him pointing out that “there will be a bigger increase (with young homelessness), with what the council wants to do with housing benefits”, “It’s gonna get worse”. His comments were understood and supported by the other participants, and reflect the findings of The Torfaen Supporting People Operational Plan (2012 – 2013), Lepper (2011 & 2012), Davies (2011), and Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 65) and Puffett (2010) as recorded in the literature review.

A young person (aged 16 – 18) commented that “when you have paid your rent, gas, electric, food and water rates you literally have nothing left”. This suggests that Maslow’s (2006) hierarchal of need is at play as my participants comments illustrate that their ability to engage in education, training and employment which will allow them to move toward achieving their aspirations, is consumed with the need to acquire food, warmth and shelter (Ingram & Harris. 2001, p. 31).

Another barrier was highlighted by a young person (18 – 25) who pointed out that “travelling is a big issue, due to public transport being so expensive”. He maintained that “I cannot afford to go to Cwmbran every day, it’s too far and it shouldn’t be like that”. This young man’s family lives in the Cwmbran area, and he has previously reported that he is unable to visit them as often as he would like, due to his inability to afford transport costs, and as a result he feels isolated. This reflects the comment of Robinson (2008, p. 109), who

suggests 'that young homeless people often find themselves isolated and social excluded'.

These comments were supported by other group members, one of whom maintained that she "started a training scheme so she could access a bus ticket" (Young Person aged 18 – 25). This effort to avoid isolation and encourage socialising with family and friends, still causes problems for other participants however, as discussion focused on the fact that some training schemes require the young person to pay for tickets upfront, and then having to reclaim that payment back. One participant (aged 18 – 25) highlighted that "sometimes you haven't got the money to pay upfront". Information was then provided of a resource that the Afon Youth forum had recently been made aware of, which enabled young volunteers to access bus tickets, without having to purchase or contribute themselves.

This session therefore evidences the providing of information and support via peer learning, as those who had not attended the previous Afon Youth forum meeting were learning from their peers, thus illustrating that peer support is strong within such groups, even though many of these young people were not known to each other (LLUK. 2008, p. 20 & 24: 1.1.5 & 4.2.4). This mutual learning environment stimulated respect and honesty throughout the session. Group dynamics were not evident as each member was empowered to support their peers and spoke honestly about their experiences.

I suggest that this conversation and the thoughts and experiences of group members impacted on the quantitative results as recorded in Figure 1 earlier,

which illustrates that four participants identified 'learning to drive and owning a car' as one of their top four priorities in terms of their future aspirations. The significance of this choice of aspiration was not appreciated until the data analysis process was completed and responses collated and compared to the qualitative material.

I was keen to determine if the young people felt that their ability to work towards their aspirations were easier when they were living independently, compared with when homeless and residing in Hales House. I was anticipating responses of how things got harder, however responses recorded the opposite. One young person (aged 18 – 25) made a valid and valuable point, "Yeah, I think when you have got your own tenancy, you are always one step ahead of those who haven't", with another participant (aged 18 – 25) adding that "you learn from your mistakes", "you learn from nothing, you have nothing". A conversation between two young people follows:

"I think that when you move into the hostel, you think that everything is going to fall into place" (Young Person. 18 – 25)

"Yeah but then you realise it doesn't" (Young Person. 16 – 18)

"Yeah, when I turned eighteen I thought everything was going to change, but actually my life isn't going to fall into place. I am going to have to work towards it myself. If people know that sooner rather than later..... I wish I had known that..." Young Person. 18 – 25)

"That's what I thought too" (Young Person. 16 – 18)

"Yeah, before I was like, I don't care. I thought it was gonna be like a jigsaw..... I am now taking every opportunity I can ..." (Young Person. 18 – 25)

This conversation stimulated much consensus, with all members who had travelled the homeless route commenting that they “appreciate things more”, because as one pointed out “you have to sleep on the floor” (Young Person aged 18 – 25). As Robinson (2008, p. 27) and a Torfaen Housing Worker as cited in (Campbell & Mackie. 2011, p. 52) all point out, these are challenges that no support workers are able to overcome, yet the comment of one participant (aged 18 – 25) contradicted this principle. He suggested that “it’s all about support, if you have the right support in place then you will go out and get it” (aspirations).

Providing the correct support provision within Tŷ Cyfle is vital to its success, as is the importance of providing this research opportunity to young people, to determine what the ‘needs’ are of those who will reside there (LLUK. 2008, p. 9 & 30: 3.1.2 & 4.1.1 & 4.2.6). As in the quantitative research findings, the qualitative findings will relate to the ‘needs’ in terms of:

- a) Living Space
- b) Support
- c) Education and Training
- d) Qualified Youth Staff
- e) Anything Else?

4.2.5 NEEDS

4.2.5.1 Living Space

Although an opportunity was presented for discussion on whether either independent or shared living space was preferred, no comments were recorded. Every participant was very quick to choose the ‘independent living

space' card, there seemed to be no contemplation over the alternative option and no discussion followed. I suggest that this illustrates the fact that all young people were confident in their choice and they felt that no discussion was necessary.

Their choice of Independent living space would present a temporary accommodation that differs from Hales House and would present more of an opportunity to have the responsibility that living independently presents. This representing a half-way house, that previous research by Mackie & Campbell. (2011, p. 12), Quarriers (as cited on Robinson. 2008, p. 136), Garthwaite (2012, p. 83), Robinson (2008, p. 135), Puffett (2012) and Barnardos Cymru (2006), maintain is needed by homeless young people through the transition from homelessness to independent living.

4.2.5.2 Support

Support was the area of discussion that dominated much of the session, and was linked to many elements of being homeless based on the responses of participants at different times. This was the area that created the most debate. One response in agreement for the need for 9 – 5 support, was “in my opinion when you are living on your own, you haven't got it all the time... if you are gearing up to get your own place, then you have to get used to it” (Young Person aged 18 – 25). This comment was supported by other group members.

In contrast however, some participants were concerned that 9 – 5 support would not be sufficient, and preferred the 24 hour support option. In relation to this aspect of the conversation 'support' was recognised as being the sort

to deal with emergencies. One participant (aged 16 – 18) asked this question in argument against only 9 – 5 support being available, “But what happens if someone hurts themselves really badly, and there’s no-one there?... what if someone is into self-harm and no-one is there... to stop them from causing themselves more harm.” Although 24 hour support is available in Hales House, the comment of one who was in defence of just 9 – 5 support maintained that “but if you were in the hostel, with the 24 hour support and you cut yourself, no-one would know about it, you know what I mean? Until someone came and found you... (Young Person aged 18 – 25).

Body language of some of the participants, particularly the young person who had expressed concerns and the members who had never been homeless, illustrated some unease at responsibility of choosing the correct opinion and took on board comments of other group members. At this point I pointed out that 24 hour emergency contact details would be provided to all residents should an emergency incident occur, in the hope that this would present some reassurances. Following this debate it was evident to see that indecision was occurring, some participants were holding the two cards trying to come to a decision – balancing the two cards, considering which to choose.

A comment from one participant about the needed support in Tŷ Cyfle was quite significant, whilst watching body language of the group, and during the data analysis process, as he said “it’s a balance...I think it should be a balance” (Young Person aged 18 – 25). Ironically the quantitative data as shown in the graph (Figure 3), illustrated the smallest margin of two options,

with support between the hours of 9 – 5 only slightly being the strongest. This does however evidence a stronger support of the findings of the National Youth Homeless Scheme (as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 12), Quilgars et al (2008, as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 71), Jozwiak (2010) and Davies (2011) that illustrate that provision that sits between the twenty four support of hostels (Hales House) and the no support that independent living presents, is what is needed. Although there was some division within the group of the significance of young people accessing support, so was the impact of support available in Hales House and the need for Tŷ Cyfle to provide different.

Much of the ‘support’ discussions of the participants who had resided in Hales House previously, commented on the lack of motivational support. One young person (aged 16 – 18) maintained that (staff) “they don’t motivate you... in the hostel, they give you a chance of a wake-up call. If you have one and you say I’m up but I’m not going to school they say, okay. They then just ring the school and say you aren’t going”. Another young person (aged 18 – 25) highlighted that “the only thing that will get you going is if someone tells you that your money will stop, otherwise no-one will go... no-one pushes you”. These comments replicate the arguments of Garthwaite (2012, p. 82 & 84) and The Welsh Assembly Government (2010), as they point out that supporting and guiding young homeless people is vital, acknowledging that they require support that focuses on more than just housing related issues.

The lack of specific support was also identified, one group member commented on a problem that he experienced, “I used to have this problem when I was in there, no staff there, and those that were, were behind the desk thing... you know? (Young Person aged 18 – 25). The comments of these ex-service users of Hales House support the findings of research from consultations with other young people who participated in the research of Campbell & Mackie (2011. p. 38), illustrating that temporary accommodation for young people is inappropriate and of an insufficient standard. One participant (aged 18 – 25) made the following statement “You need someone who is willing to go to the jobcentre or careers or something... you need a person who is specifically there” (Young person aged 18 – 25). This comments stimulated further agreement from peers, and illustrates the support for what Robinson.(2008, pp. 77 -146), Phillips & Schucksmith (2004, as cited in Robinson. 2008, p. 140), Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 74) and Jones (2011, p. 59) suggest, that an holistic approach is needed and that key workers are integral to the success of enabling young people to sustain tenancies.

