

# Leisure facilities in the pontypridd area essay sample

[Sport & Tourism](#)



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## Introduction

This report has been compiled in response to a request from The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to gather information regarding the leisure facilities available to young people in different parts of Wales. The intention of this report is to give the WAG details, information and also recommendations to improve the Leisure Facilities on offer in the Pontypridd area. It is given from the under 18 years of age perspective. It is hoped that this will help to encourage extra funding for such facilities in Pontypridd.

## Main Findings

### Sport and Leisure

It was felt unanimously by the school council that there is a definite lack of sports facilities in the Pontypridd and surrounding areas. By the lack of sports opportunities, young people are not encouraged to take regular exercise. With the rising obesity levels in young people, reported on by both the U. K. Government and WAG, this will surely have an impact on their future health.

In the town of Pontypridd, including the areas of Maesycoed, Hopkinstown, Glyncoch and Cilfynydd there are no leisure centres. The closest being Hawthorn (approximately three miles from Pontypridd centre) Abercynon (approx six miles from Pontypridd) and Llantrisant (approx nine miles from Pontypridd), which show that sports/leisure facilities are not readily available, not only to young people but also to older residents. For a

catchment area with a population of approximately 30000, this is unacceptable.

However, in these few Leisure Centres it was felt that the general quality of their service is very good. Gymnasiums are up to-date and well resourced with appropriate equipment. Their swimming pools are clean and there are ranges of activities for young people to participate in, such as Squash, Badminton, 5 a side Football, Judo and Gymnastics to name but a few. There is no problem with the cleanliness or adequacy of the equipment.

There is however a problem with the cost of these leisure facilities. It can cost up to 3 for admission before taking part in any of the activities on offer. Under 14's are not allowed to use the gymnasium equipment and in addition there is an inadequacy of public transport to these leisure centres from all areas of Pontypridd. Buses are infrequent, likewise the trains, making it inaccessible for young people who are particularly dependent on public transport.

Ynysysangharad Park, situated in the centre of Pontypridd has a range of playing fields. There are football and cricket fields, free of charge except for organised team games. The tennis courts, basketball courts and golf courses are subject to a charge. They are of an extremely high standard and are well patronised. Recently the tennis courts and basketball courts have undergone renovation

However, concern has arisen over the quality and practicality of the outdoors swimming pool, which is situated in the middle of the park. It is in urgent

need of renovation and updating, if not demolishing completely. Besides the fact that it cannot be used all year round, but only in the summer months, it's standards are poor and it does not meet the requirements of the local community. There is anecdotal evidence of injuries and other health problems, such as skin complaints and gastric problems.

### Cinema and Theatre

In Pontypridd and the immediate surrounding areas there are very few cinemas. In Pontypridd town only one can be found – this is the Municipal Arts Centre.

The Muni, to use its colloquialism, was felt to be generally quite poor in terms of facilities on offer. It is not modern but housed in an old building and not very appealing to the young. With little space between seats, tall people especially, have a problem with access and egress. There is only one screen showing films, which is unable to meet the demands of the people in Pontypridd.

An exception to this is the Showcase Cinema complex, which is situated in Nantgarw, approximately six miles from Pontypridd. It is up to-date, modern, ascetically pleasing and appealing to the young with its bright lights and welcoming atmosphere. There is a games arcade, food stalls and multi screens showing the latest films. The cinema areas are roomy; good spaces between seats and comfortable with air- conditioning. Unfortunately, it is very expensive to view films at this cinema- £4 for under 15's and £5 for over 15's. The food and drinks are premium priced; way beyond the means

of an average teenager's allowance. In addition, it is situated in a business park and is beyond a safe and sensible walking distance from housing. Public transport can sometimes be the only solution to access this popular facility but it is not always reliable or practical as buses sometimes cease service before 9pm.

On the same site is the equally popular Bowlplex which as its names suggests is a bowling alley complex. Inside is a modern exciting environment and includes a bar serving alcohol after 9pm, a restaurant serving a variety of food, an extensive games arcade and 24 bowling lanes. It costs £3.60 per child (under 16's) for one game of bowling that approximately lasts for one hour. Again food prices are high, so considering all of this information; a night out at Bowlplex would amount to a substantial portion of a teenager's income. After 9pm under 16's may not be admitted due to the fact that alcohol is served, a rule thought 'ridiculous' by many of those surveyed who are the target group of this organisation.

A lack of theatre in Pontypridd is an issue that has arisen. Apart from amateur dramatics, very few professional theatre groups have ventured into Pontypridd. Cardiff, ten miles from Pontypridd, has several professional theatre companies, but for young people who do not possess their own transport this is unpractical. The ideal solution would be to have more live theatre in Pontypridd, easily accessible (and affordable) for young people. Experiencing live theatre is extremely enjoyable but under valued by the young. It is not perceived as 'cool'. By making it more accessible, hopefully the number of young people who attend live theatre will increase.

## Youth Clubs

Of the number of youth clubs surveyed, it was apparent that the general impression of young people towards youth clubs is that they are, too regimental and their steering committees are staffed by older people who are not fully cognisant of the needs of today's youth. While this may seem a damning condemnation of youth clubs in the area, there are a few which do have the requirements of their target group at the forefront of their organisation and planning,

The YMCA in the centre of Pontypridd town stands out as such. As well as a youth group, open most evenings, where teenagers can get together with their friends and do whatever they wish whilst being under the watchful eye of a leader. There are also organised events arranged on other nights. A range of dance classes, drama and martial arts are just a few of the activities on offer.

Where the youth of a community have interesting and worthwhile things to do, anti-social behaviour and youth crime decreases year on year, measured against other areas that do not provide this type of support.

## Libraries

The main library of the area is situated adjacent to the town centre. It is housed in a late Victorian/early Edwardian building. There are other satellite libraries in Ynysybwl and Rhydfelin but data on these is incomplete. The main library in Gelliwastad Road is bright and welcoming. It used frequently by a number of young people and has a good range of fiction, non-fiction,

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audio, periodicals, newspaper, reference works and Internet. However, the main drawback is that part of the library is situated on the first floor with no lifts. This makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible for the disabled to gain access to the full facilities on offer.

### Recommendations

- \* New Leisure Centre to serve Pontypridd town.
- \* Provide new indoor swimming pool in Ynysysangharad Park.
- \* Update Municipal Arts Centre and widen its target audience.
- \* Establish or invite professional Theatre companies.
- \* Encourage younger committee members for Youth Clubs.
- \* Improve access to main library.
- \* Improve frequency of transport.
- \* Subsidised travel.

### Summary

By improving the leisure and sport facilities in the Pontypridd area it will bring many benefits. These will range from increasing the self-esteem of young people, improve their health and decrease incidences of anti social behaviour and crime.

It will have both a social and economic impact on the area. Investment in today's teenagers will reap rewards in the future.