

# Learning Disability Wales Annual Review

April 2021 to March 2022



Easy Read Wales, 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
Keeping you informed	5
Easy Read Wales	6
Influencing policy	7
Engage to Change	9
Training and events	12
Gig Buddies Cymru	14
21st Century People	18
Looking after the wellbeing of our staff	22
Our staff	23
Our trustees and members	24
How we spent our money	25
Our year in numbers	26



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





# Welcome message

**from our Chair, Jon Day**

I am writing this as I approach the end of my second full year as Chair of this fantastic organisation. I continue to be amazed by the organisation's resilience and ability to both contribute to and lead on so many important areas of work, not only as part of our core business and but also bespoke, specialist work that we are asked to be involved in.

Our focus in the last year has been both inward and outward facing, and rightly so. For us to deliver on the demands of the agenda set for us by Welsh Government as well as meet the needs of our members, stakeholders and partners, we have had to ensure that we have a team that feel truly valued, as without this we cannot deliver our ambition. To this end, we have made several decisions to ensure we have a team that is well supported, with the right structure and modern terms and conditions to help with recruitment and retention including appropriate support for their ongoing health and well-being.

Equally, when we look outwardly then I hope that the following pages demonstrate

the amazing work that the team has undertaken to achieve our aims and objectives with the ultimate vision of making Wales a better place for all people with a learning disability to live, learn and work.

We underwent a successful trustee recruitment campaign last year and for the first time in a long time we had a full complement on our board of trustees, with some incredible talent joining us to support the work of our existing trustees. This year we potentially lose a range of skills and experience from our board as key trustees stand down but we are working hard to ensure that our recruitment will attract suitable replacements that add strength and resilience to our board.

On a personal note, I would like to say 'thank you' again to the trustees and staff who make my role as Chair of Learning Disability Wales so easy. Whilst we all acknowledge the challenges ahead, we also recognise the opportunities that we need to grasp with both hands.



# Welcome message

**from our Chief Executive, Zoe Richards**

Ever changing is how we have come to expect our work at Learning Disability Wales, especially in recent years. Adapting, learning, being creative and “hanging on in there” became a way of life as we continued to find our way and support our community to deal with the impact of the pandemic.

People’s lives had changed and we were trying to plan for the future at a time when we rarely knew what tomorrow would hold. Despite this, we became creative and learned new ways to reach people and support our members. We even had time to be reflective and began working with our members to review what we do, how we offer it and what would be next.

For our members, the need for good quality accessible information remained a priority. For many, the restrictions had not yet been lifted and many people with a learning disability felt more impacted than others. The need to come together to challenge policy and practice continued to be important while the need to ensure that people felt safe and confident to return to accessing the community was carefully balanced with acknowledging that for some this simply wasn’t possible.

Welsh Government led on the Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan and we fed into this work alongside partners. There is a desire to be visionary but we fear that

the plan may lack ambition for those we support. We look forward to seeing the final implementation plan and continue to support its development.

Our projects led the way in supporting people through digital events, new and fun ways of working, training to understand how we work, and looking after ourselves differently during a pandemic. For some people those things were a vital lifeline.

Our team has worked tirelessly to inform and represent our members. It is important to acknowledge that the team’s hard work and dedication to everything they do is of the highest standard and I count myself lucky to be part of such a passionate and hard-working team.

Our board of trustees has continued to guide and support the organisation with integrity and scrutiny to ensure we uphold our values and serve our members.

It has been another year of challenges and we have learned to be kinder to each other and ourselves. We have also found confidence in being bolder in how we work, creating innovative solutions to barriers and obstacles. We have attracted new funders and received extended funding from existing programmes. We look forward to connecting with you and coming together in the future.

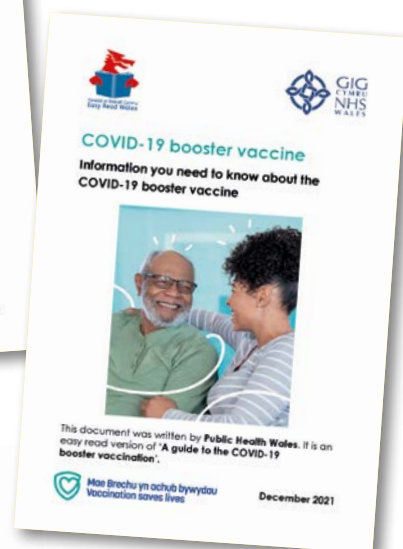
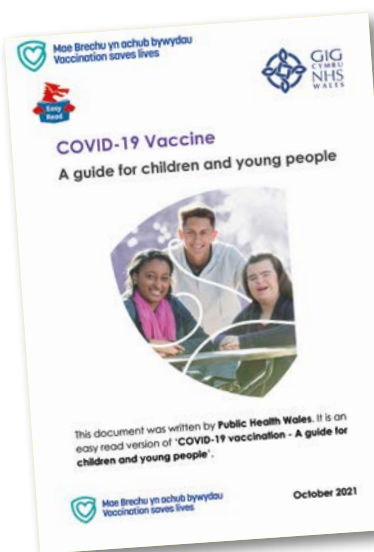
# Keeping you informed

