



Introduction

All Wales People First was established in 1990 as People First Wales, so that people with learning disabilities and self-advocacy groups in Wales could have their own national voice.



Since that day we are still the only national organisation in Wales, that is led by people with learning disabilities. All Wales People First believes that self-advocacy is the best form of advocacy and the ultimate preventative service.

Self-advocacy is about speaking up for yourself, making your own decisions. Self-advocacy is key to ensuring that people with learning disabilities are valued and included as equal citizens in Wales. Facilitating the development of self-advocacy skills is essential for making sure that people with learning disabilities are included in all policy areas:



Our mission

All Wales People First is the united voice of self-advocacy groups and all people with learning disabilities in Wales. It shares knowledge and information to achieve equal rights and a positive image.





This Manifesto

The Manifesto was written by us, members of the All Wales People First National Council during 2020 and 2021.

We want Members of the Senedd to understand what is important to us and other people with learning disabilities in Wales.

We need the new Senedd to understand how we would like to work with them.

The most important things for us for the 2021 election are:

1. **Self-advocacy**
2. **The right to choose how we identify ourselves**
3. **Employment**
4. **Transport**
5. **Equality**
6. **Health**
7. **Brexit**
8. **Reducing restrictive practices**

1. **Self-advocacy**

People with learning disabilities have the right to speak for ourselves.

Voice, choice and control are key parts of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act.

The role of advocacy is highlighted in the Act, which we





welcomed. However, the introduction of Independent Professional Advocacy contracts, which places emphasis on one to one advocacy rather than self-advocacy, is threatening our voice. Self-advocacy can only be effective if facilitated self-advocacy groups, like People First groups, receive core funding.



Facilitated self-advocacy helps us to know our rights, speak up for ourselves and be equals in Welsh society. It gives us a voice. Self-advocacy is the ultimate preventative service for people with learning disabilities in Wales and needs to be seen as an essential service.



If we lose our voice we may be forced to rely on parents, professionals and support workers to speak for us. This would put our rights back to before the All Wales Strategy of 1983. It would mean that the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act would take our voice away. We need to make sure this does not happen. If we do not take action, we WILL lose self-advocacy for people with learning disabilities in Wales.

Call to action

- We call on Members of the Senedd and Local authorities to work together to ensure self-advocacy is sufficiently funded.





2. The right to choose how we identify ourselves

Over recent years there has been much discussion about the terminology used to describe people with learning disabilities.

Learning difficulty, cognitive impairment, learning difference are just some of the alternatives helpfully suggested by people without learning disabilities. We understand that these terms might be more in-line with the Social Model of Disability, but so is taking control and autonomy.

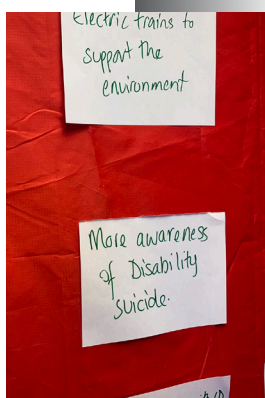
Nobody but a person with learning disabilities has the right to say what language describes our impairment.

The People First movement in Wales is the closest thing we have to a national consultation with people with learning disabilities. All Wales People First members review the terminology we use every 3 years.

In 2018 we chose 'People with Learning Disabilities'. We want our decision to be respected and listened to.

Call to action

- We call on Welsh Government and Local Authorities to use the terminology chosen by people with learning disabilities.





3. Employment

Only 5.6% of people with learning disabilities are in paid work but many more people with learning disabilities want to work.

Working is important to our dignity and wellbeing. It is an important part to us being a part of the community and making a contribution to Welsh society.



We are still excluded unfairly from employment, more than any other group in Wales.

It is important that employers in Wales create opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Many people with learning disabilities have succeeded in the workforce when reasonable adjustments have been made, such as easy read information in adverts and interviews, support to learn a job and paid internships.



Calls to action

- We call on Welsh Government to support more paid employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities in Wales.
- We call on Welsh Government and Local authorities to work with people with learning disabilities when writing or reviewing employment policy.





4. Transport

People with learning disabilities rely on public transport. An accessible, safe and affordable transport system is vital if we are to access our communities and reduce isolation. As much as we welcome the push for Active Travel to reduce the impact on the environment, we are concerned that less will be spent on good public transport.



Changes to the transport system, disproportionately affects us, and yet consultations are not always adapted so we can take part. Very few people with learning disabilities learn to drive or cycle, so a simple change to a bus route can have devastating consequences for us, especially in rural areas.



We rely on public transport to see our friends and family, get to work and volunteer. Without it, we cannot play an active role in Welsh Society as promoted in key Welsh legislation.

Calls to Action

- We call for equitable access to transport across the whole of Wales. This includes
 - o Continued access to bus passes so we, and our companion if needed, can access buses and trains.
 - o Accessible information about services and changes to services.
 - o Well trained staff who can ensure our safety.
 - o Inclusion in designing transport legislation.



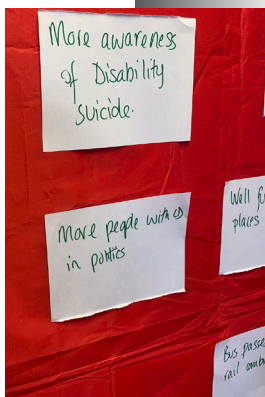


5. Equality

It is important to us that we are treated as equals. People with learning disabilities are still often treated as second class citizens or children. We are adults, we can make decisions for ourselves.

