V-POD is the latest multimedia youth provision being piloted within the Vale of Glamorgan. The V-POD is a single-decker bus specially converted to deliver activities and services for young people. This high tech, high spec, multimedia, entertainment and education centre... on wheels has been developed by the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service in consultation with local voluntary organisation, Vibe Experience. V-POD will be stopping at locations across the Vale of Glamorgan and all young people are welcome.

On board there are i-mac computers, internet, Xbox, PS3s, Wii, DJ mixing decks, Bose surround sound, plasma screens, DVD player, disco lighting, chillout area and much more! The V-POD can park up in lots of different locations, especially in areas where there is no other youth provision or activities. There will be professional tutors running creative, multimedia, music workshops, as well as qualified youth workers to provide information and activities on youth issues, such as good citizenship, community respect, healthy lifestyles and anti-social behaviour.

Sy Joshua (VOGC Officer with responsibility for the project) said,

“We have listened to the voices of young people telling us they require better access to youth provision during school holidays, weekends and in areas close to where they reside. We also recognise that complicated youth issues, increases and changes to the Vale youth population cannot be efficiently tackled by attempting to operate a youth centre in every electoral ward.”

“We aim to utilise this new mobile youth provision as a platform to complement existing youth provision, undertake informal activities/ events/ workshops in areas of little or no youth provision during school holidays and weekends. In addition, we aim to involve young people in existing community events and initiatives through the mobile provision.”

“We have now entered the pre-launch phase, trialling operations and organising previews. We aim to launch the V-POD in June 2010, as we are still waiting to hear about funding applications which will support its operation.”

Young people have been heavily involved throughout the development of the project, providing ideas and concepts for the overall design and use of the V-POD. A name and logo competition was held last year to see what young people would like the bus to be called. Two designs entered by Kentaro Abe-Donovanand Jack Evans from Cowbridge Comprehensive School provided the fantastic ideas and designs to create the name and logo. Kentaro and Jack were invited to have a preview of the bus, looking at how their designs had been used and to see how the final V-POD looked during a pilot scheme supported by Community Focused Schools. After having a guided tour of the V-POD, they had a chance to play on the consoles, internet computers, and DJ equipment. Kentaro and Jack also won a goody bag of prizes worth £150! They included a video recorder, iPod; iPod voucher and DVD voucher each.
The pilot scheme was the first opportunity for young people from across the Vale of Glamorgan to come on board, have a look at the conversion and voice their opinions on activities they would like to see the V-POD offering. The pilot scheme took the V-POD to three different locations, Cogan Leisure Centre, St Athan, and Cowbridge Leisure Centre, attracting over 150 young people. One young person said "It's definitely the best bus I have ever seen in my life...it's better than my house!". Many young people felt it was a good provision to have in an area like the Vale of Glamorgan - where access to activities and services can be difficult for young people. "If I had nowhere to go - I would come here" said one young man.

The three pilot days allowed the Vale Street Team to show some lucky young people the variety of different things the V-POD could offer. A group of young people from St Athan said "It's great to get all the youth into good stuff in the nights, it'll keep kids off the streets, keeping it clean - I hope the bus comes back soon!".

If you are an organisation/service working with young people in the Vale; get in touch before June 2010 and be a part of our prelaunch activities. We may be able to help you extend your reach, as there will be much opportunity for collaboration; publicising and promoting yourselves; and involving young people in your activities and events.

For further information on the V-POD project, including pre-launch activities and events speak to Tara Morris the Street Based Co-coordinator on 01446 450217 or Ian Bazzard the Mobile Provision Co-ordinator on 01446 733622.