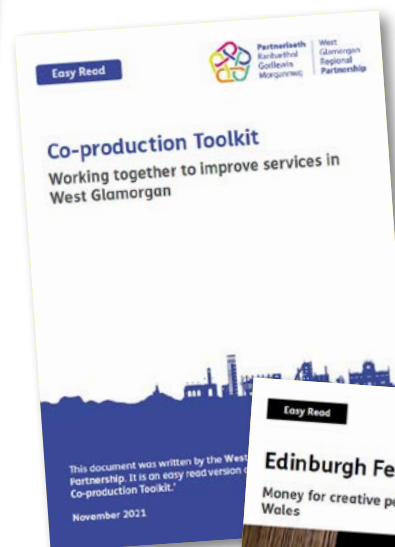
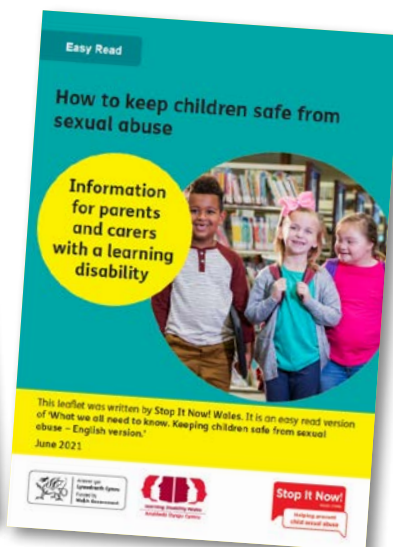
At the start of the pandemic in 2020 we adapted our work into an information and easy read hub, allowing us to put the whole team's efforts into keeping our members and wider audience informed and connected.

This work continued this year, ensuring that we could keep you updated with new developments connected to Covid-19, such as the vaccine roll-out and rule changes. We also helped key organisations, such as Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, to make sure information they produced about Covid-19 was accessible for people with a learning disability.

Examples of easy read publications about Covid-19 that we were involved in producing:

- Back to community life – a guide to help people get out again after Covid-19
- Covid-19 vaccine – a guide for children and young people
- After your Covid-19 vaccine
- An easy read guide for all women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning to get pregnant - this leaflet tells you about the Covid-19 vaccine
- Covid-19 booster vaccine.





**We had the opportunity to work with a range of new clients this year. It has been great to see more public sector organisations think more about easy read and accessible information.**

A lot of our work has been with organisations like health boards, local authorities, Welsh Government and public services supporting people with a learning disability to:

- Take part in consultations on important laws and decisions in Wales.
- Make informed decisions about health screening and taking care of their own health.
- Understand the impact of coronavirus on different groups of people and how services have adapted.
- Access funding for many different types of projects, in the arts and politics.
- Give their feedback and views on different services and how life has been for them.
- Access services, get the support they need, and take part in different activities.

This was our second year working together as a new team of 3. We settled into our new roles and both Inacia and Julie were asked to work additional hours to meet the demands of the service. We look forward to another busy year ahead and hope to see more and more organisations start to provide easy read and accessible information.



# Influencing policy



## Consultations

We responded to 22 different consultations from Welsh and UK governments and parliament committees. For example, we asked UK Government to protect people's human rights in our responses to consultations on benefits system reform and Human Rights Act reform.

We asked Welsh Government to embed accessibility into all aspects of education through consultations on the Curriculum for Wales, the Tertiary Education Bill and Shared Apprenticeships.

We advocated for LGBTQ+ people with a learning disability in our responses to consultations about banning conversion therapy and the LGBTQ Action Plan for Wales.

## Learning Disability Policy Group

We facilitated the Learning Disability Policy Group for policy leads in the sector to

discuss issues arising from the pandemic including vaccines, changes to rules, re-opening of services etc.

We continued to increase our communications and engagement through blogs, articles and items on social media. We have 4442 likes and 5233 followers on Facebook, and 7901 followers on Twitter.

## Learning Disability Consortium

As part of the Learning Disability Consortium, we continued to work closely with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales on issues affecting the lives of people with a learning disability and their families during the pandemic.

The Learning Disability Consortium increased its meetings to 4 per month and widened its membership to include Cymorth Cymru and Down's Syndrome Association. The group met twice a month with representatives from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales while

the other 2 meetings were 3rd sector partners only. We lead and coordinate these meetings and have brought together stakeholders, partners, academics and policy makers to ensure that the voice of people with a learning disability, families, carers and support organisations is present in Covid-19 policy and guidance.

## **Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group**

We continued to represent our members and stakeholders at 6 meetings of the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group (LDMAG) throughout the year, including workshops looking at the draft strategic action plan and the impact of learning disability policy on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

We were involved in the development of Welsh Government's new Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan. This involved feeding into what would become the key priority areas of work and submitting evidence on employment and annual health checks.

## **Child sexual exploitation**

We worked with the Lucy Faithful Foundation to produce accessible versions of their information as part of the 'Stop It Now' campaign to keep children safe from sexual exploitation.

## **Covid research project**

We continued to work with partners on phases 2 and 3 of the research study. As

part of phase 2 we helped to recruit some new participants (people with a learning disability and their carers) to take part in the interviews about their experiences during the pandemic. For phase 3 of the study no new participants were recruited but previous participants were again either interviewed or asked to complete the surveys.

We held 2 online events to explore the findings of each phase of the study. Attended by over 170 people in total, the events heard from expert speakers involved in the study, including researchers, people with a learning disability, family carers and support staff, about what the research has found and how we can use this learning to shape a better future for people with a learning disability.

The study found that people with a learning disability in Wales, and their families/ supporters, experienced a multitude of negative effects during the pandemic that were considerably more profound than the general population. These negative effects included reduced services and support, including many people denied an annual health; increased anxiety and loneliness; and a severe reduction in social activities and relationships. All of which in turn added more pressure on to family carers. The final report was published in February 2022 and shared widely with policy makers, stakeholders and other relevant individuals.

In August 2022 it was announced the study was being extended to include a fourth and final phase.



# Engage to Change



**Engage**  
To **Change**



[engagetochange.org.uk](https://engagetochange.org.uk)  
[/engagetochangewales](https://engagetochangewales.org.uk)  
[@Engage\\_2\\_Change](https://twitter.com/Engage_2_Change)

Engage to Change continued to receive referrals and to deliver activity throughout the sixth year of the project, through a mixture of remote and face to face work due to the changing pandemic restrictions.

