

PAC Cymru

Research Report

Empowering young people and
preventing violence in Wales

About PAC

The Peer Action Collective (PAC) is a £11.4m programme, which aims to give young people the chance to make their communities safer, fairer places to live. It is funded by the Youth Endowment Fund, the #iwill Fund (a joint investment between The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) and the Co-op Group.

PAC is a network driven by and for young people across England and Wales to conduct peer research and act on the drivers of violence affecting young people. Across England and Wales between 2023 and 2025, 121 young people were employed by 10 delivery partners (community-based youth organisations) to drive the network forward. PAC teams worked across Lancashire, the North-east (Gateshead and Middlesbrough), London, Wales, the South-west (Bristol and Exeter), Yorkshire (Bradford and Hull) and Birmingham.

Between 2023 and 2025, across England and Wales PAC engaged more than **5,900 young people across peer research and social action**. PAC teams looked at one of three key themes:

- **Trusted adults** and how they can play a more significant and more effective role in the lives of young people, to protect or prevent their involvement in violence.
- **Schools** and how they can be more supportive environments to improve attendance and prevent exclusions.
- **Positive activities** and how these can protect children from violence.

In Wales, PAC Cymru focused our research and social action on the **roles trusted adults can play in supporting young people and protecting them from involvement in violence**.

About PAC Cymru

PAC Cymru is a dynamic **collective of young people committed to driving positive change in Wales**. Our mission is to **elevate youth voices** and ensure that they play a pivotal role in shaping policies and initiatives that directly impact their lives. By engaging in meaningful dialogue with stakeholders, delivery partners, and policymakers, we ensure that the needs, perspectives, and experiences of children and young people (CYP) are **authentically represented**. Our collective understanding of the issues faced by young people allows us to advocate effectively for systemic change, fostering **healthier and safer communities across Wales**.

We believe that by partnering with organisations such as Violence Prevention and Reduction Unit (VPRU) and Vulnerable People Units (VPUs) across England and Wales, alongside collaborators like CASCADE (Children's social care research and development centre) and COOP group, we can **cultivate an environment where the voices of young people are not only heard but serve as a catalyst for meaningful action**. Our work involves co-producing policy frameworks, developing critical initiatives, and presenting findings to decision-makers at the Senedd, ensuring youth perspectives are central to discussions about their futures.

Thanks to our team, **we engaged more than 890 young people** across our research and social action to support youth-led change. Our youth-led approach has supported our team members, like Cerys, to feel greater purpose and agency and you can read more stories from our team in the appendix at the end of this report:

“

PAC Cymru has opened my eyes to the incredible power of change and change I can be a part of

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Together, let us harness the endless potential of youth leadership and ignite meaningful change across Wales, creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all young people.

Our key themes and recommendations

From our research with **166 young people** affected by violence across Wales, young people told us they wanted one thing from trusted adults above all. They **wanted trusted adults to help them feel heard**. To support this, four key principles emerged to help trusted adults do this well:

1. **Consistent relationships** - built on trust, compassion, reliability, transparency, a lack of judgement, and a respect for individuality and confidentiality.
2. **Providing effective support** - through helping young people to manage and regulate their emotions, offering practical advice tailored to young people's different ages, and connecting young people into additional support when needed.
3. **A focus on breaking down barriers** - modelling consistency, reliability, and emotional control and active listening, helping to address barriers from young people in establishing trust.
4. **Mitigating against negative influences** - support to identify misinformation, develop resilience, better appreciate consequences of their decisions, and support the journey of developing or re-building a positive self-identity.

