



All Wales People First

• Talk Back •

The National Voice of People with

Learning Disabilities in Wales

Summer 2023



Annual General Meeting & Strategy Planning Event 16th October

Strategy planning bookings close 2nd October **Page 9**

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Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2023 edition of Talk Back. We've been busy chatting with lots of you about your experiences and your opinions. Things like - using cash and cash cards; cost of living; the 40 year Anniversary of the All Wales Strategy - how things are better and what still needs to be done; transport, especially bus passes.

Losing bus passes has been a very hot issue for lots of you over the last year. We're hearing loud and clear that the consequences of losing a bus pass are very broad.

Lots of people with learning disabilities have had to grow their confidence to travel. Some through travel training. You've told us that it's easy to flash a pass and get on the bus. For people who are living on a tight budget or don't understand money though, it's hard to weigh up paying for bus travel with critical life things such as food and heating.

If you'd like to share your experience or do a member story, please email Kelly or phone her on 07508 228474 or message AWPf on Facebook Messenger

The AWPf team



The Team

Joe Powell

Chief Executive

joe@allwalespeople1st.co.uk



Kelly Stuart

Policy and Communications Manager

kelly@allwalespeople1st.co.uk

Victoria Sidwell Brown

Business and Finance Manager

victoria@allwalespeople1st.co.uk



Tracey Drew

Membership Engagement Advisor

tracey@allwalespeople1st.co.uk

Philippa Davies MIRROR Co-ordinator

philippa@allwalespeople1st.co.uk



Claire Morgan

Communications Officer

Assistant **claire@allwalespeople1st.co.uk**



Gerraint Jones-Griffiths

Outreach Worker

gerraint@allwalespeople1st.co.uk

Member article

Rhiannon Currie



I've been having some problems with my bus pass recently. It suddenly stopped working. A message came up on the bus driver's system to say the pass was lost or stolen. I don't know why. I hadn't reported it.

With a bit of help I managed to get a new pass by writing a letter. My new pass arrived in a week or two. It's working fine but I had a letter last week to say that my bus pass is under review. I have to send evidence of my benefits to see if I can keep it.



I just don't understand. Nothing has changed for me since I had the original pass. My Dad has read the rules about getting a pass. He thinks the way benefits have changed mean that I could lose my bus pass. I'm so worried that it will suddenly stop working and leave me in a vulnerable situation.



Having a bus pass means everything. It's a big part of keeping my mental health in a good place. The worry since having the letter has had a bad affect on my mental health. It's really put a dampener on life. I'm worried

Member article

Rhiannon Currie

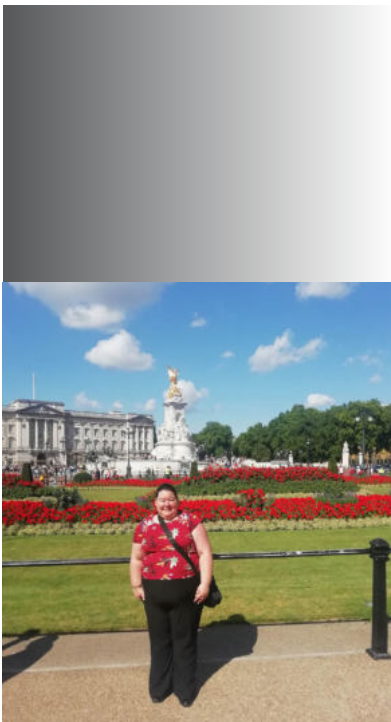


I'll be stuck at home. It's so expensive for bus fares, I couldn't afford to get out without a bus pass. I rely on it most days.

Bus travel enables me to get to places I could never otherwise go to. Places like Cardiff. It enables me to meet with friends and to take part in groups and activities. I need it to get to work on Wednesdays so I have no idea how I'll get to work if the pass gets taken. Bus is the only way to get to work as it's far away and not on a walking route.



The only way I could make any savings to pay for a few bus journeys would be to cut down on any food shopping. I'm already careful with that so not sure it would make a lot of difference. The cost of living is having such a big impact and people are struggling to live. This latest Bus pass situation is yet another knock back for me and friends who are going through the same.



Rhiannon Currie,

Newport People First member; former All Wales People First National Council Rep.

