

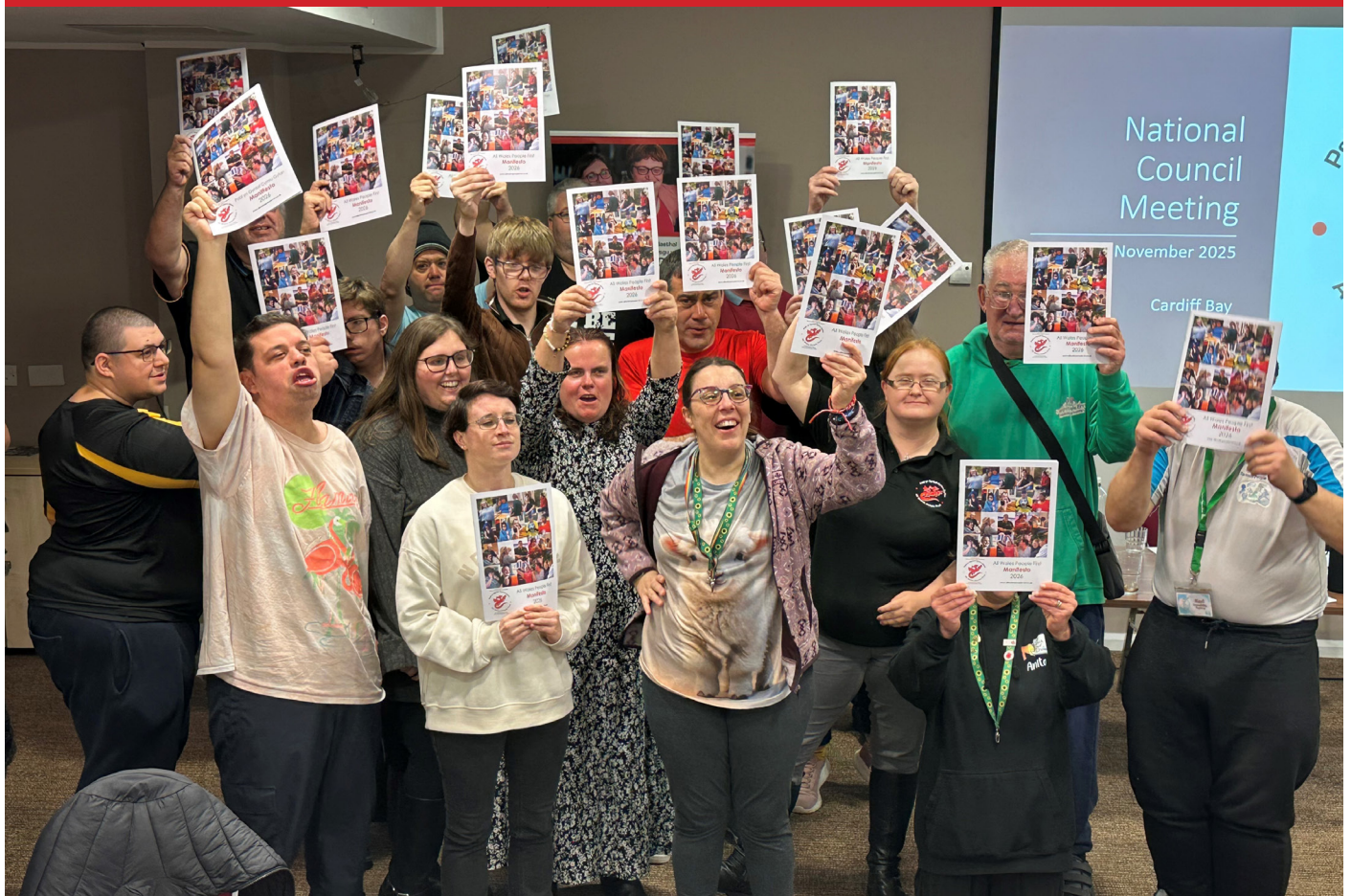


All Wales People First

Talk Back

The National Voice of People with Learning Disabilities in Wales

Autumn 2025



We launched our 2026 Manifesto! Page 13

Page 4

National
Council
update

Page 7

Out and
about with
Gerraint

Page 8

Member
article

Page 10

Chief
Executive's
update

Page 15

News from
groups



Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Talk Back. It was great to see so many of you at #LDAdFest2025, we saw lots of your talents over the 2 days. We'll be sharing the event report soon!

