

Learning Disability Wales Annual Review

April 2020 to March 2021



Responding to the pandemic, influencing policy, training and events, Engage to Change, Gig Buddies Cymru, Welsh Youth Parliament, supporting parents with a learning disability, 21st Century People, and lots more

Contents

Welcome messages	page 3
A tribute to Sam Jenkins	5
Responding to the pandemic	6
Keeping you informed and connected	6
Easy Read Wales	7
Influencing policy	8
Engage to Change	12
Employment policy work from	
Engage to Change	14
Training and events	15
Looking after the wellbeing	
of our staff	17
Gig Buddies Cymru	18
Our Staff	21
21st Century People	22
Our trustees and members	26
Our money	27
Our year in numbers	28



We want Wales to be the best country in the world for people with a learning disability to live, learn and work






Keep in touch

Learning Disability Wales, 41 Lambourne Crescent, Cardiff
Business Park, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5GG
Phone: 029 2068 1160 www.ldw.org.uk

Company limited by guarantee: 02326324
Registered Charity: 1062858
VAT Registered Number: 762 4559 11



Learning Disability Wales
Anabledd Dysgu Cymru

 enquiries@ldw.org.uk
 [/learningdisabilitywales](https://www.facebook.com/learningdisabilitywales)
 [@LdWales](https://twitter.com/LdWales)



Welcome message

from our Chair, Jon Day

Another year, a lot of change and a lot remaining the same. In terms of change, I came in as Chair in December 2020 replacing Phil Madden, who I would like to personally thank for his leadership and direction of Learning Disability Wales in some difficult times over the last few years and more latterly through the pandemic.

The biggest change has of course been the pandemic and the challenges that this has presented to us as an organisation and to all of us as a population. What has stayed the same, however, is the absolute commitment and dedication of the staff team, superbly led by Zoe our Chief Executive Officer, who have all admirably risen to the challenge of remote working and the ongoing uncertainty that this pandemic has brought.

We have strengthened our governance arrangements this year and with the right recruitment over the coming months we will build on the talent that exists at board level allowing us to move forward with confidence.

I am not going to list the range of work and activities that the team have been involved in as this is clearly and superbly illustrated throughout this annual report. This work is what leads us to be a key partner across Wales, with Welsh Government and the Learning Disability Consortium as well as other key stakeholders, and ensures that we approach all of our ambitions in a collaborative and consultative fashion.

I would like to specifically note how proud I was of the role that the organisation took over the “Do Not Attempt CPR” issues and vaccinations priorities, and the impact that this had on people with a learning disability. This led to an important debate and improved outcomes not only at a Welsh level but also at UK level. Communication into and out of the organisation is absolutely critical and these issues were expertly dealt with and managed by the organisation to great effect.

On a personal note, I would like to say thank you to my fellow trustees and the staff team who have given me such a warm welcome as Chair and have been so supportive in my first year.



Welcome message

from our Chief Executive, Zoe Richards

Our year began with a closed office, a nervous team and a huge task ahead to ensure our members felt connected, informed, heard and understood.

With some of our work on hold and in person meetings and events cancelled, we had to reorganise, adapt and learn at a speed we had never experienced before. You will see from this report that we did just that.

We forged new partnerships and strengthened existing ones. Bringing us close to decision makers and ensuring we were at the forefront of solutions.

We knew that accessible information, keeping people informed and representation would be our most important areas of work. Our team shared their skills so we could provide easy read information on all the important developments connected to the pandemic. We increased our policy team to ensure that changes being made by Governments, local authorities and health boards were informed by our members and the learning disability community.

Our projects were also adapting. Gig Buddies is all about connecting and we found new ways of making sure people were in touch along with some magnificent online parties. Engage to Change had to support young people to either continue

working safely or adapt to support those who found themselves furloughed and without work.

We became partners in the UK Covid study and recruited participants to tell their stories about how Covid has affected people with a learning disability. We launched 21st Century People and found new ways to connect through our online networks – supporting people to come together and explore the issues affecting them through our Welsh Government grant. Switching to online training sessions meant we have reached more people than ever before.

We know that the lives of people with a learning disability have been more affected than others during Covid and the team has worked tirelessly to make changes and add our voice to a host of others to find solutions. I am incredibly grateful to be part of such a great team who care immensely about the work we do. Our team lost a wonderful friend and colleague this year. I will be grateful always for the friendship and wisdom that Sam Jenkins shared with me.

As we look forward to next year, we know that despite the difficulties of the pandemic, it is also a time for hope and a chance to change how we do things to ensure that Wales can be the best country in the world for people with a learning disability to live, learn and work.

A tribute to Sam Jenkins



Our dear colleague and friend Sam Jenkins died on 1 December 2020. All her colleagues and friends at Learning Disability Wales will miss Sam for all that she brought to us over the years.

Sam started work at Learning Disability Wales over 13 years ago and quickly established herself as a strong and reliable team member. She was very proud to be part of the Learning Disability Wales team, always willing to support the organisation and her colleagues wherever she could. One of the highlights of our working year, and of Sam's, was our annual conference where we would all wear our red t-shirts and be together as a team.

Sam was more than a colleague to us though, to many she became a good friend who reminded us all that a cup of tea and a chat is sometimes the most important part of the day.

We all hold many memories of Sam's sense of humour and fun, how she loved to talk and share memories of things we had done together. A work get-together or party was never the same if Sam couldn't make it, and she could always be relied upon to have the best Christmas jumper at our Christmas meal.

Sam was a very determined and resilient person. For much of her life Sam had to push to establish her own independence and be heard, and those who knew her

were able to see that her determination and resilience served her well.

Sam was also a committed self-advocate for the rights of people with a learning disability. It was important for her that her experience and her thoughts could be used to make life better for all people with a learning disability in Wales.

During lockdown Sam felt the pain of being separated from the ones she loved and the patterns of ordinary life, just like the rest of us. But she didn't take this lying down. Sam was determined to keep in touch and was the driving force behind keeping her colleagues connected and talking, not about work but just for the joy and comfort of talking with friends, sharing a laugh, talking over problems and remembering what is important in life.

Sam's mum Margaret, all her family and her boyfriend Nathan are in our thoughts, along with the countless people in Sam's life to whom she brought happiness.