National Council update



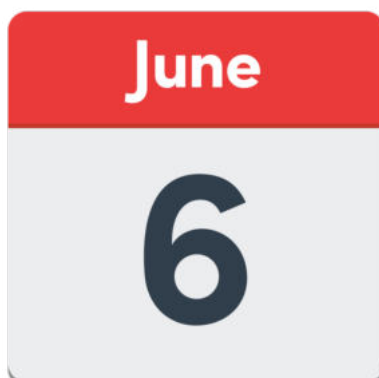
The National Council are a group of 22 elected members who represent every county in Wales. Plus an LGBTQ+ Rep and a Representative for people with learning disabilities who are Black Asian or from a minority ethnic community.

We do not have a Rep from Wrexham or a Rep for Black, Asian or minority ethnic people at the moment.



At meetings we always talk about

- Minutes and actions from the last meeting
- Issues Reps bring from their local groups that need a national action
- Joe Powell, AWPf Chief Executive, gives a report.
- Subgroups talk about campaigning, getting new members and position statements.

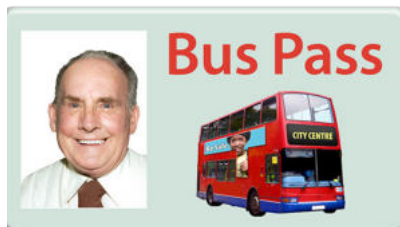


The last meeting was 6th June in Mold, North Wales.

The biggest issue Reps wanted to talk about in

National Council update

June was transport, especially renewing bus passes.



Lots of people are having trouble getting a new pass. Applications are mostly on line, are taking a long time and causing people a lot of stress.



Joe has talked to Welsh Government. We agreed to invite Transport for Wales to the next meeting.



"Through Our Eyes"

Reps also talked about

- The cost of living crisis
- Continuing the Through Our Eyes project
- Cashless payments
- Travel training
- Day centres still being closed
- Support staff leaving and problems getting new staff
- Priorities for the next AWPF business plan
- How AWPF can support a member in West Wales who is living in a hospital type setting that does not meet their needs.



Day Centre



Plan

National Council update



The National Council also decide who sits on the AWPf Board of Directors. The Directors make sure AWPf is spending money in the right way and following the law.

The National Council voted Martyn Jones onto the Board.

September

5

The next National Council meeting is on 5th September in Carmarthen.

Here's what some reps said during our meeting



"Transport for Wales need to listen. It's people's freedom. I rely on the bus and now I have to pay for my ticket and my support staff's. I can't afford it." – Simon, Cardiff



"Members have problems with businesses not accepting cash. Some people don't have cards and find it hard to manage money. Some staff have had to pay for things on their own cards." – Sam, Blaenau Gwent

AGM & Strategy planning event



Monday 16th October 2023

Our Annual General meeting will start at **1.15pm** on Monday 16th October.

You can join in person by attending the Llandudno Junction Community Club or the Clayton Hotel in Cardiff.

You can join online through Zoom
Meeting ID: 884 1793 8667

Anyone can attend the AGM.

1.45pm-5pm Are you a full AWPf member? We'd love to know what you think about the future work of All Wales People First and self-advocacy. Stay on for our strategy planning event.

5pm We have a limited number of free fish and chips for full members who take part in the strategy event. You must book a place if you'd like fish and chips. Available on a first to book basis.

6pm-7pm You can round off a great day by joining in with Gerraint's Halloween themed disco - it's up to you!

Please email admin@allwalespeople1st or call Claire on 07399 059631 to book.
Closing date **2nd October**

Out and about with Gerraint Jones Griffiths



Well, what cat can I say? I haven't stopped over the last few months! Here are just a few of the things I've been up to:

The BBC Wales networking day at Cardiff Studio on 15th May was amazing. I made some good contacts. We all talked about stigma and stereotypes in the media and how technology has changed since Covid.



The hosts shared some handy tips with visitors about interviews too. Like ensuring you have good body language when being interviewed to camera. No folded arms and look interesting. Think I've got that last one nailed, what do you think?



I had a tour of the studio and had a chat with presenter Jason Mohammad. I'm hoping to take him up on his offer to go on his show soon. Watch this space!



On 17th May I did a joint presentation at the Our Lives Now webinar. Ed Oloidi and I presented some of the findings of the Wales Covid study for People with learning disabilities and their families.

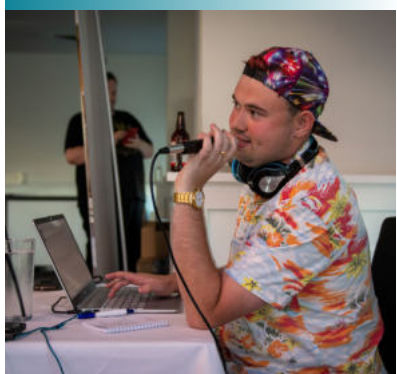
Out and about with Gerraint Jones Griffiths



What a truly awesome time we all had at AdFest this year. It was a pleasure to present the MIRROR Awards and put my DJ hat on afterwards for the disco celebrations. Lovely to see so many of you as always.