4.2.5.3 Education and Training Opportunities

Again this was a topic area that stimulated a huge amount of qualitative data, and evidenced strong opinions from all group members irrespective of the diversity amongst them. Most participants had opinions, but the strongest verbal responses were from those that had previously resided in Hales House. One participant (aged 18 – 25), made this statement, “If they are coming out of the hostel and they aren’t in training and they are going into

this property they should have a lot more to get them into placements, so when they go and get their own tenancies. So real life like, Do you get me?” This prompted the following comment from another young person (aged 18 – 25), “If you are getting the support to training and education, then you are more likely to sustain your tenancy and be more successful at it than if you are not working...just messing up, playing loud music and drinking til stupid o’clock”.

These comments support the findings from research by Jones (2011) and Campbell & Mackie (2011, p. 74), who point out that education and training opportunities are vital to reduce the difficulties that are experienced by young people, and reduce eviction and further episodes of homelessness. The consensus of the groups strong opinions are summed up in this quote,

“I think they should be on placements before they move into this (Tŷ Cyfle), or college. They should be doing something, so when they are in their own flats they are not going to be in all the time doing nothing. And not causing disruptions. If they are in work or college or whatever, then they will come back at night and be knackered and sleep”

(Young Person aged 18 – 25).

I sought clarification from the group following this point by asking, “Are you saying that it should be a condition of Tŷ Cyfle?” Responses to this were in agreement with participants saying “I reckon you should go (to education or training), you shouldn’t have a choice in this house” (Young Person aged 16 – 25) and “Yeah, you should be made to go” (Young Person aged 18 – 25). I again sought reassurance that my understanding was correct, by asking for a

show of hands of those who were in agreement and was surprised to see that there was a very strong response, with all in agreement.

I then probed by asking “Do you think it would be fair to say to them, well yeah you can come in here but we expect you to engage in the training that is going on in there? So even if they aren’t already in training they are working towards that? What do you think of that?” One participant (aged 18 – 25) made the point that “they have at least got to be engaging in training or placement, doing something... even if it is voluntary training. Getting them involved would give them the motivation to move further and forward with what they want to do”.

Careers advice was mentioned by participant (aged 18 – 25) who pointed out that an adviser could “come out once a week ...” and “I know, you know like the TVA (Torfaen Voluntary Alliance), they do courses like food hygiene etc, short courses like that, is there any way that that can be held up there?” Requests for first aid and cooking on a budget were also made. Cooking on a budget is a workshop that is currently being delivered by the Own Two Feet Project and there has been a proposal that these sessions will be run from Tŷ Cyfle. To align with the youth work ethics and principles that the Own Two Feet Program and all Bron Afon youth work rests on, before any final decisions are made, consultations with young people are planned to determine if this is what they want. This research therefore has confirmed that this proposal is supported by young people, and can be viewed as a green light for the planning of this for the future.

4.2.5.4 Qualified Youth Workers

I must acknowledge that as a Youth and Community Worker, in a voluntary capacity within Bron Afon, any probing I might have done may have been incorrectly mistaken for pressure to answer with a Yes response, as I aspire to gain employment for Bron Afon in the future. I was mindful of the significance of the participants who know me that this is something I seek, and awareness of Marvasti's (2004) social desirably affect, was at the forefront of my mind. To ensure that my research was reliable and conducted with honesty and professional integrity, I chose not to probe for discussion or clarification in this area, as I wanted to ensure that my work could not be viewed as a tool to aid a process to bring about positive outcome for myself professionally or personally. As a result of this no qualitative data was recorded, only quantitative as previously recorded.

4.2.5.5 Additional Comments?

The anything else? Question prompted two proposals from participants. One request "was for a games room, and for the Afon Youth Forum members to go in and have a training session with the young people in the block" (Young Person aged 18 – 25). Clarification was needed by an Afon Youth Forum member as to what sort of training provision was meant, and the response confirmed that equipment such as "weights and a running machine" (Young Person aged 18 – 25). The other request was for "computers and stuff, a WIFI area". This request stimulated support however there were disagreements in terms of this provision.

One participant (aged 18 – 25) requested that these resources should be “locked away after a certain time, so that they aren’t broken or taken and flogged for drugs”. However this was challenged by another participant (aged 18 – 25) who commented that

“But wouldn’t that be the same as having shared computers that could be taken out?. See I think that every room should have their own computer, some people work really late, if they haven’t got anything to do...I spend a lot of time at night on mine, chilling out etc. It’s really hard to get a balance of things...basically it needs to be like your own place”.

The reality of being able to afford a computer and broadband facilities when in your own property was at the forefront of one young person’s mind, who acknowledged that “I did it all (broadband), and couldn’t afford it” (Young Person aged 16 – 25). In defence of the need for a computer in each room was made by a participant however when he commented that “Yeah, but not everyone uses it for work and stuff, you know? CV’s, they are used for a lot of stuff not just the internet” (Young Person aged 18 – 25). All of these points evidence that computers are ‘needed’ in Tŷ Cyfle, however illustrate that how having these facilities is best achieved requires further discussion, as is a requirement for many of the topics that have been discussed in this research.

This chapter has presented a report of my findings and discussions, via the collection of both quantitative and qualitative material from consultations with young people who have never been consulted in previous research. The next chapter will present my conclusions following my study as well as recommendations for the future.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to monitor and evaluate the Afon Youth Forum's alternative housing project in Torfaen to ensure it meets the needs of the young people it works with. The methods used to carry out this study have been of the mixed methods approach, where via a focus group setting quantitative data was collected via a questionnaire and multiple choice cards and qualitative via the recorded or verbal responses on flip chart paper and an audio recording device.

The findings from this study enabled the researcher to collect and acknowledge the opinions of young people who had not been consulted previously, enabling the comparison to previous research from both youth work and housing disciplines. This combined knowledge has facilitated the process of evaluating and monitoring the Afon Youth alternative housing provision, and the findings of this research will be presented to the young people who participated in the study, as requested, as well as the Afon Youth Forum and Bron Afon Community Housing, and will provide further evidence to support the project and prioritise requirements as well as offering recommendations to be considered in the future (LLUK. 2008, p. 12 & 15: 4.1.2 & 4.2.1).

The findings of this study have illustrated that although there were some contrasts, much of the previous research has been supported by the young people who participated in this work, particularly in terms of their awareness and support for the need for a transitional style accommodation in the

Torfaen area. Much discussion and debate focused on participants experiences of residing in Hales House, and they have strong views on the sort of provision that Tŷ Cyfle 'needs' to provide and offer its residents.

The findings have also highlighted the 'need' for the Tŷ Cyfle property to provide independent living space, which will enable its residents to gather the confidence and skills during their stay which will aid their ability to sustain future tenancies. In order to facilitate this, the study illustrated the need for support on a nine-to-five basis, alongside twenty four hour emergency provision. The findings served to illustrate that support is a key element of working with homeless young people, and without adequate and appropriate structures in place young people lack the motivation and ability to work towards their aspirations and this will affect their ability to sustain future independent living.

The findings of this research, verifies that homeless young people have modest aspirations in terms of purchasing their own properties and accessing a good job, as well as other goals. The study also establishes that previously homeless young people are extremely confident in their ability to identify how the Tŷ Cyfle provision can aid the process, via the offering education and training facilities. Strong evidence was also found of the 'need' for this to be offered as a condition of moving into the property, to ensure that residents remain motivated and embrace the opportunities presented. On-site training resources was a key 'need' as was adequate and specific workers in order to facilitate the process of accessing information and support. The findings have also illustrated that qualified

youth workers are a 'need' within Tŷ Cyfle, however for reasons identified this was not explored in depth.

The findings confirm that homeless young people face barriers and challenges all of which cannot be overcome by the work of the Afon Youth Forum and their project, particularly in terms of the financial aspect of young people's lives. The impact of the pending welfare reforms is anticipated to have huge implications for many, particularly young homeless people, which will impact on the increasing numbers of young people seeking housing support in the Torfaen area. As this research demonstrates, numbers are rising in the local area, compared with numbers decreasing generally within Wales. These facts highlight the necessity in this project being successful, in order for the next phase of the New Beginnings Project to be supported and taken forward, to provide further housing options for homeless young people.

To conclude, it is evident that the study has achieved its objectives. The conclusion can be drawn that there is supporting evidence that the Afon Youth Forum's alternative housing project is reflective of the needs and aspirations of those it works with, as their work recognises the needs of young homeless people in Torfaen. However in order to guarantee that the provision remains a success, I make these recommendations.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Further discussions are needed in order to ascertain what resources are best presented in Tŷ Cyfle, particularly in terms of a computer area and a games room, and how best these facilities should be used and provided. Although it was pointed out that support from the Own Two Feet Project will be delivered

from within Tŷ Cyfle, further discussions need to be conducted to establish what outside services can be delivered from the site. A key recommendation as a result of this study is that engagement in training or education of some sort is a condition of tenancy in the property. I suggest that this could provide some resistance from partner agencies and some young people, however if the property is to be reflective of the needs of homeless young people this needs to be introduced. I recommend that further research of this kind should be carried out within the first two years of Tŷ Cyfle opening alongside thorough and regular evaluations (of a smaller scale), of which resident homeless young people should participate.

