



All Wales People First

Talk Back

The National Voice of People with

Learning Disabilities in Wales

Autumn 2023

“There are still some cultural hangovers from the old way we did things. People with learning disabilities are fitting in to services. I think there is still a journey to go”

Joe Powell



40 Years since the All Wales Strategy

Chief Executive's update

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Editorial

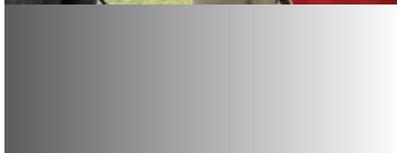
Welcome to the Autumn 2023 edition of Talk Back. You might have heard us talk a lot about something called the All Wales Strategy lately? That is because this year marks the 40th Anniversary since the 'All Wales Mental Handicap Strategy' was introduced in Wales. We don't use the words 'mental handicap' anymore.

You've been telling us what good has come from the Strategy, what impact you think it has had on the way you live your lives, and what changes still need to happen. We've enjoyed talking with you one to one during diary updates, video interviews and group meetings. Thanks for sharing what you think!

We are sad that Self Advocacy Group Development Manager Philippa Davies has disappeared from the Team page for this edition. Philippa has moved on to an exciting new job in pastures new. We wish Philippa all the best in her new adventure.

If you'd like to share your experience or opinion on something or do a member story, please email or phone Kelly on 07508 228474 or Facebook message us.

The AWPF team



The Team

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All Wales Strategy Anniversary

Member Article - Lynne Evans



I work for a few People First Groups. Cwm Taf, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, and Torfaen. Torfaen People First is new. We took the work on about a month ago.

When I'm at work, I support members to have a voice in their own lives and I do some work on Easy Read too. Some of my work is in the office and sometimes it's out and about.



Yesterday we went to an open day in Blaenau Gwent. We are trying to help new members to get involved and to join People First.

I like my work and going to work. I really enjoy what I do and feeling part of a family. Having a work family means a lot to me. We all get on well together.



I've won some awards for my work. In June I won a Highly Commended MIRROR Award in the member category. Cwm Taf People First also won in the Ideas category. The award was for our Viva Fest event. I helped to organise it. I did the venue access check.

All Wales Strategy Anniversary

Member Article - Lynne Evans



How might my life be different without the All Wales Strategy for people with learning disabilities?

I think if it hadn't come about then I'd be bored out of my mind sat at home with nothing to do. I enjoy meeting and talking to people, those things are important to me. I enjoy being able to help other people to make a difference in their own lives as well.



Is there still more work to do?

Yes, I think so. I'd like to see more people with learning disabilities having confidence to mix in the community. I think the public are too often afraid to talk to us. Maybe some training for members of the public would help with this. Maybe open days to meet and have a coffee, cake and chat?



Something else which frustrates me - People I know, who live in supported living will often have someone else who controls their money and it limits what they can choose for themselves. I don't know how to fix the problem but I'd like to see change with that.

Lynne Evans

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.



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 on 5th September in Carmarthen, West Wales.

In the meeting in June, Reps talked about the problems renewing free bus passes.



We invited managers from Transport for Wales to join the meeting.

National Council update



They heard about the problems from Reps and told us why some of these problems are happening.

They also shared some helpful information.

Welsh Government have asked Transport for Wales to organise free bus passes.

Transport for Wales are responsible for

- Designing the application form to get a free bus pass
- Sending letters to people about renewing a bus pass
- Dealing with the application forms online and on paper
- Answering questions about getting a free bus pass
- They run a phone service to help people who cannot use their services online.



Getting a new bus pass should be easy if you can fill in the application form, have ID to show who you are and can prove you are entitled to a bus pass.

National Council update



You can prove you are entitled to a bus pass if you get a higher rate of Personal Independent Payments PIP.

Or you have a letter from your doctor saying you have a **cognitive impairment**.

A cognitive impairment means your brain finds it difficult to process information or do some things. This could include a learning disability, dementia or a brain injury.



Transport for Wales cannot deal with your application for a bus pass if

- You need a companion pass
- You do not have ID to prove who you are
- You cannot prove you have a cognitive impairment



If you do not have these things, your application will be dealt with by your local authority. Every local authority in Wales deals with this in a different way.

Dealing with the local authority can take a lot longer.

National Council update



Reps told Transport for Wales that some members have needed help from family or support workers to apply for a bus pass.

Reps said some things would make it easier.

- Easy read application forms
- Not having to reapply after a few years
- Support from the helpline to complete the application form
- Local authorities across Wales dealing with applications the same way
- More ways to prove who you are. Very few people with learning disabilities have a driving license, passport or bank accounts and bills in their name.