We have now finished our review of TalkBack. The National Council decided there will be 2 editions a year. The next edition will be at the end of Spring 2026.

You may get a telephone call from one of the AWPf team soon. We need to update your details on our database. We will ask how you want to receive Talk Back. More about this on page 12.

We are looking at some other ways to share our work and keep in touch with you. Keep watching in 2026!

Remember there are lots of ways you can let us know what matters to you. A diary update with Claire or Kelly; video interview; Talk Back article; speak with your National Council Rep; SATV with Gerraint.

Get in touch with one of us if you want to get involved.

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 Manager

tracey@allwalespeople1st.co.uk



Claire Morgan

Communications Officer

claire@allwalespeople1st.co.uk



Gerraint Jones-Griffiths

Outreach Worker

gerraint@allwalespeople1st.co.uk



Jessica Keeble

Events & Engagement Assistant

jessica@allwalespeople1st.co.uk



National Council update



National Council met in Swansea on September 9th and in Cardiff on November 4th.

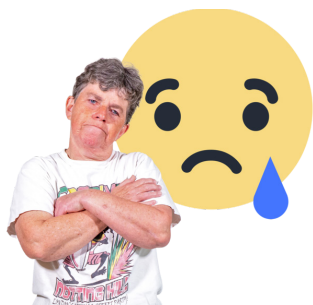
We were really sad to see that Powys People First have closed down due to the lack of funding. It's also sad to see other support services for people with learning disabilities closing.



Without these services people with learning disabilities will have lots of concerns for their social life and their usual routine of activities.

People with learning disabilities need fuller lives, not the loss of more services.

My condolences to the members and trustees of Powys People First.



During National Council meetings in September and November, the hot topics have been.

- We talked about the LeDeR report in England that gives information about any avoidable deaths of people with learning disabilities. An avoidable death is when



National Council update



something could have been done to stop the person dying. Reps said it is important that we know this information in Wales too to prevent further deaths. I feed back to LDMAG about what Reps had said at National Council.



- Reps are keen to see better healthcare, especially more GP appointments, letters in easy read and good quality annual health checks.



- Lots of members are having problems when they switch from Employment Support Allowance to Universal Credit. People are also worried because they don't understand if there will be more changes to benefits.



- In November, we were joined by Mencap Cymru. They talked about their Cashless Society campaign to keep shops and other services taking cash as well as cards for paying for things. In separate groups we talked about how to support the campaign in our local



National Council update



groups. Reps voted to work with Mencap on a project to get more shops taking cash. Watch this space!



In the November meeting the National Council launched the AWPf Manifesto 2026. The manifesto lists the most important issues for people with learning disabilities in Wales.

We hope political parties will listen and promise to help with these issues if they are voted into the Senedd next year.

Big thank you to Mark Isherwood who joined is at the launch. Mark has given us massive support over the years in improving the lives of people with learning disabilities.



As Vice chair of the National Council it's been great to stand in for Lucy to write this article. As we come to the end of the year we hope next year our voices will continue to be heard loud and clear.



A big thank you to Reps for all their hard work over the last year and to the staff of AWPf for their support in Adfest and other events.

Kurtis Marshall, National Council Vice chair

Out and about with Gerraint



On 2nd July, Vicky and I attended Gofod 3 in Cardiff City Stadium. We chatted about AWPf and the benefits of self advocacy. We also welcomed some new e-subscribers.



