

2011 NCS Residential case study

We first heard about the NCS project from our school, we went to a career fair in west Kirby concourse, and it was there that we were introduced to the NCS project. One of the challenging parts was packing for the trip because we didn't fully know what we were going to be doing on the trip, in the end our bags were very heavy and full but everyone's were the same.

The first time we meet everyone was when the minibus was picking us up at grange road west sports centre. Everyone seemed nervous and hesitant about the fortnight we were about to undergo but once we were on the minibus and on our way everybody made friends and seemed to relax.

Our first week of the residential was in Wales, this was our away residential. We stayed at a placed called Ty'n y Berth Outdoor Centre which was right in the middle of the countryside, it was described as a "great environment". When we arrived we were given rooms, so we started to unpack and settle in to our new home for the week. Most of the rooms were reasonably big and, although they didn't have en-suite bathrooms, they were quite nice. In the "common room" there was a T.V which we watched "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" and a ping pong table which we set up using 4 tables and a ping pong net. The common room was the place we did most things such as a team building activities at the beginning



of the week. The first activity we took part in was getting different people to sign your sheet which had all different qualities on it such as brown hair, has

a sister, blue eyes etc. This activity really helped to break the ice between everyone as it meant we had to talk most of the group and get to know a little about each

other. Another activity which helped build our team work was moving across the room and back as a team on just 4 pieces of newspaper. This helped improve our teamwork as we had to



communicate and help each other in order for everybody to stay on the newspaper and so that the team didn't get disqualified.

On Tuesday the activities started and we were split into two groups which we would stay in for the rest of the week. The first activity we did was exploring an abandoned slate mine. This involved getting into pairs and helping one another through the mine. In the mine we had to be clipped onto a wire as there were some very steep drops which are quite dangerous to fall down. In the mine we also had to do an abseil in order to get out. This was a good task because it made some people face their fears of abseiling. When we were in the mine we all switched our head torches off so we were in complete darkness which for most was a new experience and it was quite a strange experience.

After the mine exploration we went gorge walking. For this we had to wear wellies and water proof's as we were



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going to and did get very wet. In the gorge we faced a number of tasks such as getting up waterfalls, getting over and under logs and just generally staying on your feet. One task we faced was getting across a quite deep part of water with your hands in front of you on the rocks and your feet behind you on the rock, forming a sort of bridge shape over the water. In this shape we had to attempt to move along the wall without falling in. This proved for many a lot harder than it looked. Gorge walking was



also an activity that encouraged team work and helping each other along the gorge.



The gorge walk was also an activity which helped us learn new skills and improve skills we already had, such as communication, rock climbing and team work, “as a team we had to work together”.

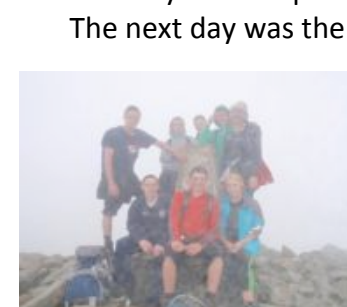
On Wednesday we did Rock climbing and Canoeing. For rock climbing we had to wear some quite embarrassing equipment, we had to wear a harness (which was quite tight) and a helmet as we were climbing on a real cliff face

not an artificial wall. We were in teams of 3 or 4 and all had a job to do. When one person was climbing another person would be strapped in at the bottom pulling the rope down so that the rope is tight for the person to climb this job is called belaying, this person would then have a back up holding the rope ready to pull the rope if anything went wrong with the belay.



The next activity was canoeing which was really fun but it was a challenge keeping the canoe upright and moving in the right direction. The canoes contained 3 people, who each had an oar to steer and make the canoe move. We learnt how to steer left and right and how to go backwards. We also learnt how to turn

without moving forwards. A task that we were set was for the team to stand up in the canoe without capsizing. This was not an easy task, because balancing was quite hard whilst you were paddling the canoe.



