



# All Wales People First

# Talk Back

The National Voice of People with

Learning Disabilities in Wales

## Winter 2024 - 2025



*“AdFest - I’m coming to it! The best bit is seeing people getting to speak up, and sharing in other people’s achievements like the Awards. We all get the chance to speak up about how we feel about things.”*

**Victoria Waller**

### Hidden talents AdFest

24-25 June 2025

The Kinmel & Kinspa, Abergele



#### What to expect

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

**BOOKINGS NOW OPEN!**



## Book now for #LDAdFest2025

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## Editorial

Welcome to the winter 2024 edition of Talk Back. We enjoyed a nice break at the end of 2024, and we're already making lots of new plans for 2025!

In March, the National Council talked about how All Wales People First communicates and how they like to communicate. We did a review of Talk Back. The National Council have shared lots of new ideas about doing things a bit differently.

We want to make sure that we get our Talk Back work right for all members. It's important that everyone can have a say before any changes happen. We will share some ideas and ask your opinions on our social media, website, and in the next edition of Talk Back.

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

**The AWPFF Team**



**Save the date!**  
**AdFest**  
24-25 June 2025

**What to expect**

- ✓ Day delegates From £55
- ✓ Overnight packages £75 - £125
- ✓ Exhibitors From £180
- ✓ Learn new things
- ✓ Be heard
- ✓ Guest speakers and stalls
- ✓ Meet friends
- ✓ Show fair!

**BOOKINGS OPEN IN 2025!**

[www.allwalespeople1st.co.uk](http://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 Cardiff on 11th and 12th March.

My name is Lucy Hinksman from Pembrokeshire. I've been elected again to sit on the National Council for the next 2 years. I am really pleased to be elected the new Chair of National Council by the other reps.



I am pleased to be working alongside Kurtis Marshall who is the new Vice Chair.

I would like to thank Tracy Austin and Samantha Hall for being the last Chair and Vice Chair and for their hard work over last two years.



The National Council meeting in Cardiff on 11th & 12th March was a residential meeting. Our first meeting of a new 2 year term for the National Council.



At the meeting Reps shared their issues from local groups and this included lack of public transport, and concerns about benefit cuts.

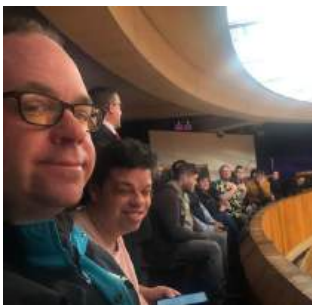
# National Council update



Joe Powell gave a Chief Executive's update. He told Reps more about the proposed changes to the benefits system.



Reps are worried but have planned lots of actions to campaign against the changes. I encourage all members to write to your MP about this. Self advocates need to work together on this issue and fight for what is right.



Reps also talked about how All Wales People First communicates with members. We did a review of Talk Back and thought about the good and bad things on social media.



We were joined by Jerry & Taylor from Southern Mississippi University. It was great to meet them both and share what we do in Wales and what they do in the United States of America.



Reps were offered a tour of the Senedd. It was very exciting, especially for those who stepped into the Senedd for the first time. We had a great time.

***Lucy Hinksman, National Council Chair***

# Out and about with Gerraint



On 28th January I attended a Welsh Government Task force meeting with Joe. An online meeting focusing on housing. Joe and I gave feedback. The cost of living is making it harder for people with learning disabilities to pay for things, and it's really hard for people to get a house.



29th January I attended a research forum. I highlighted a concern that so much research doesn't include people with learning disabilities. I am an Honorary Associate of Cardiff University.



on 30th January I co-chaired the Community of Practice on Behaviour of Concern.

I visited Caerphilly People First on 12th February. It was great to sign up and welcome some new AWPf members!



Thanks to Kurtis Marshall, who spoke about climate change during the January online SATV. Thanks also to Your Voice Advocacy for hosting an in person SATV session. Members shared lots of concerns about transport.

# Member article

James Tyler



I used to live in a residential care home, until earlier this year. Now I have my own flat. I love it!

I'd started to think about having my own place a few years ago, probably around 2020. In 2021 I found out about building plans for the flats where I now call home. A small block of flats for people with learning disabilities. There is support on site during the day until early evening if I need it.



I found out about the flats during a meeting with Pembrokeshire People First. A housing representative from the council shared an idea about building a small block of flats for people with learning disabilities. The group gave feedback and thought it was a great idea.



There was a lot of competition to get one of the flats. There's not enough housing for people with learning disabilities to live independently with some support. It felt like a very long wait for me. I found out at the end of February 2024 that I'd qualified for one of the flats.