For trusted adults to embed these principles and effectively support young people affected by violence, we have developed six recommendations for adults working with young people:

1. **Don't just tell young people you are non-judgemental, prove this to them** - Approach every young person with an open mind and a willingness to listen without prejudice. Young people told us they wanted trusted adults to help them feel supported, and not condemned.
2. **Create safe spaces and reflect with young people on how they can be made safer** - To support honest communication, environments (both physical or emotional) need to be created where young people feel secure, respected, and free to express themselves without fear of reprisal or ridicule.
3. **Listen with context-specific understanding** - Young people have stated that they feel their words are heard, rather than understood. Trusted adults should strive to understand underlying emotions, social pressures and individual circumstances that shape a young person's experiences and behaviours. Consider how something that might seem minor to yourself or someone else, might feel monumental to another person.
4. **Practice consistency and reliability** - Young people want a dependable presence in their lives. They told us they wanted regular, predictable engagement and adults to follow-through on commitments, no matter how small, to build a bedrock of trust over time.
5. **Actively maintain appropriate transparency** - Always be honest and clear about what you can and cannot do, especially around confidentiality. Boundaries should be disclosed openly in an age-appropriate manner.
6. **Actively support youth-leadership and youth-led change** - Empower young people to be agents of their own change, listen to their ideas, validate their initiatives and provide guidance and support.

The underlying ask from young people: feeling heard

Across our research, young people consistently highlighted how crucial it was to feel heard. Feeling heard, respected and understood was seen as the cornerstone of building relationships with trusted adults. Young people emphasised that adults should remain neutral, be reflective around and avoid bias, and treat them with respect rather than pity. Young people told us they could tell when communication didn't feel open, they didn't feel adults were actively listening to them, and they didn't feel engagement was genuine.

“It's about having someone who actually gets it, not just pretends to listen”

When young people had established this style of relationship, they wanted to build on this to achieve something more, to be supported to feel heard, respected and understood by a range of adults and authority figures they interacted with. Young people didn't expect change to happen straight away or for adults they trusted to have all the answers, they wanted adults to help identify, create and grow opportunities and spaces for their views to be genuinely heard, respected and acted upon. This could start small, looking at decisions that could be made in the youth club the adult worked in for example, and grow into something bigger, like submitting evidence to the Senned, over time.

“build yourself up a good relationship and go and give these young people an opportunity to do something”

Young people shared three key reasons why they felt that these youth voice work were important:

It helps to catalyse and drive positive change

When young people are empowered to participate in national discussions and decision-making, they become powerful catalysts for positive change. Their fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and direct experiences can drive impactful solutions to complex societal challenges, ranging from violence prevention to mental health support and educational reform. Their involvement ensures that initiatives are forward-thinking and sustainable.

“I believe young people are the future and shaping the world and their experience and they bring in so much ideas and inspiring a lot of people. And I think young and old can learn from one another.”

The underlying ask from young people: feeling heard

It supports more effective policy and practice initiatives

Policies and initiatives designed without the input of those they aim to serve often fall short. Incorporating youth perspectives brings invaluable lived experience to the table, leading to policies that are not only more effective but also more relevant and responsive to the actual needs and challenges faced by young people. This collaborative approach ensures that solutions are genuinely fit for purpose.

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When they moved into that office, I and a couple of young people were invited to help them design it... especially when you are working with neurodivergent young people, you are going to have somebody who only will use a specific type of fork or who will only use square plates...they're only hard [to accommodate] if you don't go in with the idea that you are going to accommodate for them

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Representation can support young to feel empowered

Young people told us that feeling acknowledged, heard, and valued is fundamental to their sense of self-worth and agency. When young people see themselves represented in decision-making processes and feel their contributions are meaningful, it cultivates a powerful sense of empowerment. This, in turn, inspires them to become more proactive and engaged citizens within their communities, leading to sustained positive impact.

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it's being able to empower the young people to be heard and be able to voice their opinions

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The underlying ask from young people: feeling heard

To harness these benefits, young people felt that four key principles needed to underpin youth voice to make it effective:

Representation needs to feel authentic

True youth representation goes beyond tokenism; it means viewing young people as equal partners in discussions and decision-making processes. This requires creating platforms where their voices are genuinely heard, respected, and acted upon. It involves fostering an environment where young people feel comfortable expressing their authentic selves and contributing their unique insights without inhibition.

