valuedlives

Learning Disability Wales annual review April 2018 to March 2019



Inside this issue

Influencing policy, training and events, Easy Read Wales, supporting parents with a learning disability, and lots more



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Create a Wales that values and includes every child, young person and adult with a learning disability.

Our goals are to:

- Strengthen the voice, rights and status of children, young people and adults with a learning disability.
- Enhance parents and family carers' ability to make a positive contribution.
- Promote person centred services.







Keep in touch

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@LdWales

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Registered Charity: 1062858

VAT Registered Number:

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66 We are committed to creatively supporting people with a learning disability and their families to get the services they need 99

Welcome message from Phil Madden, Chair of our Board of Trustees

As I write this it is a time of great uncertainty and division. Many disabled people are already facing poverty and cutbacks to services. So it is more important than ever to work together.

Everyone at Learning Disability Wales is committed to creatively supporting people with a learning disability and their families to get the services they need, to be really listened to and to be contributing citizens.

We are fortunate and grateful to have such a talented and dedicated team of staff. They really are a team. Martyn Jones left the post of Chief Executive earlier this year and we wish him well. Zoe Richards is our Acting Chief Executive, and I am very pleased that she is in post. Many of you will know her because she has been an important member of Learning Disability Wales for many years.

Our experienced trustees have also made a huge contribution during the year. We look forward to recruiting new trustees at the AGM to help us go further.

Our core activities continue - influencing policy, sharing with and listening to our members and others, offering high quality training and working in partnership on innovative projects. It has been a very

busy year in all these areas. This includes our Welsh Government funded Valued Lives programme, our leadership of the Engage To Change project, our growing Easy Read service and, with special thanks to First Choice Housing, the exciting Gig Buddies developments.

We have submitted a bid to Welsh Government under the Sustainable Social Services Grant programme, and are awaiting the outcome. We are also actively looking for other ways to increase our range of activities and sources of income.

We have also produced our new and ambitious Strategic Plan for the next five years. This will be launched at the conference and AGM.

So, challenging times. But exciting times. We are up for it!



66 We are working hard to to create, innovate and co-produce a Wales that is the best place for people with a learning disability to live, learn and work ??

Welcome message from Zoe Richards, Acting Chief Executive

Introducing the Annual Report is a time to take stock and recognise the achievements of the organisation over the last year and more importantly evaluate the change that we have contributed to ensuring children, young people and adults with a learning disability are able to live fulfilled lives in Wales.

It has been a time of consultation, feedback and priority setting. As we move forward into a new phase with a renewed energy and a clear strategy we know that we are not an organisation that wants to stand still.

Exciting projects such as Valued Lives, Gig Buddies, Engage to Change, Working Together with Parents and Love Life create a sharing of views and allows us to reach out and create new partnerships where we know we can make effective change to support people with a learning disability in a 21st Century Wales.

We were pleased to see the publication from Welsh Government of Improving Lives programme for people with a learning disability. We look forward to working closely with Welsh Government around the areas of early years, new supported housing, good quality social care, improved health services and helping people reach their potential, including getting a job.

A new Welsh Youth Parliament was established by National Assembly for Wales which saw the election of 60 young people to become Youth Parliament Members to represent the voice of young people in Wales. We were delighted to be chosen as the organisation that elects and supports two disabled young parliament members.

The uncertainty of all our futures may mean that the vulnerable are even more at risk than previously and Learning Disability Wales are working hard to to create, innovate and coproduce a Wales that is the best place for people with a learning disability to live, learn and work.

We cannot do this alone and look forward to a coming together of people, partners and stakeholders to make sure that Wales is a leader in ensuring the lives of people with a learning disability are fulfilled.



Valued Lives

2016 - 2020

Our work is entwined with the vision of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act to promote the well-being, rights, protection and interests of people with a learning disability from birth to old age.

We are funded by Welsh Government to deliver Valued Lives, and through this we aim to make a positive difference through our four work areas:





Ariennir gan **Lywodraeth Cymru**Funded by **Welsh Government**



Informing

Supporting people with a learning disability and their families to have a stronger, well-informed voice by providing an accessible and informative communications service.

Representing and challenging

Ensuring that the voices of people with a learning disability are heard and responded to.



Training and events

Creating a skilled and knowledgeable workforce by providing a comprehensive training and events programme.

