



Editorial

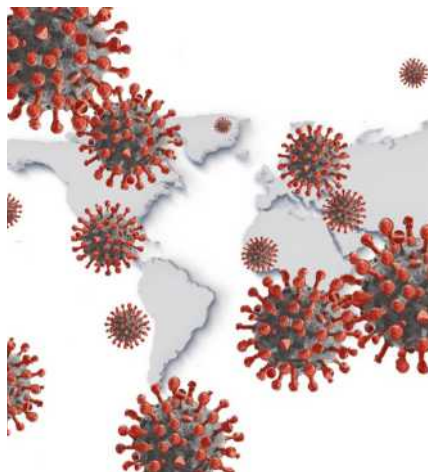
Welcome to the Autumn 2020 edition of Talk back.

Despite the continued challenges which Covid brings, we have continued with our work on the new 2020 - 2023 MIRROR Strategy. We are still doing lots of work to make sure your voices are being heard. The last National Council Meeting of 2020 took place through Zoom on 3rd November. Thanks to reps Michelle Williams - Conwy; James Lewis - Denbighshire; James Andrew - Gwynedd; David Whittle - Powys; Kate Bass - Monmouthshire; Alex Perry - Newport, who are all retiring from the National Council this year after serving their maximum terms in office.

We look forward to working with you in other ways in the future and to meeting the new area reps in 2021.

This is our last published edition of Talk Back before the end of 2020. This year has brought many unforeseen challenges for us all. We are looking forward to a restful Christmas break, and hope to be back energised and ready to tackle 2021 with you! Sending very best wishes to you all.

The AWPF team



The Team

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Through our eyes photography project



Lucy and Natasha have been busy on the Through Our Eyes photography project. We held 2 workshops at AdFest in October. Members shared their ideas for the project. You told us what your perfect world would look like.

Members also drew their own memes. Memes are pictures with words that share a message. We held another workshop in December. Thank you to everyone who came along and took part.



We announced the winners of our photography and videography competition. The entries were brilliant and it was very hard to pick the winners.

We wanted to give everyone a prize! David Whittle won the photography competition.

Ffion Poole won the videography competition. Congratulations and thank you to everyone who took part.



Lucy has been interviewing members on Zoom. Members have shared their stories and given us a lot to think about.

We will share short bits of members' video

Through our eyes photography project



interviews in our discussion film.

We will share some videos on social media in the future.

Your stories help to raise awareness about people with learning disabilities.

Telling your story is a way of having your voice heard.



Do you have a story or experiences you would like to share?

You can get in touch with Lucy Hinksman if you would like to be interviewed.

You can email Lucy on

Lucy@allwalespeople1st.co.uk

You can follow us on social media and share your ideas with us.

We have a Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/ThroughOurEyes0>

We are on Twitter.

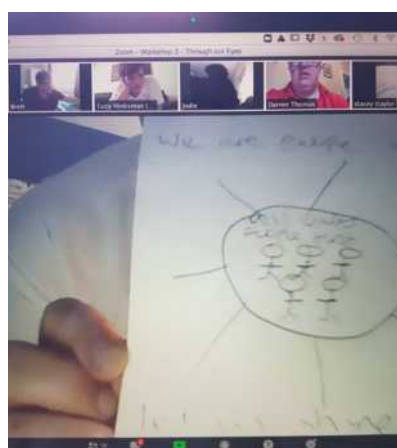
<https://twitter.com/ThroughOurEyes0>

We are on Instagram.

<https://www.instagram.com/throughoureyes0/>

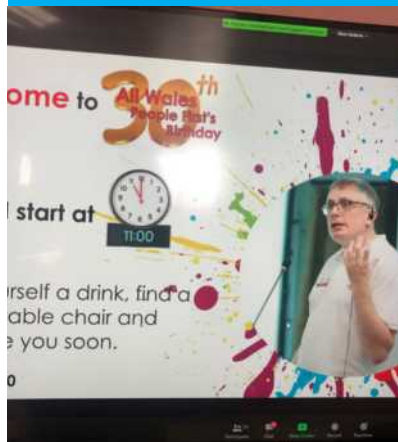
You can email Natasha on

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Article by Natasha Hirst

AdFest - 30th Birthday Bash



This year's AdFest, was quite different from from the way we've done them before, but what a day it was.