As restrictions started to be lifted, there were more opportunities for work placements and paid jobs, and young people's participation in them increased.

Our evaluation team at the National Centre for Mental Health at Cardiff University published a report on the first 4 years of the project. We held a digital stakeholder event to launch the report that was attended by Hefin David, Member of the Senedd for Caerphilly.

Throughout the year we attended and presented at digital events, including the Learning Disability Wales annual conference, and an event to mark National Apprenticeships Week. Although most events and meetings continued to be virtual, our Lead Ambassador Gerraint Jones-Griffiths, was able to meet groups of interns in person, as well as online while hosting a regular Fun Hour.

Our Comms Officer, Sophie Williams, visited young people from across the project and produced some excellent videos and case

studies to showcase their progression and achievements. You can watch these videos at [engagetochange.org.uk](https://engagetochange.org.uk).

## Employment policy work from Engage to Change

Our influencing policy work gathered momentum throughout the year as we lobbied for the introduction of a National Job Coaching and Supported Internship programme. To support this work we met with Welsh Government civil servants, and secured a meeting with Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for the Economy.

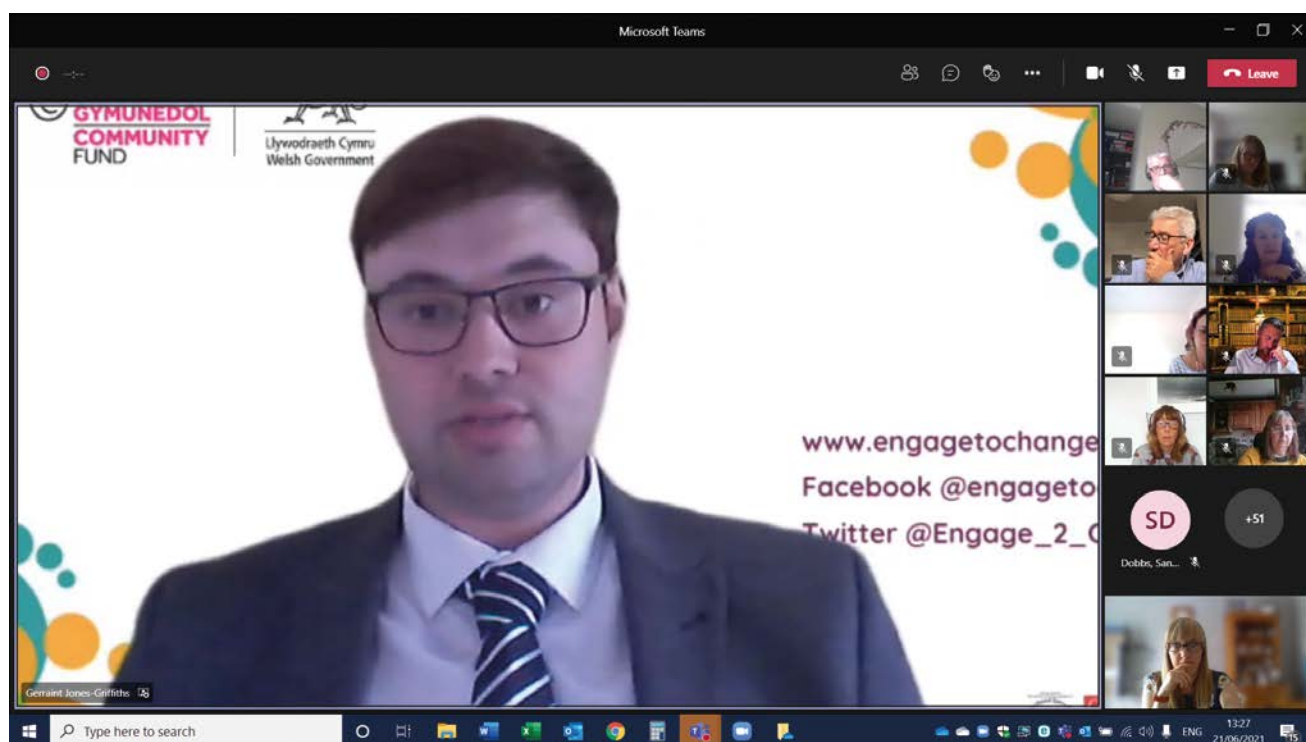
Our policy work was influential in:

- A traineeship pilot for 16-18 years olds funded by Welsh Government with job coach support provided by our supported employment partners Agoriad and ELITE, and a grant for employers. It was then confirmed this would be included in the new Jobs Growth Wales Plus programme starting in April 2022.
- A supported apprenticeship pilot with job coach support funded by Welsh Government, provided by Agoriad and ELITE, and an incentive for employers. It was confirmed this would continue for the foreseeable future.

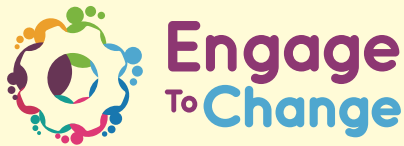
- A Shared Supported Apprenticeship with 5 job coaches funded by Welsh Government was developed and will go out to tender, with a start date of 1st August 2022.
- During this year a new Independent Living Skills curriculum was introduced to Further Education Colleges, funded by Welsh Government, that includes 'Pathway 4' supported internships, with job coach support included. Our project manager, Angela Kenvyn, worked with Colegau Cymru and FE colleges to develop quality standards and guidance for the colleges to use.
- At the end of this year, we were delighted to see the inclusion of specialist intensive job coach support for people with significant learning disabilities in the new Welsh Government Employment and Skills Plan.

We responded to several consultations and participated in Welsh Government's Disabled People's Employment Working Group and the Wales Access to Work Forum.

We also worked with the North Wales Together Transformation Team, who are co-producing a 5-year Employment Strategy for People with a Learning Disability. The Strategy is evidenced based, some of which is learning from Engage to Change, and includes both supported internships and supported employment (both with job coach support).