National Council Reps also talked about Adfest and voted Paul Sutton onto the Board of Directors.

January

9

The next National Council meeting is on 9th January 2024 in Llandudno.

Talk to your local Rep if you want to bring an issue to the next National Council meeting.

by Chairperson, Tracy Austin

Out and about with Gerraint Jones Griffiths



This year marks 40 years since the All Wales Mental Handicap came about. We call it the All Wales Strategy. I've been out and about and on Zoom talking to members about it.



It was lovely to see Caerphilly People First members on 25th July. I visited their office to talk about the anniversary of the All Wales Strategy. There were lots of great contributions. Overall we thought the strategy had made a big difference to the way people with learning disabilities live their lives today. For example, we've been able to make lots of friends and we can get the right support.



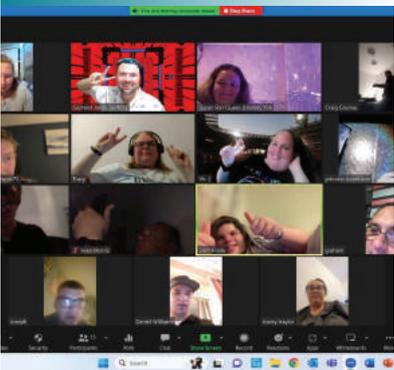
Thinking about work that still needs to be done, we said that attitudes about learning disability in society can still be a problem for us. Professionals need to be held to account more too. There is still a long way to go for people with learning disabilities who want to become parents. There are still a lot of barriers to having relationships and starting families of our own.



Out and about with Gerraint Jones Griffiths



On 5th September I attended the National Council meeting in Carmarthen to work on some content for TikTok. I asked members about the difference between advocacy and self advocacy. There were some very interesting contributions to this. Self advocacy seemed a bit harder to put in to words.



"I think advocacy is having someone to speak up for you, like a professional"

"having someone speak on your behalf and making sure they get your point across"

"Self advocacy is speaking up for yourself"



Keep watching our TikTok account **@allwalespeoplefirst** The team is super excited to be officially launching on 4th December! Personally, I can't wait to get cracking with it!



That's just a snapshot of where I've been and what I've been up to since the last Talkback. Don't forget to keep in touch by joining me for SATV in 2024 and every other Tuesday night for Gerraint's Nightclub. Joining details are on Facebook and Insight. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Gerraint Jones Griffiths

Strategy planning day

October

16

On Monday 16th October members, Directors of the Board and staff of All Wales People First came together to make plans for the future.

We held the event in 2 places so as many people as possible could attend.

- Cardiff in South Wales
- Llandudno in North Wales

We joined the 2 events together via a video link on Zoom.



The event was planned on a boat back in August by the Board Co-Chairs, David and Bob, National Council Reps, Zarah and Tracy, and All Wales People First staff, Joe and Tracey.



The aim of the planning day was

For members of the board and self-advocates to talk about the future of self-advocacy and decide on how we can work together to secure a future that works for us all.

Strategy planning day



The event was well attended with nearly 60 people in total across the 2 venues.

We started the day with everyone saying what they thought the purpose of All Wales People First is. Most people agreed that AWPf brings self-advocates and groups together to create a national voice for people with learning disabilities.



Next, we split into groups to talk about 4 things.

1. Members - How AWPf & self-advocacy groups can work better for members?
2. Self-advocacy groups - How can AWPf work with self-advocacy groups to further our collective purpose?
3. The system - How can we change or influence the system so it serves people with learning disabilities better?
4. AWPf - What can All Wales People First do better?



Strategy planning day



Everyone had a chance to join each of the discussion throughout the event. AWPf staff and Board members took notes.

There were some common themes throughout the day. This information will be used in the next AWPf business plan.



A business plan is a document that describes what the organisation does already, what it wants to do and how it will do it over a certain amount of time. The AWPf business plan is called the MIRROR strategy and is re-written every 3 years.



Here are some of the themes talked about on the day.

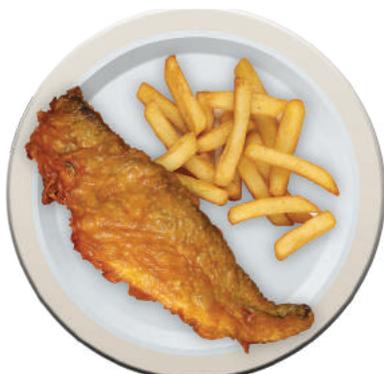
- Self-advocacy needs to be member-led and we need to find ways of checking how good we all are at this.
- We need to measure the quality of self-advocacy. This will help AWPf and groups improve but it will also help us get funding.