The next day was the mountain walk we had the choice of doing the easy, medium or hard route. Only a handful of brave people took on the challenge of the hard route and the rest did the easy or medium routes. Some people “didn’t like the mountain walk so much” but others found it to be “completely invigorating” and a “great achievement”. The mountain walk was a chance to overcome you

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weaknesses and help other to overcome theirs. It also gave us a chance to help each other along the way and work as a team to make sure everybody was ok and able to carry on.

On the last day we were given a choice of what to do either gorge walking again or the craft centre. The last day was quite sad as everybody had made friends and got to know each other but it was ok because we knew we had another week to look forward to.



The overall experience in Wales was “a laugh” and “busy, but a good experience”. The week in Wales was a very memorable and exciting time. The away residential gave everybody a chance to “try something new” and gave people a chance to “conquer fears”. The group was “friendly and supportive”, and everybody “had a laugh with new friend”. Also it was said to be “so much fun getting to know new people”. Wales was a “fantastic” experience and we would love to do it again.

To complete the 2 week residential we all went to Barnstondale on the Wirral for a week, following on from our first week in Wales. The week began the same as it did when we were going to Wales, the group meet up to either get a lift or we met at Barnstondale. The second week was easier for everyone because we all knew each other by now, which meant when we all saw each other again after the weekend it was much less awkward than it was on the first day. The week at Barnstondale started off with us finding out we all had to share one room, this didn't go down well with everyone but we all adapted to it by the end of the week, the boys and girls had a room each with 20 beds in each room, in our room all the girls ran to a bed and started to unpack and settle in.



The second week was going to be different to the first week, the first week was packed full of outdoor activities were as in the second week we were all going to be doing more indoor based activities like getting a food hygiene certificate and improving our cooking skills but we still did fun sporty activities like zumba, football, boxercise and lots more. Both the first week and the second week helped everyone to gain new skills and overcome fears or worries about things such as climbing and canoeing in the first week and cooking and sport skills in the second week. We thought that the food and being with new people was better in Barnstondale than the first week because we all knew each other better by now, but we enjoyed the activities and the environment we were staying in more during the first week in Wales, the whole project was well worth 2 weeks out of our summer holiday because without it we might not have gained new skills, made new friends or overcome any worries we had.



The best part out of the overall stay at Barnstondale was that the group got to know each other even more than the first week because the boys and girls had different rooms but the girls all shared a room and so did the boys, this gave the

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whole group a chance to properly talk to whoever they might not have in Wales during the first week, another good thing about Barnstondale that was an advantage over Wales was that the food and facilities were better than what we had at Ty'n y Berth Outdoor Centre.

The best part of our stay at Barnstondale out of the activities was the sports skills day that we did, a football coach came in to get us doing sporty activities, the best part of that day was when the group split up and went against each other in the games and races. Our personal favourite part of



that day was when the group split up into two and we played a game of indoor quick cricket, this showed how good or bad we were at sport but even if we were bad it



helped to improve our skills of doing different sports and we had different levels of ability in each team which evened us out fairly. On our last day at Barnstondale Courtney fry, the common wealth boxing gold medallist came in to show us how to do boxercise, we thought that the whole group enjoyed this because it didn't matter how good, bad or capable you were at doing sport because we made it as hard

as we wanted it to be. We didn't just gain physical skills we also gained intellectual skills on the project, the food hygiene course that we did was a chance to improve on our cooking skills and learn how to prepare food safely and hygienically, the group split off into teams of 3 or 4 and had to cook a 3 course meal, we made a pasta dish, a pizza and muesli bars with the help from the two cooks who came in to help us. Most of us did very well but in my case it showed how bad I am at cooking but it helped me to improve.

Meeting the NCS team and being a part of the project has been one of the best opportunities that we have ever had, I hadn't heard of positive futures or NCS before I took part in this project but now that I have I would recommend it to anyone because even if you are nervous about meeting new people or are worried about coming across activities that you would find challenging the NCS project would help you to overcome any of those worries because the whole experience has something that everybody will enjoy and things that you might not enjoy that much but I think this project could help you with anything you have trouble with. Our group that took part in the 2011 residential is the proof of this because we all had different levels of abilities in both the activities and meeting new people but in the end we all made new friends and gained alot of new skills.

By Sophie Holmes.