5.2 REFLECTION ON DISSERTATION PROCESS

As a Youth and Community Student I have conducted this research from a voluntary capacity within Bron Afon, but also and more importantly in terms of my dedication to provide participation and informal learning opportunities to young people, I have embraced this opportunity to utilise my youth work skills and knowledge within a youth led housing project. The significance of inviting young people to participate, both in terms of those who provided data and those who participated in a peer researcher position, has provided me with an unforgettable and invaluable experience in terms of my learning. I have found the experience to be enjoyable, and acknowledge that I have learnt much from the young people who have participated. Following feedback from 'all' participants they claim to have enjoyed and learnt for the process too, which presents a positive in terms of my role and commitment as a youth worker. This learning I am sure will provide them all with a

greater understanding of the significance of their project and a greater ownership of the ground breaking work of which they are committed, and I am confident that these findings will be of benefit to the Afon Youth Forum and Bron Afon Community Housing. Sadly many young people find themselves homeless and in need of the provision that Tŷ Cyfle can and will offer, and I am proud to of been part of this project and to have had the opportunity to work with such inspirational young people.

Total Word Count: 10,821

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APPENDIX 1 RISK ASSESSMENT

Dissertation Process Risk Assessment

Date of Assessment: 28th February 2013	
Assessor: Sam Notley	
Name of Activity: Dissertation Research Data Collection Process	
Description of Activity: Interview (Semi-Structured) and Completion of Questionnaire via Focus Group Setting, within Bron Afon Community Housing	
Prepared by (Name): Sam Notley Date: 28th February 2013 Agreed by Supervisor (Name): Maria Jones Date: 28th February 2013	Signature: Signature:

No	Description	Hazards	Who Might Be Harmed	Existing Control Measures	Probability and Severity	Rating	Further Action Needed
1	Slips, Trips and Falls	Many	All	First Aider on Site. Bron Afon Health & Safety Policy and Checks	Low	Low	None
2	Medical conditions		All	Recording of any medical conditions or specific needs	Low	Low	None

3	Abusive Situations	Child Protection	All	No Members of Staff or Volunteers to be Left Alone with Young Persons CRB Checks in Place For Every Member of Staff who participate	Possible, Major	Low	Refer To Bron Afon Child Protection Policy for More Details
4	Young People Being Young People	Impulsive, Juvenile and Immature Behaviour	All	House Rules Constant Supervision House Rules Staff Supervision	Possible, Low	Low	Rules and No Tolerance to Disruptive and Bad Behaviour Chat Prior to Event
5	Injury	Caused or Due to any of the Above or Risk of Fights	All	Possible, Major	Low	Low	Nearest Hospital, Royal Gwent Rules and No Tolerance to Disruptive and Bad Behaviour Chat Prior to Event
6	Smoking	Fire Safety and Personal Health Risk	All	Smoking Only Permitted in Designated Areas	Possible, Low	Low	Staff to Enforce The Smoking Law Discourag

7	Fire	Death or injury Resulted From Burns or Smoke Inhalation	All	No Smoking During Activities House Rules and Staff Supervision, Smoke Alarms and Fire Extinguishers are Working	Possible, Major	Low	e Smoking Outside The Permitted Areas Check Smoke Alarms on a Weekly Basis, Ensure all Fire Extinguishers are Checked by Professionals
8	Disclosure of Child Protection Issue	Child Protection	Young Person	Awareness of Child Protection Procedure and Child Protection Officer	Low, Major	High	Refer To Bron Afon Child Protection Policy for More Details

APPENDIX 2

University
of Wales,
Newport

Prifysgol
Cymru,
Casnewydd

Research Ethics Approval Form (RE1)

Faculty (please select one of both if applicable)

Faculty of Education and Social Sciences (FESS)
Business (FAB)

Faculty of Arts and

SECTION A - to be completed by Investigator/Researcher/Research Team

1. School:

Sports, Health and Applied Social Sciences

2. Project Title:

'To monitor and evaluate Afon Youth's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen, to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with'.

3. a) Name of Principal Researcher and other Named Researchers associated with the proposed project:

Sandie Notley

b) Name of Research Student(s) (including dissertations) working on this project where applicable:

4. Names and affiliations of other collaborators on the project:

N/A

5. Expected duration of project:

From: November 2012

to: April 2013

6. Category of Proposed Research Project:

Please select at least one from (a) – (c) below and follow the guidelines:-

a) Does any component of the proposed work involve **human or non-human animal participation?**

YES

If YES, then go to Section B and complete: the remainder of this form and a separate risk assessment. You will also need to provide extra documentation to support your

proposal (e.g., participant instructions/information sheet, written consent and debrief forms, and examples of materials that participants will be exposed to such as questionnaire or interview questions).

If NO, then your work is likely to be theoretical/review based. If so, please select YES to whichever of categories (b) or (c) below applies to your proposed research, and follow the guidelines:-

- b) The proposed work is of a **theoretical/review nature** and involves examining material available either within an academic domain (e.g., journal articles, textbooks, monographs, conference proceedings) or public domain (e.g., unclassified reports, unclassified government documents, unclassified websites, etc.) that **does not** fall into any of the categories under 6c below

Yes No (please circle one)

If YES, it does not need to go through a formal ethical review process and you are not required to complete the remainder of this form or associated documentation. Please **sign and date below** to confirm that the proposed work conforms to this category (A6b) and send a copy of this form to the head of your Research Cluster/Group/Centre (or Academic Subject Lead/Director if you do not belong to a Research Cluster/Group/Centre) to be held on file.

Signed _____ Date _____

AND/OR

- c) The proposed work is of a **theoretical/review nature** AND involves one of more of the following categories:
- Classified material (e.g., military/government reports, policies/procedures not available in the public domain, company information)
 - Secondary data (i.e., data that has already been collected and readily available from other sources) that will be analysed in a different way to that originally approved by an ethics committee and/or in which you do not have approval from the owner of that data (person, company, etc.)
 - Material that could potentially cause offence, harm (psychological and/or physical) or discredit to a person(s), organisation(s), the University, etc.
 - Material of a highly sensitive and/or potentially prohibited nature (e.g., major accident reports, information relating to vulnerable individuals, medical reports, information relating to terrorism, pornography, etc.)

Yes No (please circle one)

If YES, then please send this form, a summary of your proposed project (maximum of one printed page), and any supporting documentation (e.g., consent to use secondary data) to the head of your Faculty Research Committee (FESS: Professor Steven Smith – steve.smith@newport.ac.uk; FAB: Professor Barry Atkins – barry.atkins@newport.ac.uk). It will then be reviewed at a committee level by faculty heads of Research Clusters, Groups, and Centres and a recommendation will be made to the Principal Researcher.

If NO, it does not need to go through a formal ethical review process and you are not

required to complete the remainder of this form or associated documentation. Please **sign and date below** to confirm that the proposed work DOES NOT conform to category (A6c) and send a copy to the head of your research cluster/group/centre or Academic Subject Lead/Director if you do not belong to a research cluster/group/centre, to be held on file.

Signed _____ Date _____

SECTION B - to be completed by Investigator/Researcher/Research Team for any Proposed Work that Falls into Category 6a in SECTION A above

1. Briefly state the research question(s) and aim(s) of the project:

'To monitor and evaluate Afon Youth's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen, to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with'.

The aims are to:

Research the experiences and opinions of previously homeless young people who regularly attend the Afon Youth Forum meetings,

To research the opinion of what an Alternative Housing Project should provide from the harder to reach homeless young people who engage on the Own Two Feet Program, to ensure they have a voice,

To provide the Afon Youth Forum with empirical evidence that can inform their practice to ensure that their work is effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of young homeless people,

To inform Bron Afon Community Housing of the findings, so as to ensure effective support is provided in relation to its commitment to facilitate the Afon Youth Forum in its project, for the benefit of homeless young people in Torfaen.

2. Briefly describe the proposed design of the project:

This section should include information such as (although not limited to):

- *The number of studies/experiments (including pilot studies if applicable)*
- *Independent and dependent/outcome variables or factors if a quantitative project*
- *Information regarding what research methods are being employed if a quantitative or qualitative project (e.g., questionnaire questions, focus groups, observations, particular experimental paradigms, etc.).*
- *Appropriate references for materials being used from already published sources (and whether you have permission to use these).*

This research will combine the collection of quantitative and qualitative evidence by employing a range of research methods. Semi-structured interviews will provide qualitative material and will ensure continuity of questions, deeper discussions and probing if necessary to ensure that the data is thorough. A literature review will also provide secondary theoretical evidence and will provide a greater understanding of the topic area. Any already published material used will be referenced in accordance of the Harvard Referencing system. Quantitative data will be collected via the use of a questionnaire and will provide data that has not been collected via the use of qualitative methods. Combining the data collected from both approaches, should result in a greater understanding which when processed will provide a thorough view of the topic area.

All research questions on the questionnaire will also be verbally communicated so as not to ensure literacy ability of the young people with whom I work.

3. Will all the participants be (please tick each that apply):

Students at University of Wales, Newport

Staff at University of Wales, Newport

Other
(please specify):

Participants will be young people (16 – 25) who have previously or are still residing in Torfaen's only young person's homeless hostel – Hales House.

4. Roughly, how many participants will be involved?

Approximately 20.

