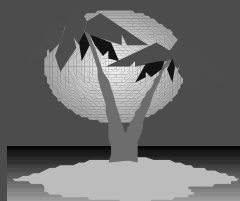


All Wales People First



Talk Back

*The National Voice of People with
Learning Disabilities in Wales*



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*Summer 2006
Edition*



Llais Cenedlaethol
Pobl ag Anableddau Dysgu yng Nghymru

Pobl yn Gyntaf Cymru Gyfan



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The National Voice of People
with Learning Disabilities in Wales

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Editors Message



Hi Everybody!



Welcome to the Summer edition of **Talk Back**.

It has been great to see a lot of our members over the last months at some of the events we have run - **LDIAG on the Road** and the **Policy and Practice - have your say days**. We have some feedback about these events in this edition. Thank you to all of those people who came and worked so hard to

give their views. It means that we can pass on this important information to the people in power and influence the way things are done in the future.

Our Annual Conference is only a short time away, and it is time to book your place at the Conference. We have lots in store for you this year.

The theme of the conference is **Government in Action**.

Please see page 3 for more details on how to book your place.

Thank you to all of the groups that sent in their really interesting and exciting news for this edition. Please keep it coming!

There is an article about the new Learning Disability Tsar in England. What a great job. We'd be interested to know if you think we should have a similar job for a person with a learning disability in Wales. Let us know what you think.

Hope you are all having a good summer and we look forward to seeing you in September at the Conference.

Glayne Walker

Chair, All Wales People First



From the Editorial Team
Glayne Walker, Christopher Edwards,
Louise Price, Yvonne Hedges



All Wales People First Annual Conference Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells 5th and 6th September 2006

We are looking forward to meeting up with our members once again at this year's conference. The conference will be another exciting and important event. It gets more and more popular every year and as ever there are a limited number of places.

This year we can only offer 6 places per county, including support workers and you will need to be a member of All Wales People First.

We have included booking forms in this edition of *Talk Back* but we have sent forms to People First **groups** only. This means that local groups can organise who attends the conference.

So if you want to attend you will need to contact the People First group in your area.

There is a list of groups with their telephone number.

This year the conference workshops spread across the 2 days, so it will not be possible to book for one day only.

We are very sorry to disappoint people who want to come but are not able to get a place. We will think about how we can change this in the future which might mean some changes in how we run the Annual Conference and whether we can get more money to do this.

If we have spare places once we have received booking forms, we will of course let groups know. It will greatly help us if you send your forms back as soon as possible.

We look forward to seeing our Members in September.

Policy and Practice Consultation

A new policy for Learning Disability in Wales

In June 2006 All Wales People First invited people with a learning disability to meetings in Narberth, Aberystwyth, Prestatyn and Cardiff.

We decided to ask people very general questions so they could tell us what is important to them. After we had done that, we looked at the detail of the Policy and Practice Statement.

People felt that having new policy is very important.

It is even more important to make sure policies are followed by everyone.

A lot of past policies about learning disability services have been very good, but have not always worked.

People with a learning disability are not a different breed of people. They are people of Wales along with everyone else.

A copy of the report has been sent to groups that took part but we can send you the report if you want it.

Some strong messages came out of the report.

People were very clear that ownership of services needs to be given to the people who use them. This means things like:

- using person centred planning to help decide what local services are needed
- finding out what is important to people with a learning disability and using that to work out a method to check the quality of services
- learning to run partnerships in a way that means everyone in the partnership has an equal voice

To do this people with a learning disability need support to understand how decisions are made and how services fit together.

The best way to know what is needed locally is to put together the information from everyone's person centred plan.

The local partnership needs to agree how to pass that information on.

Services are for the benefit of people with a learning disability, so they want their ideas to be at the centre of any system to measure how good services are. Service providers and commissioners will have their own ideas of what is important, but these should not dominate over the ideas of people with a learning disability.

Everyone should remember that people with a learning disability are the most important people in all of this because it is their lives that are at stake.

The New Learning Disability Tsar

Nicola Smith has recently been appointed to a new position at the Department of Health – Learning Disability Tsar. As a person with a learning disability she will be taking on a senior role alongside Rob Grieg.