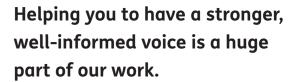


Innovating

Ensuring new or better service models are introduced for people with a learning disability.



Valued Lives: Informing



In an increasingly digitally connected world, this means daily updates through our social media, and a digital newsletter, Llais Update, that connects you to the latest news on our website.

But while digital communication may be fast and timely, it does not reach everyone. People with a learning disability continue to be among the most digitally excluded groups of people in society, while many family carers are unable to connect online constantly, or not at all.



So we hold regular events across Wales, including roadshows, consultations, training, and seminars, that inform and consult on new policy and good practice.

While our annual conference provides an inclusive environment for everyone in the learning disability sector to come together and improve a crucially important area that affects people with a learning disability.

We are always keen to hear your views on how we communicate with you. So please get in touch with any feedback or ideas you have.

New website

In October we launched a brand new website that is easier to use and responsive for mobile phones and tablets.

Booking and paying for our training and events can now be done simply and quickly online, and we have made it easier for you to browse and book all of our courses as in-house training.

Our popular Llais magazine is now available online, and you can find new and old articles from Llais as blog posts in our improved news area.

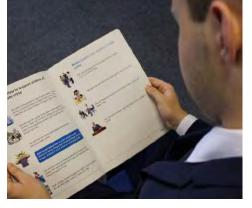
We have also added a new resources section, and improved our Easy Read Wales area, so you can find and download the latest accessible information that we have produced.











Easy Read Wales (self-funded)

People with a learning disability have a right to accessible information so they can make informed choices, speak up, and take control of their lives.

Our easy read service helps to make this possible by working with organisations, such as national and local government, disabled people's organisations, and the private sector, to ensure the information they produce is accessible and includes people with a learning disability.

We do this by producing high quality easy read information, while our popular

easy read courses train staff in these organisations to have the skills to produce their own quality accessible information.

This year we produced 43 documents for 25 different organisations throughout Wales, the UK and Europe. Documents included consultations, leaflets, surveys, reports, and easy read website pages.







Clear and Easy handbook

To help others produce their own easy read we made our accessible information handbook, accompanying films, and *Check It!* toolkit available to download from our website for free. Download 'Clear and Easy' and find all our easy read work at: www.ldw.org.uk/easy-read-wales.

Annual health checks

We worked with Public Health Wales in the development of easy read resources for people with a learning disability and GPs to encourage uptake and experience of annual health checks.

Valued Lives: **Training and events**

We bring expert trainers and exciting facilitators to our inclusive and accessible events across Wales so that you can join us in changing how people work, live and think.



Annual conference: All our futures

This year's conference explored how we can invest in a better future for people with a learning disability by changing the way we do things, and doing different things.

Over 190 people joined us over two lively days to take part in a range of inclusive and accessible workshops, presentations and drama.

Highlights included the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Sally Holland, speaking about children's rights, and Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, answering questions from our audience.

- 66 Brilliant conference. Good mix of mainstage presentations and workshops. Excellent audience participation slots, such as the quiz and Hijinx Theatre.
- Lovely to meet so many knowledgeable and passionate people. All of the topics discussed were very current and important.

Training

We provide training to the learning disability sector through our public training programme and via in-house training on a variety of topics, all designed to change how people work, live, and think.

We provided training on a range of issues including: Making information easy to read and understand; Effective communication; Autism; Supporting people to get online; Mindfulness; Mental health; Relationships and Sexuality; The Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberties.









What Matters to Me

We developed easy read and training resources to help people with a learning disability understand the assessment and care planning process of the Social Services and Well-being Act, so they can have their voices heard during the process. We recruited and briefed groups of trainers with a learning disability across wales, ready to deliver learning sessions to their peers in 2019/20.

Beyond service land

Taking place in north and south Wales, and attended by over 100 people, these events looked at new approaches To help people with a learning disability develop their social life, make friends, and have relationships.

Improving Lives, Improving Practice

Working with the National Commissioning Board and Cymorth Cymru, we held this one day conference to launch new WLGA guidance: 'Commissioning accommodation and support for a good life for people with a learning disability'.

Believe in every child

Held in association with Public
Health Wales and Welsh
Government, 140 people joined us
for this one day learning conference
that looked at reducing restrictive
practice and promoting Positive
Behavioural Support.