5. Describe how the participants will be selected (please state all methods)

The selection process will encompass previously homeless young people who once resided in Hales House and who are active members of the Afon Youth Forum. These young people would have completed the 'Own Two Feet Project' and are currently living independently. The Own Two Feet program provides support, educative themed workshops and training opportunities to homeless young people.

New participants of the Own Two Feet program will also be invited to take part in this research, as they do not currently participate in the Afon Youth Forum, so are currently not involved in the project.

Participants will be aged between sixteen and twenty five years, will be of both gender and will have originally resided in all areas of the Torfaen.

6. You may require permission(s) from an internal or external organisation(s) in order to test participants and/or collect data for this project. If so, describe how you will obtain such permission(s), whether a key person(s) has been identified within the organisation (*their position, not name*). Also, you should provide supporting evidence in an appendix to this form of any written documentation (e.g., letter, email, or memo) that will be sent to the organisation(s) in order to seek authorisation to gain access to and test participants.

Permission will be requested (Appendix 3) from the Senior Involvement Officer in Bron Afon Community Housing, who supervises all work carried out with young people, and to Hales House Management.

7. What procedure(s) will be conducted with the participants?

Write this section using terms appropriate to a layperson and provide sufficient information regarding:

- *Written, verbal or online instructions/information sheets*
- *Consent and debriefing information*
- *Examples of other written and/or verbal material (e.g., questionnaire questions)*

- *Procedures that will allow participants to withdraw from the study and ask questions*
- *Processes surrounding treatment and storage of data (e.g., anonymity, confidentiality, etc.)*

*****Pay particular attention to steps you are taking if proposing to test vulnerable participants, use materials or procedures that could cause physical or psychological harm (including those that may be emotive or offensive), or include a level of deceit*****

Information sheets (Appendix 8) will be provided for all participants, and this information will be verbally communicated as literacy skills will not be assumed. These sheets will provide details of the researcher, the research being carried out and its purpose. The aims of the project will also be identified, as well as the need for appropriate consent to participate. Confidentiality will be explained, as well as how participants identities will be protected as all recorded information will be used on an anonymous basis. These sheets will also explain a commitment to take all precautions to protect collected data for the duration of the project and for it to be safely destroyed on completion. The right to withdraw from the project at any time will be assured, with the acknowledgement that all information on that participant would be destroyed. Information sheets will also be provided for parents (if applicable), or alternatively to Hales House staff members if parental/guardian consent cannot be obtained. (Appendix 10).

Consent forms will be provided to all participants (Appendix 9), and to the parents/guardians of any participants who are under the age of eighteen years (Appendix 11), so as to safeguard the rights of the young person. If a participant is under the age of eighteen and parental/guardian consent is not viable then consent will be obtained from Hales House staff.

An example of survey or semi-structured interview questions will be provided. (Appendix 6)

A completed risk assessment will be provided (Appendix 1) to illustrate the researchers commitment to protect the health and well-being of participants at all times during the dissertation process.

A child protection officer will be identified prior to the start of the project in case a disclosure is made to the researcher at some time during the dissertation process.

8. Has a risk assessment been carried out?

Yes (Appendix 1)

If NO, please explain why – otherwise, please attach a copy of the completed risk assessment in an appendix (which should include potential psychological and physical risks to participants and the experimenter/research team and measures to reduce them).

9. Do you intend to use a written/online consent form?

Yes (Appendix 9)

If YES, please attach a complete example of the consent form that you intend to use. If no consent form is required, please explain why below.

10. If there is doubt as to a participant's ability to give informed consent, what steps will be taken to safeguard the rights of the participant (e.g. parental consent, next of kin, or, other means)? Please indicate how such consent will be obtained on behalf of the participant.

As detailed above, consent will be obtained from parents/guardian if participant is under eighteen years of age. (Appendix 11) If parental/guardian consent is not viable (as participant is homeless and residing in a homeless hostel) then consent will be gained from an appropriate adult at Hales House.

11. What other information will be given to participants (e.g., letters, information sheets/instructions, consent and debrief forms, etc.)? Please attach copies of all written/online information that will be given to participants.

As detailed above, information sheets (Appendix 8) will be provided to all participants, including their parent/guardian or Hales House staff member if parental/guardian consent cannot be obtained. (Appendix 10)

12. Will you be exposing participants to research materials (written, verbal, and/or online) such as questionnaires, tests and measures, and interview questions?

Yes (Appendix 7).

If YES, please attach complete copies of materials (with references if applicable). If complete copies of materials are not available at the time of writing this proposal, please provide a sufficient set of example materials (e.g., proposed questions) so that the Ethics Committee can fairly review their ethical suitability. Sufficient, as a minimum, is defined as at least one example question/measure/item etc. from each category/construct/variable that you are measuring.

13. Will participants be paid for their participation?

No

If YES, please state the amount and whether payment is for out-of-pocket expenses and/or a fee

14. a) Will the project receive financial support from outside of University of Wales, Newport?

No

b) If YES, specify the nature and source of support:

c) If YES, have any restrictions been imposed upon the conduct of the research?

No

d) If YES, please state the nature of restrictions:

15. a) Will any restrictions be placed on the dissemination and/or publication of results?

No

b) If YES, please state the nature of the restrictions, e.g., details of any confidentiality agreement

16. Please state any other points you wish to make in justification of the proposed research study?

I work within Bron Afon Community Housing, and my role sees me working with Afon Youth Forum members, as a facilitator on their alternative housing project as well as many others. I also work with homeless and previously homeless young people via the delivery of the Own Two Feet project, and I provide one-to-one support to a number of young people who have completed the program and are now living independently.

I am therefore at the core of both programs, and have loyalties and responsibilities in both capacities. The Bron Afon alternative housing project is driven by the Afon Youth Forum members, with them having complete control over all decision making. Bron Afon staff, and myself are facilitators of this process. The Afon Youth members are determined to ensure that they deliver an effective alternative housing option for young homeless people, therefore my contribution from a dissertation perspective will be invaluable to all parties, including Bron Afon Community Housing as they are committed to supporting the Afon Youth in this capacity. Being aware of possible claims of subjectivity I will make every effort to ensure my research study is objective in nature and application.

This illustrates my determination to conduct an honest and comprehensive report which will have the capacity to inform future practice. This therefore is of significant interest to myself and others and will benefit the homeless young people in Torfaen.

17. I have read the University of Wales, Newport Code of Practice on ethics related to research, and to the best of my knowledge and ability confirm that the ethical considerations overleaf have been assessed. I am aware of and understand the

University of Wales, Newport procedures on Research Ethics and Health and Safety. I understand that the ethical propriety of this project may be monitored by the University of Wales, Newport FESS Research Ethics Committee. I confirm that I will abide by all other applicable codes of ethics.

Signature of Staff Researcher/Student: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Project Supervisor/Director of Studies (if applicable)

Date: _____

SECTION C - APPROVAL, REFERRAL, OR REJECTION

EITHER:

- a) **At UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL ONLY: I APPROVE this project and confirm that it need not progress to the Faculty Research Committee:**

Signed (Project Supervisor): _____

Date: _____

OR:

- b) **At STAFF or POST GRADUATE RESEARCH LEVEL ONLY: On behalf of the Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee I APPROVE this project:**

Signed (Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee):

Date: _____

OR:

- c) **The Undergraduate Research Supervision Team or Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee is UNABLE TO APPROVE the project for the following MINOR ethical reasons which would need to be addressed in a resubmission:**

Signed (Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee):

Date: _____

OR (please turn over):

- d) The Undergraduate Research Supervision Team or Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee is UNABLE TO APPROVE the project for the following MAJOR ethical reasons which would need to be addressed in a resubmission:**

Signed (Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee):

Date: _____

OR:

- e) The Undergraduate Research Supervision Team or Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee is UNABLE TO APPROVE the project as it is deemed to be unethical for the following reasons (note that incomplete proposals can fall within this category):**

Signed (Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Ethics Sub-Committee):

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3 SUPERVISOR CONSENT

Formal Request

FAO of Maria, Senior Involvement Office for Bron Afon Community Housing Limited.

As you are aware I as a requirement of my final year of the B.A. (Hons) Youth and Community degree I am expected to complete an independent research project. My research is going to be to:

'To monitor and evaluate Afon Youth's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen, to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with'.

In order to complete the research I will require the assistance of previous and current homeless young people who may or may not be active members of the Afon Youth Forum. I propose to work with previously and current homeless young people with the aim of ensuring that my findings are presented to the Afon Youth forum. This can then be used to inform their work to ensure that the current Alternative Housing Project reflects the needs of 'all' homeless young people in Torfaen.

As part of this process I have to write and request your consent in allowing me to work with young people who attend both the Afon Youth Forum and current and previous members of the Own Two Feet Project.

I would be very grateful if you would respond to this letter via email to:

samnotley@bronafon.co.uk at your earliest convenience.

Many thanks.

Sandie Notley (Sam)

CONSENT RECEIVED VIA EMAIL AS FOLLOWS

From: Maria Jones
Sent: 08 October 2012 10:46
To: Sam Notley
Subject: Dissertation

Sam

Please accept this email as giving my consent for you to work with young people who attend both the Afon Youth Forum and current and previous members of the Own Two Feet Project in order to complete your research.

