



All Wales People First

Talk Back

The National Voice of People with

Learning Disabilities in Wales

Autumn 2024



#LDAdFest2024 report is available!

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Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2024 edition of Talk Back.

We've been out and about a lot since the last edition of Talk Back and it's been great catching up with so many of you on our travels during 2024!

If we haven't managed to catch up with you in person this year, we hope to see you in 2025!

We're already making plans for AdFest 2025 in North Wales. Save 24th & 25th June in your calendars if you're planning to join us.

If you'd like to see how this year's AdFest went, the report is now available in the resources section of our website. Can you spot yourself in any of the pictures?

Remember there are lots of ways you can let us know what matters to you. Here are just a few ways - doing a diary update with Claire or Kelly; a video clip; an article for Talkback; speaking with your National Council Rep; attending SATV with Gerraint. Get in touch with one of us if you want to get involved.

Wishing you all a lovely Christmas and a fabulous 2025! From the **AWPF team**



Save the date!
AdFest
24-25 June 2025



- Day delegates From £35
- Overnight packages £75 - £125
- Exhibitors From £180

What to expect

- ✓ Learn new things
- ✓ Be heard
- ✓ Guest speakers and stalls
- ✓ Meet friends
- ✓ Have fun!

BOOKINGS OPEN IN 2025!

www.allwalespeople1st.co.uk



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National Council update



The National Council are a group of 22 elected members who represent every county in Wales. We meet 4 times a year. We talk about what is important to members. Reps met in Bangor on 3rd December.

Reps reviewed the last meetings minutes and heard from Joe Powell, Chief Executive.



Joe told us about the Terminally Ill Adults (end of life) Bill. We talked about what the Bill could mean for people with learning disabilities and agreed to write a position statement.

Joe also talked about the new MIRROR Strategy. This is the business plan for All Wales People First.



We had given Joe some ideas of things we wanted to see change in All Wales People First and some new things to work on.



Joe listened and told us about his ideas to make these things happen. We liked what he proposed. The next 3 years are going to be busy!

National Council update



Kurtis Marshall and Mared Hughes from Innovate Trust told us about their One Planet project. The project shares ideas about what we can all do to help save energy and be kinder to the planet.



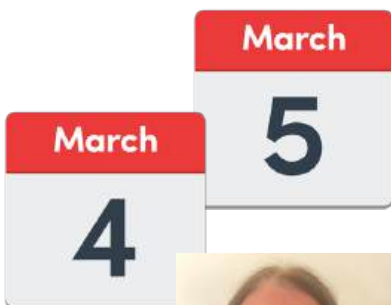
In a previous meeting, Reps had talked about being scared of getting scammed on the phone and online.

Jess shared some tips on how to avoid scams and Reps shared their experiences of scams and keeping safe online.



Finally, I want to thank all the Reps for their hard work over the last 2 years.

Groups will hold elections over the next month to vote for their new National Council Reps.



The new National Council will meet on 4th and 5th March in south Wales.



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

by Chairperson, Tracy Austin

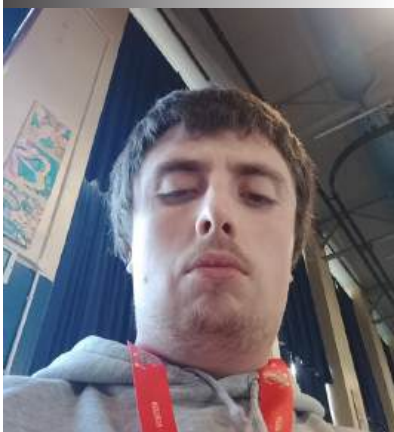
Member article

Jac Hughes



I am a member of Roaring Mon self advocacy group and I'm on the Citizen Panel for North Wales Together.

I think sharing problems is a good way of relieving pressure and helping stress. I like to help people with the barriers they're experiencing. It's important to me, to make a difference for other people.



It bothers me a lot when Roaring Mon members tell me they have no choice about going out independently. This tends to happen a lot where people share support in the same house - everyone has to do the same because there's not enough support for people to do their own thing.