We hear the online Hootenanny partying and karaoke went on well past midnight!

What a great way to mark All Wales People First's 30th Birthday year, and thanks to all who helped the event go off with a bang.



During the day time sessions we ran five workshops:

Research workshop

In the research workshop, you told researchers Jan and Claudia how well you think we are delivering our MIRROR strategy. You told us that your top priorities for our work going forward are: Equal opportunities; relationships; Independence; employment.



Innovate Trust Insight app workshop.

In this workshop, Innovate Trust gave us a tour of an app they designed. The Insight App is a safe social media platform for people with learning disabilities and their organisations.

AdFest - 30th Birthday Bash



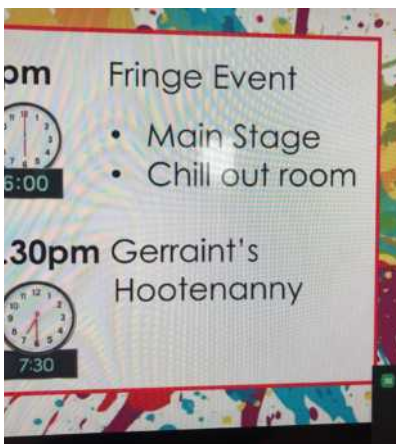
Lots of activities happen every day on Insight. There was lots of interest in the app.

Manifesto Cover workshop

In 2021 All Wales People First will be publishing a political Manifesto document which has been written by the National Council. It tells Welsh Government and the rest of Wales, what needs to happen to make things fairer for people with learning disabilities.

In the workshop, our full members shared their ideas about a design for the front cover of the Manifesto document.

The agreed design meant that everyone's contribution can be used to create the cover. We can't wait to share the final design with you in January 2021.

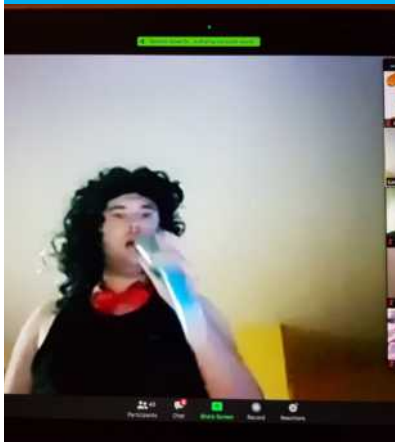


National Centre for Mental Health (NCMH), Cardiff University workshop

The NCMH is worried about the effects that the Covid 19 pandemic is having on people with learning disabilities.

The workshop facilitators asked members how

AdFest - 30th Birthday Bash



coronavirus has affected their work, volunteering, day centres and their general wellbeing.

This workshop helped to gather some evidence that we can use to ask people in power to make the right changes so that people with learning disabilities can live better lives which they choose for themselves.



Through Our Eyes Photography Project Workshop

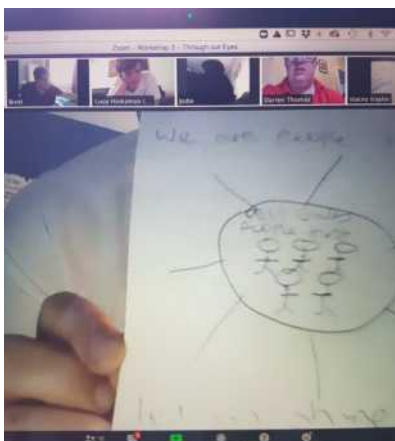
Lucy and Natasha helped members to think about and discuss positive images of people with a learning disability in photographs and the media

Members talked about what their perfect world would look like.

Evening events

After we had time to eat our tea, lots of you joined us once again for some evening Chair Tai Chi at the fringe event, followed by Gerraint's Hootenanny.

Keep a look out for our full AdFest report for more about what went on.



