

Position Statement



Homes not Hospitals

People with learning disabilities need the right support to meet their needs, in a place that is right for them.

Some people with learning disabilities are placed in secure mental health units or hospitals because the services they need cannot be provided in their communities.

This has been happening for many years and is still happening today.

Learning disability is not an illness or a mental health issue.

Giving a person with a learning disability the wrong support is not good for mental health. Giving the wrong support can lead to a mental health crisis.

The All Wales Strategy of 1983 intended to close the long stay hospitals which institutionalised people with learning disabilities.

The Strategy did achieve that, but we seem to be going back in time - some people with learning disabilities are again being housed in hospital settings, instead of being supported in a place they can call home.

Too many people with learning disabilities are being kept in hospital settings. Many have been there for several years with no plans for integrating them back into their communities.

Often these are people who have been admitted to hospital for health reasons and they have remained there even when their health has recovered. The worst case we know about is someone being in a hospital setting for sixty-six years.

“A learning disability is not a mental health condition”

“We are not prisoners, we are humans” “stop treating people with learning disabilities like prisoners” “Stop stealing lives” “institutions closed 40 years ago – why are people still locked away?”

“educated not medicated” – All Wales People First National Council members

All Wales People First have spent a lot of time trying to affect change in this area. We have written letters to Ministers; we have spoken with Ministers; we have raised the issues at Ministerial Advisory Group Meetings; We have written to individual local authorities and health boards.

Local authorities and health boards say the resources they need to provide appropriate services are not there.

Welsh Government has said that is unable to get involved with individual cases.

In March 2024 we joined the **Homes Not Hospitals** Campaign, giving our support to the **Stolen Lives Manifesto**.

Calls to Action

- 1) We call on Welsh Government to ensure that support for people with learning disabilities to live in homes not hospitals by:
 - Ensuring there are adequate financial resources to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities.
 - To ensure that placements are close to friends and family

- To ensure that people with learning disabilities have support from staff who are trained and qualified to work with people with learning disabilities.
- 2) We call on Welsh Government to hold Local Authorities and Health Boards accountable for detaining People with learning disabilities in hospital settings, if their needs could be adequately met outside an assessment and treatment unit.
 - 3) We call on Welsh Government to ensure that people with learning disabilities are afforded their human rights in Accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.

'Nothing about us without us!'

Tracy Austin, Chair of the National Council
In consultation with the All Wales People National Council
and members.
All Wales People First