All of us at Learning Disability Wales will forever miss Sam and never forget all that she gave and taught us: loyalty, laughter, determination, friendship, and the power of a strong woman.

Responding to the pandemic

Keeping you informed and connected

In March 2020 Learning Disability Wales adapted quickly to the needs of the pandemic by switching all our work into a communications and easy read information hub. With little public understanding of the pandemic available at the time, and a lot of misinformation being spread, we worked closely with Public Health Wales, Welsh Government and the Learning Disability Consortium to ensure that important information was quickly available for people with a learning disability.

We agreed to host a dedicated resources page on our website, updating it daily and offering a wide variety of information about coronavirus and the pandemic – including in-depth research and reports, easy read guides, advice about looking after our wellbeing, and tips for staying connected online. It is a significant piece of work to keep up to date and relevant. From 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 the coronavirus resources section was visited 16,493 times.

Throughout the year we used our social media, website and e-news service to report on significant developments connected to the pandemic. These included major issues such as ‘Do Not Attempt CPR’ (DNACPR) decisions, visits to care homes and supported living after lockdown restrictions were lifted, and priority access to the Covid-19 vaccine. Several explanatory



articles were also published on our website following discussions with Public Health Wales and Welsh Government.

You can visit our coronavirus resources page at www.ldw.org.uk/project/coronavirus.



Responding to the pandemic

Easy Read Wales



At the beginning of the year our easy read team had already shifted our focus to supporting Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, ensuring that the fast-changing guidance and information they were providing about the pandemic was accessible and kept up-to-date.

Throughout the year we produced easy read information about the pandemic on a weekly basis, including information about: lockdown rules and social distancing; shielding; screening; visiting friends and family in hospitals, care homes and supported living; vaccines.

Between April 2020 and March 2021 our easy read team produced over 120 easy read documents for 35 different clients

We also supported other organisations as they adapted their work in response to the pandemic, including Arts Council of Wales, the Board of Community Health Councils, Mencap Cymru, and Disability Action.

Alongside work directly relating to the pandemic, we undertook a large piece of work with Autism Wales providing a suite of easy read information for parents and carers of autistic children. We also supported many organisations as they found their way back to more regular streams of work, such as Carers Wales, Boundary Commission for Wales, Careers Wales and Senedd Election party



manifestos for Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru.

In an already incredibly busy and difficult year, we faced the additional challenge of a total easy read team restructure. Two new members of part time staff joined the team in April, Inacia Rodrigues and Julie Jones, and Laura Griffiths took over the running of the service when our longstanding manager, Karen Warner, moved to a new role within Learning Disability Wales. Karen managed the service for over 10 years and helped to establish the service we have today.

Responding to the pandemic Influencing policy

Learning Disability Consortium

During the pandemic we played a key role in chairing the Learning Disability Consortium and creating a platform for discussion and action with Welsh Government, the Social Services Directorate and Public Health Wales.

The Consortium began meeting weekly from the start of the pandemic, later switching to fortnightly meetings. During the year the group was expanded to include Cymorth Cymru and Down's Syndrome Association Wales.

The group collaborated on items including shielding, vaccines, visiting, voice and control, and 'Do Not Attempt CPR' (DNACPR) notices and met regularly with policy leads from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales.

In December, the Consortium sent a joint letter to care managers across Wales promoting good use of Welsh Government's Supported Living Guidance. This was to ensure that people with a learning disability were being safely allowed to see family and friends, and get out and about in the same way as the general population was able to, following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group

We continued to represent our members



and stakeholders at 5 meetings of the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group throughout the year. Topics covered included reviewing the Improving Lives programme and discussing future priorities with the Deputy Minister for Social Care.

Wales Disability Reference Group

The Wales Disability Reference Group sets the agenda for the Cross Party Group on Disability meetings and is made up of Learning Disability Wales, Disability Wales, Wales Council of the Blind and Wales Council for Deaf People. We hold the secretariat for the group.

In April the Group shared a joint statement on coronavirus and the rights of disabled people in Wales, asking the public to sign-up to a set of principles. Over 1400 individuals and organisations signed the statement. Welsh Government responded



Welsh Government Disability Equality Forum

Hosted by Jane Hutt, Minister with responsibility for equality, these meetings allowed us to raise urgent issues, including shielding, accessible information and discriminatory practice during the pandemic. During the year, the group produced the report ‘Locked Out: Liberating disabled people’s lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19’, authored by Professor Debbie Foster and published in July 2021. This important piece of work revealed how the pandemic has highlighted inequalities for disabled people in Wales.

by implementing several actions, including: publishing guidance for healthcare services when making decisions during the pandemic; and a letter from the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Nursing Officer to NHS Wales directors and chief executives, seeking to ensure “clarity around ethical decision making for people with any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010” during the pandemic, including ‘Do Not Attempt CPR’ (DNACPR) decisions.

Covid-19 policy meetings

Weekly meetings with policy leads from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales gave us a vital route into the teams making important decisions for people with a learning disability and those that support them. This has enabled us to influence policy and procedures throughout the pandemic that have an impact on the lives of people with a learning disability.

Welsh Government accessible information meetings

Created as part of the Welsh Government Disability Equality Forum, this group enabled us to work with Welsh Government’s communications team to ensure important documents are made accessible.

Learning Disability Policy Group

Led by our policy and communications team, along with members of the Learning Disability Consortium and other organisations interested in learning disability policy, this group allows us to connect closely with our members and keep up to date with any issues they are facing.

Additional Learning Needs reform

We have been working with members of

Responding to the pandemic

Influencing policy (continued)



the Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance to ensure that when the new system is launched in September 2021 it will support children and young people in their education. We have fed all the learning from the Engage to Change project into the reform.

Other significant policy work

- **Lobbying:** We contributed to a joint letter from the Wales Carers Alliance to Welsh Government about the impact of the pandemic on unpaid carers.
- **Research:** In light of worrying evidence from the Covid mortality review in England, we pushed for Welsh Government and Public Health Wales to provide data about the situation in Wales.
- **Senior Policy and Research Officer:** We

created a temporary new post to work on Covid-specific policy and research for 12 months from the end of March 2021.