On 10th September I co-chaired the All Wales Community of Practice Behaviours of Concern, which was in the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells. We talked about Stolen Lives and Homes not Hospitals.



On 1st September I attended the funeral of the late Hefin David MS. It was an incredibly sad day when I said my goodbye to a dear friend and colleague. Hefin was an incredible ambassador for Autism and Learning Disability. I also attended a closed event on 16th September, where members of the Senedd shared tributes to Hefin.



On 14th October I delivered SATV in person to Cwm Taff People First. We talked about volunteering, paid employment and retirement. If you'd like me to bring SATV to your group, please get in touch.

Gerraint Jones Griffiths

Member article

Kurtis Marshall



A few weeks ago, I was asked by All Wales People First to do a BBC news interview about climate change. I met with BBC journalist Garry Owen on Barry seafront. We talked about my work with the One Planet project.



"Before I started the job (with One Planet) I didn't know anything about climate change. As I got on with the role I educated myself and literally grew and knew more about it. So I think it's about educating yourself but also educating others".



Behind the scenes we talked more about the barriers to getting involved with climate change...



I explained that One Planet has funding to cover a few areas in Wales. The activities I'm involved with are a great way to get people with learning disabilities involved with the environment and reducing their carbon footprint. We do all sorts: Building confidence with travel so that people can use public transport confidently and walk more. Walking is much better for mental and physical health and the environment.

Member article

Kurtis Marshall



The repair Café, where you can trade, swap, use and buy stuff to make something. The eco gardening is fun too. It gets people growing their own food, and being outdoors is great for mental health.



Not everyone with a learning disability has access to activities like these though. I think access to information about climate change and eco-friendly activities can be out of reach for some people.

Cuts to services, especially local People First and self-advocacy groups mean there are less opportunities for people with learning disabilities to grow their knowledge, skills and experience in general. Self-advocacy helps people to have a voice and to have the confidence to make their own decisions about lots of things which affect them, including climate change.



I'm passionate about my paid role at Innovate Trust as One Planet Assistant Project Officer and about educating others on climate change. I think there should be more paid employment opportunities like this for people with learning disabilities.

Chief Executive's update



AdFest 2025 was designed by our National Council and delivered by our excellent staff team. This year's event in North Wales was a big success. Thanks everyone who took part. AdFest is an important opportunity to showcase the positive difference people with a learning disability can make in Wales. It also informs us about your priorities.



This year we also launched our new MIRROR Strategy. We used the information you gave us during two strategy events in North and South Wales in 2024. The strategy was agreed by the National Council.



Some of our members also wrote the organisation's first ever Diversity Strategy. The Diversity Strategy will help us to make sure that everyone has access to self-advocacy in Wales.



On the 4th November we launched our 2026 Manifesto at the Future Inn, Cardiff Bay. You can read about the launch event on page 12.

I would like to thank the National Council for their hard work on the Manifesto. We hope

Chief Executive's update

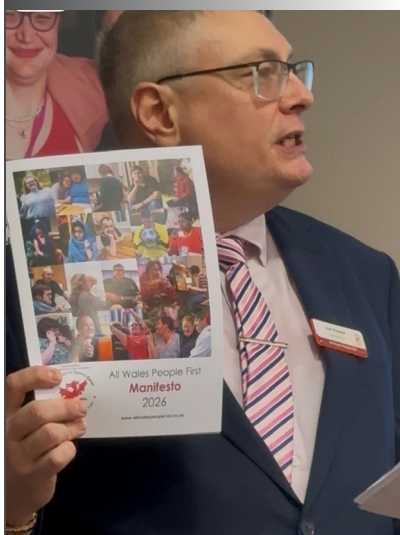


that the next Welsh Government will listen and act on our members concerns.

We encourage our members to share the Manifesto with their local election candidates and ask them to support the Manifesto and speak up for people with learning disabilities in the next Senedd.



