

A parent and child case study in a Cylch Meithrin (Denbighshire).

The fact that the cylch meithrin has been open in the Autumn and since January has been fantastic. It's been such a strain on us as working parents. Obviously work was still carrying on but the children were at home. Knowing that the youngest was able to go to the Cylch offered us a bit of normality. "Win Win" for everyone - she was allowed to see her friends and I had time to do my job.

It reduced the guilt in terms of work and in terms of parenthood. It was such a help. I don't know what we would have done otherwise, it was a "lifeline" - it would have been so much more of a "struggle" without the Cylch.

As for my child, I felt it saved her from being told too much about Covid - that she had been protected because she had been able to go to the Cylch and have a bit of normality. She was busy seeing friends and having fun. Maybe if she had only been at home, she would have had to be on the iPad and watch the television much more than usual.

In terms of behaviour, there was little difference as she was able to go to the Cylch. When she was at home, she needed to be quiet whilst my husband and I worked, and that's not normal for a small child. Children have no idea of time so after a while they need attention. It was great that the Cylch could open before the schools, this took a huge weight off my shoulders. This meant that I was then able to arrange working meetings during the periods she was at the cylch

This has really been a "lifeline" whilst trying to hold down a job – the Cylch has given her the opportunity to be a child and without thinking about Covid. Mothers may have felt the pressure more than the fathers in trying to juggle everything, eating healthily keeping the family healthy. When she was back at the Cylch, I was able to plan my work meetings so that they took place whilst she was at the Cylch. It felt as if someone had been in "survival mode" before that.

In terms of keeping safe, it did cross my mind if she would be safe mixing in the Cylch but it was a matter of balance, in reducing the pressure on us as a family as well, and also knowing that it would be safe in the Cylch as well.

I want to thank the Cylch Committee for allowing this to happen during this period and also to the Mudiad for supporting them. The committee has had to make big decisions and had a lot of responsibility, but I'm so grateful that the Cylch has been open.