

BETTWS BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

Peer Researchers

sewscap



Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales
Clwbau Bechgyn a Merched Cymru



As young people who have previously benefitted from StreetGames experiences, Lara, Carrie, Grace and Morgen (pictured left to right) wanted to be involved in the Us Girls peer research project to increase opportunities for girls to take part in sport and physical activity in Bettws, Bridgend. Morgen said “I think it brings us out of our comfort zone to make us discover things that we want to do and that we can be passionate about without anyone telling us no”.

Following its closure, The Boys and Girls Club in Bettws has since reopened in the summer of 2021 from a residential ecolodge building operating off short term funding. “This gives us the opportunity to sustain the club and have it be consistent in young people’s lives. The Bettws young people haven’t had that for years because the boys club shut down about 7 years ago and there’s been nothing there since. Our club is the only youth provision in the area”.

StreetGames posed the following research question:

‘What does an attractive sport and physical activity offer look like for girls and young women, in a post pandemic world?’

Using an online survey, the peer researchers discovered transport, cost and lack of opportunities for girls stopped young people taking part in sport. The girls wanted to access more facilities and despite 80% of young people saying they were interested in sport, only 27% of them actually took part in extracurricular sport. Nearly 90% of the young people were interested in dance and cheer, so, the group reached out to the wider Boys and Girls club network to collaborate with a club in Cardiff. Through this, the club now have discounted access to a purpose-built dance facility for young people from Bettws to attend. The SEWSCAP funding received will contribute towards fortnightly 3-hour sessions with transport and refreshments included, as well as helping young leaders to be upskilled as coaches to ensure the project is sustainable.

Lara said her biggest challenge during the project was;

“being in a group full of people that I wasn’t that close with to begin with because I have really bad social anxiety. I really find it hard to connect with people the way that I have with this group. Honestly, I didn’t realise how much confidence I had inside of me. Now that I have realised over the course of this project that I’ve got a lot more grit that people give me credit for and I’m willing to give things a go. This project has really helped me with that. We’re like comfort characters to each other now because we’re around each other so much. They are like sisters at this point and it’s comforting being around them because I know if I mess up, they’re just going to reassure me. They have become my emotional support”.

Carrie, a leader within the club summarised the project, saying

“If we get this, it will change young people’s lives and the amount of contact they are able to have with adults that are positive influences in their lives. It’s a really big thing to be able to see people from your community aspire and achieve things because it’s not something they were getting before”.