Engage to Change

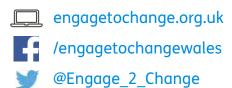
2016 - 2021







Supporting young people aged 16-25 across Wales into paid work placements lasting 6-12 months.



In the project's third year 120 young people have started paid work placements, developing their skills, experience, and confidence. 74 young people have subsequently sustained employment.

Learning Disability Wales leads this partnership project, manages its delivery and reports directly to the National Lottery Community Fund, who administers the funding in partnership with Welsh Government.

Person-centred one-to-one support and job coaching is provided to participants and employers by ELITE Supported Employment in south Wales, and Agoriad Cyf in north Wales. All Wales People First are the project's evaluation partner, while Cardiff University handle research and evaluation.





Celebration and Awards events

In June we held two successful events in north and south Wales highlighting the success of young people who have gained employment through Engage to Change, as well as recognising the contribution of employers.

The events included opportunities for stakeholders to come together and explore the challenges young people face when trying to obtain employment, and how the project can develop and improve to ensure lasting change is created.

Levi's story

One participant whose story we highlighted this year is Levi, a remarkable young woman who has overcome numerous barriers in order to secure employment.

Levi has a mild learning disability and eventually was diagnosed with autism after a years-long wait. Discouraging experiences with employers caused her to fear she would never find meaningful employment.

She then joined the Engage to Change project and met her employment advisor Steve, who arranged for her to visit Carmarthenshire People First and take on a role in the organisation. From that first day, she loved it.

As a people person with a great amount of empathy, Levi's main focus has been on supporting the various groups run by the

I just love this place. I'm safe here. As well as my job, this is my safe place. I just love being here and I'm so grateful that I've had the opportunity to come here and progress.

organisation. Her employer Sarah could not be more complimentary about her work. "She's very flexible. She'll put her hand to anything. Whatever she does for this organisation she does with commitment of 110%."

Levi has developed her confidence and feels she has found her purpose since Engage to Change connected her with Carmarthenshire People First and supported her to work there. "I just love this place. I'm safe here. As well as my job, this is my safe place. I just love being here and I'm so grateful that I've had the opportunity to come here and progress."

Levi's experience has shown that with the appropriate support, meaningful employment is achievable for people like her with a learning disability or ASD. Levi is one of many who have the capacity to fulfil their potential and contribute positively to the workforce with the support of a project like Engage to Change.



See more stories and videos about the young people who are succeeding in employment through Engage to Change at our website:

www.engagetochange.org.uk

Valued Lives: **Challenging** and representing

Within our own policy groups and in partnership with other organisations, we work to make sure the voice of people with a learning disability is heard and responded to.



Our policy groups

Access to Services group

We held two meetings of our Access to Services group and provided information and lobbying work around entitlements to services, cuts to services, and welfare reform.

The Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment process continues to pose challenges for people with a learning disability. We aired concerns at meetings with Capita, the assessor provider for PIP, and the Department for Work and Pensions.



Personalised Technology group

We believe technology can help the independence, choice, and control for people with a learning disability. Our group consists of interested people and organisations, particularly supported living providers.

Innovation in technology was promoted at our annual conference, while we sourced and promoted stories of good practice, and started planning for two regional conferences.

We also hosted a study visit of 10 people from Austria to learn about how organisations in Wales are using personalised technology to increase the independence of the people they support.

Cross Party Group on Disability

As the Secretariat for the Cross Party Group on Disability we are able to bring significant issues to a wide group of stakeholders, and more importantly, change-makers, in order to improve the lives of disabled people in Wales.

The Cross Party Group on Disability works on equality issues that affect all disabled people in Wales, including implementation of the Social Model of Disability and the right to independent living. It is chaired by Mark Isherwood AM, and includes Assembly Members from some of the main political parties, as well as representatives from organisations in Wales that represent the interests of disabled people.

Our role includes managing the administrative support for the Cross Party Group, and we benefit hugely from joining with the other members - Disability Wales, Wales Council for the Blind, Wales Council for the Deaf, and Mind Cymru - to create discussion and provide insight in order that Assembly Members gain a better understanding of the live issues in Wales today.

We held four meetings this year, including one joint meeting with the Cross Party Group on Violence against Women and Children, and another with the Cross Party Groups on Housing and Older People.

Attendees from our north Wales meeting also submitted a response to Welsh Government's consultation on Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living.