Thanks to Viva Fest and Caerphilly People First for inviting me along to do SATVs during July. We talked about the All Wales Strategy, what it's achieved and what changes still need to happen.



You might have heard that we're launching on Tik Tok this year, and I've been busy preparing some content. I can't wait to share with you soon. Keep watching our social media posts for the launch date.

Thanks to Andrew and Lucy from ProMo Cymru's Digi Cymru project for getting us Tik Tok savvy and launch ready!



Don't forget, If you fancy a bit of a chat, some cool tunes and a chair dance, join in with Gerraint's nightclub every other Tuesday on Zoom. See our Facebook page for joining details, or send an email. Thanks all!

Gerraint Jones Griffiths

Chief Executive's update



Well how about that then. Another excellent AdFest. AdFest this year was called 'Our Right to Human Rights'. It focused on the importance of our Human Rights. And the threat the proposed British Bill of Rights could pose to our Human Rights.



Sanchita Hosali, Chief Executive of the British Institute of Human Rights spoke about the Bill. Sanchita was one of the table facilitators too. A few days after AdFest the British Bill of Human Rights was binned by the UK Government. Amazing news.



We have worked so hard with many other organisations to make this happen. I am relieved we succeeded together. We learnt a lesson that we must never take our Human Rights for granted.



Thanks to the National Council festival sub-group for designing AdFest. Massive thanks to everyone who turned up and got into the spirit of AdFest. Well done to the Chair and Vice Chair of the National Council Tracy Austin and Sam Hall for their fabulous chairing. They made their AdFest debut as Chairs.

Chief Executive's update



Thanks to all of our speakers and our round robin facilitators. Thanks to those who spoke at the speaker's tent. Huge thanks to the All Wales People First staff team for their hard work in pulling this off. They work almost one year in advance in planning each event.



I believe each event is getting better year on year. This is what we need. We need AdFest to make a statement. This is the place where people from across the whole of Wales can come and learn about our points of view.



We held our MIRROR awards in the evening for the first time. Thanks to all of our sponsors for backing the awards. And thanks to Gig Buddies for working with us to provide a nighttime event in Cardiff. That and Gerraint's disco meant there was something for everyone to do in the evening.



An AdFest report is now available on our website to download.

Have a read.

Look at the fabulous pictures.

Relive the experience.

Thanks for getting behind us!

Joe Powell

News from groups



Caerphilly People First have been working closely with the University of South Wales. We recently attended the annual review meeting of the TRAC group (Teaching Research Advisory Committee) group. In July we attended the University of South Wales' Learning Disability Conference 2023. Ffion spoke about the work TRAC does. Natalie and Ffion also took part in filming for a film to train medical students.

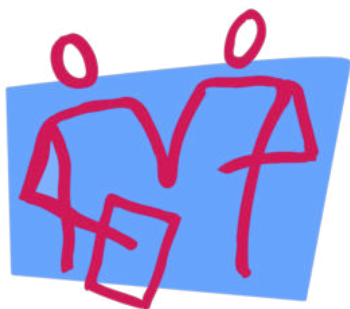


Ffion has been delivering relationship courses with Lisa French from Innovate Trust. The sessions talk about friendship - how to make friends, how to deal with fallouts, and what makes a good friend and bad friend. They talk about boyfriends and girlfriends also, and understanding your body and consent.



The Caerphilly 2035 Masterplan is a blueprint for the future of Caerphilly town centre. We were recently visited by Caerphilly County Borough Council staff to gather our views of on what we like about Caerphilly, what can be improved, and what we think about the new plans.

News from groups



putting people first
rhoi pobl yn gyntaf



People First Bridgend has been very busy! We have two new staff members: Angharad Parr, Advocacy Coordinator, and Adam Bartle, Chair of our council's learning disability service development group.

We went to our council's Away Day. We looked at what is working well and what could be better. We did a comedy role-play about co-production. We made fun of all the things that make co-production meetings difficult for people with learning disabilities. The regional partnership board encouraged us to make it into a film, so we are planning to do this with them next.



We went to All Wales People First's Ad Fest 2023. It was brilliant. And a bonus: Raymond and Adam won the Member MIRROR Award. They won because of their dedication to People First, and because of how well they spoke up at our council's scrutiny review meeting. We are very proud of them.