Being part of Roaring Mon means that I can help to get people's voices heard in the right places.



Transport is another big problem for me and other members. Since the 20mph came in to force, the bus timetables seem to have changed and there are less buses. It affects what I can get involved with. I have to attend a Citizen Panel meeting online, because I can't get a bus at the right time. It's not good enough. I've written to my MS.

Jac Hughes, Roaring Mon

Out and about with Gerraint



During August and September I visited Torfaen People First, People First Bridgend and Cwm Taf People First to run SATV. We talked about Human Rights and the right to a good life. There were lots of barriers people shared about going on holiday. Things like not having support, and having to pay for a support worker.



On 18th September I Chaired the Community of Practice for Behaviour of Concern, with Improvement Cymru. I'm now the Co-Chair of the group.



On 26th September I attended a TRAC on-line meeting. I will be attending the meetings regularly.

On 24th October I attended a Welsh Government Task Force, looking at Independent Living.



On 19th November I attended the BASE Conference in Manchester with NCMH. I won the award for a person with learning disability who has gone through supported employment, and who is an advocate for people with lived experience. Thanks to the Engage to Change Project and to Andrea and Elisa from NCMH who nominated me!

Gerraint Jones Griffiths

Through our Eyes on Tour

Bangor



It was lovely to see so many of you for the #ThroughOurEyes0 on Tour celebration event at Pontio, Bangor University on 2nd December.

Thanks to all who attended and contributed, and of course to our hosts at Pontio.

The exhibition looks fabulous, especially the voile panels hanging in the windows to the highstreet! - We hope that Pontio visitors and the wider public enjoy looking at the images throughout December and in to 2025.

We hope to announce another tour venue in 2025!



If you missed the event, here's a snapshot of how it went...



Mark Isherwood MS set the tone perfectly, by talking about All Wales People First, the importance of pictures, and the work undertaken by the Through our Eyes Project. Mark Isherwood MS has been an advocate for Disabled People's rights over many years and we are delighted that he was able to join us to give a keynote speech.



Through our Eyes on Tour Bangor



Joe Powell said “Projects like Through Our Eyes, look like they are a lot of fun. Exhibitions are fun, they are positive, and they feel like a good social engagement opportunity. And indeed they are.

But make no mistake about it, this project is not a vanity project. It is not a project about creating ‘pretty pictures’ for a back slapping celebration event like today. The reason behind this project is to address a fundamental core barrier that people with learning disabilities face in everyday life.”



Natasha Hirst and Lucy Hinksman talked about their work on the project and the project's journey from 2029-2022. How the exhibition and library images were created.



Guest speaker, Tina Evans “Human on Wheels” talked about representation of disabled people in the media - how we can change stereotypes and how the public think about learning disability



You can read some of the speeches and see Natasha's presentation in the Projects section of our website.

Chief Executive's update



It is strange that another year is almost over. The last year has been another one filled with challenges and changes. Not just within self-advocacy but the world itself.

This last year we have seen:

- The election of a new UK Government.
- A new president elected in the USA.
- The continued war in the Ukraine and:
- The conflict between Israel and Palestine.



These world events all affect the political situation back here in the UK.

It makes us wonder if things will get better, or worse.



Understandably it is an anxious time for us all. But, we got through it. We all stood and fought together to make the continued case for the rights of people with learning disabilities in Wales.



We have spoken out about concessionary bus passes, the Stolen Lives (Homes not Hospitals) campaign and many other issues. Our members voices are stronger than ever

Chief Executive's update



before in influencing important policy and decision making.

We have done so much and there is still so much to do.

But lets take the time to reflect on just how hard we have all worked.



This includes the members, self-advocacy groups across Wales, the national council, our board of directors, the staff team within All Wales People First and all those organisations we work with to try to make Wales a better place for people with learning disabilities.



Thanks to you all for your hard work and commitment.

Lets take the time over Christmas and the New Year to recharge ready to go again in 2025. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each and every one of you.