Responding to policy

Loneliness and isolation

Welsh Government consultation.
Highlighting the importance of a good social life and relationships for people with a learning disability, we were able to show how our projects Gig Buddies and Love Life are making a real difference.

Independent living

As well as being part of the group producing the new framework on independent living, we responded on behalf of our members, partners and other key stakeholders.



Above photo (and staff, page 14 / Stay Up Late protest, page 17) by Paul Stewart-Davies, PLSS Photography









Working together with others

We worked with other organisations on policy groups that included:

- Marie Curie End of Life Care group. This project developed new work, including easy read resources, that improves access to end of life care services for people with a learning disability.
- Cymorth Supported Living group. We worked with supported living providers to look at commissioning and provider issues, particularly how to meet the costs of sleep-in judgements and the National Living Wage.
- National Commissioning Board. We worked together to plan and host the Improving Lives, Improving Practice conference where new Welsh Local Government Association guidance on commissioning accommodation was launched.
- Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance. We worked to ensure the Additional Learning Needs Act and its Code meets the needs of young people with a learning disability.
- Learning Disability Consortium. Working together with All Wales People First, All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers and Mencap Cymru.
- Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group. This group
 provides advice to the Minister for Children, Older People
 and Social Care. We particularly welcomed the publication of
 Welsh Government's Improving Lives programme that was
 published in June 2018, and worked on how we will assist in
 delivering the plan.
- Disability Equality forum. A group of pan-disability third sector organisations working together with Welsh Government that advises on issues affecting disabled people.
- Wales Disability Reference Group. A group consisting of the five disability umbrella organisations in Wales.
- Council for Disabled Children (UK). Linking UK policy to Welsh policy and joint learning and sharing of good practice.
- Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board. Statutory and voluntary agencies working with Criminal Justice agencies (CPS, Probation, Police) to stop hate crime.

Our year in numbers





Managed 4 Cross Party Group on Disability meetings



Worked on **21** policy areas

Easy Read Wales



43 easy read documents



25 clients

Training and events



31 training courses



305 delegates trained



194 people at All our futures



280 hot lunches at All our futures

Informing



1 new website launched



23,717 website users



5,898 Twitter followers



3,115 Facebook likes

Engage to Change



120 work placements



74 young people sustained employment



Engaged with **145** employers

Love Life



Trained 2 trainers



84 people trained

Working Together with Parents



5 support network meetings across Wales

Gig Buddies



12 Gig Buddies matched

Gig Buddies

2018 - 2020









Gig Buddies matches adults with a learning disability with volunteers who share the same interests so they can go to gigs and events together.

This innovative befriending scheme was created by the English charity Stay Up Late. Thanks to funding from First Choice Housing Association we have been able to bring Gig Buddies to Wales, starting with our first project site in Cardiff, with plans to expand across the country.

Throughout the year we matched and supported 12 new Gig Buddy friendships, trained 16 volunteers, and developed valuable new partnerships that have helped to improve how people with a learning disability access the arts, live music and leisure in Wales.

Meanwhile, our Gig Buddies spent the year enjoying concerts, festivals, sport matches, clubnights, theatre, and forming new friendships - lots of experiences that they haven't been able to do before.

We are thrilled that First Choice have agreed to fund a second year, allowing us to expand to new areas that have expressed strong demand for Gig Buddies - Bridgend, RCT, Merthyr Tydfil, and the Vale of Glamorgan.



Katie wanted to meet up with a group of mates for her 20th birthday. She didn't want us to be involved in the planning. She mentioned her idea to the Gig Buddy group and hey presto, an event was planned. From the moment the first person arrived she was chatting, laughing, hugging her friends and generally having a great time. She'd spent the previous day planning her outfit, having her hair done, choosing a birthday cake - just like all her peers do.

This is a young woman who would sometimes spend many hours refusing to speak or interact with others and relying on us, her parents, to anticipate her wishes and feelings. We can't speak highly enough of what Gig Buddies is doing for young people like Katie. Thanks one and all for making this one of her best birthdays to date!

Philippa and Steve, Katie's parents

Launching Gig Buddies at Festival of Voice

We were excited to officially launch Gig Buddies at Festival of Voice, the international arts festival managed by the Wales Millennium Centre.

Thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund, we commissioned Hijinx Theatre to stage an intervention during the festival's opening night gala. Actors playing people supported on a night out interrupted the event and protested against being forced to leave before 9pm.