“I feel like a lot of teachers, if they do something wrong, they don’t apologise because they always think that they’re in the right. So I feel like if a teacher was to apologise to the child, they would get a lot more respect back and they’d gain their trust back because the child would then know that the teacher does care about them”

A culture of trust needs to be established

Actively valuing and integrating youth voices builds profound trust between young people and the institutions, organisations, and adults who serve them. This mutual trust is essential for effective collaboration and for fostering an environment where young people feel safe to share concerns, seek help, and engage constructively with established systems. It dismantles traditional hierarchies and fosters genuine partnership.

“If you want trust with young people, be honest, be truthful, and don’t give them false hope because they’re going to put everything into that hope and they’re going to trust you. But when you break that trust, that’s only going to make them go further into their shell”



The underlying ask from young people: feeling heard

Disparities need to be addressed

Young people we spoke to felt a significant gap between their ability and willingness to effect change and the level of engagement they experience from professionals and institutions with decision-making power to channel this energy. Bridging this gap is crucial. Meaningful youth representation empowers young people to understand that their voices do matter and can lead to tangible outcomes, encouraging greater participation and reducing feelings of disempowerment.

“ A big issue for a lot of people who are autistic is once people find out you’re autistic, a lot of people, especially employers, will usually treat you like you were a child when you’re not a child ”

Inclusivity and equity need to be central

Ensuring that youth representation reflects the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities within Wales is paramount. This includes young people from various ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, and neurodiverse backgrounds. Inclusive representation ensures that policies and interventions address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all young people, promoting equity and reducing disparities. From speaking to young people, we know that they want and NEED trusted adults to be...

“ culturally aware, culturally sensitive, understands people’s religious and spiritual boundaries, socially aware as well and the ability to be open minded, humble and listen. ”



Principle 1: Consistent Relationships

For young people we spoke to, the foundation of any effective and trusting relationship with an adult was trust. Young people consistently shared five key factors that underpinned these relationships and helped to build and sustain this trust:

- **Kindness and Compassion:** Young people consistently value adults who demonstrate genuine empathy, authenticity, and care.

“ I don't want to have to speak to a police officer and look at him like a big, bad police officer... him or her as a big police officer... I just want to talk to them as a human ”

- **Reliability and Consistency:** Trusted adults are those who are consistently present, predictable, and follow through on their commitments.

“ They're the ones who show up, every time, no matter what. You can count on them ”

- **Non-Judgmental Approach:** A safe space is created when young people feel they can share their experiences and feelings without fear of criticism or condemnation.

“ I need to know I won't be judged. That's the main thing. If I tell them something, it won't be held against me. ”

- **Honesty and Transparency:** While maintaining appropriate boundaries, trusted adults are truthful and straightforward.

“ I think the best thing about him [a trusted adult] was when he explained that anything that I say to him that he worries would be damaging he has to explain to the school. So, he always made sure that I understood that it's going to be going somewhere whether he likes it or not, that's his job, that's his responsibility. ”

- **Respect for Individuality and Confidentiality:** Valuing a young person's unique identity and respecting their privacy are crucial. While confidentiality has limits, particularly concerning safety, trusted adults discuss these boundaries clearly.

“ Learn what that specific person needs to calm down, calm them down and then go about figuring out, then problem solve what the problem is ”

Principle 2: Providing Effective Support

Young people recognised and valued the help trusted adults provide to support them in navigating challenges. To help young people most effectively, young people told us they wanted more support from trusted adults in four key factors:

- **Emotional Regulation:** Helping young people understand and manage their emotions, particularly during times of stress or conflict.

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"Trusted adults remind the kids, don't go looking for fights if you're annoyed at people"

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- **Constructive Advice and Guidance:** Offering practical, age-appropriate advice that helps young people make informed decisions and navigate complex situations.

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I feel that if they just help me just handle things. Get down on my level, you see, and just guide me through it. Like, go with me side by side, then that'd be good.

”

- **Prevention of Negative Behaviours:** By providing alternative perspectives and positive coping mechanisms, trusted adults play a crucial role in diverting young people from engaging in harmful activities or cycles of violence.