Joe Powell

News from groups



Caerphilly People First won the prestigious Food Sustainability Award at the GAVO Volunteer Awards 2024 for Caerphilly County Borough. This recognition highlights the incredible dedication and hard work of our volunteers, especially through our Reconnect Through Cookery sessions, where we have promoted sustainable food practices and shared the joys of cooking together.

As part of our Wellbeing Wednesdays project, we are hosting monthly reflexology sessions with Emma from Soulfully You. The therapy can be especially beneficial for individuals with learning disabilities and autism, as it helps reduce stress, improve mood, and ease physical tension.



Members recently attended the Welsh Ambulance Conference in Newbridge. We learned that it's not necessary to dial 999 when you're ill. You can call 111 for medical advice instead. They even have a new service to help with mental health issues: just dial 111 and select option 2. We got an inside look at the 7 checks paramedics do, tried out some equipment, and toured an ambulance.



News from groups



Newport People First had a fun and productive day on 19th August! In the morning we had guest speakers from Swansea Bay NHS. Neil and Merna explained their project about restrictive practices - our members gave their thoughts by taking part in interactive and easy read Question & Answers. It was really interesting to learn about different ways people with a learning disability are stopped in living their lives the way they want.



Then right afterwards we had our All Members Meeting - as some of the members were already there at the office!



Monday 14th October we met Esther at the Rubicon Dance Studio who gave us the grand tour around the building. We got to see dance classes in action - our member and keen dancer Steven also told us all about the dance competitions he's entered and won a few awards. We also got to take part in easy steps and muscle warming exercises. Esther told us about different dance styles for us to promote to our members.



Zarah Kaleem

News from groups

People First Bridgend
Pobl Yn Gyntaf Pen-Y-Bont



putting people first
rhoi pobl yn gyntaf

People First Bridgend helped train police officers how to interview a person with a learning disability. We watched a video of a crime, and the officers practiced using their skills to interview us about the video.

During Hate Crime Week, we visited the South Wales Police Heritage Centre.



We worked with Swansea Bay NHS, helping them to develop training packages on reducing restrictive practices and positive behaviour support. Our help will make training better, so that staff and carers know how to help people to have a good life.



We are helping Social Care Wales with their easy-read Codes of Professional Practice. These are the codes that describe how social care workers must work.

We are making a film about why we think the voices of people with learning disabilities should be included in the social work course at Swansea University.



We held an event to celebrate the advocacy movement for adults with learning disabilities and autism in Bridgend.

News from groups



Your Voice Advocacy

We are looking forward to our Christmas Fayre on December 13th. It was our member Rob's idea and he has been planning for months.



South Wales police visited our groups for hate crime awareness week and we got to see their Tesla car light show.

We went to a big event with the regional partnership board to celebrate everything being done.



We will be working with the Paul Ridd Foundation to run more training for medical students in the new year.

Our reps Connie and Adam enjoyed the trip up to Bangor for the All Wales People First National Council.



It was the first time for Adam to take such a long journey by train.

facebook



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - 2 December

Our All Wales People First co chair Bob Rhodes and I met with Lois Owen and her colleagues at Gwynedd Learning Disability team to talk about the way we commission services and our experiences about focusing what matters to people for a good life.



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - 21 November

Tracey and I had a wonderful afternoon celebrating the 30th anniversary of Newport People First. 30 years is an amazing achievement. Especially given the challenges of funding for self advocacy. Congratulations to everyone at Newport People First. Here's to the next thirty years



Round up



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - 17 September

The Stolen Lives motion was passed in the Senedd this afternoon. It was passed unanimously and Sarah Murphy MS, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing acknowledged that one person placed inappropriately in a mental health hospital is one too many. The journey is not over but it's a big step forward. So proud to have stood alongside the Stolen Lives team representing All Wales People First along with our consortium partners Learning Disability Wales.

In the debate it was acknowledged that this was a human rights issue which is a fundamental breakthrough. Hefin David MS, Sioned Williams and Mark Isherwood MS were outstanding in advocating for people with learning disabilities.