# Ffion finds success as an apprentice



**Ffion, 24, joined the Engage to Change Project after she struggled to find work after leaving full-time education.** Through the project, Ffion was supported by Kayleigh, an Employment Advisor, to find suitable employment. In October 2019, Ffion started a placement at a local bowling alley, XL Bowl. Ffion enjoyed the role and got along with the team. However, Ffion's hopes of working in the bowling alley ended when the venue closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Throughout the lockdowns, Ffion continued to work with Kayleigh to develop her employment skills. Kayleigh also worked with Ffion to look for any suitable job vacancies. Ffion came across a vacancy with a local charity called Cerebra, with the opportunity to complete an NVQ Level 2 Business Administration Apprenticeship. Ffion was enthusiastic about being able to earn and learn simultaneously. Ffion was supported in applying for the role and successfully secured an interview. After a successful interview, Ffion was offered the role of Library Assistant.

Ffion was supported in her new role by her Job Coach, who helped her settle into her new role and learn different aspects of the position. Ffion has settled into her role



**“All my life, I’ve been accepting the negativity of myself and not accepting the positivity of myself, and now it’s completely different.”**

well and enjoys working as a part of the Cerebra team. Ffion says that she “feels like a different person” since she began her apprenticeship, which has made her much happier and more independent. Ffion said, “It’s been an absolute pleasure to be a part of a charity that supports people with neurological conditions when I’ve got that myself.”

Ffion’s apprenticeship with Cerebra helped her identify her skills and talents, and she is looking forward to a bright future ahead. Ffion said, “All my life, I’ve been accepting the negativity of myself and not accepting the positivity of myself, and now it’s completely different. Great job, great life.”



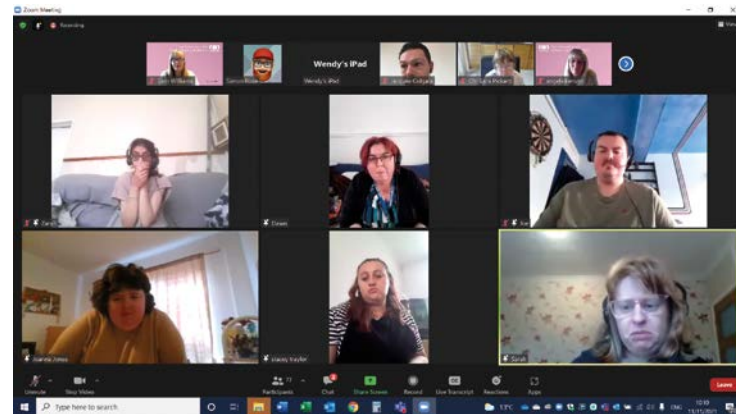
# Training and events

## Annual conference – We Can Work It Out

This year's annual conference looked at what work, jobs and employment mean to people with a learning disability.

With Covid restrictions still in force we gathered online for a week of discussion, films, and stories. We explored work issues and what needs to change to make the world of work better for people with a learning disability. You can watch recordings of all sessions at [ldw.org.uk/we-can-work-it-out](http://ldw.org.uk/we-can-work-it-out).

Over 200 people joined us during the week, with around 100 attending each day. We are thankful to Drive, Careers Wales, Working Wales, National Star, Base,



**“I particularly liked the videos from people with learning disabilities who expressed the value and benefits to their lives of being able to be in paid employment.”**

Swansea Parent Care Forum, Mirus and North Wales Together, who sponsored the event.

A promotional graphic for the 'We can work it out' conference. It features a pink background with a white curved shape on the right. On the left, a woman with dark hair and a yellow shirt is smiling. The text 'Real life stories' and 'Straeon bywyd go iawn' is in white. The text 'We can work it out' and 'Gallwn ni ei weithio allan' is in white. The hashtag '#WorkItOutLDW' is in white. At the bottom, there is a logo for 'Learning Disability Wales' and 'Anabledd Dysgu Cymru' and the text 'Annual Conference 2021' and 'Cynhadledd Flynyddol 2021'.

## Understanding Sight Loss training with RNIB

We teamed up with RNIB to raise awareness and knowledge about sight loss and people with a learning disability. We ran 6 free training sessions looking at various types of sight loss and how these might affect people's behaviour.

The course provides guidance on how to spot the possible signs of sight loss and how to respond to and support people with a learning disability and sight loss in effective ways.

## Autism Wales employment seminar

We worked with Autism Wales to assist them in the running of an event for people with autism with or without a learning disability. The events provided information and skills to help people into and sustain employment.



## Supporting people to communicate online

During the pandemic it has been extremely important to help people with a learning disability to learn new digital skills and stay connected with friends and family online. To support this, we continued to work with Digital Communities Wales to provide free training for support workers so they can help people with a learning disability to learn these skills.



# Gig Buddies Cymru



Gig Buddies continues to be a major success in Wales and we are proud of what the whole team has achieved. After expanding to north Wales in 2020, this year we focussed on growing better, rather than bigger, and the year was packed with highlights!

Having a Gig Buddy helps adults with a learning disability and/or autism to enjoy a great social life with a new friend. But there are many other positive effects – including better mental health, increased independence, real choice and control, opportunities for volunteering and employment, new experiences, and being more visible in their communities.

To help our Gig Buddies stay connected we continued our virtual socials, which has led to new friendships being formed across Wales, and Buddies learning new digital skills. As the year progressed, we were able to start holding socials in person and support Gig Buddies to go back to meeting up and attending events together.

