**Position Statement**



**Coronavirus: Support and Care needs**

The Coronavirus crisis has affected the services that people with learning disabilities receive in Wales.

During lockdown services have been suspended or changed.

People with Learning Disabilities understand that these challenging times mean we have to do things differently.

These means sometimes having to do without some things we used to enjoy.

However, many decisions about changes to services have been made without involving people with learning disabilities. This is not acceptable.

This includes the circumstances around the closing and re-opening of day service provision and:

The shielding of all people with learning disabilities in care settings to protect other vulnerable people who use the services.

Whilst we recognise the situation regarding shielding has been necessary, it has affected people with learning disabilities disproportionally to other citizens in Wales.

Many people with learning disabilities are still not able to access their local communities, friends and families. This is even though Wales is now in the Amber phase of the Covid epidemic.

This has caused many people with learning disabilities to be isolated and lonely and to suffer with anxiety and depression.

It is vital that the key principles of Voice, Choice and Control as outlined in the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales (Act) 2014 and other key Welsh legislation are not lost during the Coronavirus epidemic.

Local authorities and care providers still have duties towards the wellbeing outcomes of people with learning disabilities.

People with learning disabilities should still have a key say in the decisions that affect their lives. This includes changes to their services.

In order to do this people with learning disabilities need clear accessible information to keep them informed.

People with learning disabilities should have access to information at the same time as any other citizen in their locality.

They must also be involved in decisions taken at the onset.

We ask all care providers and commissioners in local authorities to take this on board.

We ask them to consider the impact on wellbeing and human rights of people with learning disabilities when making their decisions. This is just as important as protecting people from Covid 19.

We ask everyone to take personal circumstances into consideration.

We ask for clearer communication between Welsh Government, Local Authorities, Public Health Wales and Care service providers to make it clearer to people with learning disabilities who are shielding what their rights are.

We ask all local authorities and care providers to remember that they still have well-being duties towards people with learning disabilities. Even if the way this is delivered will be different.

We ask everyone planning, funding or designing services to remember one simple phrase:

‘Nothing about us, without us’

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