Nicola says – “I just wanted to prove I could do a job like this. I got the job because I inspire people and because of my experiences. I can give a lot back. I have been working in advocacy for 10 years. I have worked with MENCAP. I think I have a lot of grounding and I have met a lot of challenges already. I set up my own self advocacy group in 1995.”

Nicola is very worried about people living in long stay hospitals because she knows what it is like to live there as she herself lived in one in her early twenties. *“It was grim. It made me determined that it can’t carry on.”* She believes there should be more help for people to find jobs and she is worried about social services removing children from parents with learning disabilities.

Nicola is determined to make a great success of her new role. There was a lot of competition to get the job and she was then faced with a great lack of belief when the Sun newspaper said that the job was a waste of tax payers’ money.

She says, *“We need to educate people. You can’t change things overnight. We want things to get better and I believe that they can.”*



Nicola Smith, the first Learning Disability Tsar

"Listening and Learning"

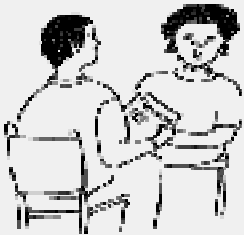
by Colin Vyvyan



People who complain about social services should be **listened** to properly. And councils should **learn** from complaints to make services for everyone who uses them.

These were the two main aims of the Assembly when it changed the law on social services complaints in Wales on April 1st 2006.

There are now three chances to sort things out.



Stage 1: First, if you are unhappy about something, You should try to sort things out with the local service itself, such as your day service. The local service should sort things out within two weeks.

Stage 2: Next, if you are still not happy with the way your local service has dealt with things, the council should get someone who's not involved in the local service to look at your complaint. That person will talk to you and everybody else who can help, to try and find out what went wrong. The council should make sure that they have finished looking into your complaint within five weeks.

Stage 3: Finally, if you are still not happy with the way your council has dealt with things, you can ask for a Panel to look into your complaint.

All three members of the Panel will be people who have nothing to do with the council you've complained about. Once you ask, the Panel should meet to look into your complaint within a month.



The Welsh Assembly Government has printed a new leaflet called: **Your Rights to Complain A quick guide to complaints procedures for adults using social services**

A copy is enclosed with this edition of **Talk Back** to People First groups. To get your own copy, please write to us or phone us.

The Witness Intermediary Scheme - and YOU

by Jackie Jones and Kathy Slinn - North Wales Advice and Advocacy Association

What is a Witness Intermediary?

A Witness Intermediary is a person who is good at understanding communication. They are there to help vulnerable adults - **that includes you** - to talk to the police and the courts.

What is the Witness Intermediary Scheme?

The government decided that it would be good to have Witness Intermediaries to help vulnerable adults. They tested the idea out in some parts of the country - it worked well.

Now the Government hope to put Witness Intermediaries in more areas. This is the Witness Intermediary Scheme.

What is it for?

A Witness Intermediary can help you if you have been a victim of a crime, or if you have seen a crime happen (you are the witness).

The Witness Intermediary will be with you to make sure that you and the police understand each other, and to make sure that you can give good evidence in court, which means that criminals can be sent to prison.

How do I get a Witness Intermediary?

Some counties already have one that you could use. If you wanted to report something to the police, you, or someone you know could ask the police to get a Witness Intermediary to come and help you.

Some counties do not have a Witness Intermediary. If there isn't one in your area, you can get in touch with VOICE UK, who may be able to find one for you.

Some counties are trying to get a Witness Intermediary of their own by asking the Welsh Assembly Government.

If you would like more information, you can contact Kathy at:

nwadvocacy@fsmail.net or Tel: 01286 676583

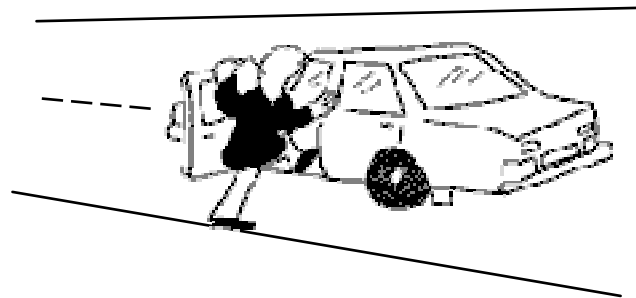
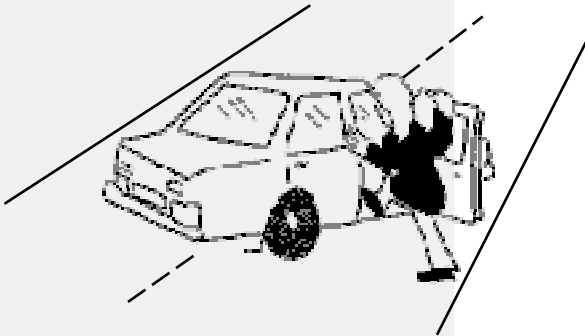
Or VOICE UK at voice@voiceuk.org.uk or Tel: 08451 228695