I believe the aims of your work,

'To monitor and evaluate the Afon Youth Forum's alternative housing project in Torfaen to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations the young people it works with'.

This will inform the practice of Afon Youth, ensuring the project meets the needs and aspirations of homeless young people and gives them a voice. This work will also ensure Bron Afon, understands and fully supports their work and continues to take forward their recommendations.

Regards

Maria Jones

Senior Community Involvement Officer

Bron Afon Community Housing

Ty Bron Afon, William Brown Close, Llantarnam Industrial Park, Cwmbran NP44 3AB

T 01633620125 **M** 07528 965221

E maria.jones@bronafofon.org.uk

APPENDIX 4 FOCUS GROUP SESSION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Introduce myself.

Discuss fire safety routines, and give directions to toilets, discuss refreshments and lunch arrangements etc.

ICE-BREAKER

CONDUCT FORMALITIES

Distribute Participant Information Sheets and read out all details, as well as explaining session and its purpose etc.

Obtain Consents, explain confidentiality etc.

Provide quantitative questionnaires for completion (ie age, nationality, etc)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW BEGINS

Information giving and Data Collection - to stimulate discussion, understanding and record qualitative responses (Afon Youth Members).

LUNCH

AFON YOUTH FORUM DELIVERY

Background of their project. What research have they done and what has informed their decisions to date? Etc .Details of this discussion can be viewed as Appendix 5.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS BEGINS

Quantitative data will be gathered via the completion of a questionnaire, and the provision of individual cards, which will present a multiple choice selection process. Participants will be required to choose in accordance with what they agree or disagree to in relation to some questions. Individual cards will also be provided in response to participants highlighting responses that they maintain is a priority choice in terms of what they view as a 'need' for Tŷ Cyfle to offer to provide its residents, this again collecting quantitative material.

Qualitative data will be recorded via verbal responses collected by Afon Youth Members on Flip Chart Paper and on an audio recording device. During the collection of quantitative material, verbal discussions will follow in order to seek more information and to gain clarification of understanding.

ANY QUESTIONS?__FEEDBACK AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ONE TO ONE DISCUSSIONS OFFERED AND CARRIED OUT IF REQUESTED.

APPENDIX 5 AFON YOUTH FORUM, Tŷ CYFLE BACKGROUND

What is the Afon Youth Forum?

What is the Alternative Housing Project?

How and why was it set up?

What research has been carried out?

What is it hoping to achieve and offer its residents?

- Secure temporary accommodation for 6 to 8 young people, with individual kitchen and bathroom facilities
- An opportunity to practice living alone, so they can learn and be better prepared when moving on, for example responsibility for own gas and electric payments
- A communal lounge and kitchen area
- Support based on young person's needs (but not 24 hour)
- Education and training opportunities, while the building is being re-developed and beyond
- Access to information from not just Bron Afon but other service providers
- The ability to move back into the hostel if needed, without losing homeless status

- Tŷ Cyfle – House of Opportunity called this because this is what it can be to young people

Where is the project now?

What's happening next?

Does anyone here want to be involved now or in the future?

We are working really hard, and are committed because we want and need it to be successful for us to be able to do more in the future. That's why your opinions, ideas, involvement and feedback is so important.

Thank you!

APPENDIX 6 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Semi-Structured interview Questions

1. What do we mean by homelessness? Provide a definition and brief legislation.
2. What people become homeless?
3. What are the reasons that cause it?
4. What impact does being homeless have on young people?
5. Do you think numbers are increasing or not? Relay National and Local statistics.
6. Have you heard of The Revolving Door Syndrome? A cycle of homelessness. Intentionally homeless – no support.
7. Housing options for young people in Torfaen, Hales House, B & B's. Support mechanisms in place within these options. Discuss transitional housing.

FOLLOWING FORUM'S CONTRIBUTION

8. How can Tŷ Cyfle help you and others like you? What does it NEED to offer its residents that will enable them to sustain their future tenancies and move towards reaching their aspirations?
9. What do you think Tŷ Cyfle should offer and provide? What do you think young people staying in their 'NEED'?

Using the red cards provided, please choose from the options available.

- A. LIVING SPACE – Independent Living Space or Shared Living Space
- B. SUPPORT – 24 Hour or, Part Time
- C. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES – Yes or No?
- D. QUALIFIED YOUTH WORK STAFF – Yes or No?
- E. ANYTHING ELSE?

PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS EACH OPTION

10. What are your 'aspirations' for the future? What would you like to do, or have in the future?

Using the blue cards provided, please choose four options.

- A. TO HAVE A GOOD JOB? If so what job would you like to do or be?
- B. TO HAVE A FAMILY?
- C. TO TRAVEL THE WORLD?
- D. TO PURCHASE YOUR OWN HOME?
- E. TO LEARN TO DRIVE AND OWN A CAR?
- F. TO HAVE UP TO DATE TECHNOLOGY, PHONES ETC?
- G. TO WEAR DESIGNER CLOTHES?

- H. TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO SAVE?
- I. TO GO TO UNIVERSITY?
- J. ANY OTHER IDEAS?

PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS

11. Are you able to work towards these 'aspirations' when homeless? If not why?
12. What about when you move into your tenancy? If not why?
13. Can Tŷ Cyfle do anything or offer anything that can help you move its residents towards their aspirations?
14. Does anyone want to be kept updated and involved via the Afon Youth Forum? If so collect names and contact details.
15. ANY QUESTIONS?

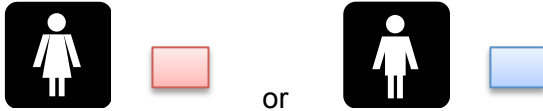
Your contribution will now inform the practice of the Afon Youth Forum's project and will make a difference to homeless young people in the future.

Thank You for Taking Part, I hope you have enjoyed it!

APPENDIX 7 QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant Questionnaire – Focus Group Meeting 28th February 2013

Please tick or complete as appropriate.



1. How old are you? **16 - 18 years** or **18 – 25 years**

2. What Nationality are you? (Welsh, British or other)
.....

3. Are you currently registered as homeless? **YES** or **NO**

- If **YES**, are you?
- Living In Hostel/ Cluster
 - Sofa Surfing
 - B & B
 - Sleeping Rough
- If **NO**, where are you living?
- Own tenancy
 - With Parents

Other

Have you previously been homeless? **YES** or **NO**

4. If yes, where did you or do you stay?

A Hostel Sofa Surfed B & B or slept rough

5. How long have 'you been' or how long 'were you' registered as homeless?

0 – 6 months 6 – 12 months 12 – 18 months

6. Have you even been in foster care? **YES** or **NO**

7. Have you been registered as homeless more than once? **YES** or **NO**

If so, how many times

APPENDIX 8 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

As part of my B.A. (Hons) in Youth and Community Work degree at the University of Wales, Newport, I am required to undertake a research project. The title of my research project is:

'To monitor and evaluate Afon Youth's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen, to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with'.

Its purpose is to ensure that previously homeless and current homeless young people have an opportunity to have a say in what they feel an alternative/transitional style housing option should provide. To ensure it reflects the wants and needs of homeless young people. The research findings will be presented to the Afon Youth forum to ensure that their project reflects the opinion of more than just the homeless and previous homeless young people who attend the forum.

You are invited to be part of this research which will require you to complete a brief questionnaire and to take part in a semi-structured interview which will take (approximately) an hour within a group setting. At the end of the interview I will set aside time to discuss the session, to ensure your understanding of the process and to answer any questions or concerns.

You do not have to take part, the decision to participate is up to you. Should you choose to do so, a consent form will be completed by yourself, and if you under the age of eighteen years, consent will be required from a parent/guardian or appropriate adult. You will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, with no explanation being required. Any data relating to you personally will not be used and destroyed in a safe manner.

All information will be collected on an anonymous and confidential basis, therefore every precaution will be made to protect your identity. All data collected throughout the process will also be destroyed at the end of the study, and during the process will be locked away in a secure location or password protected on my computer.

The University of Wales has given ethical consent for this study to be conducted, and it will be overseen by Emma Chivers, Senior Lecturer. If you have any concerns at any time he can be contacted on:

emmachivers@newport.ac.uk.

If you require any further information from myself - ~Sam Notley (the researcher), I can be contacted on:

Sam.notley@bronafon.org.uk or on SandieNotley@student.newport.ac.uk.

A copy of the completed work will be available to you on request, and will be read by the University of Wales, and possibly members of the public.

APPENDIX 9 PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This form is for the participant's formal consent to take part in the following research: 'To monitor and evaluate Afon Youth's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen, to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with'.

Would you please carefully read this and tick the boxes to show your agreement with each point. When you have completed and signed it will you please return to the Researcher.

- I have read and understood the information sheet that I have been given to keep.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time – without explanation, and that any data relating to me will not be used and destroyed in a safe manner.
- I understand that all involvement will be based a confidential and anonymous basis, therefore all precautions to protect my identity are being undertaken.
- I understand that at the end of the study all data will be destroyed in a safe manner.
- I consent that the completed work will be included in a University assignment and may be read by members of the public.
- I consent to take part in this study.

Your signature will confirm that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study, having read and understood the information sheet provided.