**Do you want to volunteer as a Gig Buddy? We're looking for people of all ages, with all interests. Find out more and apply at [ffrindiaugigiau.org.uk](http://ffrindiaugigiau.org.uk).**



## South Wales

Throughout the year we promoted Gig Buddies by working with new and existing partnerships, including CVCs, arts venues and other charities. With restrictions beginning to lift we were able to run stalls – with the help of some of our Buddies – to recruit new volunteers and participants at Cardiff University, Chapter Arts Centre, and Idles' sold-out show at Cardiff Motorpoint Arena.





One successful match has been Shan and Menatalla. They both love jazz music, dancing and going to the theatre and are an unlikely match in some ways due to their age difference and cultural backgrounds, but have bonded very quickly. Shan said “Gig Buddies helps me to feel more confident and Mena is a really lovely, kind person. She phones me to see how I am getting on...I love dancing and I like getting dressed up to go out”.

**Shan, Gig Buddy participant**

## Socials

Our socials give people a chance to meet each other as part of the wider Gig Buddies community, find matches in a natural way, explore new events and experiences, and to have fun!

In June 2021 we held our first in-person ‘socially distanced’ outdoor social – a momentous occasion where nearly 40 people met up for drinks, food and bingo. Other socials included: gigs; drag cabaret; immersive theatre; and our very first ‘speed mates’ event - a simple but effective way at creating new matches by inviting unmatched Gig Buddies to get together and have quick chats about things they love.

One particular highlight was Drag Bingo. During lockdowns volunteer Gareth Pahl formed the House of Deviant - a drag group with 3 of our participants, Nicole, Sophie and Becky. We worked with House

of Deviant to put on Drag Bingo at Chapter, in Cardiff - a wild and fun night, with drag performance and bingo, hosted by the Deviants themselves.

## North Wales

After launching in October 2020, North Wales has been flying, with a high demand across all 6 counties. As well as a Gig Buddy, some new participants needed more support in their life, and through our networking we were able to refer them to various services and organisations.

Our relationship building has resulted in joint ventures and opportunities for Gig Buddies. We worked closely with North Wales Transformation Project in co-producing ‘the future’; raised issues about travel; worked with TAPE on an animation class; were interviewed by Llwybrau Llesiant’s radio station Lleisiau Llawen; worked closely with arts centres; and partnered with Cwmni Addysg Rhyw, where participants were trained to become trainers on a sex and relationships workshop.



We started regular online and in person volunteer support sessions that offer a safe space for discussing volunteers' experiences and share ideas and issues. Volunteers got to know each other better and were able to raise issues and questions, with transport being a common issue.

"I really enjoyed being out and having time and friendship with everybody. It is a thing I haven't had before as I haven't had many friends. In terms of getting to a social it can be a nightmare, but I do OK if the buses are OK. If it is somewhere I don't know I do get a bit stressed. Having my Gig Buddy there to stop me worrying how to get home too is really helpful. My Gig Buddy took me home which is good as I do get stressed about how I would get home from an event later in the evening. I don't like staying out late too much."

**Dan, Gig Buddy participant**

## **Socials**

From July 2021 participants were able to start planning their own socials, thanks to a small pot of money from North Wales Transformation Fund. The group met 5 times to organise socials, including how to organise more 'stay up late' events.

Throughout the year we met in Rhyl, Bangor and Llandudno for various events. By January however, new Covid restrictions forced us to meet online for a virtual all-Wales talent show. Watch a video from our February bowling social: [https://youtu.be/\\_r5pjFBnx9U](https://youtu.be/_r5pjFBnx9U).

In March we celebrated our 1st year with a special event at Academi, Bangor with bands and local DJ and volunteer Carl Anians. Hosted by Ernie Sparkles (volunteer Gareth Pahl), with everyone dancing the night away and 'staying up late'.

While socials are important for participants to meet new people and enjoy new experiences, they have also given volunteers opportunities to learn from each other, while developing their understanding of disability. Our March event was instrumental in challenging people's perceptions.

## **All Wales**



### **Idles fundraising gig**

We were delighted to team up with Dev, the bassist of popular UK band Idles, for a special online fundraising gig in June. Dev reached out to us after seeing first-hand how Gig Buddies has improved the life of his partner's auntie, who is one of our participants in Cardiff.

The evening raised money for Gig Buddies Cymru and to set up Gig Buddies Bristol. Publicity for the event reached far and wide,





26 runners fundraised for us at the March 2022 Cardiff Half Marathon. We are thankful to the amazing fundraising efforts of all the runners.

resulting in raised awareness of the rights of people with a learning disability to have access to friendship, gigs, and control over their social life.

## Funding

We would like to thank our funders, who we are extremely grateful to:

- First Choice Housing Association for their support and continued funding of Gig Buddies Cymru since we started in 2018.
- Lloyds Bank Foundation, who are sustaining our project for 2 years until March 2023.

- North Wales Transformation Project, who have given funding to help us facilitate planning socials by our participants in North Wales.
- Innovate Trust, who gave us a one-off donation.





# 21st Century People



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

Funded by Welsh Government and now in its second year, 21st Century People works across 4 themes to celebrate people with a learning disability as creators, contributors, and citizens of Wales, while challenging existing stereotypes. Welsh Government announced that the funding for this project would be extended for a further 2 years taking the project to March 2025. Read on for what we achieved across these themes during the year.

## 21st Century Families

### Parents with a learning disability

We continued to work in partnership with Vale People First to support their group for parents with a learning disability, as they meet online and in person. In November 2021 we also wrote to the First Minister to raise our concerns about the forthcoming



closure of the Action for Children Ymbarel project due to loss of funding. The Ymbarel project provides specialist support to parents with learning disabilities in Cardiff and the Vale to enable them to safely look after their children and reduce the risk of them being taken into care. We were very relieved to hear that the project's funding was extended for an additional 12 months shortly before it was due to end in January 2022.