Learning Disability
Implementation
Advisory Group

LDIAG on the Road in Treforest, South Wales and Llandudno, North Wales

23rd March and 16th June 2006.



All Wales People First in partnership with MENCAP and with the support of the LDIAG Information Officer Lis Walters, held 2 events to let people know about the work of the LDIAG. At these meetings people were able to say what was important to them and what they wanted the LDIAG to do.

A lot of people attended these 2 events. There was a very good turn out in North Wales. People in North Wales often feel they don't get enough chances to get involved. They were really pleased that an event had taken place in Llandudno.

At both events people said that they wanted more meetings like these so that people continue to know what is going on in the LDIAG and can give their views to the group. At the moment people feel that there is not enough information about the LDIAG and what it does. People want to know what the LDIAG is actually achieving – the results and outcomes of their work. They think that Assembly Members should be involved in the meetings like these.

Some interesting and important views came out of the workshops.

Everybody agreed that there was a need for action.

People were worried that the LDIAG does not have enough influence - they want the LDIAG to give more direction. They want the LDIAG to make sure that local authorities do things properly.

They also want the LDIAG to:

- Make sure that groups of people communicate well, such as – people who provide services, professionals, people with learning disabilities, parents and carers.
- Involve people in planning at all levels and in consultations. (have your say days).
- Make sure that people get good services in all areas of Wales.
- Offer professionals examples of good practice, and offer other skills and expertise so that lessons learned from things that are done well can be passed on to others.
- Strongly back advocacy and the rights of people with learning disabilities to be a real part of their communities.
- Allow local groups to be able to feed their views into the LDIAG.

The LDIAG's work in the Future

People had lots of ideas about what the LDIAG should be working on.

They want them to do more about:

- A real choice in housing
- Proper planning for people who are going through change (transition)
- Real work, with support
- A better understanding of people with learning disabilities amongst the public
- Training for doctors delivered by people with learning disabilities
- Involving people with learning disabilities in choosing staff
- Proper support so that people with learning disabilities get independence
- Making sure that there is enough money so that Person Centred Planning works well
- Recognition of the support that parents provide
- Fair benefits for people with learning disabilities and their parents and carers

The LDIAG has sub groups where the greater part of the work is being done. People had ideas for the subgroups' work.



Ideas for the Strategic Planning subgroup

It is hard for people with learning disabilities to manage their finances. There are lots of reasons for this. People with learning disabilities need a range of support systems.

Talk Back

There needs to be a way so that people can talk to each other more, such as local authorities, voluntary sector, people with learning disabilities, parents and carers.

There are more and more people with learning disabilities.
People are worried that there will not be enough services in the future.

Health subgroup

People want better health services and better access to them. They want good services from doctors and community nurses. They are worried about people who live in care homes being registered with GP's. They want to make sure that all people with learning disabilities get a health check.

People want lessons learned from things that are done well to be passed on to others.

People don't like having to travel a long way to see a dentist. And some people have to pay.

They want people who are out of their home communities to be brought back.

Meaningful Lives subgroup

People want more jobs for people with learning disabilities with proper pay.

A system that shares the profits made by workshops.

People want the benefits system to be sorted out so that they can try out jobs or take short term jobs and not have to worry if they need to go back on benefits.

More LDIAG on the Road events?

Everybody agreed that they would tell other people about these meetings so that more people would get to know about the LDIAG.

All Wales People First would like to thank all of the people who came to the LDIAG on the Road events for giving their views so enthusiastically and the people that facilitated the workshops. We would also like to thank MENCAP for their partnership so that the events could take place and thank Lis Walters, the LDIAG Information Officer, for her support. With everybody's continued support we plan to run more events like this in the future.



