



# All Wales People First

# Talk Back

*The National Voice of People with Learning Disabilities in Wales*

## Winter 2021



**Through our Eyes Photography Project**  
Dragma show photoshoot, December 2021

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## Editorial

Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of Talk Back. Sadly the pandemic restrictions at the end of 2021 meant that we had to stop face to face meetings .

We are starting to get out and about again, and we have lots of events coming up.

AdFest 2022 is a face to face event. It will be held in The Quay Hotel, Deganwy on 21st and 22nd June. More information and booking forms will be posted to all members in March.

SATV is getting out and about in 2022 too! We may be coming to a self advocacy group near you. Why not get in touch to invite us?

You can also join SATV roadshow events on Zoom. For more information contact [gerraint@allwalespeople1st.co.uk](mailto:gerraint@allwalespeople1st.co.uk) or [claire@allwalespeople1st.co.uk](mailto:claire@allwalespeople1st.co.uk)

We are still running our usual Gerraint's nightclub event on Zoom every other Tuesday night. Contact Gerraint or Claire for the link if you'd like to join in.

**The AWPf team**



# The Team

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# Through our eyes photography project

## The project team



**Natasha Hirst**  
Project Manager



**"Through Our Eyes"**



**Lucy Hinksman**  
Project Worker/  
Photographer

It was so busy before Christmas! Members organised lots of great activities and we tried to visit as many as possible.

We joined members in North Wales to take photos of their consultation event about Engage to Change.

RCT People First had a brilliant 25th Anniversary event at Pontypridd rugby club. There was some excellent dancing!

We visited Vision 21 to take photos of the trainees at work. The trainees were making Christmas products to sell on the market. Some trainees were making ceramics. Some trainees were doing crafts and Christmas cards.

We took photos of their market stall in Cardiff city centre and it looked brilliant.

Joe took part in a conversation with Derek Walker from the Wales Cooperative Centre. They talked about employment and relationships. As they talked, they realised they had a lot of things in common. Their

# Through our eyes photography project



experiences were different in a lot of ways too. We filmed their conversation and will use some of it in a video.

Some of our members were the stars of the Dragma Natterbox Live Christmas show. They have been rehearsing for a long time. The show was amazing. We all had so much fun. Some members went to the pub afterwards.



In January we joined Michael Allcock in Brecon with his kayaking club. We watched Michael kayaking on the river. He was really good at it.

Do you take part in any sports? Let us know if we can come and take photos!

Our Steering Group had a meeting in January. We showed them some of the photos we have taken. We asked the Steering Group what other photos we need.



We need more photos of members at work or volunteering.

We need to take photos of members using public transport.

# Through our eyes photography project



We also need photos of the things that members do in their day to day life and at home.

The Steering Group came up with some great ideas for the end of project exhibition in November. We are starting to plan for that.

Are you coming to AdFest this year? We will have a photography studio and we hope you will come and have your photo taken.



We would like to interview some of our members about their experiences of living with a learning disability. Interviews help us to share more of your stories and views. We will use quotes from the interviews for creating images with text on, like posters. We will also use parts of the interviews for a short film.



- Let us know if you would like us to visit you to take photos of the things you do.
- If you take photos and you'd like to share, we would love to see them!



# Through our eyes photography project



**You can email Lucy on**

Lucy@allwalespeople1st.co.uk

**Or Natasha on**

Natasha@allwalespeople1st.co.uk

**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/>



*Article by Natasha Hirst*



# Chief Executive's update



The UK Government are reviewing the Human Rights Act in the United Kingdom.

They want to replace the Human Rights laws. They want to change them from the ones we had in Europe to ones that are British.

This is because we left Europe after Brexit.

Human rights organisations like the British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR) and Liberty are very worried about this.

They believe that changes to the Human Rights Act will mean everyone in the United Kingdom will have their rights weakened. This means that disabled people could be very vulnerable.

We need Human Rights laws to keep us safe And to make things fair.

If Human Rights laws aren't strong enough it makes it much easier for a Government to do things that may not be fair.

And much harder for us to challenge them. Because the actions they take, will be lawful.

One of the worries we have is that this is being spoken about in the House of Commons and most people don't know about it.



# Chief Executive's update



The UK Government have put out a consultation to get the views of the people of the UK.

**It closes on the 8th March 2022.**

There is no Easy Read version of the consultation.

A lack of Easy Read information discriminates against people with learning disabilities.

The BIHR ran an Easy Read event online on the **8th February 2022.**

We shared the link with groups and on social media.



We don't have much time left.

We need to make our voice heard.

Whether we think the new rights are better or worse it is important that people have a chance to decide for themselves.

To have a say.