In addition to this, we relaunched our network for professionals who work with parents with a learning disability in January 2022 at an online event attended by over 50 people, including parents with a learning disability and professionals. Speakers included members of the Vale People First parents' group talking about their families' experiences during lockdown as well as sharing their thoughts on how support for parents with learning disabilities could be improved. We also provided feedback

to Prof Ruth Northway's research team at University of South Wales on the draft new guidance for social workers on supporting parents with learning disabilities.

## Training for family carers in partnership with Cerebra

We continued our partnership working with Cerebra to deliver free workshops for parents of people with a learning disability. These 'Accessing Services' workshops aim to help parents work constructively with local services to make sure that their children get the care and support that is right for them. This practical workshop equips parents with tips and tools to use when working with health, education, and social services to get the best outcomes for people with a learning disability.



developed and implemented an accessible selection process, including a panel of young neurodiverse people, to elect 2 young disabled people from across Wales.



We were delighted to announce that Georgia Miggins and Tegan Skyme were elected as Welsh Youth Parliament Members. We discussed their individual support and access needs to ensure that we can offer support to them both in a person-centred way. We also made sure that Welsh Youth Parliament staff were aware of their access needs and how these could be addressed. We supported Georgia and Tegan to attend 2 online regional meetings, and the first full Welsh Youth Parliament meeting in February 2022.

## 21st Century Voices

### Welsh Youth Parliament



We successfully reapplied to be a partner organisation supporting 2 young disabled people to be Members of the second Welsh Youth Parliament (2022-2024). We

### Introduction to Easy Read online sessions

During the first year of the pandemic we adapted our popular easy read training into a free 2 hour taster session. This helped to ensure that more people with a learning disability received good quality accessible information during a time of fast-moving developments. In 2021-22 we delivered another 12 free courses.

# 21st Century People

## Policy and people - Cross Party Groups on Disability and Learning Disability

Following discussions with Disability Wales, we agreed that the role of secretariat for the Cross Party Group on Disability should return to them as they now had capacity to take this work back on. We continue to be active members of the group and to contribute on relevant issues.

This led to further discussions within the Learning Disability Consortium about the need to set up a new Cross Party Group on Learning Disability to address the specific issues facing people with a learning disability and their families in Wales. We therefore decided to invite Members of the Senedd from all parties to join the group and 3 agreed to do so. The first meeting of the new group took place in May 2022 where our Policy and Communications Manager Samantha Williams was elected as secretary. To sign up to the mailing list for the new Cross Party Group on Learning Disability, please email [samantha.williams@ldw.org.uk](mailto:samantha.williams@ldw.org.uk).

## Healthy 21st Century People

### Annual Health Checks – easy read resources

Our work around Annual Health Checks continued to be affected by the pandemic.

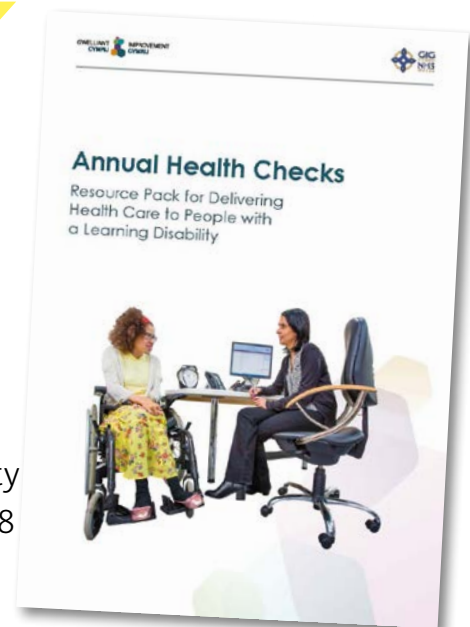
Annual Health Checks are available to anyone with a learning disability in Wales aged 18 years or older.

The check is carried out by a GP or nurse in primary care services and includes a physical examination, medical review and completion of a health check action plan.

The easy read resources we developed with Public Health Wales were made available to GPs and health professionals online and we had regular discussions about making them available to people with a learning disability and their families. It is hoped that these will soon be uploaded to the NHS 111 Wales website, managed by the Welsh Ambulance Service.

### Reducing restrictive practice

We continued to attend Challenging Behaviour Community of Practice meetings online and engaged with the network to promote the involvement of people with challenging behaviour in the Covid-19 research study (see page XX for information about the study). We took part in the launch event for Welsh Government's new 'Reducing restrictive practices framework' as a panellist and attended the Reducing Restraint Network 2-day conference in Leeds.







We are involved in discussions with Improvement Cymru and Social Care Wales about the possibility of holding a series of events across Wales to raise awareness of restrictive practices and the new framework among people with a learning disability and their families/carers.

## Living in the 21st Century

### Connections Cymru

Our Connections Cymru network brings people together to explore and create ways to reduce loneliness and social isolation. 35 people attended our second online meeting where we talked about creative ways for building connections and friendships, and how circles of support are helping

people plan a good life. Membership of the network increased to 178 during the year. Unfortunately, our third meeting was cancelled due to staff ill with covid.

We worked closely with the North Wales Transformation Project's 'Alliance for a better future' group, co-producing in North Wales. Topics and issues explored included Gig Buddies, transport, and connecting in north Wales. To join the network please email [karen.warner@ldw.org.uk](mailto:karen.warner@ldw.org.uk).

### Personalised technology

We held an online meeting of our personalised technology community of practice where the role of staff was explored and how they can support people with a learning disability with technology. However, our second meeting was cancelled due to staff ill with covid. We joined the wider group of Digital Inclusion Alliance where we attended 2 meetings and gave views about Welsh Government's Digital Strategy for Wales. We now have 116 members of the network. To join the group please email [karen.warner@ldw.org.uk](mailto:karen.warner@ldw.org.uk).