News from People First Groups

Ashlea Harris Cardiff People First



In March 2006, a local scheme was launched called the 'Pedal Power Project', based in Pontcanna Fields, Cardiff. Members of Cardiff People First were invited to come and try out the specially adapted bikes.



The Welsh Assembly Advocacy Grant Scheme has withdrawn its funding for their Young People First project. This happened just after the launch of their DVD, and has left members feeling upset and confused as to what happens next.

Cardiff People First has written to BILD and to the Welsh Assembly expressing their concerns over the future of the project and has sent them both a copy of the report on the work done by Cardiff Young People First and the DVD, asking them to reconsider their decision.



Paul Johnson Anglesey Forum



Members of Anglesey Forum held their conference in July to look at the County Council's information leaflets about services in general, and how to make them a lot more user friendly.



Inspectors from the joint review have been to visit some members of the Forum to ask them about the services they receive in Anglesey. They wanted their opinion on the services in Anglesey, and what could be better, and what people wanted to see happening in the future.

Members have also been actively involved in making the current review document more user friendly.

Anglesey Forum are looking for new members to come and join them, so that the Forum can expand and develop.

News from People First Groups

Rhondda Cynon Taff People First



RCT People First received some funding from the lottery to produce a film on the rights of people with learning disabilities to get married.

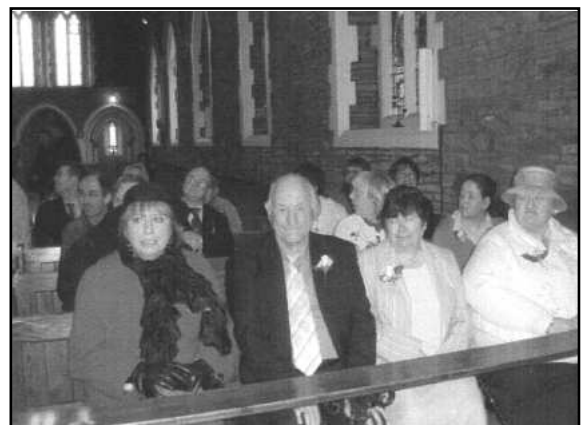
The filming took place at St. David's Church in Hopkinstown on 28th March 2006. It was filmed by Lucy Duckett and crew from the University of Glamorgan.

The film highlights the fact that just because a person has learning disabilities, they still have the right to have a relationship and get married if they choose.

The day was fun, and thanks go to the Vicar of St. David's Church, the film crew, members, volunteers and staff of RCT People First and the Awards for All Grant scheme for making it possible.

The film will be used for future training purposes, and a DVD will be available shortly for you to buy at £12.99.

For more information, please contact RCT People First on 01443 683037.



News from People First Groups

Louise Price

Caerphilly People First



Caerphilly People First are doing a lot of work in Partnership with Social Services on a number of projects that will give people with learning disabilities the right to choose how to run their own lives.

People who attend these meetings come from across the whole County. The County Group meets in Blackwood Rugby Club every month. Their role is to gather the views of people from Brooklands, Gwerin, the Retirement Groups and from Windy Ridge.

The group has invited speakers from Pathways Supported Employment, REACH supported housing, the Community Nursing Learning Disability Team, Leisure Services in Caerphilly, Keyring supported Housing Scheme and various representatives from Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Over 100 people attended a conference in Pontllanfraith called **Good Days Ahead**. Workshops gave people a chance to talk about their futures. They covered topics like housing, leisure, work and Person Centred Planning.

Please note that Caerphilly People First have moved offices.

We are now based in Bargoed. Our new address is:

Caerphilly People First, Bargoed YMCA, Aeron Place, Gilfach, Bargoed.
CF81 8JA Tel: 01443 834444 Mobile: 07970748277

Powys People First

Members of Powys People First have been involved in making a video for Brecon Citizen Advocacy's 'My Life, My Health' project. People from Newtown, Brecon, Ystradgynlais and Llandrindod were filmed talking about what doctors should do to make things better. They tell the doctors to 'speak to me', 'explain the choices', 'tell me what you are going to do - before you do it!' as well as lots of other advice.

The video will be used as part of roadshows and presentations.

