

TRAUMA-INFORMED ISLAND: YNYS MÔN

BACKGROUND

The Isle of Anglesey is in North Wales, with Holy Island the home the ferry port of Holyhead and gateway to Ireland. The beautiful landscapes and unspoilt coastlines, hosts colonies of sea birds and attracts 1.71 million visitors per annum (24 times the population of 68,900) who contribute £304m to the local economy [1]. Anglesey is an important hub for Welsh language and culture; 53% of people on Anglesey are Welsh speaking and 17% aged 15 and under [2].

THE COMMITMENT

Anglesey has been involved in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) awareness and trauma-informed projects and programmes for many years. These include the Police and Partners Early Action Together Programme and participation in a multi-site pilot of ACE enquiry in General Practices in 2018 led by Public Health Wales and Betsi Cadwalader Health Board. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board (PSB) Wellbeing Plan for 2023-28 commits to the PSB being trauma-informed and raising awareness in the system about the impacts of ACEs and trauma on children and young people, and the opportunities to prevent exposure, mitigate risks and address harms [3]. Anglesey is committed to preventing adversity and trauma with a focus initially on supporting the increasingly complex social, emotional, and mental health needs of some children and young people and reducing the demands on services and specialist placements that are increasing over time.

VISION

"Being a Trauma Informed Community isn't a bolt-on, an intervention or something that a few do. It's a culture. It's our approach. It's everyone."
(Service Manager, Children & Families Service)

Anglesey, as a trauma-informed island, seeks to promote connections and relationships to support those struggling with adversity or trauma in their lives. It is a whole system approach with a shared language, Tools and strategies are available to look beyond behaviours, and help effectively support the underlying needs of children and the community with empathy and compassion. It understands that anyone may have experienced adversity and trauma.

APPROACH: STRENGTHS BASED AND RESIDENCE FOCUSED

Residents in Anglesey have a strong connection with their community with 57.9% of adults feeling that they belong; a foundation for the development of a trauma-informed island [4].

The strengths-based approach builds into the connection, engagement, civic assets and the natural resources of the people and the island itself to create a positive psychosocial environment and a high level of community resilience (recognised by The Building Communities Trust (BCT) report in 2017) [5]. Communities on Anglesey are no different to other areas in Wales in facing challenges such as living conditions affected by poverty and increased complexity and disclosure of mental health needs following the COVID-19 pandemic [6]. A whole system, whole community, trauma-informed response is required.

"It's not just something that social services do, something that education does, it affects every single department within the council" (Portfolio Lead for Social Services).



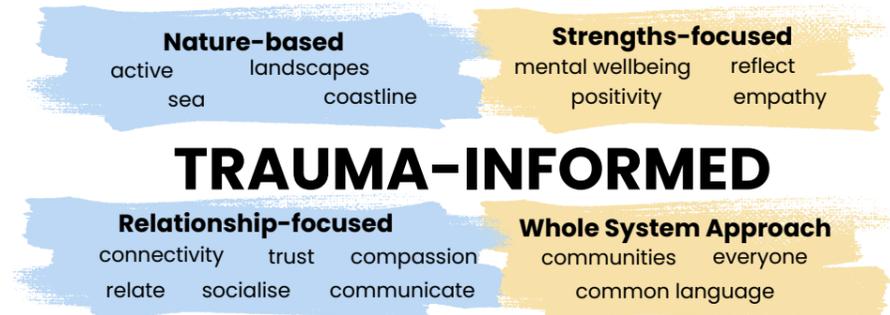
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Strengths and nature-based resilience focused work is happening across communities on the island.

- **Community Alliances** are part of the **place shaping programme** with voluntary organisation Medrwn Môn, stimulating conversations with people to identify assets, make connections and support action for a stronger and more resilient future.
- Smaller projects such as the **Small Woods** support children and young people's wellbeing and resilience through woodland, **nature-based activities**[7].
- **Môn Community Link** provide a **Social Prescribing** service for people over the age of 18 and families living on Anglesey who feel isolated, lack confidence, want to improve physical health and get support[8].
- Four volunteer led **'Good Turn' schemes** offer help to any person in the area who due to illness, incapacity or another need, could do with a hand performing **everyday tasks**.
- Developing and sustaining the **shared language** of trauma-informed through training and policy review across the Local Authority; including CAMHS in-reach and community based support services.
- Opportunities for trauma-informed practice provided by funding such as Uk Government Serious Violence Duty Grant

At an Island level, the Public Map Platform pilot will enable children and young people to be involved in decision-making about their places, supporting social, environmental, cultural, and economic maps that reveal inequality and chart progress towards them being more sustainable and resilient [9].

Collectively, this forms a strong foundation for the trauma-informed island vision.



TRAUMA-INFORMED

A TRAUMA-INFORMED ISLAND

"What I've noticed now... is the same language is being used by the school nurse, by CAMHS, educational psychologists, social services. The trauma-informed language."
(Looked after Children's Education Co-Ordinator)

Starting with looked after children in schools, the journey towards developing and sharing a common, trauma-informed language, has moved to include the local authority, youth services, foster carers and children and adult social services. Wider groups and community based organisations such as football and young farmer's clubs are now also getting involved. With community and nature-based programmes and services, underpinning governance from the PSB, and connection and relationships that build on the natural strengths of the Island at its heart, Anglesey is now well on its way to achieving its vision for its permanent, and transient, communities.

"An acceptance of people's different lived experiences, and an environment that's inclusive and wants the best for everybody. When we talk about everybody... we consider the children, but also the families and their lived experiences and the staff."
(Head teacher, Ysgol Gynradd Esceifiog)

Anglesey makes a strong case study for a strengths, resilience and nature-based approach to the implementation of the Wales National Trauma-informed Practice Framework, and Trauma and ACE (TrACE) community approach in a unique island setting[10].

[1] Bangor University (2020). Supplementary Tourism and Recreation Assessment ORML1938 Further Information 22_MOR-BAU-DOC-0001_Supplementary Tourism and Recreation Assessment.pdf

[2] Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) (2022). Community Services Transformation; ANGLESEY, Locality Needs Assessment 2021-22.

[3] Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board (2023). Anglesey and Gwynedd Well-being Plan 2023-28 3-5-3-216-1-Gwynedd-and-Anglesey-Well-being-Plan-2023-2028.pdf (llesiantgwynedd.com)

[4] Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) (2022). Community Services Transformation; ANGLESEY, Locality Needs Assessment 2021-22.

[5] Building Communities Trust (2023). Resilient communities: meeting the challenge of being at the margins Resilient+communities+-+meeting+the+challenge+of+being+at+the+margins+-+ENGLISH.pdf (squarespace.com)

[6] Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board (2022). Anglesey Well-Being Assessment 3-4-3-140-1-Anglesey-Well-being-Assessment-2022.pdf (llesiantgwynedd.com)

[7] Smallwoods (2019). <https://www.smallwoods.org.uk/en/about-small-woods/our-history/>

[8] Môn Community Link (2020). <https://www.medrwnmon.org/community-link>

[9] Public Map Platform (2024). <https://publicmap.org/en/>

[10] ACE Hub Wales and Traumatic Stress Wales (2022). Trauma-Informed Wales: A Societal Approach to Understanding, Preventing and Supporting the Impacts of Trauma and Adversity.