I would like to end this year by giving thanks. Thanks to the National Council for their hard work over the last year. Our National Council is what makes us All Wales People First. An organisation led by people with learning disabilities in Wales.



Thanks to the Board of Directors for their hard work. Our Directors do not get paid, and we could not run the organisation without them.

Thanks to the staff team for their hard work over the last year. Our staff are extremely dedicated and I couldn't wish for a better team.



Finally, I wish the readers of Talkback a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Joe Powell

Are your contact details up to date?

Name

Address

Phone Number

We're checking that we have the right contact details for our members.

We're contacting you by telephone to ask questions about how you prefer to communicate.

You might have had a call from one of the team already?



We want to make sure that we do good work for a wide range of people, so we are asking about gender, sexuality, faith and ethnicity. You don't have to answer those questions if you don't want to.



If you haven't yet heard from us, it could mean that we don't have your telephone number.



Please can you get in touch with us to confirm your contact details, and to let us know if you would like to continue your membership with us? Get in touch by:

Email claire@allwalespeople1st.co.uk

Telephone Claire on 07399059631

WhatsApp Claire on 07399059631

Facebook messenger All Wales People First



Manifesto launch

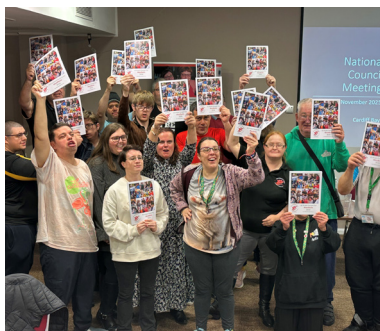


All Wales People First
Manifesto
2026

www.allwalespeople1st.co.uk

We launched our manifesto in Cardiff and live on Facebook on 4th November.

Our members want Welsh Government and decision makers to understand what is important to us as people with learning disabilities in Wales. Our priorities in this Manifesto are: Self-advocacy; Housing & support; Employment; Transport; Health; Equality.



“Resources are tightening, and disability is becoming less of a political priority across the United Kingdom. That’s why it’s so important that whoever forms the next Welsh Government fully understands the challenges disabled people face, and the real consequences these challenges have on people’s lives” Joe Powell.



Thanks to our keynote speaker Mark Isherwood MS. Mark is a member of the Cross Party Group on Disability and has been a strong advocate for disabled people over many years.

You can read our Manifesto in the resource section of our website.

The event is on our **YouTube** channel.

Through our Eyes on tour



We're on tour again! Thanks to the Arts Factory for hosting our full photography exhibition at Maerdy Community Centre. If you're in the CF43 4DD area, why not pop in to see the exhibition?

Their Brew Factory Cafe is open 9.30am - 2.30pm Tuesday - Friday. You can buy hot and cold drinks, cooked breakfasts and snacks.

A few Cwm Taff People First members have already visited the exhibition hall. They shared what they think about Through our Eyes and why It's so important to show the pictures in public spaces.

The exhibition is a great way of showing what people with learning disabilities can do and for educating people who don't understand learning disability - For example we can have paid jobs, do live performances, and use public transport when people treat us fairly.

Take a look at our You Tube and Tik Tok to hear more of what they had to say about the exhibition.

News from groups



Newport People First

We delivered our disability awareness training to the staff of Monmouthshire Building Society in Newport City Centre.

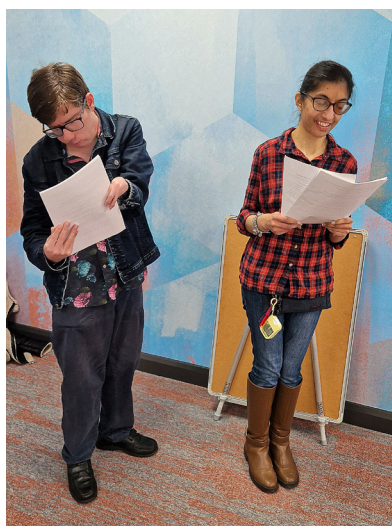
It was a great turnout, and the staff were a privilege to get to train.

