



Summer 2022 Newsletter

CAERPHILLY PEOPLE FIRST

Reconnect Focus Group

In addition to their weekly work on our garden plot in Taraggan, the Focus Group has been busy taking part in other activities.

Caerphilly Parent Network staff taught the group how to make stress balls and decorate them—items which will prove very useful! Everybody had great fun, and the Parent Network staff were great—very helpful and interactive. We look forward to more partnership work with the Parent Network in the future.

The group began their Jubilee celebrations with an arts and crafts session. This involved sticking Union Jack flags onto a canvas, adding a picture of the Queen's head, and decorating the canvas with sparkly gems, beads, pearls and buttons etc. We'd like to say a massive thank you to Cheryl from The Parent Network for running the session. This activity was funded by United Welsh. The following week's Jubilee activity involved taking part in a quiz about the Royal Family, playing bingo, and having conversation over tea and sandwiches. Thanks again to United Welsh for funding this activity.



The group popped along to Islwyn coffee shop, formerly known as Springfield day centre. The coffee was amazing and it was lovely to see some familiar faces. The staff looked so professional in their uniforms, and the customer service skills were incredible.



Co-Production with the Uni. of South Wales

Natalie, Ffion and Sarah were recently joined by Stacey Rees and Edward Oloidi from the University of South Wales to talk about the new project we are going to be involved in – co-producing an accessible outcomes measure based on the HEF (Health Equalities Framework) and Service Development project. The Health Equality Framework is an assessment used in Wales to check on your health and life.



The areas covered in this project are: Where you live and what you do, your health, how you communicate, things that keep you healthy, and support to stay healthy. This is important because people with learning disabilities are more vulnerable to health problems. We are really pleased to be part of this focus group and are looking forward to the second part.

TRAC Training

As members of TRAC at the University of South Wales, we were recently invited by Cwm Taff People First to take part in some filming about the DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) order, where staff and members were filmed playing the roles of doctors and nurses. During the pandemic, people with learning disabilities were given 'do not resuscitate' orders, in spite of widespread condemnation of the practice and an urgent investigation by the care watchdog.



Mencap received reports from people with learning disabilities that they had been told they would not be resuscitated if they were taken ill with Covid19. Although this is very difficult subject to have to deal with, the process also included some fun moments as we united to express our views and feelings.

Taraggan Gardening Project

During a discussion held among the Caerphilly People First Reconnect Focus Group, members talked about what they want to do in the community. Some members told us they would like to learn how to grow their own food, which led to us contacting the Taraggan Educational Gardens project in Bargoed. A lovely gentleman called John showed us a plot that our volunteers/members can work on to grow their own vegetables, and we signed a lease for our own plot.



Since then the group has planted leeks, sprouts, potatoes, cabbages, and mint (which had to be planted separately because it can take over the whole plot). The plot is now full and we can't wait to see the progress of the things we've planted. If anyone would like to join us, we'll be at the Taraggan project every Tuesday (weather permitting) from 10:30am to 12:30pm.

Tackling Isolation and Loneliness

Since the last newsletter, Caerphilly People First completed the fifth and six events we set up to tackle isolation and loneliness. During week five we headed to the Fleur De Lys Community Centre in Blackwood, and were delighted to be joined by ten people, some of whom we were meeting for the first time. Everyone seemed very positive as we talked about our experiences of Covid, and how we have all coped. Thankfully, individuals are now increasingly going out into the community and attending events. After the discussions we had a great time playing music requested by individuals, and we also hosted an Easter quiz.

During week six we welcomed some new attendees and had a great time catching up and sharing our stories. Our main activity was playing bingo, with the winners being awarded an Easter egg, but we also talked about what makes a good day, and what people are doing to keep themselves busy and occupied. Because of the reduced services which have been put in place due to the pandemic, members can't attend their old day opportunity and are missing friends and staff. They told us they would like a chance to connect with friends whilst taking part in activities and learning new skills.

Wales Covid Evidence Centre

Ffion, Natalie and Sophie recently attended an online workshop identifying research priorities for the Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre (WCEC). The three went into individual breakout rooms and talked about the general impact of the pandemic and lockdown, and the impact it had on their health. Everyone shared their stories about how they felt at the height of the pandemic, and some people became very emotional.



Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week took place from Monday 9th May to Sunday 15th May, and this year's theme was loneliness. During the pandemic lots of people experienced loneliness, and sadly 1 in 4 adults will be affected by mental health problems during their lives. During Mental Health Awareness week, the Reconnect Focus Group focused on their mental health and wellbeing by connecting with nature and the outdoors. We spent some time digging, planting and painting; activities which are really good for physical and emotional wellbeing. The group also took part in a wellbeing game and touched on what makes us sad, happy and angry. We finished off our session with a great walk in the sunshine.



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