

Cross Party Group on Learning Disability



Notes from the 13th meeting on
18 June 2025.

The meeting was at Tŷ Hywel in Cardiff
Bay and on Zoom.



People who came to the meeting

- **Sioned Williams MS** – Member of the Senedd, Chair
- **Sam Williams** – Learning Disability Wales, co-Secretary
- **Sara Pickard** – Mencap Cymru, co-Secretary
- **Mike Hedges MS** – Member of the Senedd
- **Mark Isherwood MS** – Member of the Senedd
- **Sion Jones** – Mencap Cymru
- **Kai Jones** – Gig Buddies Cymru
- **Richie Horrigan** – Gig Buddies Cymru
- **Kate Young** – All Wales Forum
- **Joe Powell** – All Wales People First
- **Beth Rees** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Eliza Wright** – Mencap Cymru
- **Angela Owen-Griffiths** – Senedd

- **Gwen Anslow** – All Wales Forum
- **Michael Beynon** – Mencap Cymru
- **Thea Brain** – Care Forum Wales
- **Daniel Bray** – Your Voice Advocacy
- **Grace Coppock** – All Wales Forum
- **Steven Crane-Jenkins** – BASW Cymru
- **Wayne Crocker** – Mencap Cymru
- **Samantha Dodd** – Cartref Ni
- **Gillian Eastwood** – Cartref Ni
- **Carl Edwards** – ITV Cymru Wales
- **Adam Elameer**
- **Amanda Everson** – CWVYS
- **Angharad Griffiths** – Senedd Cymru
- **Jonathan Griffiths** – Learning Disability Wales trustee
- **Julia Hawkins** – Hft
- **Lara Homan** – NHS Wales Executive
- **Nadine Honeybone**
- **Gerraint Jones-Griffiths** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Wayne Lewis** – V21
- **Elin Llŷr** – ITV Cymru Wales
- **Marg McNiel** – SEE around Britain
- **Lucy O'Leary** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Colette O'Sullivan** – SAM
- **Louise Peck** – Your Voice Advocacy
- **Joe Powell** – All Wales People First
- **Jackie Prosser** – Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO)
- **Ana Reis-Rogers** – PAVS
- **Rachel Richards** – National Lottery Community Fund
- **Zoe Richards** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Simon Rose** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Adele Rose-Morgan** – Parent
- **Sarah Sidman-Jones** – Vale of Glamorgan Council
- **Darren Smith**
- **Kelly Stuart** – All Wales People First

- **Foo Seng Thean** – Chinese in Wales Association
- **Mel Thomas** – Valleys to Coast Housing Association
- **Eloise Tong** – Hijinx Theatre
- **Oliver Townsend** – Mirus
- **Karen Warner** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Sarah Washbrook**
- **Sheena Williams** – Betsi Cadwaladr UHB
- **Victoria Waller** – Gig Buddies Cymru
- **Andrew Jenkins** – Senedd



People who said they could not come to the meeting

- **Janis Griffiths** – Parent
- **Davina Carey-Evans** – Family Fund
- **Julian Hallett** – Down Syndrome Association
-

About this document



This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained in a box below the word. You can see what all the words in **blue** mean on **page 13**.

1. Welcome and introductions



Sioned Williams is a Member of the Senedd and **Chair** of the Cross Party Group.

The **Chair** of the group is the person in charge of the meetings.

Sioned welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Sioned welcomed Sara Pickard back. Sara is the group's **co-Secretary**.



The **Secretary** is the person or organisation in charge of organising the group. For example, booking meetings and sending out agendas.

A **co-Secretary** is when more than 1 person shares the job of Secretary.

Sioned said it was Learning Disability Week.



She introduced the speakers:

- Richie Horrigan from **Gig Buddies Cymru**.
- Elin Llŷr and Carl Edwards from **ITV Wales**.
- Michael Beynon from **Mencap Cymru**.

2. Presentation by Richie Horrigan from Gig Buddies Cymru



Richie said Gig Buddies Cymru is very important to him. It helps him go to music gigs, stay out late and make new friends.



Going to gigs helps Richie feel happy and less worried.

A video showed what Gig Buddies is like with lots of photos of Richie enjoying nights out.



Being an **ambassador** for Gig Buddies makes him feel proud and happy. Sometimes it also makes him feel emotional.

An **ambassador** is someone who promotes something. This could be telling people about a service or organisation.