We hope the video will make doctors think more carefully about how they talk to and treat people with learning disabilities.

News from People First Groups

Swansea **People First**
Peer Health - Advocacy Project



Andrew Evans Swansea People First Swansea People First Peer Health Advocacy Project 'Good Health for All!'

Assembly Member Dr Dai Lloyd, also a member of Swansea People First Management Committee opened the 3rd Annual Health Fair on 14th June on behalf of the Peer Health Advocacy Project. Over 200 people attended and were able to get important information from the Community Dental Service, Vision Express, Singleton Hospital, cancer, asthma, Heartstart, Health Challenge Wales and environment health amongst many others.



Swansea People First launched an information leaflet that had been prepared in partnership with Cruse. The leaflet is called 'Someone Has Died' and is designed to help people with learning disabilities deal with the difficult times when they have lost someone dear to them. Andrew Evans, Chair of the Member's Committee, whose photos appear in the leaflet, gave a moving speech about the importance of easy to read information about losing someone.

There was singing at the Health Fair from Nia King, and dancing from a learning disability Belly Dancing Group and from dance troupe, **Take This** showing how you can keep fit and have fun.

The day was a great success and enjoyed by everyone.

John Greenland Abergavenny People First

For the past few months, teams of our members have been rehearsing hard to produce presentations which will, help to train health workers to give us a better service. As part of Health Challenge Wales we are, through role play, short talks as well as question and answer sessions, attempting to get doctors, nurses, receptionists and other health professionals to improve their communication with people with learning disabilities. We've already 'performed' in Builth Wells and Brecon with Ystradgynlais, Crickhowell and Talgarth coming up over the next few weeks.

News from People First Groups

Jane Turner

Newport People First



On June 6th, nine members of Newport People First went to see the Welsh Assembly Government in action. We chatted with the First Minister for Wales, Rhodri Morgan, and asked him some important questions

We have been following up on the issues from our 'Speaking Up' conference held last February. Members have talked to Pathways Supported Employment about getting jobs and to Newport City Council about the new developments and safety in the community. Members have also started an Anti-Bullying campaign, and will be holding a launch event in the autumn.

In July we are holding a People First Sports event in Newport. We hope to see lots of other groups there, and that this will become an annual event for Newport People First.

Vale People First



Vale People First members met at Barry College on 30th June 2006, to visit the Wales National Assembly in Cardiff Bay. When we arrived, we met Richard, who was to be our tour guide. He told us all about the building, like how environmentally friendly it is, for example, how rainwater is used to flush the toilets.

Richard then took us all around the building, starting with the committee room where the Assembly Members first meet to discuss important issues that affect our lives. Unfortunately there wasn't anybody there as the AM's were attending surgeries in their own constituency.

All our members that made the trip agreed it was a brilliant day out.



Members of Vale People First,
outside the
Welsh National Assembly

News from People First Groups**Meredith Pugh****Carmarthen People First****Carmarthenshire
People First**

On March 10th 2006, Carmarthenshire People First held their annual conference at the Halliwell Centre, Trinity College, Carmarthen. Speakers came from some of the sub groups of the Joint Planning and Commissioning Strategy, to tell us what they have been doing in their groups.

Helen Mary Jones who is the Plaid Cymru Assembly Member for Llanelli joined us for the day.

Our day was spoilt by an incident involving one of our delegates who needed to use the stair lift. No one in the Halliwell Centre appeared to know how to work it! It was then found to be broken down. Our delegate was stuck on it for nearly an hour and in the end had to be carried. The conference was delayed because of this problem which meant we had to rush through the agenda. The lift was still broken at the end of the day, and our delegate had to be carried again.

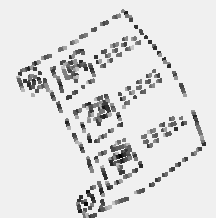
The Halliwell said we would not be charged, but then demanded payment in full. Carmarthenshire People First and Helen Mary Jones wrote to complain and said they would use the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Halliwell Centre then wrote to say we wouldn't have to pay.

The next time we book a venue, we will double check and get it in writing that equipment for disabled people is in good working order.

People First Manifesto

**In June we sent you the People First Manifesto.
Please remember to send your views back by 28th July.**



This is an important piece of work and we will need to have it ready in its final form by the Annual Conference in September.

