

GAVO Wales Adventure Play Site



'A free play space for children and young people to play, engage and experience within their own community.'

Description

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO), Wales Adventure Play Site is a designated staffed play site within a community space in New Tredegar. The Adventure play project sits within GAVO a voluntary organisation linked with the local integrated children's centre.



It started in May 2005 because it was a compulsory element of the integrated Children's Centre and is subsequently entirely funded by Cymorth Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) funding.

Three staff work after school hours and holidays and within holiday periods in an outreach capacity throughout the community using local open space, (complete with a condemned play park), in New Tredegar to interact and engage with the community and offer play opportunities. Although the space is currently run down and underused, when staff are not there, the aim is to ensure that adventure play is respected and appreciated throughout the community so that it can continue to develop and become a sustainable and valued provision.

Highlights

Many children, young people and parents have attended and engaged in the project, with sessions regularly attracting between 20 – 30 children all year round. Ages have ranged from 4-20 years of age and many have attended even when weather has been



extreme. The surrounding community has been really positive and supportive towards the staff and project, even when their children come home wet muddy and bruised!

Strengths

- Qualifications, training and experience of the staff team and their enthusiasm,
- which has been maintained through all the dark wet and cold evenings.
- Relationships are being continually built with the staff, children and young people who are attending the site which is having a profound effect on their trust, respect and behaviour.
- The locality and 'open access' nature of the project has meant it has been very successful in bringing together children from a wide range of ages, backgrounds and schools to form new and lasting friendships and developed confidence.



Challenges

- Weather is a challenge as the site is exposed to the elements with little or no shelter, as the provision is very new.
- Operating in a public space has presented difficulties with respects to other 'users' who may leave behind hazardous litter such as glass, dog poo, etc.
- Although staff do role model positive behaviour and provide support for children to resolve conflicts challenging behaviour has tested the staff at times.

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