AdFest - 30th Birthday Bash



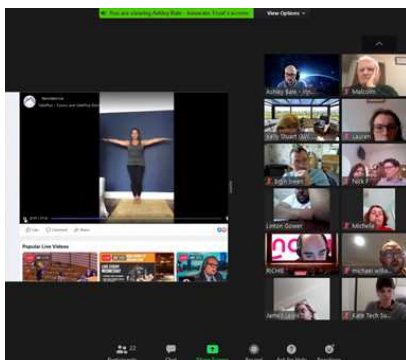
All Wales People First @AllWalesPF

“Only when people know their rights and are heard can change happen [@JaneHutt](#) [#AdFest2020](#)”



All Wales People First @AllWalesPF

Some great comments in the chat to kick the event off. Welcome everyone ‘this is my favourite Zoom meeting ever’ [#AdFest2020](#)



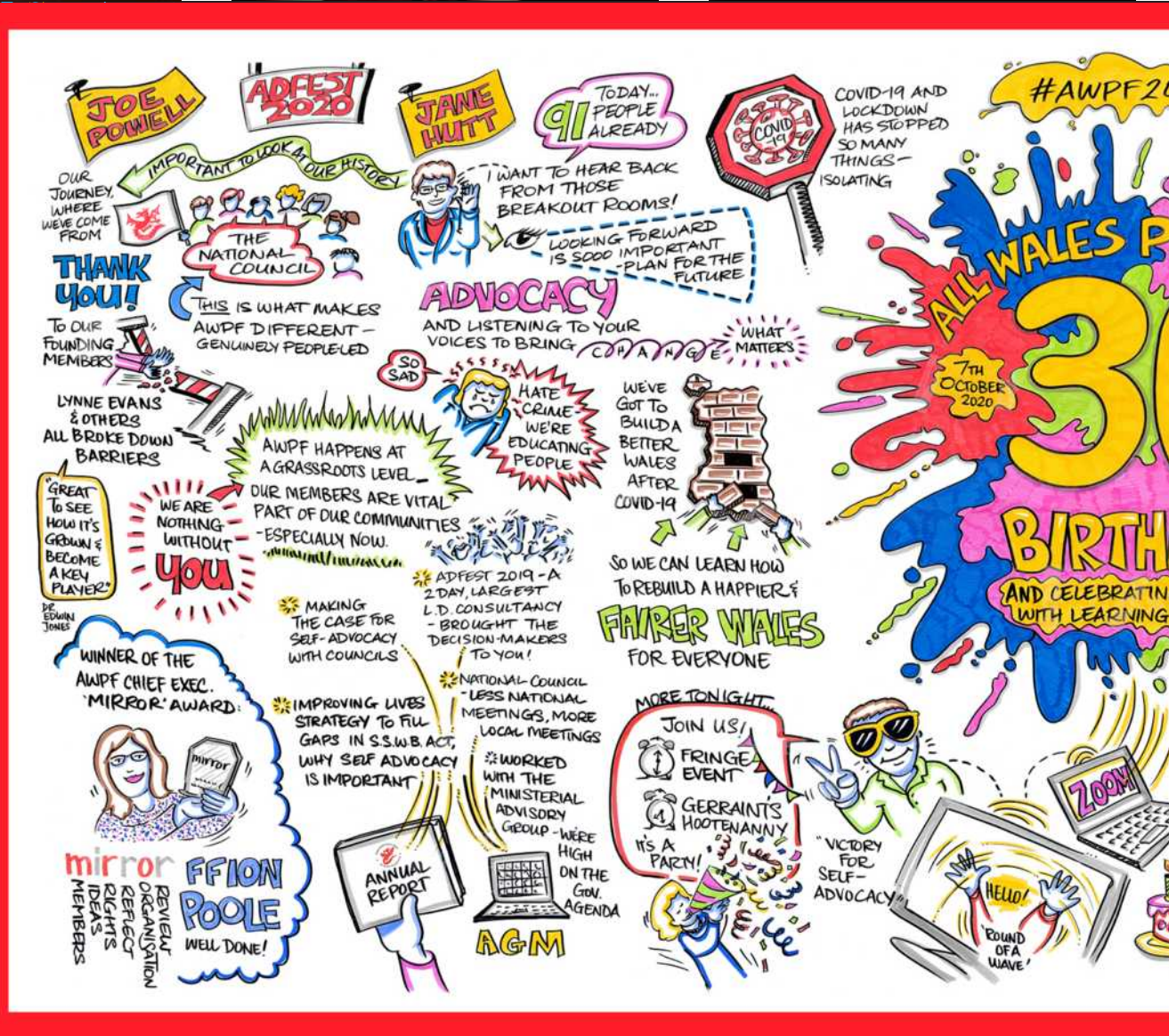
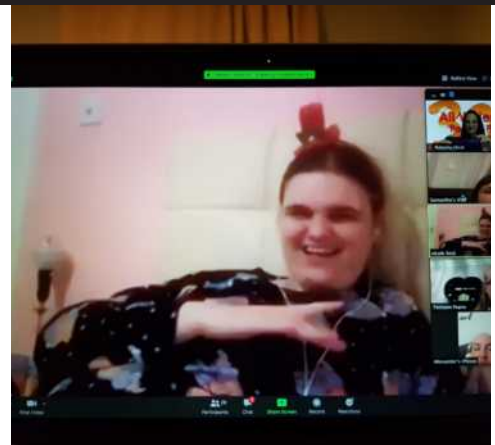
All Wales People First @AllWalesPF