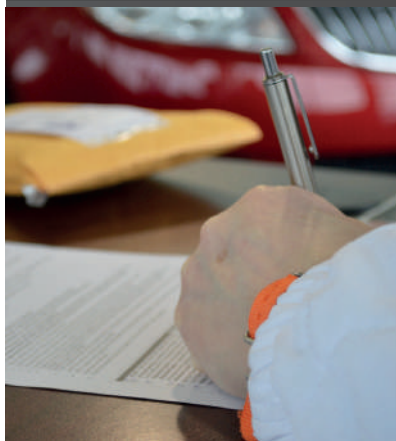
All Wales People First are working to try to make things fair.

We have asked local self-advocacy groups for their experiences.

We have also shared a link to the consultation with local groups.



# Chief Executive's update



And on social media.

We want to encourage as many people and organisations as possible to fill in a consultation form.

The more voices the stronger the result will be.



We have also been working with a disabled person's organisation on a paper which talks about the impact on disabled people.

This is part of a sub-group of the Disability Equality Forum.



I chaired a BIHR event called 'Ask the Experts' on the 26th January.

Leading Human Rights experts spoke at this event.

Their presentations were videoed.

And will be shared by the BIHR on social media.

We will share these with you on our social media.

And will send the links to local groups.

The BIHR have also produced some information about what may happen.

The information is on their website [www.bihhr.org.uk](http://www.bihhr.org.uk)

It is not in Easy Read unfortunately.



# Chief Executive's update



The consultation on the Human Rights Act is called Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights - GOV.UK

You can find it on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

All Wales People First will do all it can to represent your right to have a say in any changes to the Human Rights Act.

*Article by Joe Powell*

## Extraordinary General Meeting



We are holding an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) this year.

We will be asking members to vote about the organisation's legal rules. They are called the Memorandum and Articles of Association. This is a very important meeting. If you want your say you can join in person or on Zoom.



**To book your place** please email [admin@allwalespeople1st.co.uk](mailto:admin@allwalespeople1st.co.uk) or Call Claire on **07399059631**

Lunch will be free for members who book to attend in person.

**Date:** Tuesday 3rd May 2022

**Time:** 1pm - 1.30pm

**Place:** Ramada Plaza, Wrexham, LL13 7YH



# News from groups



**Mold self-advocacy** - We had a meeting with the new Diversity Officer for Flintshire.

We spoke about hate crime and how the local police officers are supporting members of the group.

Michelle Williams introduced herself and her role as Self-advocacy Co-ordinator for North Wales.

We had a nice Christmas lunch, but could not meet in January because of Covid.



**Denbighshire virtual meetings** - We had another DSSSAN meeting in January. This month social services asked us if we think “co-production” is working.

Flintshire, Denbighshire and the Rainbow Gogs Yr Enfys will write a letter to GPs in North Wales. You can read more about this in the next ‘Denbighshire Ahead’.



**Denbigh self-advocacy** - We met the new local Diversity Officer for Denbigh rural.

Denbigh and Prestatyn Self-advocacy had their annual Christmas Party in Dyffryn Support Agency.

We did not meet in person in January. We discussed the letter to the GPs on Zoom.



# News from groups



**Prestatyn self-advocacy** - We are still working on learn to teach computers. In November we met the British Railways Police. Our meeting in January is about social media.



**Rainbow Gogs Yr Enfys** - We have a new constitution. We have asked members to choose Reps for the North Wales Learning Disability Partnership Group and All Wales People First. In January we worked with Sandi from the North Wales Health Board and spoke about our concerns going to the GP. Some of us made a film about us, which we want to show soon.



**Gwynedd** - We are still meeting on Zoom, which is working fantastic. Gwynedd is a big county.

We are discussing the changes to day services, and reductions in the online meetings with Llwybrau Llesiant. We have asked to meet with the the Llwybrau Llesiant and day services heads to discuss the future of Gwynedd Day services and online groups.



## News from groups



Lots of work has been done with Kim Killow on work opportunities. In February Kim will produce and share a report with all the North Wales Counties.

We will have a Working Together event with Gwynedd Council soon.

**Ynys Môn** - We now have have a group constitution.

We met with local authorities about including self-advocates in their interviews for trainee social workers.

Work has been done in Anglesey on work opportunities, and we are looking forward to our views been heard and getting real jobs in the community.



**Soul Wrexham** We are looking for more members in the Wrexham area.

If any All Wales People First members want to get involved with Soul Wrexham, please email [Adrian.jones@nwaaa.co.uk](mailto:Adrian.jones@nwaaa.co.uk) or phone him on 07592368986





# News from groups



## **Vale People First** - By Mark Tierney

Hi, I'm Mark and I am the new Vale People First Covid Safety Officer. We got funding from the Big Lottery Awards for All Wales for my job. I also have a PA called Jo.

I started my job on 4th November and I work for 6 hours per week.

The first thing I did was to have training all about Covid-19 and the rules. This helped me to know exactly what to do to help to keep our members safe when we are doing activities.

Me and Jo also had a meeting where we discussed what PPE we needed to order. I designed my new uniform so that people know where to come for advice. Here is a picture of me in my Hi-Viz and matching orange tops.

