



Gogledd Cymru **Gyda'n Gilydd**
North Wales **Together**

Gwasanaethau ddi-dor i bobl ag Anableddau Dysgu
Seamless services for people with Learning Disabilities

North Wales Together

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with Learning Disabilities

Bulletin December 2020

Hello and welcome

from Kathryn Whitfield: Programme Manager

Hello and welcome to our latest bulletin.



We thought it would be good to get a bulletin out to mark the end of what has been a very strange year!

Firstly on behalf of myself and the whole team, we would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas. Whilst recognizing the festive period will be very different this year, I sincerely hope that everyone has a safe and restful break.

Our project has been lucky to have such dedicated supporters who have helped us along our way on our journey this year. As I sit back and reflect on the successes of the past 12 months, I really do appreciate what everyone has done and look forward to a new year filled with determination and commitment as we work on completing our goals before this phase of the project comes to its conclusion at the end of March 2021.

For our final bulletin of 2020 we have focused on the work the project has done to support children and young people with learning disabilities. As always, if there are any questions on the contents of this bulletin, please email learning.disability.transformation@flintshire.gov.uk.

Children in Conwy are getting their groove on!

Ribideres will be running a series of online dance sessions for children in Conwy with global development delay and their families. The sessions will include Makaton signs and symbols and lots of sensory fun! Dance is a fabulous activity for families to engage with encouraging physical development and communication. The 40 minute sessions will be based upon the story of the Gruffalo and explore different aspects of the story for 6 weeks. They will include story, songs, rhyme and dance in both English and Welsh.

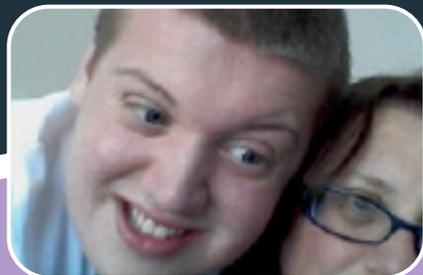
Each session will have the same structure and include repetition so families will get to know the routine of them. An introductory session just for parents, will explain how the sessions will run so they can best support their children to have a fun and enjoyable time. Sessions will use props that can easily be sourced from within the home and the details of what will be needed for each session will be emailed to participants beforehand.

Families will have a chance to connect with each other virtually and gain some tangible ideas for play at home.



Dylan's I-Team Story – Making an online connection

Dylan and his Mum, Annemarie joined the I-Team project back in April 2020. Dylan had just turned 18 years old and is going through the transition process from School to the Adult world.



Mum describes some of the things that have happened - "Dylan is very artistic, and loves floristry. This is why I have shaped Dylan's circle as a flower (this is 'growing a relationships map that names all of the friendly faces in Dylan's life. We use this to identify people to invite into the I-Team). Now he meets his family, from all over the world every Saturday".

Auntie Eileen says - "I live in Germany and have never had this level of contact with him before. As a retired nurse, I have been able to give invaluable suggestions to Mum and also it's given me the knowledge of how easy it is to offer support even from a distance".

Dylan says - "I like to see everyone every week on the screen and I am now able to video call people who I know will chat with me and make me happy". Back to Mum - "What's astonishing for me is that he has told them the college he wants to go to after school. He's never told us this before. He also said that he wants to be a 'YouTuber!'!"

"Initially he would just listen....now he wants them (his I-Team) to know what he is doing. He is making the choice himself. Amazing! It's giving him a voice - fantastic".



Transition for young people with Learning Disabilities

Young people with learning disabilities go through a number of transitions as they become adults: leaving school, starting college, moving into their own home etc, and if they need it, transferring from children to adult services.

The 'Don't Hold Back' report published by the Children's Commissioner for Wales highlights the importance of getting these transitions right for young people with learning disabilities.

"This period from the mid-teens to the mid-twenties is a crucial window to ensure that young people are fully equipped and supported for life. We need to have much greater expectations that as a society we are prepared to find ways to reduce the stigma and social exclusion of disability and welcome children and young people with learning disabilities as equal citizens in our schools, workplaces and communities." (Don't Hold Back, p.4).

The transformation programme is undertaking a range of activities to improve young people's experience of transition so it is more seamless and enables them to fulfil their potential and achieve what matters to them.



Glan-Ilyn is upskilling their staff

Glan-Ilyn camp has developed to become one of the leading outdoor pursuit education centres in Wales.

Their aim is to provide opportunities through the medium of Welsh for children and young people in Wales to become fully rounded individuals, developing personal and social skills that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the community.