Richie also:



- Works with Innovate Trust and First Choice Housing. He asks people what they think of where they live.
- Helps run a group about relationships and online dating. This group helps people stay safe online.



Richie is planning a music night called **RichieFest** on 19 July to celebrate his birthday. The event will raise money for Gig Buddies.



Sioned thanked Richie for his talk and sharing his story.

3. Presentation by Elin Llyr and Carl Edwards from ITV Wales



Elin and Carl talked about their work with Mencap Cymru.



They spoke about Sara Pickard from Mencap working with ITV Wales. Sara helped make links with the media and co-presented a show called **Sharp End**.



They showed a video about what it is like to visit and work at ITV Wales.



They talked about media training days for people with a learning disability.



They also explained that ITV Wales wants to include more people from different backgrounds.

They run a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Panel 4 times a year. These meetings are online and at their offices.



People from charities meet the journalists. They watch the evening news and give feedback.



They said that if charities want to contact TV media, they should share pictures or videos as this helps tell your story better.



Sioned thanked Elin and Carl. She said the media must show people with a learning disability in a positive way.

4. Presentation by Michael Beynon from Mencap Cymru



Michael gave his talk with his mum. He has done many things, including:

- Starting his own business called **Coalpit Welsh Cakes**.
- Being an athlete and advocate.
- Breaking records.

Michael said people sometimes think he cannot do things without asking him first.



Michael is part of the **Mencap Myth Busters** group. This group has 18 people with a learning disability. They share what life is really like for them.



Michael said people with a learning disability must be seen in the media. This helps them be role models. It helps change how people think about learning disability.



He finished by saying **visibility** leads to inclusion and inclusion leads to real change.

Visibility means being seen, recognised and understood.

5. Questions and ideas



Wayne Crocker from Mencap Cymru asked Michael's mum what advice she would give to other parents of people with a learning disability.

Michael's mum said she would tell other parents to let their children try lots of different things. Help them to find something they love doing.



Schools and colleges need to give children and young people with learning disabilities more opportunities to try different things.



Amanda Everson from CWVYS asked what services could do to be more accessible for people with a learning disability.

Michael said that they should be welcoming and friendly.



Wayne said that we can learn from other countries about making youth services more inclusive.



Mark Isherwood MS asked Michael how important it is for people with learning disabilities to exercise and stay fit.

Michael said exercise is very important in his life. He is also writing a book about healthy eating.



Sioned asked Richie what could be done to make places more inclusive for people with a learning disability.

Richie said too many places do not let people pay with cash. This is not fair for many people with a learning disability who cannot pay by card. It stops people being able to go out and enjoy themselves.



Gig Buddies are supporting the cashless society campaign to get more places like shops, bars and restaurants to take cash.



Before he joined Gig Buddies, Richie had to be home by 11pm. Now he can stay out late with his Gig Buddy.

6. Any other business



Sioned asked if there was anything people would like to talk about in future meetings.



Adele Rose-Morgan said she would like to talk about how to make schools and colleges more inclusive.



Joe Powell from All Wales People First would like the group to talk about advocacy.



Louise Peck from Your Voice Advocacy said that lots of people are very worried about the UK Government's plans to cut benefits.



Sion Jones from Mencap Cymru said that they are doing a survey to find out what life is like for people with a learning disability living in Wales.



You can fill in the easy read survey here:
<https://wales.mencap.org.uk/WalesSurvey25>.

Sion would like to present the findings of the survey to the group at a future meeting.

7. Next meeting



The next meeting will take place online on
Wednesday 24 September 2025 at 12.15-1.15pm.

Anyone with ideas for the meeting should email
Sam Williams: samantha.williams@ldw.org.uk or
Sara Pickard: SaraE.Pickard@mencap.org.uk.



Sioned thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and sharing their ideas.



You can find all the easy read agendas and notes of the Cross Party Group here:
www.ldw.org.uk/project/cross-party-group-on-learning-disability/

Hard words

Ambassador

An ambassador is someone who promotes something. This could be telling people about a service or organisation.

Chair

The Chair of the group is the person in charge of the meetings.

Secretary or co-Secretary

The Secretary is the person or organisation in charge of organising the group. For example, booking meetings and sending out agendas.

A co-Secretary is when more than 1 person shares the job of Secretary.

Visibility

Visibility means being seen, recognised and understood.