“Enjoying hearing about Innovate Trust’s work to create a safe, inclusive app for people with learning disabilities [#AdFest2020](#)”



All Wales People First @AllWalesPF

“Love this quote by Birthday Bash photography workshop facilitator, Lucy “when you focus a camera, focus on the positive” [#AdFest2019](#)”





Regional update



How the coronavirus pandemic has affected you

Coronavirus has changed the way we all live and work. We haven't been able to go out as much and a lot of group activities have moved online, over the phone or by post. Some groups are busier than ever.

Cardiff People First is a winner in the Coronavirus Leaders List. They have won an award for all the work they've continued to do throughout the pandemic.



They quickly moved all their projects online. Members suddenly had to navigate their way through video calls and instant messaging. Not everyone was already online, and even those who were still had to get used to this new way of working.

It wasn't easy. It meant a change in work routine and making sure they had the right space and technology at home. They also had to find the confidence to be online, star in video conferences and type instant messages. But they were there to help and guide each other and they've also secured funding to run new projects.

People First Bridgend have been getting in the swing of things with online groups. They



Regional update



received some funding from BAVO for purchasing tablets for members to keep them more connected.

Some members have been back doing their voluntary work in the community including, food bank support, charity shop work, dog walking and working at a local plant nursery. Their advisory team have been meeting every 2 weeks on a Wednesday. Some of the things they have done are:



Voted for a new national council rep – Raymond will be the new rep and Tina will be supporting as deputy.

They have learnt about the history of learning disabilities

They celebrated Remembrance Day

They have taken part in a consultation about how the local council should spend their money

They have run Halloween quizzes

And through all of this..... they have got to know each other better!



Newport People First have opened a new office in Church Road, Maindee. They have comfortable spaces for their members to work in. They also have a chill out room called the

Regional update



Cwtch for some peace and quiet away from desks.

Members have been in for a cuppa and catch up. They are looking forward to working and meeting there in future.

For Cwm Taf People First and Blaenau Gwent People First, what a year it has been so far!

Since March 2020 they have secured funding to purchase, set up and provide iPads to nearly 100 members across the three counties. They have trained people on how to use them on their doorsteps and bought software to provide IT support from a distance.



They have taken part in campaigns such as:

Celebrating the NHS VE Day

Learning Disability Week - Friendships

Mental Health Week – Kindness

Scammers Awareness Week

Employability Week

Volunteers week

Independence Day

They have written a poem and made a film about kindness in lockdown which you can see at <https://vimeo.com/442671324>

They secured funding for members across



Regional update



RCT and Blaenau Gwent to deliver self-care packs to communities.

They have also received funding to employ 2 members, Bradley O'Keefe and Darren Thomas to work on a joint project with

People First Bridgend to research "My Brilliant Life – My Day My Way". A report will be written and given to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board.

Members have been involved in co-producing and co-designing day centres, daytime opportunities and holding conversations about Supported Independent Living Services across Blaenau Gwent, RCT & Merthyr

Members in Merthyr have co-produced an advocacy strategy. Members in RCT are making a video and producing a Cwm Taf People First Learning Disability Charter.



Caerphilly People First have been running quiz and bingo nights jointly with Cwm Taf. These have been a great success with people from all parts of Wales joining in. They have monthly check-ins with the Welsh Ambulance Service and regular meetings

Regional update



and video calls with volunteers.

Ffion Poole their coordinator won a MIRROR award for showing exceptional leadership skills. Ffion also won the Life in Lockdown videography competition for the Through Our Eyes Project.