I did my very first meeting at our fundraiser at Romilly Park. I had my PPE and forms to ask people for their names and phone numbers. I took the temperature of every person that attended and offered hand sanitiser to



Covid Safety Officer Mark  
PIC+COLLAGE

# News from groups



everyone.

Our next meeting was an indoor event at The Wellbean Café. I made sure that I was there to set up before everyone else and greeted them as they came in. Again, I asked for contact details and took people's temperatures. I also reminded people that they needed to wear their masks when they were moving around the café but could take them off when they were sat down.

We have a weekly meeting on a Monday to plan the week and I have worked at several events now to keep all the members as safe as possible. I am also doing regular refresher training to make sure that I am up to date with all of Welsh Government Covid regulations.

I also did a presentation at the Learning Disability Wales Conference this year, I presented to 131 people, to tell them about my job and how important it is for me to have paid employment. It has boosted my confidence and it is a big step up from volunteering for me.

## News from groups



**Caerphilly People First** - We have been working with members to access GP appointments. As doctors in most surgeries are still not offering face-to-face appointments, they are recommending that people fill out an online form which asks about symptoms. One of our members, found some of the questions hard to understand.



The Caerphilly People First Reconnect Focus group has continued to meet weekly. Our recent activities include: a recap from Digital Communities on how to keep safe online and not fall prey to scammers; group discussion on coping through the pandemic; working on digital skills; taking part in filming by the Welsh Ambulance Service.



We recently connected to Conwy Connect's Health Check Workshop. We learned what a health check is and how important it is that people have one every year. You can book your annual health check by calling your GP. The health champions who ran the workshop did a fantastic job and the event was very informative and fun.



# News from groups



## West Glamorgan People First

Our membership is growing and we now have more groups meeting than ever. Members have begun to meet face to face but Zoom groups will continue as long as people are worried about catching Covid 19. These are our groups and you can find out more on our website

Funky Zoom Night Club; Talk Tuesday; Arts and Crafts; Ponty Friends; Snack and Chat; Karaoke; Advocacy Group; Film Club; Talk Sport; Saturday Social with Kelsey and Lily.

Right through the pandemic, the groups have been a lifeline for members who may have felt lonely and frightened. People have been able to get together and share interests and experiences.

Now that there's light at the end of the tunnel, some members have been keen to get out. A recent highlight was our Halloween sponsored walk in Penllergare Woods attended by around 20 people. We were welcomed by Penllergare Trust who look after the woods. Members walked three miles (in fancy dress!). So far we have raised over

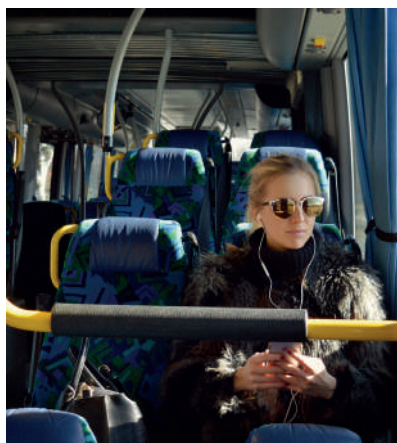


## News from groups



£300 in sponsorship.

Members have told us that they struggle to get transport to some events. Most often they can't get a bus home in the evening. We are trying to raise money to recruit volunteer drivers, pay for taxis and even get our own mini-bus so that no one misses out on the chance to socialise with friends.



Lloyds Bank Foundation are supporting us to build a bigger, better People First. They have given us money and their experts are helping us to plan for the future. We intend to make WGPF an organisation led by its members, but this takes time.



We also continue to work with Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils. They agree that people with a learning disability should have more say about what the Councils do and what services they deliver. We have helped them and the Health Board to re-write their information in easy-read, so that more people can understand it.

Please visit our new website at [www.yourvoiceadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.yourvoiceadvocacy.org.uk)

# facebook®



**All Wales People First, Chief Executive - Joe Powell**  
**17 December**

Attended the first meeting of the re-established Cross Party Group on Disability this morning. Mark Isherwood MS was re-elected as Chair and Megan Thomas and Disability Wales were elected as the secretariat. Respect to Learning Disability Wales who had previously taken on the secretariat on an interim basis. Their involvement meant the group could still take place.

The most important thing we discussed was the Locked Out report, which reported the experiences of disabled people throughout the pandemic. I made a plea for opposition parties to ensure they scrutinise and hold Welsh Government to account in the Senedd over progress made. I was disappointed with the lack of interest the opposition parties showed towards the Locked Out report when it was first released, with the exception of course of stalwarts such as Mark Isherwood MS who has always been a positive champion of the rights of disabled people

# Round up



**All Wales People First, Chief Executive - Joe Powell**  
**15 December**

Attended the last meeting of the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group for 2021 today on Zoom. Chaired excellently as ever by Sophie Hinksman. Big thanks to People First colleagues Sophie Hinksman, Lynne Evans and Michelle Williams for working with me over the last year. And to the support workers Tracey Drew, Dawn Price, Pauline Carter and Michele Pipe for supporting members with engagement.