- **Informing:** We created a new section on our website bringing together all our policy work in one place and launched a new mailing list for people interested in our policy work: www.ldw.org.uk/project/policy.

Consultations

We responded to consultations on areas including Children, Young People, Education and the Implications of COVID-19; Access to Work; Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System; Disabled Students' Allowance; draft Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services; Transport; Strategy for an Ageing Society.



Covid-19 vaccine

Vaccine priority groups campaign

Working with our partners in the Learning Disability Consortium, we lobbied for people with a learning disability to be prioritised for the Covid-19 vaccine. The Consortium launched an e-campaign that saw 550 supporters sending 3,000 emails to Members of the Senedd. People with a learning disability were subsequently included in priority group 6.

Vaccine Equity Group

We have worked with Welsh Government to ensure that the vaccine is accessible to all by advising on accessible information about the vaccine and its administration.

Coronavirus and people with learning disabilities research study

In October we joined the largest UK study into how the pandemic has affected people with a learning disability. Working closely with All Wales People First, the All Wales Forum for Parents and Carers, University of South Wales, and Cardiff University, we recruited 150 people with a learning disability in Wales who were interviewed (the first of three interviews) about their lives during the pandemic. We also recruited support workers where people could not take part themselves.

Find out more about the study at <https://www.ldw.org.uk/project/covid19-learning-disability-study/>.

Responding to the pandemic

Engage to Change



**Engage
To Change**



engagetochange.org.uk
[/engagetochangewales](https://engagetochangewales)
[@Engage_2_Change](https://twitter.com/Engage_2_Change)



“This job has had a great impact on my life. This time last year I would never have guessed that I would be working as a health care assistant at my local hospital. I am so proud to be going to work wearing my scrubs and looking after patients during this terrible time. The job is very rewarding and I am enjoying every second of it.”

Elenid Williams

Engage to Change continued to receive referrals and deliver activity throughout the fifth year of the project, with partners and young people adapting to remote working and learning new skills through use of digital platforms.

Some participants employed in key worker roles chose to continue working. Most of those who had not yet progressed to paid employment attended digital job clubs and took part in a range of accredited training courses adapted to consider remote delivery, completion and assessment. Young people were supported to access necessary IT equipment and networks. Elite and Agoriad, the supported employment delivery partners, developed and delivered a new accredited course called ‘Promoting Safe Practice with Covid 19 and Other Infectious Diseases’, designed for young

people and staff to keep safe while travelling and at work.

“I have learnt a lot of new skills from my job such as how to work with people. It’s improved my communication skills, how to use different cleaning equipment and products, how to manage my own workload independently and most importantly how to carry on working safely during the Covid19 pandemic.”

Alex Jones

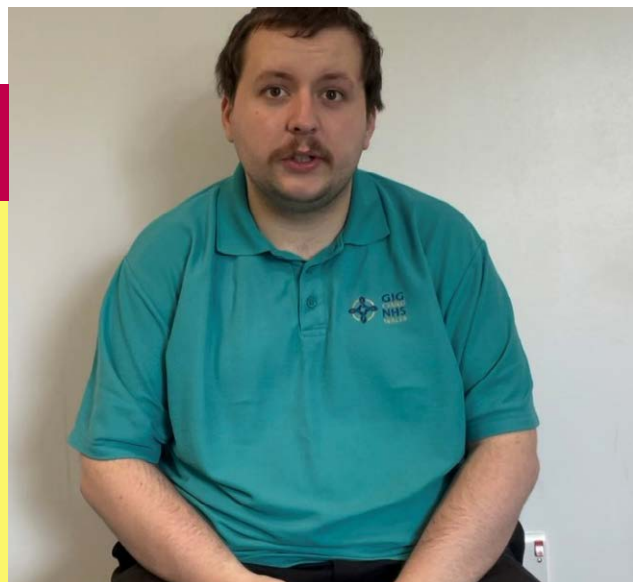


Rhys Harris – case study

While the pandemic has affected many of Engage to Change's work placements, it has also seen past and present participants become essential frontline workers. One example is Rhys Harris, who in the space of two years went from a college student to a vital frontline NHS worker.

Rhys started his Engage to Change DFN Project SEARCH internship at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend in September 2018. During his first placement, Rhys joined the hospital's Pharmacy Department where he gained confidence and learned new skills.

Rhys's placement at the pharmacy was so successful that he decided to stay in the same role for his next two placements. After he had graduated from the internship, and due to his enthusiasm and support from the department, Rhys kept working in the pharmacy voluntarily



until a job vacancy for a full-time Pharmacy Assistant became available. Rhys was supported by the project and successfully interviewed for the role.

Working through the pandemic as a Pharmacy Assistant, Rhys has been vital in ensuring that patients at the hospital receive their prescriptions and ensuring that the wards are stocked with medications. Whilst Rhys admits it was challenging to work in the hospital during the pandemic, he is also proud of the essential work that he was able to do to support the NHS and is looking forward to progressing in his role.

There was a focus on keeping in touch and providing well-being support and advice to young people. Additional support was provided to young people and employers on furlough, redundancy, return to work and welfare benefits.

During periods when restrictions were lifted, face to face support was gradually increased, with work placements and new jobs undertaken by those young people who wished to.

The project successfully held 3 virtual events throughout the year with some young people presenting live and others sharing their experiences via pre-recorded videos.

The impact of the pandemic played a part in the project gaining an 18-month extension and additional funding to amend activity and continue to support those young people affected the most and furthest from the jobs market.

Employment policy work from Engage to Change



We have learned through the project that significant changes are needed across Wales if we are able to sustain, let alone raise, the number of people with a learning disability and/or autism in employment.

Our aspiration is that by year 7 of the Engage to Change project there will be a National Job Coaching scheme that will dovetail other employment initiatives and be a driving force in increasing access to the labour market for people with a learning disability.

We produced two briefing papers that were widely circulated during the year to key people within the sector. The briefings covered the need for a National Job Coaching and Supported Internship

programme, and the role of the NHS and other public sector organisations in providing jobs for people with a learning disability and/or autism in Wales.

We were invited to be members of Welsh Government's Disabled People's Employment Working Group, enabling us to meet with the Head of Employment Policy officials leading on a supported apprenticeship pilot. As part of this group, we also contributed to the development of 'A More Equal Wales', a practical guide for employers to employing disabled people, and the establishment of a network of Disabled People's Employment Champions to provide advice, information and support to employers across Wales.