The intervention showed how difficult it can be for people with a learning disability to stay up late and enjoy events at night, and how Gig Buddies can be a huge help.







Welsh Youth Parliament

2018 - 2020

We were delighted that our application to support two young disabled people to be among Wales' very first Youth Parliament Members was successful.

We designed an accessible process to elect the two young people, who were nominated by our membership. Our chosen young people, Anwen and Katie, attended the first Welsh Youth Parliament residential in Cardiff, and both gave their opening speeches on their chosen subjects in the Chamber at the Senedd.

It was an incredibly proud day for both Anwen, Katie, their friends, family and Learning Disability Wales. We are sure it is just the start of them making history for other young people in Wales.





Love Life 2016 - 2019





Funded by Erasmus+, our Love Life project is working with six partners across Europe to develop a training programme on relationships and sexuality led by trainers with a learning disability.

In November our team of expert trainers spent a week in Rotterdam developing a training course which will be delivered to support providers in Wales on their return. The course included rights, conversation starters, games on people's own experiences and some interactive learning sessions.

The training has been a success, with over 80 participants being trained, and will be rolled out further.





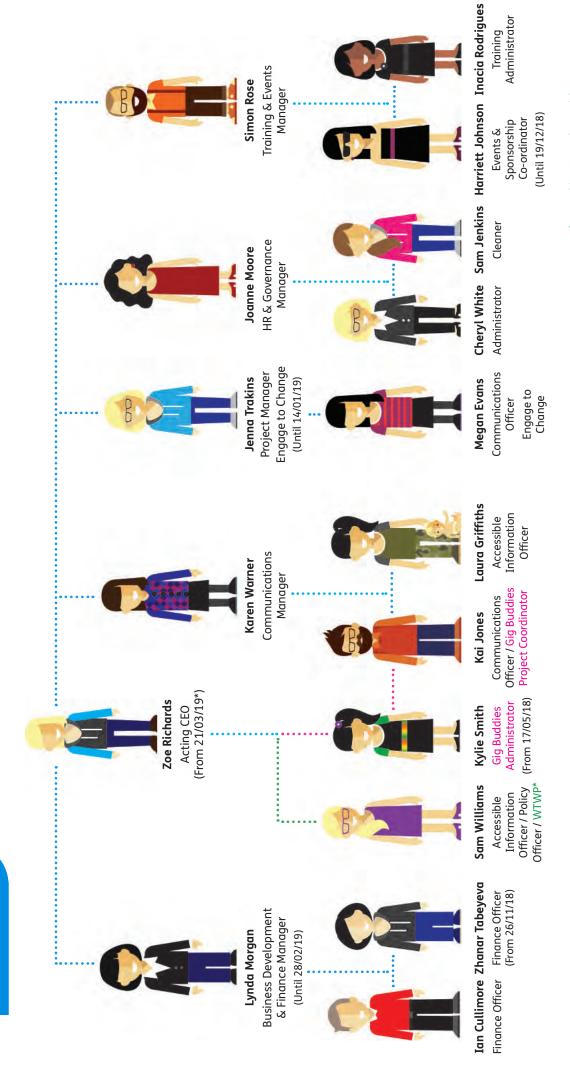
Working Together with Parents 2016 - 2019

Funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation we have been working alongside the Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities and the Norah Fry Institute at Bristol University to improve policy and practice in Wales, England and Scotland.

Our north and south Wales networks met throughout the year and were able to share their stories and influence change. Support for parents who have a learning disability has now become a priority focus in Welsh Government's new Improving Lives programme.

We worked with the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) to roll out training to CAFCASS social workers. The training will ensure they are aware of the issues that parents who have a learning disability face when going through the court system, in relation to keeping their children with them.

We tendered, with partners, for research into how and why there is a high number of looked after children who have a parent with a learning disability. Although our tender was unsuccessful, we have been working with Oxford Brookes University, who won the tender, with the research.