All Wales personalised technology community of practice



# Looking after the wellbeing of our staff



This year saw us still working from home through a continued series of lockdowns. As a team we were better prepared for keeping in touch with each other via Zoom and Teams, and we continued to get together in our virtual coffee mornings. Christmas was celebrated altogether on Teams, but we were thrilled to be able to celebrate in person in February when restrictions were lifted.

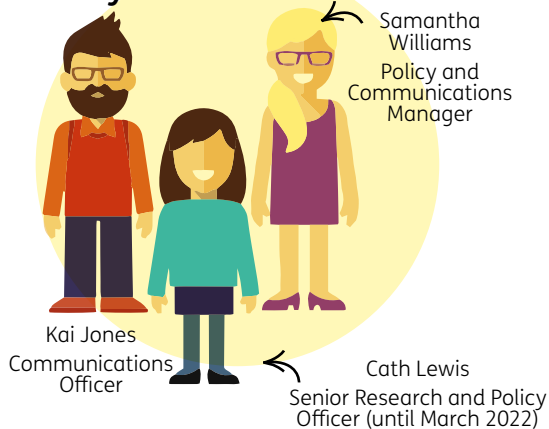
We cautiously began returning to the office in small groups, following government guidelines on safe working practices. Staff

really enjoyed the opportunity to finally have face-to-face contact with colleagues again.

In meeting our commitment to be a modern, supportive and flexible employer, we developed a hybrid model of working that will be introduced in the summer of 2022. This allows staff the flexibility to split their working time between home and the office if they wish.

# Our staff

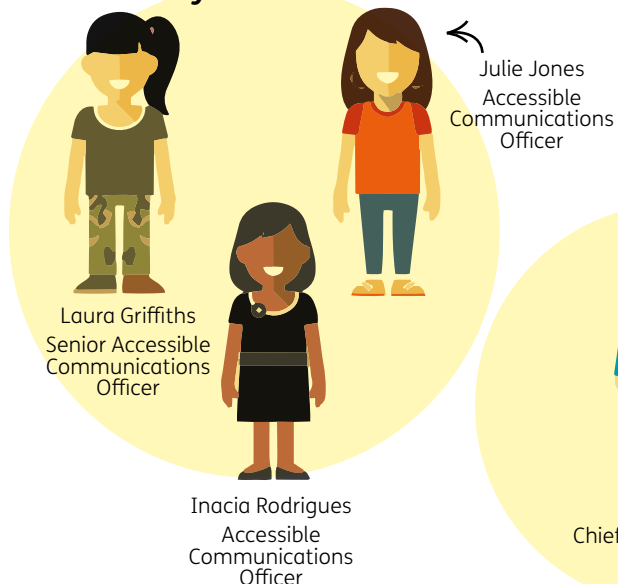
## Policy and Communications



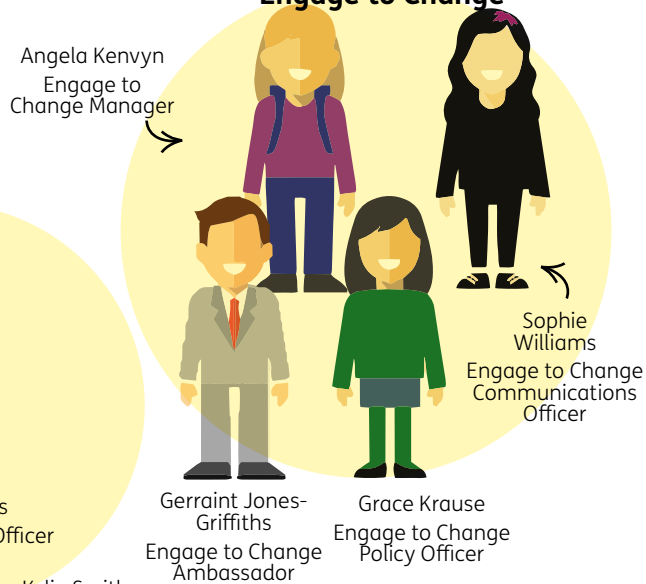
## Training and Events



## Easy Read Wales

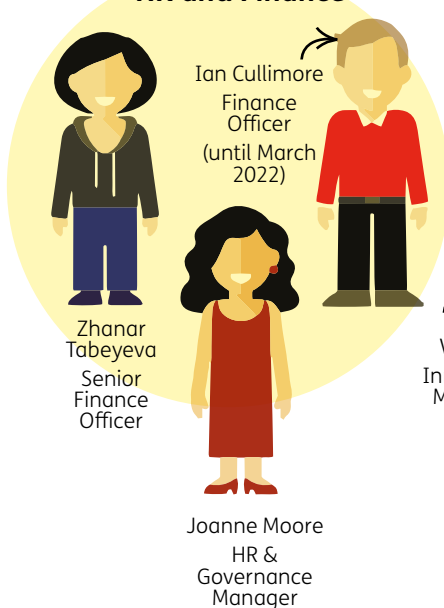


## Engage to Change

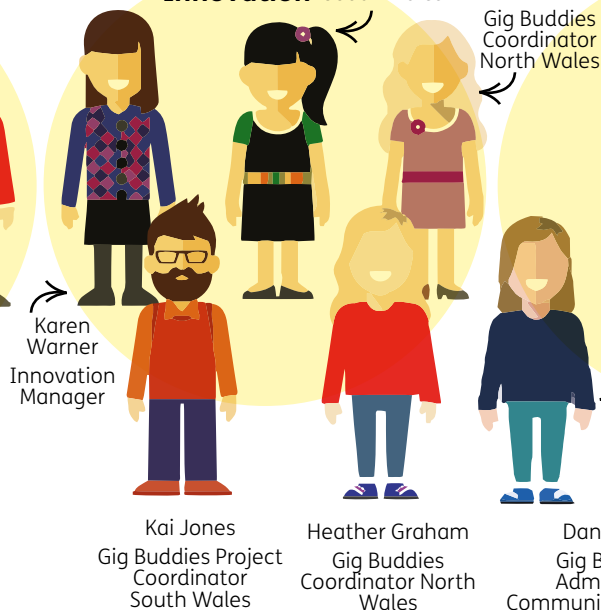


Zoe Richards  
Chief Executive Officer

## HR and Finance



## Innovation



## Support





# 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 Joe Powell	All Wales People First Cardiff People First All Wales People First
Family Carers	2	Jacqui Caldwell	Conwy Connect
Family Support Providers	2	Alison Thomas	Pobl Group
Supported Employment	1	Lily Beyer	DFN Project SEARCH
<b>Open Seats</b>	<b>Number of Seats</b>		
Interested individuals	5 (flexible)	Jon Day Sian Owen Laura White Ian Benbow James Donaldson Al Lewis Stephen Barnard Wayne Crocker	