Responding to the pandemic

Training and events



“Things were explained and communicated effectively, and I left the session feeling confident about producing easy read communications for our audiences. Diolch!”

At the beginning of the first lockdown we sadly had to cancel our programme of planned training and events and bookings for our training room. We also had to radically change our plans for holding our annual conference.

Seeing the amount of fast-changing information being sent out to people with a learning disability about Covid-19 rules and changes to support services, we wanted to ensure that people and organisations were equipped with the skills to provide more accessible information.

We responded quickly to these needs by rapidly adapting our ‘Making Information Easy to Read and Understand’ training to an online version and offering it free of charge. During the year we held 22 free online courses, helping 291 delegates learn how to produce easy read information.

We also teamed up with Digital Communities Wales to run free online

training on how to support people to communicate online. From personal experience and from our Personalised Technology Community of Practice, we learnt many people with a learning disability were isolated and digitally excluded during lockdown. This training helped 117 people support others to stay connected and communicate using digital technology.

Citizens Advice Cymru events

We worked with Citizens Advice Cymru to host free online events promoting their Advicelink Cymru service. The events highlighted how this support can help people with their welfare benefits, and with other problems like debt, housing problems and job issues.

Responding to the pandemic

Training and events (continued)

Annual conference: Everybody

Our Annual Conference 'Everybody' explored loneliness and social isolation, highlighting how people with a learning disability are affected by these issues and showcased what is being done to improve this in Wales.

Over 2 weeks we held 25 separate online events with 741 attendees joining talks, films and workshops on topics including: running a community coffee morning, forum theatre, community radio, sex and relationships, digital self-advocacy during the pandemic, Gig Buddies, and the Welsh Government Plan on Loneliness and Social Isolation.



Learning Disability Wales
Anabuddi Dysgu Cymru

Voice-it! Learn how people have stayed connected online

Free online workshop

Voice-it are a self-advocacy group run by members of the North Wales Participation Group

13 November 2020 10am - 11am

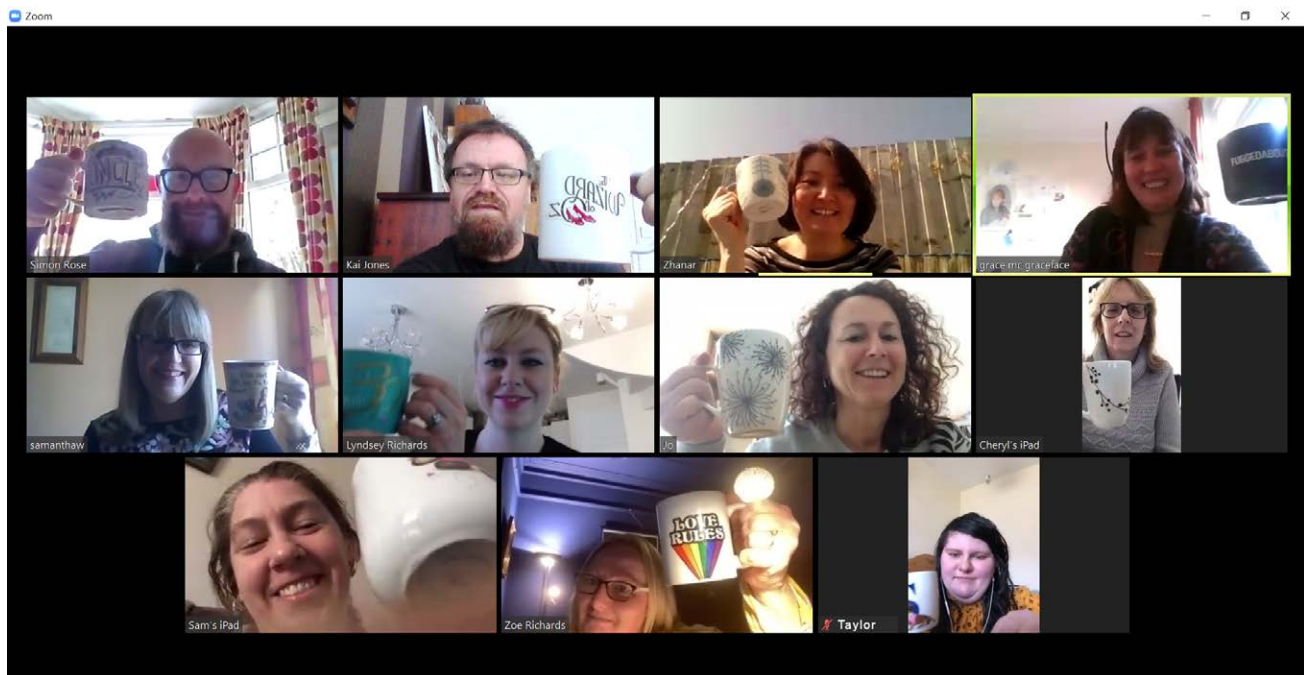
Sponsors

Everybody 2020 Learning Disability Wales annual conference - all sessions **free** online

Book your free place now at www.ldw.org.uk/event/everybody

Responding to the pandemic

Looking after the wellbeing of our staff



It has been a very unusual year and for most of the team it has been a year spent working from home. This can be very lonely and difficult at times, and we have made sure that our teams have a chance to meet every morning for an online coffee break just to chat about day-to-day things.

We also felt the need to do something together, even if it could not be in person. We set ourselves a challenge of walking the equivalent of the Welsh Coastal Path between us, with the whole team taking an hour out of work every Wednesday to do this, and we had a great time doing it! We also made sure that we kept in touch and asked questions about how we have been affected by the pandemic, so we could support everyone by making changes to how we work.



image from walescoastalpath.co.uk

Responding to the pandemic

Gig Buddies Cymru



Simon suggested we could play a music quiz he owned where players had to guess what song was being played on a kazoo. The result was 'Kazoom' our new late night virtual social.

Hosted and planned by Gig Buddies themselves, 'Kazoom' featured quizzes, karaoke and talent shows. A huge thank you must be given to one of our volunteers Gareth, a professional drag performer, who co-hosted each week in character as 'Ernie Sparkles'. After a few weeks we added an afternoon tea party to people's social calendars, and by the end of the year we had held nearly 100 hours of virtual socials.