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...it's a lot about what's done wrong and what penalty are we going to give you for this; rather than what's gone wrong, okay why has that gone wrong, what can we do next time to change the outcome?

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- **Advocacy and Connection:** Acting as an advocate for young people and connecting them to additional resources or professional support when necessary.

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It's a good thing to have a more relaxed and safe environment for people to express their issues but you still need to take those issues seriously

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Principle 3: A focus on breaking down barriers

Young people we spoke to felt it was hard to establish trust, as they had sometimes felt let down in the past, felt their relationship with an adult had become or was becoming too imbalanced and/or felt that their needs and experiences were not fully understood or were even misunderstood. Young people who took part in our research shared that addressing these barriers to trust required deliberative and ongoing work from adults, centring four key factors:

- **Consistency:** Regular, predictable engagement builds confidence over time.

“...I need consistency because if I am like feeling extremely anxious, which I do from time to time, I need to make sure that if I have a trusted adult that we have got like a strategy in place. We've got consistency with that strategy”

- **Reliability:** Being dependable and showing up for young people in both small and large ways.

“[My teachers] they're really reliable. My Math teacher especially. She's always gone out of her way to ask if I've needed help with Math and offered to stay late and I really appreciate that.”

- **Emotional Control:** Maintaining a calm and composed demeanour, even in challenging situations, helps young people feel secure and understood.

“I thought she could at least pretend like she cared, but she didn't. She called me a lapdog. That's the only thing I've ever remembered from that therapist. That's not a good thing to remember. It was just mean.”

- **Active Listening:** Genuinely hearing and validating young people's concerns rather than dismissing them.

“I think showing me that what I say is completely open. I can say whatever is on my mind. That they're not going to judge me for anything. They're just going to be there to listen. They're not going to interrupt me and all of that stuff. Just showing that it's an open conversation. That it's not pressured.”

Principle 4: Mitigating against negative influences

Young people told us how they are constantly exposed to a myriad of influences, including harmful content on social media and negative peer pressures. They felt trusted adults could play a greater critical counter-balancing role to these negative influences. To support young people in navigating these influences, young people told us they wanted trusted adults to focus on four main factors:

- **Distinguishing reliable information:** Helping to filter out misinformation and harmful narratives and pressures.

“ everything being online now, increases stuff like bullying. You know, hate crime, everything like that. I feel like that wasn’t as much of an issue them growing up, because obviously they didn’t have social media. They wouldn’t have had the pressures of that. ”

- **Develop resilience:** Equipping them with the tools to resist negative peer pressure.

“ Of course you have to show resilience and keep moving on with life but you also need to be able to experience those feelings and be able to speak to people about it because if you keep it to yourself and if people are very like shut you down about it and don’t let you feel those emotions, it is going to cause problems later on in life. ”

- **Better understanding of consequences:** Guiding them to foresee the outcomes of various choices and behaviours.

“ ...the dangers of getting into certain crowds or just the dangers of violence in the street or in school... They could end up with a criminal record which is going to stay with them forever and it’s going to block so many things for them... it will stay with you for life and all that for a silly mistake. ”

- **Create positive self-identity:** Reinforcing self-worth and positive values in contrast to external pressures.

“ Yes. Yes. Yes, yes. Representation, 100% percent matters because it opens the doors of opportunities. It shows that someone like me can do it. If they can do it, so can I. And it really is all about showing that the exposure and the opportunities are available. ”

Our Social Action - Putting findings into action

Central to our approach to PAC, and as documented in this report, was to firstly undertake peer research to understand what support trusted adults could provide to protect young people across Wales from involvement in violence. We then took these insights and brought more young people into our team, in Changemaker roles, to work on putting these into practice through social action.

Reflecting the creativity and range of solutions needed to support young people affected by violence effectively, we planned and delivered a range of initiatives, including:

- A 22 Sonnets campaign to connect young people from the 22 counties of Wales to share their experiences and stories through creativity.
- Collaborated with Swansea Council on a poster campaign to help tackle violence against women and girls.
- Working with professionals across South Wales and young people to create a Trusted Adult Documentary to raise awareness around the need and role of trusted adults in different communities, and how we all have a role in the prevention of violence, helping move towards a Wales without violence.
- Collaborating with Wales Violence Prevention Unit and Public Health Wales on a Stop and Search survey, reaching 2091 people, 508 of whom were young people.