# Member article

James Tyler



I had a few site visits during 2024 and I moved in to my flat on 3 January 2025. The first night I slept there overnight was amazing! I thought I'd feel nervous after being used to company and support for so many years. I wasn't.

So far, I've had visitors and an opportunity to share my self advocacy skills and experience with the others who live in the block. The fire alarm went off, and everyone was scared and not too sure what to do. I helped to explain things and I think it reassured them. Things didn't go to plan but it was a good practice opportunity for everyone, including the housing support. I think we're all prepared if ever there is a real fire.



One of my friends from the care home came to visit for the day recently. I made us some pizza and we had a good catch up. He usually has support when he goes out and about. I felt very proud that the care home staff trusted me to take care of our own support while we spent some time together. I hope it's helped with his confidence to be more independent too.





# Member article

James Tyler



My girlfriend is coming over to stay this weekend. I'm looking forward to celebrating Valentine's Day together. I'll be cooking and we plan to go to Tenby on Saturday.

The best bit about living independently in the new flat, is having the freedom to choose what I want to do and when. I decide which visitors I want to invite. It's great! There's a rule about overnight visitor limits, but that's it. I go out whenever I want to.



The down side of living in my own place is having to do chores like house work. I've been here a few weeks already and it doesn't look like a tip yet! I try to tidy up as I go along. That way mess doesn't get out of control.



When I think how I managed to get here, self advocacy and People First played a big part. More confidence came though experiencing and understanding about more things. I started to believe what could be possible. Now I've got a lot of confidence in what I can do for myself. I speak up about my opinion and things which affect me.

**James Tyler**

# Chief Executive's update



It was really nice to end 2024 celebrating Human Rights Day in Westminster, hosted by the British Institute of Human Rights.

The event took place on the 10th December. I travelled to the event with Lucy Hinksman, who represented Pembrokeshire People First.



The event not only celebrates Human Rights Day, it also showcases the Human Rights projects that the BIHR work on with organisations across the United Kingdom.



Last year Tracy Austin and I presented All Wales People Firsts Human Rights toolkit to help people with learning disabilities and autism to fight for their rights if a decision is made that they feel goes against their human rights.



The toolkit was dedicated to and inspired by our member Jack Cavanagh and his experiences of being held in a mental health hospital when he didn't need to be there. He was there because the services he needed could not be provided.

I spoke about the toolkit once more and the

# Chief Executive's update



very positive outcome of the Senedd debate on this issue which took place on the 4th December 2024 in which the Senedd recognised this issue and the fact that the Welsh Government had a responsibility to address it.



Whilst All Wales People First can take no credit for this success, I was so proud to stand alongside the Stolen Lives group of which I am a member.



At Westminster It was lovely to see members of RCT People First too who worked with the BIHR on a Human Rights game called 'The Game of Rights'.



The Game of Rights aims to teach people about the Human Rights act in a fun way. It is an excellent resource and one that I would encourage everyone to take a look at.

Wales had such a strong presence at the event – it felt like a People First take over. Wonderful stuff.

**Joe Powell**

#LDAdFest2025



# Hidden talents AdFest

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# #LDAfest2025



Our next Adfest has the theme of Hidden Talents! We want to give our members the chance to celebrate their talents and inspire each other.

So we're shouting out to all of our members, because we know that among them are magicians, dancers, sport athletes, musicians, performers, artists, creatives and more.



If you have a talent you would like to share at Adfest, please email us a video of your talent to: [jessica@allwalespeople1st.co.uk](mailto:jessica@allwalespeople1st.co.uk) Or send it to us on Facebook messenger.



We can talk to you about the best way to display your talent at Adfest, whether it would be best displayed on a video, performed in person or something else.



There will be a prize for the best talent, the winner will be decided by Adfest delegates.

The deadline to send us your talent is the 14th of April, but the earlier you send in, the more likely you are to secure a good performance spot!

# MIRROR Awards



This year our MIRROR Awards ceremony will happen on the evening of 24th June. That is day 1 of AdFest.

MIRROR Awards celebrate the great things self-advocates with learning disabilities and their groups have done over the last year.

There are 6 awards: Members, Ideas, Rights, Reflect, Organisation, Review.



