



# Autumn

## 2025 NEWSLETTER

### Travel Training

We recently jumped aboard for a fantastic Travel Confidence trip with the lovely Clare from Transport for Wales! We set off from Pengam Station and travelled to Cardiff Queen Street, before heading down to the beautiful Barry Island. On the way back, we enjoyed a direct journey from Barry Island to Pengam – and we were lucky enough to ride on one of the brand new trains. They're so comfortable, spacious, and much quieter than the old ones.



We had coffee and cold drinks at Marco's, took a lovely stroll along the front, and of course, no trip to Barry Island is complete without chips and ice cream. Everyone had a fab day, full of fun, sunshine, and confidence-building travel skills. Thanks again to Clare and Transport for Wales for supporting us to travel safely and independently.

# TRAC Meetings

Over the past few weeks, members of Caerphilly People First have joined online TRAC meetings with the University of South Wales. TRAC is a project that helps train student nurses by including the lived experiences of people with learning disabilities. At the meetings, we discussed developing an Easy Read Risk Assessment. We're delighted that Ffion and Gethin will be involved as Teaching and Research Leads/Co-Researchers. Members will also be trained and paid to take part in research and teaching.

TRAC members will teach Year 1, 2 and 3 nursing students in the USW simulation suite. This gives students the chance to practise real-life situations in a safe environment and learn directly from people with lived experience—something you can't always get from a textbook.

By working together, we can support better training and help ensure people with learning disabilities get the right care. Well done to Ffion, Nat, Gethin and all the members who took part.

Want to make a difference? You can apply to study Learning Disability Nursing at the University of South Wales, Pontypridd Campus. Visit [www.southwales.ac.uk](http://www.southwales.ac.uk) to find out more.

# Online Hate Crime

A huge thank you to Noah for delivering online hate crime training to our members recently. They really enjoyed the session and gave some great feedback on what they learned:

Andrew – learned how to make accounts private and how to report hate crime.

Theresa – found it helpful, especially learning not to answer phone scams.

Amy – found all the information helpful, learned more about staying safe, and said it was fab!

Olivia – found it very interesting and learned about safe settings.

Christy – said the training was very detailed, delivered in an easy way to understand, with a fun ice breaker and interesting conversation throughout.

Members also learned that hate crime can be reported to Victim Support, as well as through social media platforms if abuse happens online.



# Disabled People's Rights

We recently met with Tracey Drew from All Wales People First and our friends from Swansea Self Advocacy Groups and talked about the big 10-year plan to make life fairer for disabled people in Wales. Some of the proposals included in the plan are: more people living independently, more training & jobs, better healthcare, easier transport, all information in Easy Read, and making sure our voices are heard!

We shared our thoughts on what's good about the plan and what could be better. We were proud to speak up and be included.

## AGM NEWS

We recently held our AGM – that means our Annual General Meeting. It's a special meeting where we talk about what we've done over the year and make important group decisions. We also voted for a new Chair and Vice Chair.

A HUGE congratulations to...  
Natalie King – our new Chair!  
Gethin Chamberlain – our new Vice Chair!

Well done both of you! We know you'll do a brilliant job speaking up for our members. Thanks to everyone who took part in the meeting and the vote.

# National Council Meeting

Amy Jones – supported by Ffion Poole – recently attended the All Wales People First National Council meeting at The Grand Hotel in Swansea. After introductions, the first agenda item was to go through the minutes of the last meeting. Next came the Chief Executive's Report during which, in Joe Powell's absence, Kurtis gave an update on LD Mag.

National Council reps then spoke about national actions, during which Amy provided feedback we have received from our members. Amy said that our members would like longer GP appointments, easy read letters from their doctors, and more annual health checks for people with learning disabilities. She also shared that our members said there needs to be more support in mental health services for adults with mental health issues, as well as people with learning disabilities.

Kelly then gave a communication update and said All Wales People First are in the process of making updates to how Talkback is distributed to members. We also spoke about the WhatsApp group for National Council reps, and came up with some rules the reps had to agree on. After lunch Tracey shared the draft manifesto that All Wales People First has been putting together, and members shared their experiences with Direct Payments, and answered some questions from a consultation document about Direct Payments. It was a really interesting meeting and it was lovely to see everyone!

# Reconnect Through Music

Over the summer and early autumn of 2025, Reconnect Through Music brought together dozens of members, volunteers, and friends for a series of uplifting music sessions filled with joy, laughter, and incredible performances. Across these sessions, we regularly welcomed 25–30+ singers per event, showcasing an inspiring variety of songs and musical styles, showing the depth of talent in our community.

Each session was filled with singalongs, clapping, and dancing. The atmosphere consistently reflected joy, confidence, and togetherness. The events wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of our staff and volunteers; Christy, Cheryl, Helen, Zoe, and others provided buffets and hot food, from pizzas to ham and cheese rolls, keeping everyone well-fed and happy.

Reconnect Through Music continues to prove that music isn't just about songs — it's about community, belonging, and joy.

**Funded by:**



# Woodland & Nature Walks

Over the summer, Caerphilly People First members enjoyed a series of wonderful walks together, staying active, social, and connected. Most of our adventures took place around Bargoed Woodland Park, where we explored different routes, admired the beautiful views, and shared lots of laughs along the way. Some walks were early morning strolls to beat the heat, while others stretched to over 6,000 steps and longer treks all the way to Fleur-de-Lys and back! Every walk brought fresh air, good company, and plenty of smiles.



We also enjoyed a trip to Pen y Fan Pond, where we spotted wildlife and then discovered a hidden gem across the road at Fferm Gelli Camping Site. Members loved meeting the animals – from ducks and rabbits to chickens, alpacas, and even some very friendly horses!

Overall, these walks have been a brilliant way to enjoy nature, keep fit, and spend quality time together. Well done everyone – you absolutely smashed it!

# Reconnect Through Cookery

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Over the summer, our members have been busy cooking, learning, and sharing laughter at our Reconnect Through Cookery sessions. Together we've made a variety of delicious meals – from Mayflower chicken curry, Chinese curry, and pasta bake, to fresh wraps, colourful salads, and hearty cottage pie.

After enjoying the meals, we've celebrated birthdays with cake, played lively games of bingo, and stretched our minds with quizzes. Special thanks go to our brilliant volunteers, quiz and bingo hosts for keeping everything running smoothly – you are truly the heart of this project!

These sessions are about much more than cooking – they're about friendship, confidence, and connection. Members have gained new skills, tried different foods, and worked together in supportive ways. Every week, the feedback has been fantastic, and the benefits are clear: reduced isolation, improved wellbeing, and plenty of laughter.