And things have been just as busy in North Wales.



The **SOUL Group from Wrexham** have been meeting every week on Zoom. They have been using social media in new ways to get our voices heard and get new members. The group has also decided to join an organisation who support different types of community groups to make change happen. This means they will be able to join up with other people and have a stronger voice. It also means that other groups will get to work alongside people with learning disabilities and see how great they are!

Denbigh Self-advocacy Group made the jump to be 'Digital Self-advocates'. Meetings have been held all the way through the lockdowns. Here are a few examples of what has been going on:



Regional update



Members took part in the Hate Crime survey. Dr James Davies – Member of Parliament and Mark Isherwood Member of the Senedd listened to members talk about how the pandemic is affecting people who need support. Members spoke at a Senedd meeting about disabilities and have been invited back.



Members learned how to speak up and give our opinion to others on Zoom. They also learned more about social media and how to work better together in North Wales. They learned more about how politics in the UK works.



Last year in Denbighshire an LGBT+ Self-advocacy Drop-In was set up. The group has been meeting every month online and now includes members from across north Wales. They have learnt about Gig Buddies launching in the area. They have had a workshop about healthy relationships, rights, dating and sex.

Article by Philippa Davies

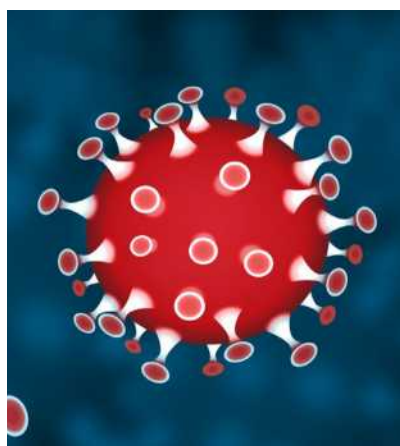
Would you like to take part in a study?



Coronavirus and people with learning disabilities: a study of the lives of people with learning disabilities through the Coronavirus pandemic

There is a new team of university researchers working in the UK.

Researchers ask people questions to find out new information.



The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has meant a lot of changes for everybody.

The researchers want to ask adults with learning disabilities about these changes and coronavirus.

They will tell the people who can make things better for people with learning disabilities what they find out.

The study officially launched 16th November 2020



If you want to find out more about this study, have a look at this website:

www.covid19learningdisabilities.co.uk

Linton Gower



Our dear friend and Colleague Linton Gower passed away suddenly on Wednesday 2nd December 2020.

Linton was involved with All Wales People First over many years. He dedicated a lot of his time to the organisation, and was the Vice Chair on the National Council for 2018-2020.



Linton's passing is a huge blow to self advocacy. We will miss his fabulous sense of humour and of course how gentle and considerate he always was. Linton's legacy will certainly live on through the self advocacy movement.

"It is difficult to do justice to a man like Linton, but what speaks volumes is that his passing has provoked hundreds of social media comments, phone calls and correspondence from people all across Wales who knew him as a friend, a colleague, a community member or simply a person who always stopped for a chat" Anonymous quote - The Leader, Noth Wales.

Our thoughts are with Linton's family and friends at this sad time.



facebook®



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - Joe Powell
November 12

Joe Powell on the evening BBC Wales Today News

12th November 2020

Joe Powell, from All Wales People First, an organisation which supports people with learning disabilities, said the guidance was "positive" but he is frustrated it has taken so long to be published.

He is also concerned it is "quite woolly" about exactly how decisions will be made on things like extended households.

Mr Powell believes there has been a "fundamental breach of human rights" of people with learning disabilities during this pandemic.

"I believe that the approach taken has been overly prescribed," he said.

"It has not been the least restrictive or proportionate to the situation.

"People have been isolated, they've been lonely, there have been issues of people with mental health difficulties increased by this, who have been suicidal, who have not been able to fulfil their wellbeing duties as promoted under the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act and other key Welsh Government legislation."



Round up



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - Joe Powell
4 December

This morning attended the Autism Employment Forum, co-chaired by our very own Geraint Jones-Griffiths. The event looked at the importance of employment for people with autism, the importance of employers engaging in the social model of disability to make it happen. Ken Skates AM was in attendance. Employment is especially important with the current state of the economy and we need to make sure that people with autism and learning disabilities aren't casualties