## **Nominating someone**

You can nominate yourself or someone else by completing the online form. You will find it in the events section of our website. Or you can get in touch with

[Tracey@allwalespeople1st.co.uk](mailto:Tracey@allwalespeople1st.co.uk)

Closing date for nominations: Friday 25th April



## **Sponsoring**

Each award is sponsored by different groups, companies and organisations. To find out more about sponsoring opportunities, visit the events section of our website, or contact

[Victoria@allwalespeople1st.co.uk](mailto:Victoria@allwalespeople1st.co.uk)



# Through our Eyes on Tour Update



Since the last edition, we've been busy doing more photoshoots to get more pictures for the online photo library and the exhibition. This is part of our ongoing work on Diverse Cymru's Cultural Competency standards.



Photographer Natasha Hirst, visited Cwm Taff People First to take some pictures of members doing the things they enjoy and members who have a learning disability and another hidden disability.

It was about representing 'pan-disability'.



We are looking forward to more photoshoots. They will represent cultural diversity and LGBTQ+ identity.

We have some more exciting news to share with you! The Through our Eyes photography exhibition tour will be visiting the Rhondda Arts Factory from 28th June until August.



Keep watching the next Talk Back and our social media accounts for more updates.

# News from groups



**Caerphilly People First** members Amy Jones and Natalie King recently attended a TRAC (Teaching and Research Advisory Committee) meeting at the University of South Wales. The meeting was about the new lung screening service for the future, and teaching interview and research skills. It was lovely to see members from other People First groups and connect with everyone working towards making a difference!



Ffion and Amy recently delivered 'Learning Disability Awareness and Health Care' training to people from Shared Lives, the Caerphilly Learning Disability Social Worker team, and representatives from Care in the Community.



The aim of the course is for people to get a better understanding of people with learning disabilities. The feedback was great, with comments like "the session was presented very well and information was given clearly" "information given will help me to be a better social worker" "it was great that it was being led by people with experience of having learning disabilities".





## News from groups



**Conwy Connect** - Bad weather in January, caused disruptions and we had to cancel the first face to face Forum meeting in January.

Some members had no water. A big water pipe broke and took a few days to be fixed. Members made sure they are on the Welsh Water priority list.



Richard Redmond has been re-elected by the group to be the All Wales People First Representative. He is thrilled. Everyone in the Forum is getting excited for Adfest and are happy that it is in Conwy.



The Representatives and Deputies for All Wales People First and the North Wales Flyers from Conwy and Denbighshire are having a training day to help them to be the best that they can be in their roles.



Members have also been involved in the consultation for the new Learning Disability Strategy (plan) for North Wales. It aims for people with Learning Disabilities to have a better quality of life and to be valued in their communities.

# News from groups

People First Bridgend  
Pobl Yn Gyntaf Pen-Y-Bont



putting people first  
rhoi pobl yn gyntaf

## People First Bridgend

We are doing lots of work with an organisation called Llais. Llais means 'voice' in Welsh.

We trained Llais staff in Learning Disability Awareness, and they kindly donated us a delicious Christmas buffet!

Llais want to make a film about our views and experiences of health and social care services, like our GP practices, hospitals, and supported living. We have enjoyed sharing our stories with Llais. Llais will make sure our voices are heard by people who make decisions about services.

We are continuing to work with South Wales Police, helping them with their Specialist Witness Interview Training Course. The training helps the Police to be better at communicating and interviewing people with learning disabilities. This is very important training, but we also have lots of fun!



# News from groups



## Cwm Taf People First & Torfaen People First

Cwm Taf People First and Torfaen People First have been working on a project with the British Institute of Human Rights to make a game called the Game of Rights.



We were invited to the Houses of Parliament on December 10th, International Human Rights Day, where Harriet (Torfaen People First) and Stuart (Merthyr Representative) gave a presentation there.

The Game of Rights is a fun way for people with a learning disability to learn about their rights and find out how rights can help us live our lives. Watch this Space the Game will be arriving shortly!



# facebook



**All Wales People First, Chief Executive - 10 December**

On Human Rights day I attended the BIHR - The British Institute of Human Rights anniversary event at the House of Lords. Lucy Hinksman joined me and it was wonderful to see Cwm Taf People First talk about the human rights game they produced with the BIHR. I represented All Wales People First talking about the 'Using Human Rights' toolkit we produced along with the BIHR last year. The toolkit was designed to help those with learning disabilities challenge unfair decisions using the human rights act.

Lucy Hinksman invited her MP Henry Tuffnell. He came to chat to Lucy in person.



# Round up



**All Wales People First - 23 December**

We started out on our Cultural Competency journey at the end of January last year and we're feeling proud to have been given the Bronze Award. We've been working hard this year to ensure that we provide a 'culturally welcoming and inviting environment' for Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and to promote diversity and inclusion. We'll be aiming for the silver award in 2025!



**All Wales People First - 1 January**

Happy New Year to all our members and supporters!  
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda!