The staff were empathetic and curious, and they already have the warmth in their working practice.

However they now also have a better knowledge on how to support someone and help with a learning disability in their work place.

A big shoutout to Catherine Bone for organising the day.

Zarah Kaleem



News from groups



Caerphilly People First TRAC Meetings

Members of Caerphilly People First have been taking part in TRAC meetings with the University of South Wales. TRAC is a project that helps train student nurses by including the lived experiences of people with learning disabilities. At the meetings, we discussed developing an Easy Read Risk Assessment, and we're delighted that Ffion and Gethin will be involved as Teaching and Research Leads/Co-Researchers, and will be trained and paid to take part in research and teaching. By taking part in this work, we can support better training and help ensure people with learning disabilities get the right care.



Online Hate Crime Training

A huge thank you to Noah from Victim Support for delivering online hate crime training to our members recently. They really enjoyed the session and gave some great feedback on what they learned: Andrew – learned how to make accounts private and how to report hate crime.



News from groups



Theresa – found it helpful, especially learning not to answer phone scams.

Olivia – found it very interesting and learned about safe settings.



Members also learned that hate crime can be reported to Victim Support, as well as through social media platforms if abuse happens online.



GAVO Volunteering Awards 2025

We're thrilled to share that we recently won the runner-up prize in the Community Advocate category at the GAVO Volunteering Awards 2025, an award presented to us by Jane Mudd, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent.



This recognition celebrates our contribution to volunteering and the positive difference our members continue to make across the community. It was amazing and uplifting to hear about the many great projects happening throughout our county. We're so proud to be part of this amazing community.

News from groups



**YOUR VOICE
ADVOCACY &**
WEST GLAMORGAN PEOPLE FIRST

Your Voice Advocacy has had such a busy year.

Our member trustee Rob M organised and ran 3 seasonal fayres which were so much fun.



We worked with Penderi Cluster on a huge Well Being event to share information about Health Checks with loads of organisations.



We ran Fit Jacks with the Swans Foundation. It was an 8 week course to help people understand Health and Wellbeing and get active.



At the start of the year we ran Medical Student Training with the Paul Ridd Foundation. We had great feedback from the students and have been invited back to do it again in the new year.

News from groups



We are proud one of our staff Neil is on the All Wales People First Board. His wife Ann is on the board for Learning Disability Wales.



Our members got political and went to events in Cardiff and protests in Swansea. Rich B even got on the news!



We went to St Fagans with the Dylan Thomas Centre and our members gave a presentation on Easy Read for the Museum's Association.



Even with the train strikes last week our Advocacy Group got together with adults services last week and started working with Adult Services on new ways to make each area of Swansea better for people with Learning Disabilities.

facebook®



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - 14 August

Sophie Hinksman and I co-chaired another Homes not Hospitals sub-group of the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group at the Welsh Government offices in Cathays Park today. Sophie opened the meeting with a one minute silence for Hefin David MS who sadly passed away a couple of days ago. The group also agreed that the final report would be dedicated to Hefin's memory and the enormous role he has played in fighting for the rights of people with learning disabilities and autism who have been sectioned inappropriately in secure settings. Today we fine tuned the report for submission to the main Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group in September. They will then decide whether to endorse it and submit it to the Minister. Thanks again for everyone's hard work today.



Round up



All Wales People First, Chief Executive - 10 October

Vicky and I are representing All Wales People First at the Mental Health and Wellbeing Wales awards at the Mercure Hotel in Cardiff today. All Wales People First were finalists in the 'Workplace Wellbeing (small organisation)' category. We did not win but just being a finalist is a great accomplishment given the high number of nominations per year. Mental Health and Wellbeing are embedded in our workplace culture and we will continue to be the very best employers we can be