As Gig Buddies is all about friendship, socialising and enjoying new experiences, the pandemic made it very difficult for people to go out and meet their Buddy, therefore contributing to people's sense of loneliness and isolation. We worked hard to adapt by quickly setting up opportunities for people to communicate and socialise online. We helped Buddies get online and made an easy read guide to using Zoom.

After being forced to cancel all Gig Buddy meet-ups and in-person socials, Gig Buddies met on Zoom in the first week of lockdown to plan what a virtual social would look like.

Gig Buddy pairs stayed connected by meeting for their own virtual activities, including online events, quizzes, and chats. We supported this by keeping Buddies informed of the many creative activities and events that were available online during the pandemic.

"I really like going to Gig Buddies events because it gives me a chance to meet up with different people and make new friends."

Shahid Afsar

“Volunteering as a Gig Buddy doesn’t feel like volunteering at all. It’s like being given a new friend”

Gareth Pahl

As a result of the virtual socials and Gig Buddy pairs keeping in touch online, people improved their digital skills and confidence and began to host their own online events. Gig Buddies also connected with people from other Gig Buddy projects, helped by two huge global online parties - ‘All in One Day’ and a Christmas party - that included projects from across the UK, and even Gig Buddies Sydney.

We also held weekly Facebook Live sessions where people could interact with Gig Buddies and learn more about the project, and built new relationships, collaborating on online events with Electric Umbrella and Innovate Trust’s Insight App.

During the pandemic our focus shifted to keeping our current Gig Buddies connected. It was harder to recruit volunteers because we usually recruit at festivals, gigs and events, and fewer people were looking for



this type of volunteering opportunity.

As some pandemic restrictions eased in July 2020, some Gig Buddies started to meet up for outdoor walks or visiting cafés and pub gardens, but even after shielding ended on 16 August some Gig Buddies did not feel safe and comfortable to go out and socialise. The vaccine roll-out in early 2021 had a positive impact on this and by March 2021 Gig Buddy pairs were able to start making plans to see each other again.

Check out our highlights of the year in this video we made during lockdown: <https://youtu.be/OGWg8dx7Gd0>.

Gig Buddies North Wales

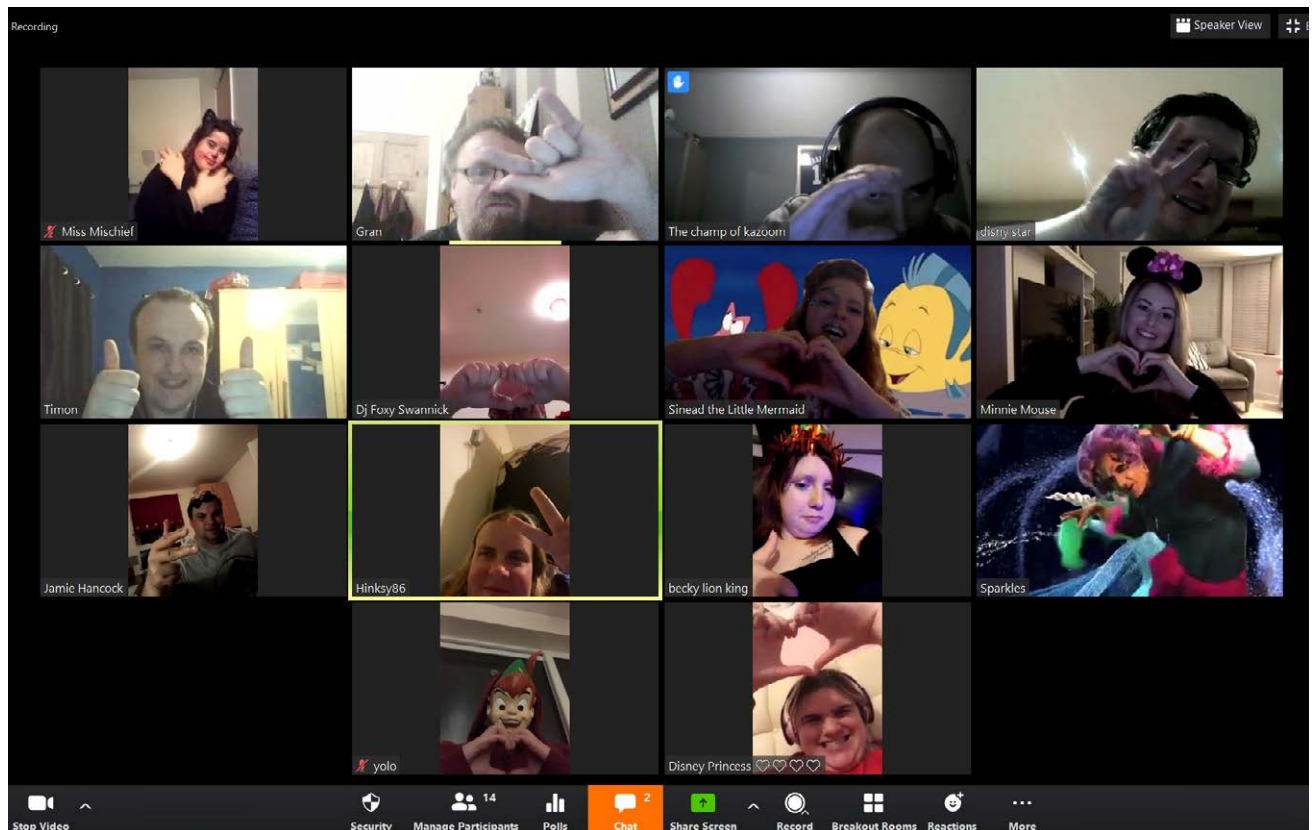
We were delighted to launch Gig Buddies in North Wales thanks to funding from North Wales Transformation Programme and First Choice Housing Association. We appointed two part-time Project Coordinators, Heather Graham and Rachel Somerville. The launch was a fun online event with a livestream, music, chat and a special Kazoom party.

A steering group was set up to help develop the project with people and organisations in North Wales. Work was put into networking, marketing and recruiting participants and volunteers.