The centrepiece of our social action was our Trusted Adult Walk, co-created with young people to show what life is like for young people who have access to support and services as opposed to those who don't. The walk is to show the stark contrast between the two and shows life through a young person's lens. The walk was a way for professionals to be up close and see the real research conducted by the PAC Cymru team, where you could feel, hear, and see everything that young people had shared with us to make it as real as possible. The Trusted Adult Walks role is to make professionals aware of the different lives young people live and how, as a society, we can work together to ensure ALL young people feel seen and are safe.

We tested this with different groups across Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport and developed a learning toolkit to support adults and organisations working with young people. The toolkit aims to help them put themselves in young people's shoes and reflect on how their support can be more effective for young people affected by violence with diverse needs. You can access the toolkit through the QR code below.



Find out more about the
VAWG campaign with
Swansea Council

Access the Trusted Adult
Walk Toolkit here



Appendix - Perspectives from our team on leading PAC

Tesni

“ My two years on PAC Cymru have been deeply impactful for myself, others on the team, and the young people we've worked with, as we've platformed their voices through interviews we've conducted and supported them in accessing further support, education, and skills through workshops and events.

I feel confident in saying we've had a positive impact on the individual lives of many young people and that our work and research have pushed several stakeholders in a more positive direction for young people, given our work with police and crime commissioners across Wales, the Senedd, and local councils and organisations.

I'm very proud of the way in which our research has uniquely captured the voices and perspectives of young people in a way few other methods can, the way in which we record their full true experience and analyse that through our extensive interviews is more than what a survey can often capture and how we have conducted our outreach, by going where young people already are and working with them on their terms have allowed us to especially support and platform the voices of young people from many different backgrounds, financial statuses and identities - people who often can't get involved with more traditional methods of having their voice heard such as youth forums, but still have a voice of equal value that should be heard.

Our projects, like our podcast, workshops with stakeholders, and notably the Trusted Adult Walk, have undoubtedly informed the practice and policy of many stakeholders, such as the crime and justice plan for South Wales PCC, and the memories we have created will continue to affect how policies are informed well into the future.

How we've identified specific and actionable qualities in our research for trusted adults (engaged, proactive, qualified, understanding, transparent and inclusive) as well as highlighting different barriers to support from trusted adults such as uniforms, limited direct experiences and specific behaviours from trusted adults that can be seen as damaging to trust has created a better understanding for many of what it means to be a good trusted adult and effectively promotes the behaviours that really support young people.

This work has undoubtedly been pivotal for Wales and Welsh people, with a far-reaching impact for years to come. ”

Appendix - Perspectives from our team on leading PAC

Muna

“ I've been involved in PAC for 2 years, and it has been the most amazing time with meeting new people and tackling important themes that affect children and young people every day.

From the outset, it was clear that young people already have deep insight into the systems surrounding them—education, family, social services, peer groups, and digital spaces. As peer researchers, many of us had never been given such responsibility or trust before. Through this experience, we saw firsthand how empowering young people to lead and shape research unlocks their confidence, creativity, and commitment to change. Along the way, we heard many stories, some deeply personal, about how the presence or absence of a trusted adult had shaped someone's journey.

Through this project, I also began to see the deep connection between identity and vulnerability. Young people who are LGBTQIA+, neurodivergent, from ethnic minority communities, or growing up in poverty often face higher risks of violence, but they also face more barriers to being heard or supported. Listening to these stories, and sometimes sharing my own, reminded me why representation matters so much. We need to see ourselves reflected in the adults around us, especially those who are meant to protect or guide us.