Strategy planning day



- AWPf needs to keep checking that we are doing things in the best way for members and adapt if needed.
- We all need to do more to help members be leaders. This means good support to learn about rights, speaking up and influencing change.
- The current system for supporting people with learning disabilities to have a good life is not working well. We need to help services and the community to find a better way.



After we had finished talking together we all had a fish and chip supper followed by a disco with AWPf Outreach Worker, Gerraint.



Tracey Drew

Chief Executive's update



On Monday the 27th of November the 'Looking back, looking forward' and was hosted in Cardiff by the University of South Wales.

All Wales People First and our Consortium Partners helped to design the event.

The event focused on the 40th anniversary of the All Wales Strategy of 1983.

What the strategy has achieved. And what still needs to improve.

It included the voices and experiences of:

- People with learning disabilities
- Parents and carers
- Third sector organisations
- Academics



It was the first major strategy to recognise that people with learning disabilities were not ill.

They did not need to be in hospitals.

The strategy sought to give people with learning disabilities normal lives in the community.



Forty years on and most of the institutions across the United Kingdom are closed.

People with learning disabilities are far more visible in society than they have ever been.

Self-advocacy groups and projects like Gig Buddies are real proof of that.



Chief Executive's update



It is right we celebrate how far we have come. However, there is still some way to go. Many people with learning disabilities who I speak to are still not in control of their lives in the way they want to be.

They are still restricted to what services can offer them rather than what they really want to do.



In some ways when we closed the old hospitals, we created a new type of institution. A better institution than the long stay hospitals but still an institution, nonetheless.

There are instances where people with lived experience are being placed in mental health facilities because the services they need cannot be provided. This is wrong.



And it is exactly what the All Wales Strategy was supposed to prevent.

And the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.



There is still inequality in employment for people with learning disabilities.

And people with learning disabilities still face barriers to equal education and housing.

The strategy is something Wales should be very proud of. But our fight is far from over.

There is still more to do.

Joe Powell

News from groups



Caerphilly People First - November was the 10th anniversary of Reck Rock, a Caerphilly based social enterprise which helps people with learning disabilities to improve skills and build confidence. We attended a celebration event in Blackwood where members performed on stage. There was so much talent!



We were recently joined by Wise Kids, an organisation promoting digital literacy and wellbeing. We talked about social media and the websites and apps we use. We talked about the good and bad things with social media.



The session prepared us for a course of six sessions on mindfulness and digital wellbeing.

Patrick and Kane from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board visited to talk about the Mediterranean Diet and the importance of healthy eating. They talked about which Mediterranean Diet foods, and what foods are bad for you. Members received a booklet to take home, some recipes to try, and an eating chart.



News from groups



Your Voice Advocacy has been busy. We have some new groups: a friendship social group, a neurodiversity social and a cooking workshop.

Some of our members did a food safety course and all passed.

Well done folks!

We connected with the local Disability Liaison Group and went on the Copper Jack boat ride to do some networking.

Our members have gone to lots of meetings and events to make our voices heard.

We've done research, co-production and told lots of different people and groups our thoughts.

Like the Welsh Ambulance Service here.

Some of our members tried a new qualification to check it works for people with learning disabilities.

For our work with the Dylan Thomas Centre we got shortlisted for the Museums Change Lives Award for the second year in a row.

We have just started making some new awareness training so its ready for the new year!



News from groups



Powys People First Healthy Lives Project started in March. Our first red Kite walk was up The Crug, Brecon.

Our second Red Kite walk was Garth Hill in Builth wells.



Our third Red Kite walk from Craig Y Nos to Penwyllt. It was sunny day.

These walks were training us for Pen Y Fan.

There were three attempts to do Pen Y Fan. But the weather was very cloudy and wet so we could not see anything. So instead we went to:

First one was Garwnant Visitor Centre.
Second was Cyfarthfa castle



Our third walk was Pen Y Fan. It was a beautiful day. We needed sun cream! It was windy and sunny.



David Whittle

powys people first  **pobl gyntaf powys**

News from groups



All the members from **Conwy Connect** were thrilled when they found out that they had won a Mirror Award. They won the 'Organisation' category. Richard Redmond, who is the All Wales People First Representative was there to receive the award on behalf of the Forum.



Members got together and had a party to celebrate their award. Winning this award made everyone feel very proud to be a part of the Forum.



Bethan Foxall has done an amazing job as the North Wales Flyers Representative for two years, but her time came to step down from the role.

At the recent face to face Forum meeting, members had a discussion about the 'Role of the Rep'. Members then had a vote, and it was decided that Peter Marsh will represent the members from the Conwy Connect Forum at the North Wales Flyers meetings.