Consent given by; (Participant): Date:

Signature or Participant: Date:

Conditions agreed by Researcher : Date:

ARE YOU UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS YES/NO

I would like to be sent a copy of the completed project. YES/NO

If YES, please write your email address here:

APPENDIX 10 PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION SHEET

As part of my B.A. (Hons) in Youth and Community Work degree at the University of Wales, Newport, I am required to undertake a research project. The title of my research project is:

'To monitor and evaluate Afon Youth's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen, to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with'.

Its purpose is to ensure that previously homeless and current homeless young people have an opportunity to have a say in what they feel an alternative/transitional style housing option should provide. To ensure it reflects the wants and needs of homeless young people. The research findings will be presented to the Afon Youth forum to ensure that their project reflects the opinion of more than just the homeless and previous homeless young people who attend the forum.

Your child, is invited to be part of this research which will require them to complete a brief questionnaire and to take part in a semi-structured interview which will take (approximately) an hour within a group setting. At the end of the interview I will set aside time to discuss the session, to ensure their understanding of the process and to answer any questions or concerns.

They do not have to take part, the decision to participate is up to them. Should they choose to do so, a consent form will be completed by them and yourself. They will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, with no explanation being required. Any data relating to them personally will not be used and destroyed in a safe manner.

All information will be collected on an anonymous and confidential basis, therefore every precaution will be made to protect their identity. All data collected throughout the process will also be destroyed at the end of the study, and during the process will be locked away in a secure location or password protected on my computer.

The University of Wales has given ethical consent for this study to be conducted, and it will be overseen by Emma Chivers, Senior Lecturer. If you or they have any concerns at any time he can be contacted on:

emmachivers@newport.ac.uk

If you require any further information from myself - ~Sam Notley (the researcher), I can be contacted on:

Sam.notley@bronafon.org.uk or on SandieNotley@student.newport.ac.uk.

A copy of the completed work will be available to you on request, and will be read by the University of Wales, and possibly members of the public.

APPENDIX 11 PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

This form is for the Parent or Guardian to provide formal consent for _____ to take part in the following research:

'To monitor and evaluate Afon Youth's Alternative Housing Project in Torfaen, to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the young people it works with'.

Would you please carefully read this and tick the boxes to show your agreement with each point. When you have completed and signed it will you please return to the Researcher.

- I have read and understood the information sheet that I have been given to keep.
- I understand that the participant has the right to withdraw at any time without explanation, and that any data relating to them will not be used and will be destroyed in a safe manner.
- I understand that all involvement will be based a confidential and anonymous basis, therefore all precautions to protect the participants identity are being undertaken.
- I understand that at the end of the study all data will be destroyed in a safe manner.
- I consent that the completed work will be included in a University assignment and may be read by members of the public.
- I consent for _____ to take part in this study.

Your signature will confirm that you have voluntarily decided to allow the participant (Named above) to take part in this research study, having read and understood the information sheet provided.

Consent given by; Parent/Guardian:..... Date:

Conditions agreed by Researcher :..... Date:

I would like to be sent a copy of the completed project. YES/NO

If YES, please write your email address here:

**APPENDIX 12 TRANSCRIBED RECORDING OF FOCUS GROUP
SESSION. 28TH FEBRUARY 2013.**

Researcher presented as R, Young People presented as YP

R - What do we mean by Homelessness, what does it mean?

YP - Not living anywhere

R - OK Anyone got anything other ideas?

YP - No fixed address

YP - Yes?

Pause,

R - Ok there are loads of different variations depending on who or what you read. The definition by the Housing Act (1996), is (read from definition in literature review) The significance of the word intentional will be explored later. The Southwark Judgement (2009) described as from literature review.

R - What people do you think are Homeless, or become Homeless? Who becomes Homeless?

YP - People with no income

YP - Yeah

YP - People with problems at home

R - Is it age specific?

YP - No, people of all ages

YP - Yeah

YP - There are elderly people who are Homeless, who are in hostels in Cardiff Chepstow, all over Wales and all over Britain. There are different circumstances for everyone.

R - , Yeah, Well done

R - So you are all agreeing that it can affect people of all ages?

YP - Yeah

R - All backgrounds?

YP- Yeah, people who have been in the army all their life, and come out with not enough money to buy a house, so are homeless

R- Good point, Ok

YP- Ex offenders

R- Has anyone else got anything to add?

YP- People with no family support

YP- People who have been in foster care

R- Yeah, well done. So to clarify, so in agreement that it can happen to people of all ages and all backgrounds yeah?

R- You have already answered question 3, which is, What are the reasons that cause it, so well done. Right then, number 4. What impact does being homeless have on young people? Its up to you if any of you want to draw on their own experiences, but for those of you haven't what do you think?

Pause

R- Have a think, what impact does being homeless have on young people?

Pause

R- How do you think it makes them feel?

YP- Their confidence and self- esteem – it can knock it

YP- Depression

YP- Not having any support

R- Ok. Anything else?

Pause

R- OK, what about their ability to look forward?

YP- When you are homeless, you are more stuck in a rut like, in you?

R- OK

YP- You don't care

R- What about the ability to look forward? To the future

YP- When you get homeless, you are more stuck in a rut like than anything else, in you?

R- OK

YP- You don't care

YP- You don't care, because you are in a rut?

YP- Yeah

R- OK

YP- Yeah you don't care where you live, you just want to get out of there?

R- By there, where do you mean?

YP- The hostel

R- OK. So you have said that it knocks your confidence your self-esteem, and that you are not able to look forward yeah? OK, Is there anything else? How does it make you feel?

YP- I think it makes people not want to go to school, so it effects their work

YP- Some turn to drugs

YP- Self harming

R- Really good stuff guys!

YP- Drink

R- Lets give the guys (scribers) time to catch up. You are doing a great job girls.

YP- (Scriber) My arm is aching

R- Ok don't let it fall off yet

Laughter

R- Ok is there anything else anyone wants to add before we move on, we can go back and add stuff later if you want to. Ok, this is a bit of information for you as well. Do you think numbers of young people becoming H, is increasing? Do you think it is on the increase?

YP- Yes

YP- Yes

YP- Yes

R- So you are all in agreement? Ok. I will now give you the statistics (Statistics read from literature review). These statistics show a huge difference between the figures compared from the whole of Wales and Torfaen.

YP- There will be a much bigger increase, with what the council wants to do with housing benefit.

YP- Right Ok, Well done

R- So as much as there is a problem now...

YP- It is going to get worse

R- OK, so the Afon Youth Forum are aware of this and the lack of housing options for young people, so are on the cusp of doing something, before it does get worse. Another point worth making is that some people become homeless more than once. Ok. Its not just about getting accommodation after being homeless, and everything being fine. People do fall into a cycle of homelessness.

YP- I have been homeless three times

R- It's brilliant that you have offered that information, well done. OK, (scribers) please make sure you do not make note of the name of the person who has just said that, because I will be able to identify them from the questionnaire. Is that ok?

YP- (Scriber) Yeah

R- This repeated homelessness is called the revolving door syndrome, Ok and like I say, if you in that situation then it has been recognised that there needs to be support to prevent repeated homelessness. So when we talked about intentionally homeless earlier. This is where this comes in. If a person moves into their own accommodation, and for whatever reason loses it, whether it is because they can't pay their rent or water rates, or there is problems with their tenancy and they lose it, as soon as that property is taken from them, they are classed as intentionally homeless. So there is no support, the housing organisation has no legal obligation to find accommodation. So if a young person leaves Hales House, and moves into their own property and then loses that property, whether it is their fault or not, they are not able to move back into the hostel. There is not a guarantee that they will be able to access support.

Reference was made to an individual who had returned to the hostel, after previously being kicked out.

R- There will sometimes be opportunities , this is rare, but there will be exceptions to the rule, but overall they haven't got to.

Reference was again made to this individual

R- I obviously don't know the circumstances, do you know what I mean? Even so this hasn't got to happen, so it is about the cycle and providing support so they have a greater opportunity to keep their tenancies when they get them. So what do you all think the housing options are for young people in Torfaen? So if they are homeless, where can they stay? This is number 7 guys (scribers), number 7. So what do you think the housing options are for young people? If you are homeless where can you stay?

YP- Shared accommodation

YP- Hostel

YP- B & B

YP- Sometimes if you are lucky a hotel

R- Oh right OK

YP- Not a really posh one

YP- Etap

R- OK

YP- Are you classed as being homeless if you are in a hostel

R- Yep, if you are in a hostel, or a B & B, if you are registered as homeless then it is only temporary accommodation. From the research I have been reading, some young people based on the research completed in 2011, there are times when the hostel is full and there are no B & B's, some young people will have been sent to privately rented properties with no furniture, because there is nowhere else for them to go. They have no support, OK. So literally you imagine if you found yourself homeless, and the local authority says that there is nowhere for you to go, No room in the hostel, no B & B's, so here is a set of keys you can go and stay in that house. If you are not in the system of Hales House, then us in BA know nothing about you. So those people could literally be isolated , living somewhere where they know no one, and they are all on their own. So if you look at Hales House for example, there is support, there may be support in B & B or cluster properties like floating support OK. Support is an integral part of what homeless young people are entitled to when they are homeless. OK. So you have said B & B's, the hostel, there are also...