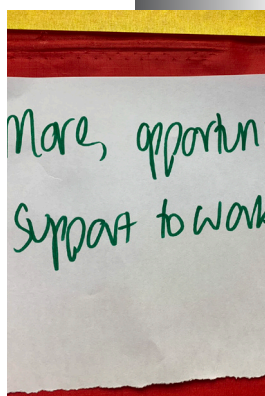
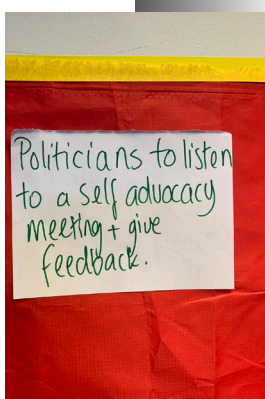
There are far too many examples of how people with learning disabilities are not treated fairly across Wales. Inequality affects all areas of our lives – education, relationships, employment, accessing information and more.

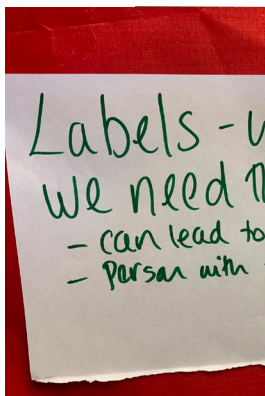
We think that including the UN Convention of the Rights of Disabled People into Welsh law will help to tackle these inequalities.



Calls to action

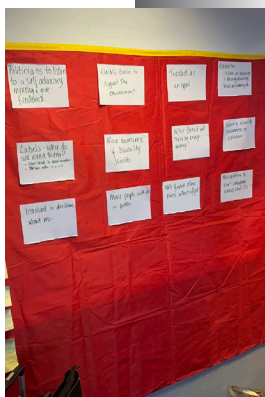
- We call on the Welsh Government to include the UNCRPD into Welsh law.
- We call on the Welsh Government to establish a Commissioner for People with Learning Disabilities to champion our rights and bring attention to inequalities.





6. Health

The COVID 19 crisis hit us harder than most of the population. Research showed that people with learning disabilities were 6 times more likely to die from COVID than people without learning disabilities. These deaths were often preventable, caused by existing health inequalities and unnecessary DNR orders.



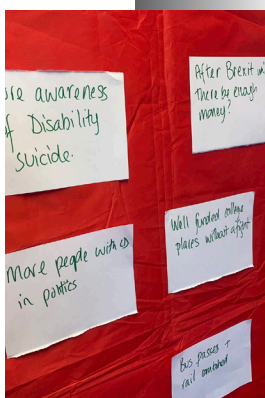
The confidential report into the premature deaths of people with learning disabilities found that 38% of deaths of people with learning disabilities were avoidable. For people without learning disabilities this figure falls to 9%.

It is important to our health and wellbeing that we have friends, relationships and opportunities to contribute. Many people with learning disabilities who are living in care or hospitals could be living in the community with full active lives. There is more to life than services.



Calls to action

- We call on Welsh Government to remove the health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities by:
 - o Providing adequate care and follow up care.
 - o Full and thorough Annual Health Checks.
 - o Providing accessible information.
 - o Increasing the use of Direct Payments and community-based approaches when designing services.
 - o Training and employing more Learning Disability Nurses.





7. Brexit

We fear that the repercussions of Brexit will hit people with learning disabilities hard.

Wales has previously received European funding for projects that supported the education, skills and employment of people with learning disabilities. We fear that if this money is not replaced, these services will be reduced or disappear.



The full impact of Brexit on disabled people has not been talked about much by politicians in Wales or Westminster. We fear that we will lose rights protected under EU law and upheld by the European Court of Justice.



Disabled people were not included in the development of Brexit policy. This means the impact on our lives has not been considered.

Call to action

- We call on Welsh Government to consider the implications of leaving the EU on people with learning disabilities and to create a plan to protect us from the disproportionate impact.





8. Reducing Restrictive Practice

Many people with learning disabilities continue to live with and experience services that restrict people's liberty. This ranges from overuse of medication, unnecessary locked doors to excessive use of physical restraint.

In England, the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act, commonly known as Seni's Law, aims to minimise restrictive practice, improve recording of restrictions and identify the root causes of excessive use. It asks people working in mental health hospitals to think about unconscious bias, so they don't treat people differently because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age or disability.

Seni, was a young black man who admitted himself to a mental health hospital. He was not given the support he needed and became distressed. The police were called, and 11 police officers held him down. He stopped breathing and died.

Seni is not the only person this has happened to. It happens more to people who are black or ethnic minority.

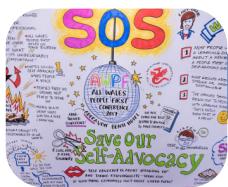
We do not have Seni's Law in Wales, we think we should. Our lives depend on it.

Call to action

- We call on Welsh Government to introduce a law like the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act in Wales.



Summary



1. Self advocacy is under threat

- Ensure self advocacy is funded



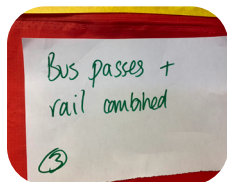
2. People want to change our terminology

- Respect our choice to use 'people with learning disabilities'



3. We want to work

- Support more employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities



4. We need public transport

- Ask us how to make it accessible



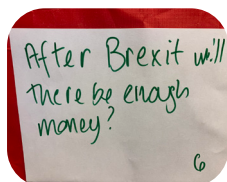
5. We are not treated equally to others

- Include the UNCRPD into Welsh Law
- Create a Commissioner for people with learning disabilities



6. We do not have equal access to good healthcare

- Remove health inequalities



7. Brexit will impact us more than most

- Create a plan to protect us from the impact of Brexit



8. Too many people live restricted lives

- Make a law in Wales like Seni's Law