We also took our Advisory Team to St Fagan's Museum to thank them for their hard work this year. We had a lovely time, but it was extremely hot!



News from groups



Cwm Taf People First



Cwm Taf People First had an AGM in May.

Lynne was voted in as Chairperson.

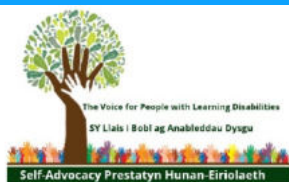
The Lynne Evans Award was given:

in memory of Luke Evans for always bringing the party; Rebecca Chick for her contribution over many years; Tom Watling, the people's choice self advocate.

We attended AdFest in Cardiff and won an award for Viva Fest

Members in Merthyr had a 10 week course about menopause and women's health.

We did some consultation with the council in RCT about daytime opportunities.



Prestatyn Self Advocacy Group invited the

Local Authority Manager and new

commissioner to our meeting to discuss how

we can be part of designing the services we

receive. The Commissioner gave out a form in

what we wanted self advocacy service to

look like for her future putting out to tender.

Here are some photos of the meeting.

Celia Watson has been facilitating the

Denbigh and Prestatyn self advocacy groups

since May 2023 for NWAAA.

Peter Mcandrew is the North Wales Flyer's representative for Denbigh.



News from groups



Vale People First have been running a gardening Group for the last two years at the Bridge Between. We have eight members who grow vegetables and flowers. Come rain or shine we are all very enthusiastic. The Bridge Between has recently received a Green Flag award for all of the garden spaces which includes ours.



We have taken over Lana's community cafe at The Bridge Between. Since taking over in April 2023 four new volunteers have joined. They learn new skills like money management, keeping a workspace clean, working safely, making and serving food. We have had referrals from the disability services team and now looking to offer training and volunteer opportunities in the future.



The Women First group have learnt about healthy relationships, women's health, craft and beauty. We've been working on a survey finding out how safe members feel where they live.

We went to a Goddess Festival in Glastonbury, on 5th August it was fantastic!



News from groups

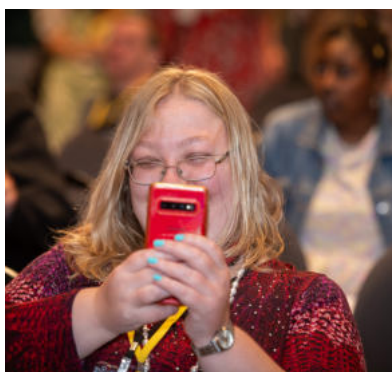
Our Voice Our Choice (Ceredigion)



This year Hywel Dda University Health Board started its new project for people with Learning Disabilities living in Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire. This project aims to increase awareness of common health conditions and the services offered by the Health Board and Doctor surgeries.



The project consists of twelve workshops which are held monthly. The Learning Disability liaison nurses from the Health Board deliver the workshops which have been created in partnership with the Health Care Champions from the three counties. The Health Care Champions are people with a Learning Disability who work closely with the Health Board to shape its services.



Our Voice Our Choice is hosting and advertising these workshops in Ceredigion, and we are pleased to see the interest from the wider community and our members. The workshops are interactive, informative, relaxed, and attendees are given a workbook



News from groups

on each topic. The topics covered so far are:



- The Importance of Exercise
- Healthy Eating
- Epilepsy
- The Annual Health Checks
- Breast and Testicular Cancer



We look forward to hosting and participating in the remaining workshops and believe other Health Boards across Wales should also adopt this project if they are not doing something similar already.



Anita Clasby
Chair Our Voice Our Choice



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All Wales People First, Chief Executive - Joe Powell - 14 June

Spent the last two days in Warwickshire as part of my none-executive board role for LivesthroughFriends CIC. Livesthroughfriends were the organisation who helped me break out of the care system and they are currently working with one of our members to help them do the same. Livesthroughfriends try to create 'real lives' for people based on what matters to them for a good life. They understand the limitations of the care system and the importance of doing things differently to get better outcomes. This is something I am keen to connect our members to given the systemic failings which stop them living as full members in their local communities.

Massive thanks to Chris for my lift back and the fabulous conversation we had in the car



Round up



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - Joe Powell 29 June

Was lovely to chat to members of People First of Washington USA on zoom this evening and share knowledge and information about how both groups work and how we use self-advocacy to make a positive change to our lives. Thanks to the National Council Chair Tracy Austin and Vice Chair Sam Hall for joining me. They were both great. Thanks to all at People First of Washington for inviting us along to speak to you. There is a fascinating similarity between the challenges for the people with learning disabilities in Washington and Wales.