Gwersyll Glan-Ilyn have received funding from the North Wales Together Project to train and develop 6 Outdoor Pursuit Instructors so they have the right skills to support children with learning disabilities through the medium of Welsh. A trainer from Bendrigg Trust, Kendal (who specialize in delivering high quality activity courses for disabled and disadvantaged people and aims to promote inclusion, encourage independence and build self-confidence through the safe provision of adventurous activities) will visit Glan-Ilyn to provide training and to share good practice with the instructors.

The aim of the project is to increase opportunities in outdoor pursuit activities for those with a learning disability, to create better awareness of learning disabilities to the instructors and to ensure opportunities through the medium of Welsh.

This will also create opportunities for short breaks to individuals and their families in North Wales.

We are excited to see what Glan-Ilyn can offer next year when (fingers crossed) children and young people are able to visit the site and participate in the activities on offer.





Gwynedd Health and Wellbeing Transition Project

This project is funded by the North Wales Together Learning Disability Transformation Fund. The funding has allowed the Adult Learning Disability Team to employ a full-time Health and Wellbeing Officer dedicated to transition who works as part of the service's well established Wellbeing Team.

The funding has allowed the Adult Learning Disability Team to employ a full-time Health and Wellbeing Officer dedicated to transition who works as part of the service's well established Wellbeing Team. The officer works with people with learning disabilities at all ages to support them at different transition points in their life. A key group for the project is young people with learning disabilities accessing the Derwen Children's centre and who are coming up the point of transitioning to the adult team.

One of the key ways they have engaged young people is by inviting them to take part in a range of online groups and activities like arts and crafts, dance sessions, discos and our 'Miri' social groups. This has helped the young people to get to know more about the wellbeing service and also staff from the adult team.

The project highlights that "the transition from children's to adult services can be an anxious and nervous time, and is a key moment in the life of the young people we support. Engaging with the available online provision has alleviated some of the angst involved with the process". Taking part in virtual groups has also familiarised the young people with engaging with the service online. The Wellbeing service is preparing to launch a new website soon 'Llwybrau Llesiant' (Wellbeing Pathways) which will provide information about activities, groups, the team, how to get in touch, and much more. All materials will also be available in easy read format both in Welsh and English.

Like so many of the programme's funded projects, the Health and Wellbeing Transition service has shown great commitment and dedication during Covid to finding new ways to engage and support young people as they approach transition to adult services. Rona Rees Jones is the Practice Lead for the Wellbeing Team and the project and can provide partners with a comprehensive update on the project. Please direct initial enquires to Meilir Price Owen at Meilirpriceowen@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



BCUHB Regional Transition Pathway Steering Group

Alongside the provision of direct support to children and young people through our funded projects, the lead for integration has been working with our partners from BCUHB to develop a refreshed transition pathway from the Child to Adolescent Learning Disabilities sub-regional services (CALDS).

The lead for integration has been working with our partners from BCUHB to develop a refreshed transition pathway from the Child to Adolescent Learning Disabilities sub-regional services (CALDS) to both mainstream health services and specialist adult learning disabilities services provided by the Local Authorities.

A large event had been planned for June to bring all the key services together to work on this pathway. Due to the pandemic this had to be cancelled. The group has now rallied and is planning a more staged approach to developing the pathway, including working alongside the new Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer [DECLO] for BCUHB who has a statutory role to help strengthen liaison and joint action between the health service and the local authority.

Fundamental to the pathway is ensuring that it is in line with the recommendations from the Children's Commissioner of Wales 'Don't' Hold Back Report', the more recent 'No Wrong Door Report' and NICE guidelines on Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG43/chapter/recommendations>.

ALN Research Project

This project is funded through the LD Transformation Fund and the researcher is employed by the Programme Team.

In our November bulletin we provided an overview of the project which you can find by following this link. <https://northwalestogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Project-Briefing-6-full-English.pdf>

Stephanie Hall is leading on this work for the team and is keen to speak to families/ carers about their views of how well post-school, local opportunities meet the individual development needs of their children. And to get your ideas on how we can make them better! To thank you for helping with the project we will provide wellness goody bags to everyone interviewed. If you would like to take part in this research please contact Stephanie by: Phone: **07500 530429** or Email: stephanie.hall@flintshire.gov.uk



Families & Carers Needed

The North Wales Together Learning Disability Transformation Programme is doing a piece of research.

Can you help?

North Wales Together Needs Your Help

Hi, I'm Stephanie Hall and I work for the North Wales Together Learning Disability Transformation Programme. We have just started a new research project and we need your help.

