**Position Statement**

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**Treated as Equals**

Being treated fairly and equally to people without learning disabilities is crucial to our health and wellbeing.

Equality is critical to enable us to play an active part in accessing the services we need to fulfil our wellbeing outcomes.

Being treated fairly and equally is promoted in key legislation such as the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

It is also an important part of the Social Model of Disability, which is backed by Welsh Government.

But people with learning disabilities are still not viewed as equals in Welsh society.

Lots of service providers and the public in general do not see us or treat us as equals.

This has a negative effect on our confidence and our wellbeing.

Not being treated as equals causes us to feel like our voices are not heard.

Bad things can also happen if our voices are not heard and we are not taken seriously.

It is important that we learn lessons from scandals such as Whorlton Hall and Winterbourne View, and this can only happen if people listen to the voices of People with Learning disabilities

Negative attitudes about our value as people with learning disabilities make us feel like we do not matter. Like we do not have a place as equal citizens who have an active contribution to make in society.

We can play a key and active role in Welsh society and as contributing members of the community, as employees, and tax-payers.

**There are lots of ways we are not treated equally:**

We are not treated equally in healthcare. People do not talk to us in a way we can understand. They often talk to our parents or carers instead of us.

People fear the unknown and do not want us to take risks. When people over protect us, it does not make us feel equal.

People without learning disabilities do not have to ask to take a risk. We are adults, we should not have to ask either.

We have equal rights and freedoms and we want them respected.

People often treat us like children. We are not seen as sexual beings and we are often stopped from having opportunities to have meaningful relationships.

Inside of People First we are treated equally. We are valued and seen as capable. Outside of People First a lot of people do not think of us as being capable.

In order to be seen as equals, we need help to change attitudes, and we need help with opportunities which allow us to demonstrate our worth and contributions to society.

We call on Welsh Government to ensure that self-advocacy groups such as People First continue to receive funding, so that we can continue to grow our skills and confidence to have our own voices heard.

We call on Welsh Government to continue to build on their Learning Disability Improving Lives Programme, and to ensure that legislation such as the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act, and Well-being of Future Generations Act are doing what they set out to.

We call on Welsh Government to build on their commitment to projects such as Engage to Change as these types of projects give us opportunities to show our worth and can change negative attitudes about us.

It is only through having opportunities to show how we can contribute to society, that we can challenge negative attitudes about learning disability.

**NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!**

Simon Richards, Chair, All Wales People First National Council.

In consultation with the All Wales People National Council.

All Wales People First