★ Working Together With Parents Network (WTWP)

★ Zoe Richards: Young Person & Carers Manager / Project Manager (Until 21/03/19)

Our trustees

Elected: November 2016

Full Member reps			
Community of Interest	Trustees	Representing	
Adult Providers	Mandy Evans Steve Cox (Treasurer)	Mirus Perthyn	
Self Advocacy	Dawn Gullis 1 vacant seat	Cardiff People First	
Parents & Carers	Jacqui Caldwell 1 vacant seat	Denbighshire VSC	
Children's Providers	Denise Inger	SNAP Cymru	
Independent / Citizen Advocacy	1 vacant seat		
Supported Employment	Kathy Rivett	Elite	
Family Support Providers	1 Vacant seat		
UK Links	1 Vacant seat		
Open Seats			
Interested individuals	Phil Madden <i>(Chair)</i> , Steve Barnard		
Advisors	Sian Owen, Steve Beyer (appointed 23/01/19)		

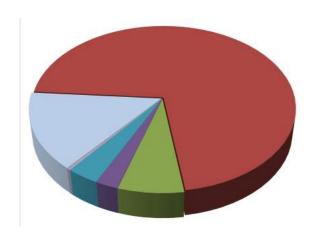
Our members

	North Wales	Mid/West Wales	South Wales	Outside Wales
Full	9	8	39	1
Associate	15	24	47	9

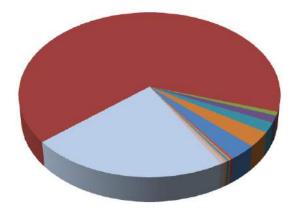
Become a member of Learning Disability Wales

Membership of Learning Disability Wales is free. Join Learning Disability Wales now so we can work together to improve the lives of children, young people and adults with a learning disability. Phone us on 029 2068 1160, or simply join online at our website: www.ldw.org.uk/about-us/become-a-member.

How we spent our money



Money we received this year			
Welsh Government Grant	£297,600 (15.2%)		
UK Projects	£1,413,026 (71.5%)		
European Projects	£140,515 (7.1%)		
Training & Events	£48,497 (2.4%)		
Consultancy, networks and hosted services	£67,970 (3.4%)		
Membership and publications	£0 (0.0%)		
Donations	£5,776 (0.3%)		
Bank interest	£2,400 (0.1%)		
Total	£1,975,784		



End of year result:

- £21,323

The deficit consists of unrestricted surplus of £16,611 and a restricted deficit of £37,934.

Money we spent this year			
Staff and travel costs	£487,382 (24.4%)		
Grants to UK project partners	£1,183,489 (59.3%)		
Grants to European project partners	£116,330 (5.8%)		
Courses and conferences	£33,824 (1.7%)		
Looking after our building	£40,408 (2.0%)		
Project events	£64,159 (3.2%)		
Running the office	£46,279 (2.3%)		
Freelance costs	£4,775 (0.2%)		
Llais and Llais Update	£0.00 (0.0%)		
Translation	£8,468 (0.4%)		
Irrecoverable VAT	£1,544 (0.1%)		
Audit fees	£5,250 (0.3%)		
Depreciation	£1,250 (0.1%)		
Trustees meetings	£3,949 (0.2%)		
Total	£1,997,107		

Photo competition

We ran a photo competition with Able Radio giving people the opportunity to express their hopes and dreams for the future.

75 people from across Wales entered, and our judges had a hard time picking winners from a high calibre of entries. We announced the winners at our annual conference, All our futures, and we are looking forward to welcoming back the overall winner, Tristan Lewis, in 2019 as a guest judge.

Cystadleuaeth ffotograffau

Fe wnaethom gynnal cystadleuaeth ffotograffau gydag Able Radio gan roi cyfle i bobl fynegi eu gobeithion a'u breuddwydion ar gyfer y dyfodol.

Fe wnaeth 75 o bobl o bob cwr o Gymru roi cynnig arni, ac roedd ein beirniaid wedi cael amser caled yn dewis enillwyr o blith ymgeiswyr o safon uchel. Fe wnaethon ni gyhoeddi'r enillwyr yn ein cynhadledd flynyddol, Dyfodol pob un ohonom ni, ac rydym yn edrych ymlaen at groesawu'r enillydd cyffredinol, Tristan Lewis, yn ôl yn 2019 fel beirniad gwadd.



Tristan Lewis

'Follow Your Dreams'

'Dilyn Dy Freuddwydion'



Jack Goode 'King of the Cathedral' 'Brenin yr Eglwys'



Sophie Maddick 'Selfie' 'Hunlun'



Thomas Jones 'Handyman at Work' 'Crefftwr Wrth ei Waith'



Kathryn Gallo 'My Own Spot' 'Fy Man Fy Hun'



Sarah Duke 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun' 'Mae Merched am Gael Hwyl'