We are looking at local options and opportunities in North Wales for young people with learning disabilities leaving specialist secondary school.

We want to hear your views, and those of your children, on how well post-school, local opportunities meet the individual development needs of your children. And your ideas on how we can make them better!

Interviews should last under an hour and information will be treated as strictly confidential.

We will provide wellness goody bags for those we interview.

If you would like to take part in this research please contact me on

Phone: 07500 530429 or Email: stephanie.hall@flintshire.gov.uk



Family Transition Service, Conwy Connect

Funded by the LD Transformation Fund, the project supports young people with learning disabilities aged 16 to 20 years. The Project Coordinator came into post at the beginning of lockdown and has shown enormous commitment and resilience to delivering the service during this very challenging time.

The service offers a 'whole family' approach to supporting young people and their families across North Wales to be active partners in preparing for the transition from secondary education.

To date the service has supported 17 young people and their families to navigate transition more effectively through the provision of information and support, liaising with statutory agencies, and referring to other support agencies such as Careers Wales, Citizens Advice Bureau, local schools, STAND North Wales, North Wales Police, MENCAP and NEWCIS.



The Coordinator has also used the opportunities provided by online engagement to set up a virtual Makaton choir for young people and offering both virtual parent chat sessions and bespoke chats to parents and young people in situations where children have found it difficult to talk to others and open up.

For families and young people without access to IT equipment, the project secured donations of tablets from a private sector employer to enable them to get online and stay connected whilst also distributing 200 rainbow cards during the recent fire breaker lockdown. To find out more about the service please contact Annemarie McNally at Annemarie McNally Annemarie@conwy-connect.org.uk; visit her webpage at <https://www.conwy-connect.org.uk/transition> or connect with Annemarie via the Conwy Connect Facebook page where they promote all their online services and activities: <https://www.facebook.com/CC4LD>



LD Transformation Facebook Group



This group is continuing to grow and our new anchor man, David Wilberforce is doing a great job interviewing all the guests that come onto our facebook live sessions.

David and Michelle went online alone for the first time this week setting everything up themselves and conducting the interviews independently.

We would like to thank Beverley Futia for all her hard work in upskilling David and Michelle on this platform. You are officially redundant!

Take a look at some of the interviews that have taken place so far by joining the group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/424132108223654>

It has been a great opportunity for everyone to hear directly from individuals involved with the programme and something the team will continue to do moving forward! If you are interested in appearing, please drop us a note at learning.disability.transformation@flintshire.gov.uk.

Have you had your Flu Vaccination?

We mentioned this in our last bulletin, however feel it is important in the current climate to mention again.

Now more than ever it is so important to keep an eye on your health and ensure you have the flu vaccination. This winter will be the first time that ALL children and adults with a learning disability will be entitled to a flu vaccination and we encourage all citizens to take up this offer from their GP. Those citizens who have a needle phobia and cannot have the vaccination by injection should ask their GP if they are eligible for the nasal spray option.

Public Health Wales published a study into covid related deaths amongst people with a learning disability, which again highlights the health inequality that those with a learning disability face. It is more important than ever that people with a learning disability are seen by their GP if they have any health concerns. You can access the report here:

<https://www.ldw.org.uk/report-into-deaths-of-people-with-a-learning-disability-in-wales-from-covid-19/>

You can also check out our easy read Covid-19 resources on the get checked out website at www.getcheckedoutnorthwales.org/coronavirus





Update from Michelle – our project board representative

I am involved in lots of different groups as part of the project working lots of things. For example I am helping the team develop an E-learning module and I am helping look at the get checked out website.

I have also really enjoyed interviewing guests alongside David Wilberforce on our facebook live sessions. I am still enjoying attending the project board meetings and am currently working with Paul Hosker on creating a film about being healthy!

I love being part of the transformation team- it is keeping me really busy and I have learnt so many new things during the pandemic! It has been great to connect with lots of different people from across North Wales.



Project Evaluation

We are continuing to work closely with our project evaluators. We are now looking at what is needed to sustain outcomes within North Wales Learning Disability Strategy going forward. We are therefore working with our evaluators on sustainability plans for the future.

We are constantly working with project partners to assess outcomes from the funding streams and evaluate the work being delivered as part of the programme. Any reports or data will be published on our website so keep an eye at **www.northwalestogether.org**

If there are any topics you would like featured in our next bulletin, please email us at learning.disability.transformation@flintshire.gov.uk or contact Sian on **Sian.croston@flintshire.gov.uk**

Finally, please stay safe, stay connected and have a very merry Christmas.