This work is about more than preventing violence; it is about reimagining how Wales engages with its young people. The Trusted Adult Model is both a framework and a call to action. It challenges us to shift from reactive responses to proactive, relationship-based systems that value presence, consistency, and compassion. Every young person in Wales deserves at least one adult who sees them, hears them, and believes in their potential. ”

Appendix - Perspectives from our team on leading PAC

Anastasiia

“ I've been involved in this project since November 2023 as a peer researcher, and for nearly 2 years, our team has been exploring what trusted adults mean to young people in Wales. We focused on understanding trust, the barriers young people face in accessing support, and how trusted adults can support young people.

To engage with young people, we used creative methods (like focus groups, group interviews, surveys, and workshops) to make sure every voice was heard.

One of my favourite parts was the Trusted Adult Walk, where we presented our findings in a creative and interactive way, showing both the positive and negative experiences young people face on a daily basis.

For me, the most important outcome is seeing young people's voices heard. When young people are empowered to share their experiences and ideas, they are able to influence change and shape their communities for the better. ”

Alysha

“ I've been involved with this project since May 2024, starting out as a volunteer and falling in love with the research.

Trusted adults play the most pivotal role in a young person's life. We have focused on highlighting six key traits a Trusted Adult should have (according to a young person's definition of a Trusted Adult), identifying the different types of Trusted Adults and the barriers that young people face.

My favourite discovery was seeing young people's voices heard and felt through the use of our creative workshops, focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Each young person looks genuinely happy and free after participating, knowing that they wouldn't be judged within our safe space.

My favourite part of the Trusted Adult Walk was making sure the Trusted Adults understood the uncomfortable, vulnerable feelings young people can face daily. Through this, I educated them on how young people wish to be addressed, as the most important outcome for me was to bridge the gap of communication between young people and Trusted Adults. ”

Appendix - Perspectives from our team on leading PAC

Poppie

“ From being a peer researcher at PAC, I have learnt so much working with young people, and the team, I have gained so much confidence doing workshops and interviews. As a team, our main goal is to make sure young people's voices are heard in Wales, to make sure all young people have access to a trusted adult.

Young people have different methods for how they can share their experiences with us and getting their voices heard. They can conduct an interview where they are reassured that their personal information won't be shared with others, and that whatever they say will be kept confidential. Young people have the opportunity to send surveys or join a focus group.

By being in PAC for 2 years, I have really enjoyed being able to make a difference for young people and get their voices heard. I have met the most amazing team. I've been part of our 'Trusted Adult' documentary, where I shared my experiences so that young people would feel more comfortable talking about issues they face in the community or at home. ”



Appendix - Perspectives from our team on leading PAC

Megan

“ I've been with PAC for 2 years, and they have been some of the most impactful of my life. Getting to meet so many people and learning more about the struggles that young people face in Wales.

From the start, it was known that young people faced a lot of complex challenges. As someone who is LGBTQIA+, I knew some of the issues that young people from minority groups faced. It was interesting to be able to expand on this knowledge by interviewing other young people and comparing experiences, and what could be done to help improve these problems.

Through our topic, we were really able to see the effect that adults have on young people's lives. By providing a safe or harmful space, the young person can either grow supported or find themselves surrounded by issues. By also interviewing professionals who work with young people, we can provide a space for young people to have their say and state their needs, so the professionals can try to accommodate.

Getting to conduct interviews and give young people a voice through creative and impactful means felt like we were getting our point across to all who would listen. Running workshops and events, talking to people about their experiences and what we had learnt through our research really impacted people's perspective and made a lasting impact to facilitate change.

The past 2 years of PAC have been some of the most enjoyable and impactful of my life. I have loved every second of it and will carry what I have learnt with me. Rethinking how Wales interacts with young people and working to prevent violence and create a safer Wales for young people should be a goal for all spaces with young people. Resources such as the Trusted Adult Walk give insight into how this could be achieved and how it could benefit young people and create a better Wales for everyone. ”

Appendix - Perspectives from our team on leading PAC

Cameron

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Over the past four years working with PAC, I've grown so much in my skills, engagement, research methods, and approaches to working with young people, along with so much more. I first joined PAC during its first phase in 2021 as a peer researcher, where I played a role in shaping how the project looks and operates. Through lots of trial and error, we developed an effective way of engaging with young people across Wales.