## Advisors

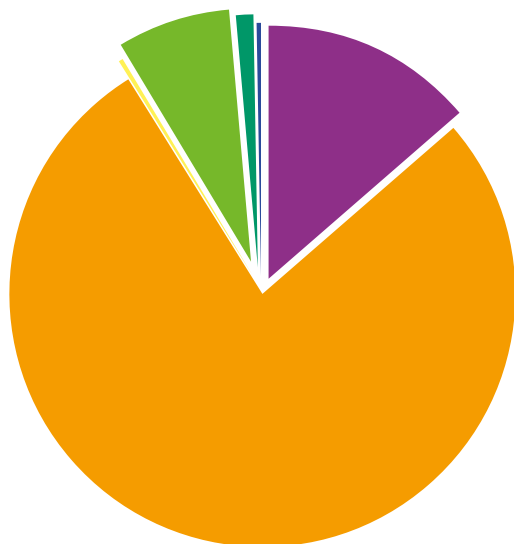
Steve Beyer, Kathryn Whitfield and Michael Allcock who moved from Trustee to Advisor in June 2021.

## Our members

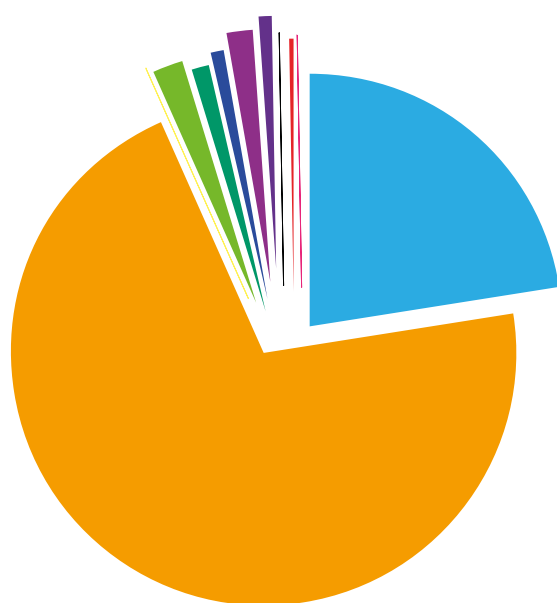
<b>Full</b>	80
<b>Associate</b>	120

# How we spent our money

## Money we received this year



Welsh Government Grant	£385,531 (13.87%)
UK Projects	£2,151,926 (77.44%)
Training & Events	£7,690 (0.28%)
Consultancy, networks and hosted services	£197,082 (7.09%)
Donations	£34,066 (1.23%)
Bank interest	£2,622 (0.09%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,778,917 (100.00%)</b>



## Money we spent this year

Staff and travel	£598,367 (22.48%)
Grants to UK Project Partners	£1,884,100 (70.78%)
Courses and conferences	£2,124 (0.08%)
Looking after our building	£54,259 (2.04%)
Project events	£32,119 (1.21%)
Running the office	£19,540 (0.73%)
Freelance costs	£42,540 (1.60%)
Translation	£22,148 (0.83%)
Irrecoverable VAT	£888 (0.03%)
Audit fees	£4,380 (0.16%)
Depreciation	£1,438 (0.05%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,661,903 (100.00%)</b>

## End of year result:

The surplus of £117,014 consists of an unrestricted surplus of £95,892 and a restricted deficit of £21,122 before transfers.

# Our year in numbers

## Influencing policy



**6** meetings of the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group attended

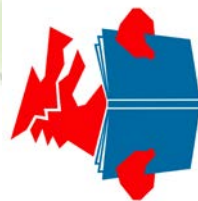


**170** people joined us for 2 Covid study online events



**22** consultations responded to

## Easy Read Wales



**156** easy read documents



**49** clients

## Keeping you informed



**32,498** website visits



**80,543** website pages visited



**1** coronavirus resources page updated regularly



**7,880** Twitter followers



**5,214** Facebook followers



**36** news articles published on website



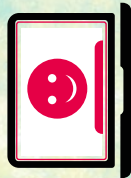
## Training and events



**290** people attended online events at our annual conference, We Can Work It Out



**16** online workshops during We Can Work It Out



**3** free online sessions supporting people to get online



**12** free online sessions on making easy read information

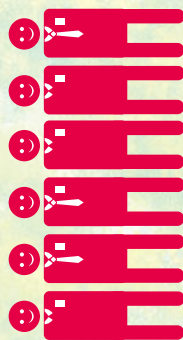
## Engage to Change



**88** young people started paid employment



**43** young people sustained employment



**57** young people started internships

## Gig Buddies



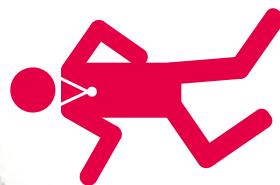
**50** Gig Buddy matches made across Wales



**11** in-person socials held across Wales



**10,000** people watched our livestream fundraiser organised by Dev from Idles



**26** runners fundraising at the Cardiff Half Marathon