Responding to the pandemic

Gig Buddies Cymru (continued)



Gig Buddies supporting each other

We checked in with Gig Buddies by phone, especially buddies who were not digitally active, and set up an email newsletter with events happening online and tips for staying connected, as well as our own events.

In July we held a support session for volunteers, while we adapted our volunteer training and delivered 5 training sessions on Zoom. Our Gig Buddies team received invaluable support throughout the year at regular project partner meetings, where all Gig Buddy projects came together to share good practice and to support each other.

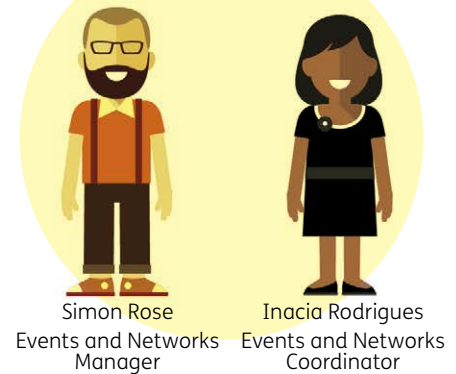


Our staff

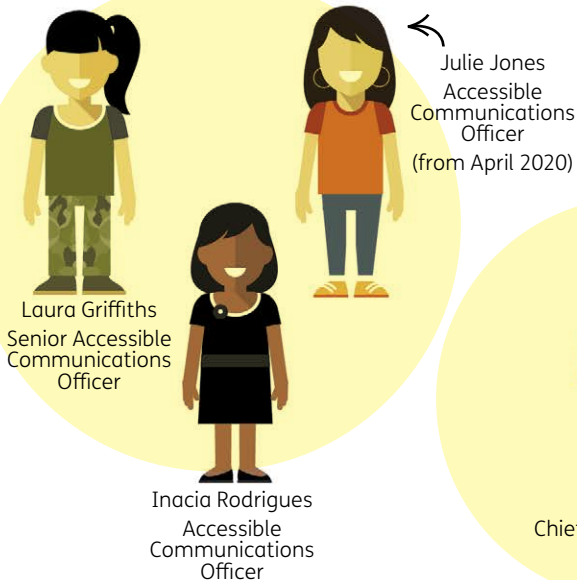
Policy and Communications



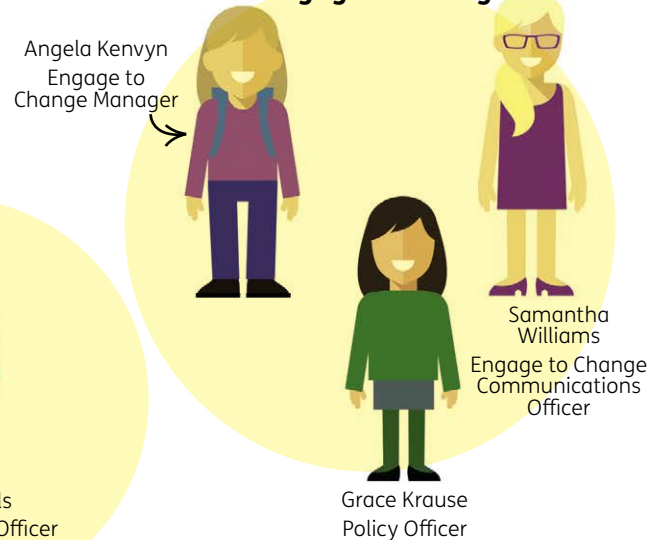
Training and Events



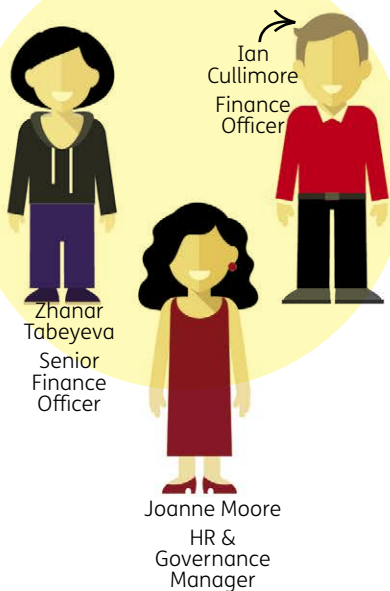
Easy Read Wales



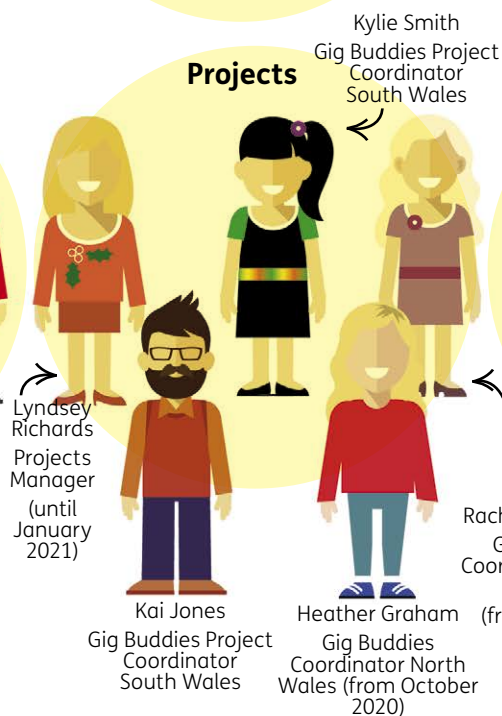
Engage to Change



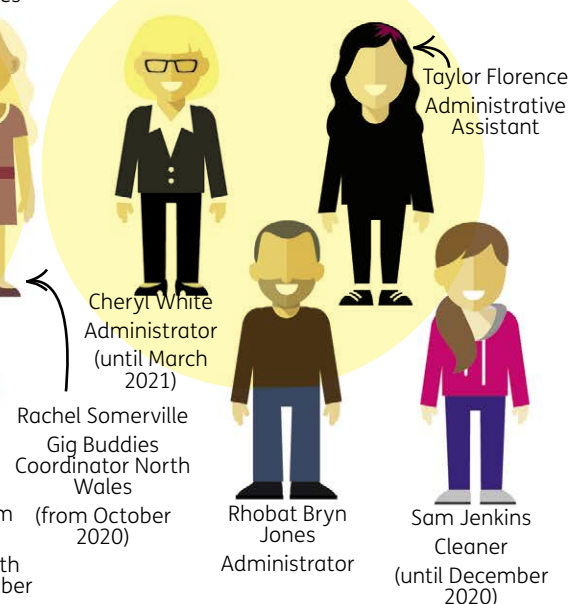
HR and Finance



Projects



Support Team



21st Century People



21st Century People

In today's modern Wales people with a learning disability should be able to live modern lives. In April we launched 21st Century People, a major 3 year project that aims to make this possible by co-creating choices, opportunities and support for people with a learning disability.