I began as a part-time peer researcher, working directly with young people and interviewing them about violence among children and young people. From there, I moved into my current full-time role as Deputy Project Lead. Along the way, I've delivered workshops, interventions, interviews, and social action projects, all of which have helped me refine my practice. During this time, I also achieved my youth work qualification, becoming a fully qualified youth worker.

Another highlight has been bringing my passion for film and TV into the team, creating short films, documentaries, podcasts, and other creative content, as well as leading my own projects within PAC. Working with thousands of young people over the past four years has been eye-opening and inspiring, especially witnessing the significant impact we've made on young people, schools, police, violence prevention units, youth clubs, and communities across Wales.

A core focus of our work has been ensuring young people are genuinely represented in decision-making, and that all diversities are acknowledged and included both within and beyond our project. The positive response PAC Cymru has received shows just how important it is to young people in Wales. For many, it has provided support, resources, and guidance, while serving as a safe, youth-led space where they feel heard and valued.

It has been an absolute privilege to work alongside such an incredible team and to support so many young people whose lives we've touched. Seeing their progress, resilience, and voices being amplified has been the true highlight of my journey with PAC Cymru.

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Appendix - Methodology

Our approach

This report is based on two connected youth-led research projects involving 166 young people from across Wales. You can find a summary of these two projects, the methods used and the number of young people reached below.

Research project and question	Number of participants	Methodology
Overall question for project 1: How can children and young people who are experiencing or at risk of violence effectively reach out, build relationships, engage with and be supported by trusted adults to reduce the impact of violence among children and young people in Wales?	91	50 interviews and six focus groups/workshops.
Overall question for project 2: What is the impact of trusted relationships on the health, wellbeing and educational outcomes of disengaged young people from care-experienced backgrounds and marginalised groups, and what pathways facilitate these influences?	75	29 interviews and seven focus groups/workshops.

In these projects, our youth researchers facilitated numerous interviews—both one-on-one and within focus groups—that delved into the profound impact of trusted relationships. Through open-ended conversations, young people shared their personal experiences, shedding light on the complexities of navigating violence and seeking support. Our workshops provided dynamic, interactive spaces where participants could explore sensitive topics through creative activities, group discussions, podcasting, filming, and role-playing exercises. These sessions were designed to empower young people to articulate their perspectives on building trust, identifying reliable adults, and the pathways through which such relationships influence their health, well-being, and educational outcomes. The immersive nature of these interviews and workshops allowed us to gather rich, authentic narratives that directly informed our understanding of the overarching research questions for both research projects.

Appendix - Methodology

Commitment to Ethical Standards and Inclusive Research

Before we started each of our two research projects, we submitted our plans to The Young Foundation for ethical approval. Potential risks were carefully identified, such as the chance of triggering distressing memories, and were mitigated through appropriate support and oversight. We were also supported by The Young Foundation to reflect on how our research was going, to help us improve our research as we went through the process.

Alongside this ethics process, PAC Cymru took several measures that supported us to exceed targets and involve diverse groups of young people from across Wales throughout our work. Central to this was our youth-led approach which fostered environments where young people felt genuinely heard and empowered. PAC Cymru was driven by young peer researchers, who, through their relatable experiences and specialised training (including in cultural competency and trauma-informed practices), built trust and facilitated deeper engagement. We also tailored our workshops, providing translated resources, and employing creative engagement strategies, to support inclusive participation in young people.

Together, these measures support our research to reach young people from various backgrounds, including those with diverse lived experiences of violence (including victims and perpetrators), homelessness, the care system, those who are neurodiverse, young people from the LGBTQIA+ community, and young people from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds. This extensive engagement across diverse groups, representing the breadth of experiences within Welsh communities, was not only integral to the ethical robustness of our research but also ensured the authenticity and representativeness of our findings, significantly enhancing the utility and impact of our subsequent social action initiatives.