Phone ringing

R- There is also provision which is called transitional housing. Following the research that they (the Afon Youth forum) have conducted, that they are going to tell you about in a minute. That is the model that they are thinking or planning on replicating in Torfaen. OK, Now transitional housing works as a step up step down, if a young people leaves Hales House and they have the opportunity to move into this accomodation. They can have a chance of living on their own but if for whatever reason the decision is made by them or the staff that they are still not going to be able to sustain their tenancies for whatever reason, then there is an option for them to go back into Hales House. So they won't be classed as intentionally homeless.

Coughing

R- So they can practice living on their own, but if things are happening, or whatever, they can go back. And then when they are ready they can either move back into this house, or into their own tenancies. So its about preventing you from going down the road..

YP- Sorry can I take this call?

R- Course you can. So that's what transitional style housing is, has anybody got any questions? No. There is supposed to be break for lunch, so can you please stop the recording

LUNCH

R- Welcome back. The Afon Youth forum discuss their housing project (As detailed in Appendix 5).

R- Now everybody has got an envelope with a red dot on it, OK. If you open the envelope you should see,, all in order some small cards. So firstly what do you think Ty Cyfle, this building should offer and provide? What do you think this building needs to have. The word is NEEDS, so as young people, imagine you are going in there from either a B & B or hostel, what do you think it should have? Independent or shared living space? ~Which do you prefer, which do you think it should be? Pick the one you choose, keep it in your hand and put the other back in the envelope out of the way.

YP- What?

R- You have got independent living space, or shared. Which of these do you think , would you want your own flat.....that's is you've got it. Has everyone picked their choice. Ok now support, do you think it should be 24 hours support, or part time support?

YP- It depends on the person

R- Ok. What about education and training? Do you think there should be education and training opportunities up there for young people? Ok, number 4. Do you think that the staff working in there should be qualified youth workers? No ok, whatever. Ok. Is there anything else that you think this place Needs? I have given you a few suggestions, what else do you guys think?

YP- There could be like a games room

YP- You could have a small training room, with one of the youth forum members going in and having a training session with the youths that are in the block.

R- Ok. A training room in the building?

YP- Yes

R- What sort of things do you think should be in there? Anything specific?

YP- Like weights, a running machine

R- So you mean, exercise stuff not computers etc? OK. Anything else?

YP- Yeah computers and stuff, a wifi area

YP- Yeah

YP- Like have 2 computers with slot times for people to come down and do their job searches there and then.

R- OK

YP- See I think that every room should have their own computer

R- Right Ok

YP- Yeah but then....

YP- But what is someone breaks it?

YP- Yeah but that could end up putting too much responsibility onto one person and then if they are addicted to drugs then they could take it and flog it for drugs. If, it , if.

YP- Things could be put in place

YP- At a certain time, they could be taken out

YP- But wouldn't that being the same as having shared computers that could be taken out

YP- Yeah

YP- Maybe they could be in a locked room

YP- Yeah after a certain time they could be locked away

YP- So then people can't access them, Yeah but some people work really late, if they haven't got anything to do they can't go on them. I spend a lot of time at night on my computer, chilling out etc. Its really hard to get a balance of things. Basically if needs to be like your own place..

YP- But what is the chances of you having it when you move into your own tenancy? You probably won't be able to afford broadband and internet

YP- I did it all and couldn't afford it

YP- Yeah but not everyone uses it for work and stuff, you know. CV's, there are used for a lot of stuff not just the internet.

R- OK, Some of you are aware of the Own Two Feet projects, you know the workshops, where we have got CV writing, money management. We have got all these workshops, eating on a budget, barriers to work, all these sessions

YP- Yeah I did eating on a budget with you, didn't I?

R- Yeah. Well there is a chance that or a proposal that the own two feel project will be delivered from this building. So obviously there would be support with. When I say support I mean... let me clarify... for those of you that were in Hales House, what sort of support did you use.

YP- I'm trying to think back

YP- When I was in there, I used as much support as I could get. I actually wanted to uhh, I wanted to go and do my work training and education. You have some people in the hostel that just want to mess around,

YP- Yeah

YP- And sit on their bums all day

YP- Yeah

YP- Taking drink

YP- Yeah drink and drugs

YP- Yeah

YP- They just want to get their own tenancies to mess them up, and you do actually get good people who want to move forward and make an effort to keep their tenancies

R- So the own two feet project and the support from that aspect, if that was in there, do you think that would be beneficial. The workshops?

YP- Yeah

R- What does everyone else think?

YP- Yeah

R- So in terms of support like those of you in here who are receiving one to one mentoring support, that would also be offered from there. So it would be a base where all of this can go on. Who felt that the support should be 24 hour in there?

YP- I think part time,....

YP- I think 24 hour

YP- In my opinion is when you are living on your own you haven't got it all the time. Like you haven't got support at two o'clock in the morning.

R- Ok

YP- There's no-one there to support you.

YP- That is what I was thinking

YP- You have got to get used to it. If you are gearing up to get your own place, then you have to get used to it.

YP- But what if someone hurts themselves really badly, and there's no one there?

YP- Yeah, if someone is into self harm and no one is there support wise to help them calm down or whatever, or to take their blades away from them to stop causing themselves more harm.

YP- Yeah

YP- But if they had their own property....

YP- If they had their own place, who would be there then?

YP- You wouldn't have 24 hour support in your own property

R- There would be some sort of emergency support. So if there was an emergency then there would be a point of contact to someone. That would be 24 hour.

YP- Yeah but if you were in the hostel, with 24 hour support and you cut yourself, no-one would know about it, you know what I mean, until someone came and found you. It's a balance.

YP- I think there should be a balance

YP- Well I think that someone should sort out their problems before they go in there if it gets to that stage.

R- OK fab. So we have all looked at your decision's, and I don't know what they are. I will obviously explore that later. Education and training opportunities, I don't know what you have said. Is there anything else that you think NEEDS, or what young people NEED to be in there?

YP- I'm trying to think back to what the hostel had, trying to think back to what people wanted

YP- Yeah

R- OK

YP- I think support from careers and all like

YP- Yeah

YP- If they are coming out of the hostel and they aren't in training and they are going into this property they should have a lot more to get them onto placements, so when they go and get their own tenancies. So real life like, Do you get me?

YP- If you are getting the support to training and education then you are more likely to sustain your tenancy and be more successful at it than if you are not working. Just messing up, playing loud music and drinking til stupid o'clock

R- OK

YP- When you are on your own, you are just not going to do it. You tell yourself you will do it tomorrow, but you are not actually going to do it

R- So you are talking about motivation?

YP- Yeah

R- So when you are in the hostel your motivation is low. Does anyone want to explore and discuss in more detail?

YP- They don't motivate you. I went on training because I did not like being in the hostel 24 hours a day. It's just people doing the same routine day in, day out. When I started going out I felt more ...

YP- Yeah .. laugh

YP- Yeah

R- OK so what do you think This Ty Cyfle, what could it do to..

YP- Provide you to go to school

YP- Yeah

YP- Or at least careers to come out once a week to see

YP- Or a staff member. I used to have this problem when I was in there, no staff there, and those that were behind the desk thing... you know. You need someone who is willing to go to the jobcentre or careers or something.

YP- There always has to be two people in the hostel

YP- Yeah you need a person who is specifically there, to show them.

R- OK so how about providing an element of someone from the jobcentre to come into there, as well as having the opportunity to go out to them. So are you saying bringing in services that are appropriate to your needs.

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

R- So you can gain the skills, confidence whatever or the motivation to go out

YP- Yeah

R- Have I got that right?

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- If you go to the jobcentre and get training you can do plastering or whatever, so they are stuck in all the time

YP- Yeah cos you get.. I have actually got a contact a contact who wants to talk to you about the Ty Cyfle project

R- Fab

YP- I will give you her number when we finish

R- Wonderful

YP- That's the one who wants to sort my CSCS card.

R- Brilliant

YP- Yeah so they might be able to sort CSCS cards out for other people if the need it.

R- OK, so has anyone got anything else to add to this before we close this but down? No. OK if everyone puts the answers that they have chosen into this envelope. Will you please pass it around. So I have no idea who has responded to what, its totally confidential. It will be interesting for me to see what you have all said. Will you now put all the answers you did not chose back into the small envelope, seal and pass to me so they don't get mixed up. OK. Thank you , Well done. Now for the next session, open the blue envelopes. Some of this we have already talked about, but maybe we can now explore a little more. What are your aspirations for the future? By aspiration I mean what are your hopes and your dreams for the future? What would you like to do, what would you like to have?

YP- To be honest, I would love to have all that

R- Exactly, there are probably things that you would all like to have. So what I want you to do is prioritise...

YP- There are people who can have all of these things whenever they want, and there are the less fortunate ones who cannot.

R- Exactly, so what I want you to do is prioritise what are your top four.

YP- Orrrrrr what? Can we pick 5?

R- No just four. There is one saying any other ideas, you should all have a pen in your pack so write on the back what you think. Put it on there. So have a think, what are your top 4. OK. Turn them over and place the number 1 in a circle on the back, so I can determine what is your number one. Place your top four in this envelope, and the ones you don't want to choose in the little envelopes. Get them out of the way. The ones you are

keeping, let have a chat about them, lets see what you think. OK. Now these are suggestions that I have thought of, you could have some that I haven't thought of.

Time provided and envelope passed around.

R- It will be interesting to see what you have said.

YP- I like the colour co-ordinated paperclips, and dots

R- Do you, good, and blue and red ink on the board.