Everyone thanked Bethan for being such a dedicated Representative and we wish Peter good luck in his new role.

Eva Collins

News from groups



Newport

We went on a walk to Bedwellty House with Cwm Taf People First and RCT people first. Rose and Ian from Gwent Wildlife Trust were excellent at hosting the team work . We all worked together scavenging nature finds like leaf's sticks, twigs, stones and conkers! We collected plenty of nature materials to make a human outline in an art form called Mandala! Mandala is a form of art started and still going today from the Asian culture.



We met with Morgan and Alex from Newport Transport to discuss the issues our members have with the local bus service. They have agreed to work with us in the future regarding new bus time tables, promotional material, and also support us delivering learning. We will meet up again in the next months.



We also put plans together for a new project where we give our members the opportunity to tell their life stories. We will video these stories and put them on our Youtube channel.

Zarah Khaleem



News from groups

Roaring Môn
Self-advocacy



Hunan Eirioiaeth
Rhuo Môn

Roaring Môn

We recently started recording our own Podcast series.

We have been discussing the impact of the Welsh Government's new 20mph speed limit. Buses are not running to time and the digital information displays do not give information on delays or cancellations. This often leaves passengers wondering whether they have missed their bus. The new speed limit has also brought about alterations of services, with little or no notice being provided to us passengers.



A number of members have told us that they had their free bus passes cancelled without notice. Pass holders only became aware of their cancelled pass when they tried to use it. This has caused embarrassment for people, not to mention financial issues and increased anxiety. Not being able to use a bus pass can lead to isolation, stress and not being able to get to work.



We are planning to write a letter to Transport for Wales, to let them know how we feel about the bus service delays and bus passes.



Victoria Waller

News from groups



Gwynedd Self Advocacy

On the 1st of June an Awards ceremony took place at the Quay Hotel for Helga Uckerman. Helga's husband accepted the award with Bryn. The North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Andy Dundobin presented the award. Malcom, Gwynfor, Adrian and Jon from NWAADA also attended.



The group have been busy preparing feedback for various meetings. The main one was the Welsh Government meeting in Llandudno. Harry and Andrea attended the meeting and were able to give some positive and negative feedback from the group about services. Andrea said "I hope they will listen, and not go away and forget about us as they always do"



Harry and Andrea also attended the All Wales People First meeting in Llandudno Junction. Again, we shared our views about the future of AWPf. Harry said "It was a really good and interesting day" The day ended with Disco, fish and chips, and Chicken nuggets for Harry.



It's coming!

**19th
& 20th
JUNE**



AdFest 2024



This is Me!

#LDAdFest2024

All Wales People First

Future Inn, Cardiff
more information soon...



ALL WALES PEOPLE FIRST AGM 2023

1pm 9th January 2024
Conwy Business Centre
Llandudno, LL31 9XX

You can join in person
or on Zoom
Zoom Meeting ID
814 5240 0059

Please let us know if
you will be taking part
in person or online

You can email
claire@allwalespeople1st.co.uk
or phone 07399 059631



Annual General Meeting (AGM) Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes and Matters arising from the Annual General Meeting held on 5th March 2023
4. The 2022/2023 Annual Report
5. Questions and Answers
6. The Finance Report
7. Questions and Answers
8. Adopting the Annual report
9. Retirements from the Board of Directors
Ruth Northway; Lee Ellery; David Whittle;
Margaret Flynn
10. The National Council 2022/2023
11. Changes to or Mem and Arts (or rules)
 - Our rules now say our Annual General Meeting should be in September or close to September. We want to change it so the Annual General Meeting can be at any time in the year.
 - Our rules now say meetings should be in person. We want to change it so members can meet and vote both online and in person.
12. Any Other Business

facebook



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - 27 November

Attended the 'looking back, looking forward: How do we make Wales a better place for people with learning disabilities for the next 40 years?' event at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Cardiff today. The event focused on 40 years of the All Wales Strategy and how we continue to progress going forward. There were many excellent highlights today for me, including excellent videos from members Martin Heffron and Sara Griffiths. I co-presented an item on Restrictive Practice with David O'Brien on the use of the Restrictive practice framework....

We have come a long way since 1983 in my opinion but I still believe we have some way to go to fully realise the aspirations of both the AW Strategy and current legislation.

Round up



All Wales People First, 17 October

We're excited to be showcasing our @ThroughOurEyes image library at the @ DisabilityWales #DWConf23 today. The event is about media representation of disabled people, challenging stereotypes & changing society. You can learn more about the Through our Eyes project and view the image library here <https://allwalespeople1st.co.uk/.../through-our-eyes.../>

Come and say hello and have a #ThroughOurEyes0 selfie