Funded by Welsh Government, 21st Century People celebrates people with a learning disability as creators, contributors and citizens of Wales, while challenging existing stereotypes. The project is delivering work across 4 key themes: 21st Century Families; 21st Century Voices; Healthy 21st Century People; Living in the 21st Century.

Read on for what we achieved across these themes during the year.

21st Century Families

Parents with a learning disability

We continued to support the Vale People First parents' group to get together, learn new skills and share their own personal experiences.



We worked in partnership with the 'Stop it now!' campaign to consult with the Vale parents' group on a leaflet for families on preventing child sexual abuse. This involved 3 online consultation events with parents with learning disabilities as well as speaking to others from the group who were not able to attend. All the parents' comments were captured in a report that was submitted to the 'Stop it now!' campaign lead for Wales.



We supported Professor Ruth Northway's team at the University of South Wales following their successful application to produce guidance for social workers on supporting parents with a learning disability. We agreed to assist with the recruitment of parents with a learning disability and promote the work of the project to encourage people to take part and raise awareness of the new guidance when it is published.

Accessing public services

In partnership with Cerebra, we held a free online workshop helping parents and carers who are facing problems accessing public services for the person they support. The workshop highlighted Cerebra's 'Accessing Public Services Toolkit' and looked at practical ways that parents can solve problems and get the services they need. If you are interested in attending future workshops email enquiries@ldw.org.uk.

21st Century Voices

Welsh Youth Parliament



We continued to support Welsh Youth Parliament Members Katie and Anwen at meetings, both online and in person, plus other activities, such as contributing to committee reports and taking part in interviews and campaigns.

Katie was part of the Emotional and Mental Health Support Committee and contributed to its report published in October. Anwen was a member of the Littering and Plastic Waste Committee and also took part in a meeting with the First Minister and Counsel General on the impact of Covid-19 on young people across Wales.



Accessible information

We provided free training and taster sessions to organisations across Wales supporting them to provide information that is easy to read and understand.

Policy and people: Cross Party Group on Disability

We are the secretariat for this group with responsibility for hosting meetings. At the start of the pandemic we moved quickly to support online meetings, and ensuring that they would be interactive.

21st Century People

A positive outcome has been that many who are usually unable to attend physical meetings are now joining the virtual meetings. In May we discussed the road map out of Covid, including care worker £500 payments, the effect of Covid-19 on people with a learning disability, shielding, and accessible information.

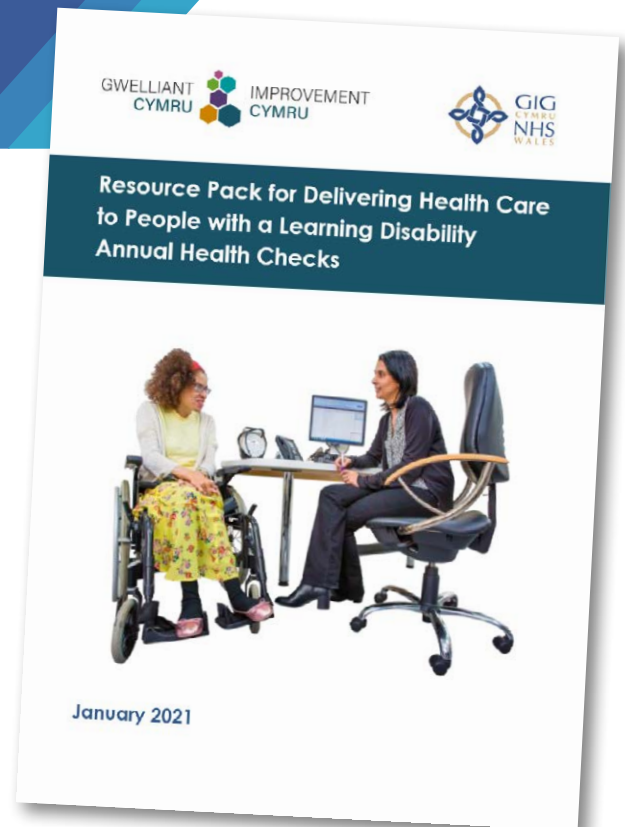
In July we organised a people's panel for those with lived experience, outlining issues they had faced throughout the pandemic. In October we looked at personalised health budgets and personal care payments, the See Around Britain App, the call for a Learning Disability Commissioner, mask wearing, and Personal Independent Payment Assessments.

Healthy 21st Century People

Annual health checks

To help increase the number of people with a learning disability getting an annual health check we have continued to work with our stakeholders to promote annual health checks, including the production of easy read resources.

We raised concerns with Welsh Government about health checks being suspended during the pandemic, and sought assurances when they would return, and when easy read resource packs would be available.



Reducing restrictive practice

We are members of the Challenging Behaviour Community of Practice and have stayed engaged with the community's online activities during the pandemic. There were concerns during lockdown about the restriction of people's rights and liberties in care and support settings that we collectively challenged with partners from the Learning Disability Consortium. We also highlighted these issues through our website and social media.

Living in the 21st Century

Connections Cymru

This is our new network bringing people together to tackle loneliness and social isolation and find creative solutions to overcome these issues. The first meeting



took place in March with 40 people joining online to talk about loneliness and social isolation coming out of lockdown, what we have learnt, and new opportunities. An article was written to share the outcomes of the meeting: <https://bit.ly/39K2DQR>.

130 people have joined the network so far. You can find out more and join the network here: www.ldw.org.uk/project/connections-cymru.

Personalised technology

The All-Wales Personalised Technology Community of Practice promotes independence, choice and control for people with a learning disability through the person centred use of technology.