YP- Yeah really good

R- OK lets feedback. If anyone has chosen a good job, does anyone want to offer what their job choice is

YP- Yeah, a support worker

R- OK anything else

YP- I want a good job, but I don't know what I want it to be

R- That's ok

YP- I reckon that will be everyone's first choice

R- OK, so what do you mean by a good job, define what a good job is

YP- Good money

YP- Yeah good money

YP- Good money

YP- Something that you enjoy

YP- Enjoyment

YP- OK, Right ok.

Laughter

YP- Yes that's the right answer guys, more laughter

R- So you have explored what you would like or hope to have in the future, so when you are H, are you able to work towards those things

YP- If you are stuck in the hostel, then no, but if you get out from there then yeah maybe you can

YP- You just need the motivation don't you?

R- OK

YP- If you are stuck in the hostel, people say like, have a try of this or have a go of that and then you like say

YP- It's also about support, if you have the right support in place then you will try to get out and get it. If you just sit in the same room staring at the same walls day in day out....

YP- You get bored of it

R- OK, so you haven't got any motivation, or you have is there anything else that is a challenge that stops you. So what other things can stop you?

YP- Peer pressure

R- OK so that can inhibit you. What else stops you?

YP- Well you think what's the point, you are in the hostel, so you can't do anything.

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah you get dirty looks cos you are in the hostel

YP- Yeah

YP- People ask what have you done wrong? You must be a slut to be in the hostel

YP- Yeah

R- OK, so people pre- conceived ideas of you because you are in the hostel. So what others think of you.

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- OK, especially when you are a young one, people give you dirty looks. I used to think whatever, it's not your life an all.

R- OK good point.

YP- People can also turn to drugs, like cannabis. That makes you lazy. I know I took it and became lazy when I was in the hostel. So it can be about drugs too

R- OK, so is there anything else? I'm thinking of one thing that is huge, but I am not able to say what I think it is. Have a think.

Pause

R- What stops you from having or doing what you want. What restricts you? For example if you wanted to learn to drive or have your own car, what is stopping you?

YP- Money

YP- Money

YP- Finance

YP- Yeah Money

R- OK. Do you agree that finance and money is an obstacle?

YP- Yeah

R- OK does anyone want to explore that a bit more?

YP- We haven't got enough money to do it full stop.

YP- With the way the economy is going with prices going up and everything, and taking money off people who are trying to help themselves out of benefits etc. With making them pay their benefits direct, then people aren't able to do that. Like people keep going back to the same things. Alcohol, misuse of drugs, people ain't gonna be able to support themselves. If they have to pay their own rent and council tax payments then they will end up spending it all and losing their tenancies.

R- OK You have talked about what people spend their money on, their lifestyle choices. A key word for me is benefits.

YP- Yeah

R- Does anyone want to expand, Are you saying that benefits restrict you? Do they stop you from doing all that you aspire to do?

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- They don't give you... especially if you have a child

YP- An extra twenty quid benefits when you have got a baby

YP- No

YP- I am expected to get one box of milk and nappies from it, I can't do it

YP- People who have kids, want to treat them to day out somewhere or swimming, a good fun day. Then you are not exactly spending a lot but you are not able to have a good day for the kids.

R- OK, so for those of you with children that is a massive battle, for those of you without, what about them. Are benefits a challenge for them.

YP- Yeah

YP- When you have paid your rent, gas, electric and food you literally have got nothing left

YP- And your water rates

YP- Yeah you haven't

YP- And if you smoke too. You should always have a tenner back up like, just incase you do run low on your electric or gas

YP- Yeah

YP- I think a big issue is travelling, you cannot afford to go anywhere

YP- Yeah, it so dear

YP- Public transport is so expensive

YP- That's my problem anyway.

YP- That's why I started training so I could get hold of a bus ticket

YP- I cannot afford to go to Cwmbran everyday it is too far and it shouldn't be like that.

YP- No.

YP- I reckon it should only be a pound for everywhere

YP- Yeah like a certain price

YP- Well, like the thing we were doing in the youth forum, that was a massive opportunity, which provided homeless people with an chance to go and see family members and friends, do things they need and want to do.

R- What ? is referring to there is, in the last forum, some people came in and because the members are volunteering from BA, then they are entitled to a bus pass. There is no time limit on it, it can be used at all times of the day. I think you have to pay towards it, but they will reimburse you. What they also do, is if you are volunteering and you have to pay for your lunch they will reimburse you with five pounds, as long as you present the receipt. If anyone wants more details about that , then have a chat with me later and I will tell you what I know, so we can get that in place for you.

YP- So do you definitely have to pay so much up front?

YP- I think so

YP- It's a gold ride ticket, you give a sheet to the driver and they give you a ticket. It depends where you are volunteering too.

YP- I'm just saying that sometimes you haven't got the money to pay upfront.

YP- I think that is only for college tho, I only know that one.

R- There you go, ? knows more about it than me, so have a chat with her later or me and we can find out more details for you. It sounds like something that you can access because you do regularly volunteer for us. So we will have a chat about it later. OK. You have sort of answered this question anyway, you have talked about the challenges you face when you are H, so for those of you who have been, now you are in your own tenancies does it get easier?

YP- Yeah it does

R- So its easier for you to move forward?

YP- Yeah I think when you have got your own tenancy you are always one step ahead of those who haven't

YP- Yeah, you learn from your mistakes

R- OK

YP- You have to learn from nothing, you have nothing

YP- Yeah you have to sleep on the floor

YP- Yeah

YP- Waiting for your bed to come

YP- You know, yeah you appreciate things more

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

YP- Like carpet

R- OK, so things are getting easier when you are in your tenancy compared with when you are in the hostel?

YP- Yeah

R- OK, do you think if you were moving into Ty Cyfle, what things, if anything, I'm not saying that there is anything, but if so what things could be put in place to help you move towards your aspirations. So rather than wait till you get your own tenancy, if you are going to be spending I don't know six months or a year in here before moving to your own tenancy, what can it provide that will enable you to work towards your dreams and aspirations before? Is there anything?

YP- I think they should be on placements before they move into this, or college. They should be doing something, so when they are in their own flats they are not going to be in all the time doing nothing. And not causing disruptions. If they are in work or college or whatever then they will come back at night and be knackered and sleep.

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

R- So are you saying that it should be a condition of Ty Cyfle

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah it should be

YP- I had a choice of whether I was going to carry on and go to school

YP- No-ones pushing you

YP- Yeah no-ones pushing you, saying come on. I just decided not to go.

YP- The only thing that will get you going is when someone tells you that your money will stop, otherwise no one will go

YP- In the hostel they give you a chance of a wake up call, if you have one and you say I'm up but I'm not going to school they say ok, and then just ring the school and say that you aren't going.

R- So your motivation again?

YP- I reckon you should go, You shouldn't have a choice in this house

YP- Yeah you should be made to go.

R- How many of you agree with that? Hands up. Yeah so a strong response, everyone

YP- Yeah everyone is dropping out of school and moving into H.

YP- Yeah, I didn't go to school

YP- I didn't go to school and I regret it because I missed out on getting qualifications

R- OK, so summing up now, of all the things you have said. So other than making it conditional that they must engage in training or education, is there anything else that you think that Ty Cyfle could do to help? You earlier linked motivation and support, so am I right in saying that you need support to be motivated?

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

R- Is there anything else that Ty cyfle could do?

YP- I know, you know like TVA, they do courses like food hygiene etc, short courses like that, is there any way that they can be held up there?

YP- If there was a communal kitchen up there, they could do that there

YP- Yeah and first aid and stuff

R- So you mean onsite training opportunities?

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah

R- So a variety of short courses?

YP- Yeah like cooking on a budget, because I don't know how to cook

YP- Yeah it could offer courses like

R- OK, so you think that there should be engaging in training before they go in there what about them having to engage in the training that is delivered from there?

YP- Yeah

R- Do you think it would be fair to say to them, well yeah you can come in here but we expect you to engage in the training that is going on in there? So even if they aren't already in training they are working towards that? What do you think of that?

YP- Yeah, they have at least have to be engaging in training or placement

YP- Yeah should be doing something

YP- Even if it is voluntary training

YP- At least they are getting out

YP- At least they won't be stuck in a rut, depressed, you know, on drugs or alcohol, getting them involved would give them the motivation to move further and forward with what they want to do

R- So you are saying that they could be working towards their aspirations rather than presenting you with challenges.

YP- Yeah, I think that when you move into the hostel you think that your life is just going to fall into place,

YP- Yeah but then you realise it doesn't

YP- Yeah when I turned 18 I thought everything was going to change, but actually my life isn't going to fall into place, I am going to have to work towards it myself. If people know that sooner rather than later. I wish I had known that so I would have carried on in school

YP- That's what I thought too.

YP- I wish I had, I am now taking every opportunity I can to get qualifications

YP- Yeah

YP- Yeah, before I was like I don't care. I thought it was gonna be like a jigsaw

YP- Yeah it gives you a proudness like, that you have done that for yourself. That you have done that.

R- OK so training, education.

YP- They need to do something.

R- You have been absolutely brilliant. Thank you. Do any of you want to be involved in this alternative housing project and kept updated of it. Please write down your names before you leave and the forum guys will collect.

Any questions?

Thank you.