The network grew during lockdown as meetings were able to take place online. We held three network meetings, looking

at the problems being faced by people with a learning disability accessing technology, the range of technological solutions people were using to stay in touch during the pandemic, and what needs to be done after the pandemic.

We published two articles exploring how technology was being used to keep people with a learning disability connected during the pandemic, and the issues that were keeping people digitally excluded: <https://bit.ly/3FkQQXS> / <https://bit.ly/2ZZxxmI>.

All Wales personalised technology
community of practice



Our trustees and members

Trustees

Community of Interest Full Member reps	Number of seats	Trustees	Representing
Adult Providers	2	Steve Cox Mandy Evans	Perthyn Mirus Wales
Self Advocacy	2	Michael Allcock Dawn Gullis	All Wales People First Cardiff People First
Family Carers	2	Jacqui Caldwell Vacant	Conwy Connect
Family Support Providers	2	Alison Thomas Vacant	The Pobl Group
Supported Employment	1	Lily Beyer	DFN Project Search
UK Links	1	Vacant	
Open Seats	Number of Seats		
Interested individuals	5	Jon Day Steve Barnard Sian Owen Laura White Wayne Crocker	

Advisors

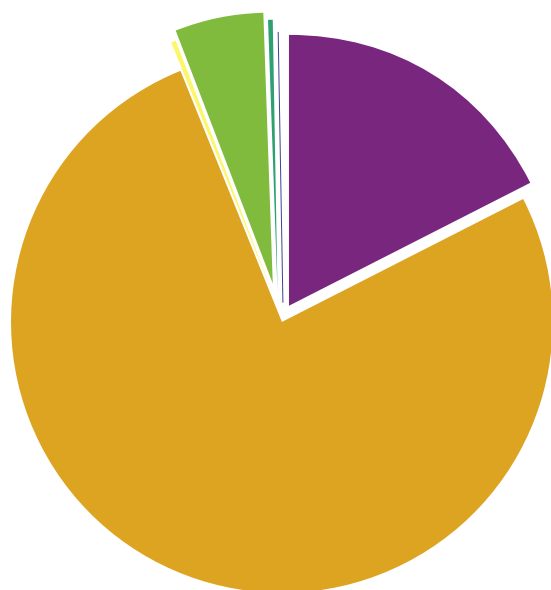
Steve Beyer
Kathryn Whitfield

Members

(April 2020 – March 2021)

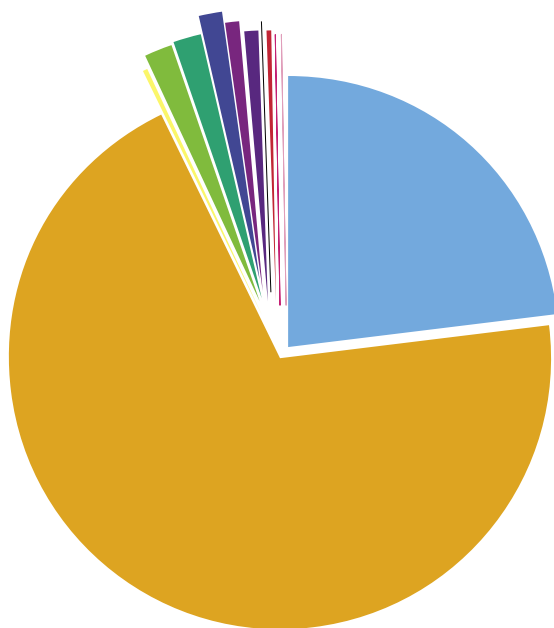
	North Wales	Mid/West Wales	South Wales	Outside Wales
Full	13	8	46	3
Associate	162			

Our money



Money we received this year

Welsh Government Grant	£400,000 (17.66%)
UK Projects	£1,733,297 (76.51%)
Training & Events	£2,418 (0.11%)
Consultancy, networks and hosted services	£122,368 (5.40%)
Donations	£7,047 (0.31%)
Bank interest	£460 (0.02%)
Total	£2,265,590 (100.00%)



Money we spent this year

Staff and travel	£496,568 (23.21%)
Grants to UK Project Partners	£1,490,526 (69.68%)
Courses and conferences	£3,644 (0.17%)
Looking after our building	£39,4914 (1.85%)
Project events	£35,403 (1.65%)
Running the office	£26,036 (1.22%)
Freelance costs	£21,673 (1.01%)
Translation	£18,028 (0.84%)
Irrecoverable VAT	£1,851 (0.09%)
Audit fees	£4,155 (0.19%)
Depreciation	£1,293 (0.06%)
Trustees meetings	£586 (0.03%)
Total	£2,139,254 (100.00%)

End of year result:

The surplus of £126,336 consists of an unrestricted surplus of £132,731 and a restricted deficit of £6,395 before transfers.

Our year in numbers

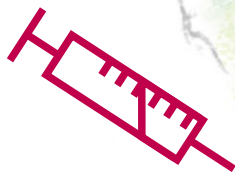
Influencing policy



Managed **4** Cross Party Group on Disability meetings



150 people with a learning disability interviewed in the Covid study



1 Learning Disability Consortium campaign for priority access to Covid-19 vaccine



11 consultations responded to

Easy Read Wales



120 easy read documents



35 clients

Keeping you informed



52,548 website visits



123,011 website pages visited



1 coronavirus resources page created and updated daily during the pandemic



7,396 Twitter followers



4,234 Facebook likes



52 news articles published on website

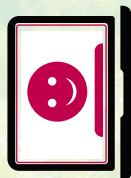
Training and events



25 separate online events during our annual conference, 'Everybody'



741 people attended online events at our annual conference, 'Everybody'



5 free online sessions: 'Supporting People to Get Online'



14 free online sessions on making easy read information

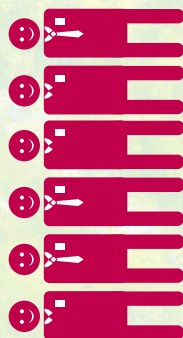
Engage to Change



46 young people started paid employment



58 young people sustained employment



53 young people started internships

Gig Buddies



31 Gig Buddy matches made so far across Wales



100 hours of virtual socials during the pandemic



6 new areas launched November 2020: Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham