

Our Impact in Wales

2019-2020



**Leonard
Cheshire**
Cymru





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Foreword

Welcome to Leonard Cheshire Cymru's first annual Impact Report, covering the period 2019 – 2020.

The aim of this report is to show our supporters, staff, residents and partner organisations the positive impact we have had during this year.

I am proud to introduce this report to you and explain the positive impact Leonard Cheshire's programmes and support have had on my own life this year.

I first heard about Leonard Cheshire through their employment programme, Changing Futures, and the work they do in the communities in Swansea. I reached out in May 2019. At that point I had very low confidence and belief in myself. I did not think I had any chance of paid employment.

I have experience with chronic depression and medically controlled schizophrenia, and this had been a barrier for me in gaining employment. I lacked experience. My Changing Futures Coordinator Mark suggested I do some volunteering in Leonard Cheshire's IT suite at the CREST Centre. This gave me the opportunity to get some valuable experience working with customers. The programme also enabled me to enrol in an on-line Sign Language course. This was invaluable to me as it helped me to interact in a variety of ways with users of the IT suite.

In November, a position became available at Leonard Cheshire's social enterprise in Swansea (the Social Bean), which Mark encouraged me to apply for. He helped me with the application, and because I had been volunteering in the IT suite, I finally had a lot of experience I could draw upon. I was elated when I heard the news that I had been successful and had got a job in the Social Bean!

When I look back on how far I have come, I am astounded at what I have been able to accomplish, and so proud. I never thought that with my past I would ever have a job. My confidence is through the roof and I am happy and grateful to those who saw potential in me. It has given me something to get up every day for.

During the pandemic, I also volunteered at Ty Cwm as a gardener. Working with Leonard Cheshire Cymru has opened so many doors and I have been able to try lots of different things. I have found new skills and hobbies, and I truly feel a part of Leonard Cheshire's journey. I am over the moon to have finally gained meaningful work and friends both at the Social Bean and TyCwm.

I am delighted to be considered a success story and am so pleased to be able to introduce our first ever Impact Report for Wales, which is structured around the Welsh Government's seven well-being goals, 'aimed at making Wales a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal and globally responsible country with cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language. Thank you to all staff, residents, supporters, and partner organisations who have made my story possible, and who change the lives of many other disabled people on a daily basis.

We know that 2020-21 will bring its own unique set of challenges with the Covid-19 pandemic; disabled people being amongst the most affected. I am proud to be part of a charity and a nation that is using this as an opportunity to innovate and adapt, so that disabled people are not left behind in the pursuit of economic and social recovery.

Michelle, Barista at the Social Bean



¹Welsh Government.
2015. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

A Prosperous Wales

Our influencing and community programme work is based on alleviating barriers to employment for disabled people. Our programmes and employment initiatives focus on raising awareness amongst employers of the untapped talent disabled people offer to the workforce, as well as supporting disabled people to upskill.

As we know, approximately 1 in 5 people in the UK have a disability.² In 2018, just half of disabled people in the UK were employed (51.3 per cent), compared to 8 out of 10 non-disabled people (81.4 per cent).³ If our nation aspires to drive innovation, progression, and adaptability for years to come, disabled people need to be part of that journey.

Changing Futures

Our Changing Futures programme is at the forefront of bespoke employment opportunities and training for disabled people in Wales. Operating in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend, the programme supports individuals with a work limiting health condition into training, volunteering, and employment. It helps participants develop essential skills and the confidence necessary to improve employability.

We have provided bespoke employment support for over 330 individuals - all with work limiting health conditions - through the Changing Futures programme.

The Changing Futures programme tailors itself to the individual. There are two strands to the programme:

1) Include: This is the employability skills side of the project, which is the bespoke 1:1 training, mock interviews, employability workshops.

2) Achieve: This strand of the programme provides participants with paid placements. Placements are 20 hours a week for 20 weeks, and undertaken at host organisations. The view being that at the end of their placement, the host organisation employs them, or the participant is better placed to find sustained employment elsewhere.

We provide employability workshops as well as online and face to face training to ensure a wide range of experience and skills are acquired to best equip people for the workforce. Our employability workshops facilitate peer to peer support, creating networks of like-minded individuals who can

support each other post-programme. Many of these networks result in participants forming their own support groups and coffee mornings.

For us, prosperity in Wales should exist socially as well as economically. We aim to ensure prosperity cross-generationally, to achieve thriving local and national economies that benefit all ages. For this reason, although Changing Futures is split

82%

of the people who completed the programme have gone onto new opportunities, with:

30%

in full time employment

27%

in further learning

25%

taking part in volunteering opportunities

² Office for National Statistics. Official Census. 2011.

³ Office for National Statistics, A08: Labour market status of disabled people, released 13 November 2018 for July – September 2018.

into two projects - one for young people (18 - 24 year olds) and one for adults (25 years old plus) - all programme events include participants from all age groups. This is especially important in the employability workshops which encourage integration of all attendees. Many participants have been referred to us by other employment support programmes due to our programme's flexibility and adaptability to suiting the needs of the individual, no matter their ability or experience.

The commitment to a prosperous Wales for all - regardless of disability - is not just confined to this one programme. Within Leonard Cheshire's daily activities, project coordinators promote equality and raise awareness of the unrecognised potential of disabled people. This vital awareness raising is undertaken with Job Centres, training organisations and key decision makers. We have a dedicated Employer Engagement Coordinator who builds relationships with local businesses to promote inclusivity, employing disabled people and highlighting the benefit this can bring to their business and wider society.



Our Change 100 programme operates across the UK, providing paid internships and mentoring workshops to young disabled people. This vital work and mentoring experience affords young graduates with the crucial first step into the jobs market. We focus on upskilling talented young graduates, raising awareness of inaccessible recruitment practices, and challenging employer assumptions about disabled candidates.

100%

of our Change 100 interns said that their experience has improved their confidence in the workplace

This year we have been in contact with 58 organisations and businesses who would be interested in taking on a participant for a placement. During this time, we have had 18 placements completed by participants, and 21 external jobs from supportive placements offered to participants we have mentored.

Our employment programme is continuously improving and adapting, with our own coordinators upskilling themselves to provide better support. Our coordinators are currently undertaking training with Educ8 towards a level 4 Advice and Guidance qualification. Adapting to the changing employment climate in Wales enables us to deliver advice and training that is at the cutting edge of the employment market.



In the last year, we promoted Change 100 with a variety of Welsh businesses and networks, forging great partnerships with GO Wales, the University of South Wales, Cardiff University and Swansea University, which will be developed and built upon for years to come. Organisations we partnered with to provide placements this year included the BBC, the Wales Audit Office, and the Intellectual Property Office. Covid-19 restrictions inevitably impacted on some of these placements, with some delayed, while others were adapted to take place virtually.

95%

of employers said their Change 100 intern had a positive impact on their organisation

The Social Bean

The Social Bean is a social enterprise and fully accessible coffee shop. This is a new, exciting venture for us, opening in February 2020, shortly before the first national lockdown. The coffee shop provides volunteering, training and employment opportunities for anyone who lives with a disability of any kind, facilitating them in gaining the skills and confidence to seek further employment opportunities and improve their wellbeing. Disabled people were also at the heart of its design, being step-free and housing one of the only fully accessible changing places toilets in Swansea and the surrounding areas. In addition to serving great food and coffee, the Social Bean also hosts a Go Digital IT suite, where members of the public can access Wi-Fi, improve their digital literacy and learn about digital inclusion and online safety.

Michelle and Tilly from the Changing Futures project described how they have “felt a dramatic change in [their] skillset” because of working at the cafe. The coffee shop provides the resources and ability to support and upskill many more people, like Michelle and Tilly, creating a fun and easy way for disabled people in Wales to gain work experience and start their career journeys. The opening of the Social Bean also allowed us to connect with Welsh communities, providing a safe and accessible coffee shop where everyone is welcome.

The Social Bean also is a proud supporter of local Welsh businesses, only using suppliers from within a 30-mile radius of Swansea. Getting our produce from Swansea market, Gower based farms and Fred Ley fruit and veg, among others, helps us reduce our carbon footprint.

We are also committed to reducing our environmental impact, as part of a globally responsible Wales. Towards this, the Social Bean has almost achieved a zero-waste goal, recycling everything possible, using paper and biodegradable plastic and giving away our used coffee beans for fertiliser. Later this year, we will be launching our new ‘Roast and Post’ service, enabling people to buy our sustainably sourced coffee, hot chocolate and other products to experience in their own homes.





Discover IT

Digital inclusion can make a vital difference in a disabled person's life. It can improve connections to loved ones and create connections with an otherwise inaccessible world, enabling engagement in life-changing activities and events. It can help both individuals and communities to prosper together.

Leonard Cheshire runs two programmes devoted to digital inclusion: Go Digital and Discover IT. These programmes help our residents, service users and staff across the UK, including Wales to improve their digital confidence and develop IT skills, enabling them to:

- Do online shopping or banking;
- Use entertainment apps to explore new films and music genres;
- Connect with friends and family on social media; and
- Utilise stimulating new technologies – such as sensory rooms and Virtual Reality headsets – to become familiar with handling challenging situations that in the outside world would otherwise cause anxiety.

Our digital inclusion coordinator Liam commented that: “there is a lot of trepidation and nervousness around social media because people hear a lot of

Digital Inclusion

bad things about it. But when you start unpicking it and start helping someone gain confidence, showing them that they don't have to post every little thing that they do... they often find a lot more things are available to them and that might create a whole new life and improve connections to the things that they are interested in.”

Alongside these programmes, our organisation provides disabled people with access to IT centres across Wales, establishing 4 new centres in 2019 (including our Social Bean Coffee Shop in Swansea and working with Mencap in Anglesey). Our programmes help users access IT, engage in employment programmes and prosper in the world of work. We provide users with stability, self-confidence and an ability to engage with companies and businesses in their community.

During 2019, we directly supported 109 individuals through our Go Digital and Discover IT centres across Wales. Alongside this, we offered 1:1 support to 30 people, whether this was with home equipment applications, virtual support or group sessions.

Our digital inclusion team have worked tirelessly to ensure that users in rural regions of Wales are provided with the right equipment to help them overcome some of the challenges that inaccessibility causes them on a daily basis.

A More Equal Wales

Campaigning

We campaign to improve the lives of disabled people in Wales. Our policy and campaigns team engages with key public bodies and leads nationwide campaigns to improve the lives of disabled people.



This year, the policy and campaigns team delivered events and focus groups aimed at improving the rights of disabled people in Wales. Our policy work has centred around improving independence for disabled people, giving them the opportunity and voice to campaign on issues that matter to them.

We work in partnership with third sector networks to lobby decision makers and achieve change, being members of the Disability Equality Network, Wales Ability Network Board, and the Health, Social Care, Wellbeing Planning Group which is coordinated by the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action. These forums assist us in voicing the concerns of disabled people and coordinating our campaign actions with other third sector organisations.

To allow disabled people to be their own advocates, and equip them with campaigning skills, we hold focus groups and campaigning workshops. This year, we travelled across Wales, delivering focus groups from Swansea and Newport to Conwy and Wrexham. Through these workshops young disabled people in schools and colleges were given the opportunity to learn and feedback their views on issues such as Transport, Education, Employment, Hate Crime and their rights.

Every year, we run a Youth Skills Day event on World Youth Skills Day (15th July), providing an opportunity for young disabled people to learn more about their rights. 90 young people attended our 2019 event, which was held in partnership with Whizz Kids and Children in Wales, and included workshops on the role of the Children's Commissioner, and the change of voting age to 16. This event also included a question and answer session with the Senedd's Llywydd (Presiding Officer) Elin Jones MS, and a question time panel that included:

- Julie Morgan MS (Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services)
- Mark Isherwood MS (Chair of Cross Party Group on Disability)
- Helen Mary Jones MS (Plaid Cymru Regional Member for Mid and West Wales)
- Caroline Jones MS (Independent Alliance for Reform Group Regional Member for South Wales West)



“

I enjoyed the day and liked the interactive workshops – they made me feel part of the community. It is a great feeling to finally have my voice heard and learn more about the issues affecting me.

UN Youth Skills Day attendee

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Alongside grassroots campaigning and engagement, we have engaged with Welsh Government and Welsh Parliament consultations to reflect the concerns of disabled people on a wide range of issues, including:

- The Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) Bill
- The Social Services and Wellbeing Act
- Electing a more diverse Assembly
- The Active Travel Act
- The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act
- Strategic Equality Objectives (2020-2024)
- Plaid Cymru: 'Developing a vision for social care in Wales'
- 'How should DWP involve disabled people in changing how it works?'

We also engage with key political decision makers at party conferences and events, enabling us to highlight issues affecting disabled people and their communities. Last year, we attended conferences held by the Welsh Labour party, the

Welsh Conservatives, and Plaid Cymru. At the Welsh Labour party's conference, we conducted a roundtable event on the barriers to employment for disabled people. We illustrated the importance of removing these barriers to employment, and the resulting impacts this has on local economies and communities. We spoke with Lee Waters MS (Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport) and Jane Hutt MS (Deputy Minister and Chief Whip) about how employers can reduce barriers to employment for disabled people. Campaigning work such as this allows us to elevate the voices of disabled people in Welsh communities.

Alongside our Wales-specific work, we have also contributed Welsh nuances to Leonard Cheshire's national and global campaigns. Such campaigns include the 'Get on Board' campaign to make rail travel more accessible, and other campaigns around employment, hate crime, social care, and the 'A Day Without' campaign. Representing the voices of disabled people and ensuring that their issues are addressed by political figures encourages more cohesive communities, that value all members of Welsh society.

My Voice My Choice

The My Voice, My Choice programme was run for the first time in Swansea in 2019. The programme empowered disabled people to make changes in their local communities, and further the rights of disabled people. It broke down attitudinal barriers that limited disabled people's participation, improving knowledge and understanding of advocacy and campaigning. It was a platform for disabled people to share their stories and have their voices heard.

The programme featured 3 workshops on social inclusion, hate crime, and fitness and wellbeing, with the topics selected on the basis of feedback from disabled people. We collaborated with other third sector organisations to deliver the workshops

– including Mencap Cymru, Victim Support, and Medimotion – enabling us to feature specialists in each workshop, delivering meaningful and informative advice and information.

This programme enabled us to garner feedback from a wide range of participants and use this feedback to reinforce our campaign messaging. We also reinforced this work with focus groups to gain a sense of issues affecting other areas of Wales. In our future work, we intend to reach more individuals and enable them to campaign on their own local issues so that they may achieve true equality in their communities.

86%

of My Voice My Choice attendees want to learn how to campaign on local issues

57%

of interactive focus group attendees said that this programme would directly improve their mental health

81%

said they wanted My Voice My Choice in their area



“As a disabled person myself, the sessions were vital. Helping to make sure disabled people know how to and where to report a hate crime and the importance of fitness is crucial, and I applaud Leonard Cheshire for the work they are doing.”
My Voice My Choice participant



A new programme was set up this year to empower young people to campaign for change in their own communities as citizen reporters, and provide them with the skills and support needed to deliver impactful campaigns. Change Makers operates in Swansea, and there are also projects in Belfast, Manchester and Glasgow.

The programme aims to teach young people aged 16-25 how to run local campaigns, raising important issues through speaking to communities and capturing lived experiences using social media. This year we had 4 citizen reporters join the programme in Swansea, who had a real impact in their local communities. During this time, they have also assisted the policy and campaigns team, making promotional and campaigning videos for their manifesto asks, My Voice My Choice, and hate crime and transport campaigns.

“I chose to be a part of Change Makers because I wanted a new challenge. I wanted to help disabled people like me. It is important to me, and my family are so proud of me for becoming a part of the Change Makers.”

Ellie, Citizen Reporter

This year, the Change Makers have been focusing on raising awareness of invisible disabilities, using their own lived experiences to shine a light on inequalities, and make real change in their Welsh communities.

“My Mother has always taught me that I live in a mainstream world and I need to shout louder than others because I am only 4 ft 8 inches, but my voice can be as big as it needs to be, to be listened to.”

Pasha, Lead Reporter

A Resilient Wales

We are environmentally conscious and prioritise disabled peoples' access to their communities. Safe, nurturing and natural environments are crucial for emotional wellbeing. We also recognise the global threat of climate change and endeavour to do our part to reduce emissions and undo the damage already done.

We have a variety of initiatives in our workspaces, procurement, and services to ensure that biological diversity and greenspaces are not lost.

We ensure all our suppliers are subject to monitoring for environmental impact, corporate social responsibility, and modern slavery to make sure we are only partnering and supporting other organisations who are focused on making a positive impact in both communities and natural spaces.

In our services, we use regular audits to assess the levels of recycling carried out by waste disposal experts. This allows us to continue to reduce our environmental impact. Each year, our national Environment Management working group carries out an impact assessment, allowing us to identify areas for improvement and minimise any potentially harmful practices.

In Wales, we source our meats, vegetables and other food products from local growers and businesses. We have supported small businesses where possible, to keep local Welsh economies thriving.

Our services have been fitted with sustainable lighting and energy systems. Alongside this, we do our best to work with other Welsh businesses that align with the 7 Wellbeing Goals.⁴ Welsh Water provide all our water and maintenance, and we hope to develop relationships with other not-for-profit organisations who prioritise wellbeing over the coming year.



⁴ Welsh Government. 2015. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.



Can Do is our UK-wide social action programme. In Wales, it operates in Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham and Conwy, including the surrounding areas of each location. The overarching aims are to give young people (aged 16-35 years) opportunities to gain valuable volunteering experiences and improve their employment prospects.

The programme has two pathways for young people:

- 1) Building Communities projects – allowing individuals to take part in a single prolonged project where participants can see the effect of their impact over time (usually twelve weeks); and
- 2) One-off taster sessions – opportunities to learn new skills within local communities.

Can Do in Wales improves participants' confidence and skillsets, allowing them to be more engaged with their local communities. The programme focuses on raising awareness amongst employers and non-disabled people about the talent and potential of disabled employees. We deliver promotional talks and presentations through our networks in Wales to demonstrate the value of community-based volunteering for young disabled people.

In Wales this year, we provided 2,009 opportunities to improve the employability, confidence, and self-esteem of young people. We reached 575 young people between the ages of 16-35 and provided opportunities to a further 89 individuals outside this age range. By facilitating young people in connecting with their environments and local communities, Can Do improves social resilience and awareness for the natural environment. A number of the Building Communities projects involved gardening, conservation and improving the community for vulnerable members of society. This important work shapes and improves the natural environment in Welsh communities whilst also providing critical support to vulnerable groups. We are proud of our team and the support they have provided to hundreds of young disabled people across Wales to improve their skills and wellbeing.

5,349

hours of volunteering were contributed by Can Do participants this year

71%

of participants said that Can Do improved their self-confidence

68%

of participants said that Can Do improved the awareness of disability in their communities



The National Garden Scheme

This year, some of our Can Do-ers had the opportunity to transform an outdoor area at College Gwent's Crosskeys Campus. Beforehand, the area was unused, and lacking creativity. Our Can Do participants volunteered to help with refurbishing the space to create a social outdoor space for students to enjoy. The project was supported by local Welsh landscapers, and staff and students at the college.

To celebrate the achievement of our participants, an open day was organised that gave staff, students, and locals the chance to witness the transformation first-hand. The day included afternoon tea, provided by college students studying food and customer service courses. Many local businesses and organisations offered their support of this celebration, with Cows on Tour joining us for the open event; providing chickens, sheep and goats for students to interact with.

Cows on Tour also provided activities showing how we make locally sourced food. This tied in with the students' plans for the garden, going from planting to plate - as the vegetables and herbs that are grown are used in the college and their enterprise café. We are so proud of our Can Do-ers achievement, and now an amazing outdoor learning space has been created for the Independent Living Skills students and the local community.

"The garden at Coleg Gwent's Crosskeys Campus has created so many opportunities for our Independent Living Skills learners. From the planning stage where learners were involved in creating a PowerPoint presentation to present to the college, to securing funds to help purchase the polytunnel, learners gained skills and confidence throughout the whole process."

Sarah-Louise Davies, Lecturer at College Gwent

"We had a fantastic experience showcasing Cows on Tour! The students showed such enthusiasm in learning about our industry and we really felt that everyone took something away from the day."

Mat Shervington-Jones, Cows On Tour Chairman



A Healthier Wales



Social Care

Our care services are at the heart of everything we do. Our residents regularly feed into campaigning work and offer their experiences to give meaning to the wider work of Leonard Cheshire Cymru. The impact in our care services is reciprocal; both for the community and feeding into our national work. Every week we dedicate approximately 772 hours to activities and physio for our residents, 9,205 hours for person-centred care and nurses, and 1,885 hours for domestic and kitchen duties

We pride ourselves on ensuring that our residents feel supported, happy and have utmost quality of care. To ensure that both our residents' physical and mental health and wellbeing is prioritised, we provide a wide variety of opportunities, community events, and weekly activities.

Our care services are person-centred. Residents are consulted on a wide range of issues relating to their care and input into the decision-making processes. For example, residents have monthly meetings with our Service Managers and wider teams to discuss upcoming activities, alongside the Activities Coordinator in each service. They can suggest any further opportunities they would like to have access to and take an active role in their care experience.

Our services implement outcome goals on an individual basis to ensure our residents' goals and achievements are met and celebrated. When a resident from our Danybryn service identified that he wanted to watch a Manchester City football game, our staff organised booking a hotel, a Manchester City top, and made sure that there was a nurse and care staff available to support him. We supported him and eventually we achieved the outcome goal of watching a football match in person. This positive experience exemplifies the attention to detail and care that our staff provide to residents on a daily basis.

Mair, our service manager in our Holywell Project, says consistent social care in our services is "the difference to a life". Our services encourage residents to out try new opportunities, learn new skills, socialise and be part of a community. For instance, a resident moved into our Holywell service approximately a year ago. When he first moved in, he was not an active member of his community, and did not often partake in community activities. He is now part of MENCAP and Gateway, and an avid sailor.

As a result of this valued input, our staff have organised a plethora of new and innovative activities this year, including:

- Zumba
- Wheelchair Yoga
- Physiotherapy
- Drum Workshops
- Gardening
- Jewellery Making
- Baking
- Visits to the local community, including garden centres, leisure centres and shopping destinations
- Theatre Trips

This year, we provided care services to 176 residents, 62 of which have been living in our services for 5 years or more.

9,976 hours of social care are delivered in our Welsh services every week.

Staff and residents across our services have commented on the positive impact that these activities have on mental wellbeing and resilience, improving social skills, confidence and connections to local communities. To improve connection to the community, some of our services hold Summer Fetes, which enable locals to come to services and get involved in community building activities. Last year, Dolywern's summer fete raised £1,315, which was a great achievement for the service and source of pride for residents and staff alike.

Volunteers are often vital to users being able to meet new people and make friends outside of services. All our service managers have highlighted the vital work of their volunteers, who provide new activities and bring vitality and energy to the everyday running of services for both residents and staff.

We also recognise the importance of family visits for our residents, keeping them connected with their loved ones.

“

We know that meetings with family and friends are good for the resident's quality of life because they're able to connect with the people that matter most. Prior to Covid-19 we have always operated a sort of open-door policy where family could just come in as and when they wanted to visit residents in services – we find this creates a community atmosphere where family and our services become one.

Shane, Service Manager, Danybryn

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Dolywern's Path

Residents at our Dolywern service raised that there was no wheelchair-accessible path that led to the Oliver Jones Memorial Hall. This was a significant barrier for some of our residents, who could not attend community events at the hall, leading them to feel isolated.

Local residents and members of our service campaigned in the community and spoke to representatives at the council about building an accessible path.

Because of the campaigning and community work of our supporters and residents, the path was built in 2019 using money from the Keith Burgess Fund. This path represents the positive impact that residents have had on their local community. Now, residents can access the local Community Hall, and take part in coffee mornings, fairs, concerts and other events. This also provided an alternative route to the Hall to travelling up the road from the Dolywern car park, enabling safer access at night to all members of the community.

This has enabled access to the Hall, the Bowling Green and out to the lane beyond for walks outdoors and the Mulberry Inn. Our residents were proud to know that they had directly improved their local community for themselves and others.



Staff Wellbeing



Leonard Cheshire Cymru recognises the importance of ensuring our staff's mental wellbeing across the organisation and in services. High staff morale is a key to delivering quality care and support to the people who use our services. This is why we developed a national Wellbeing Strategy in partnership with volunteers who specialise in wellbeing in their professional lives. This strategy encompasses employee benefits and the schemes and support networks they have access to that promote healthy wellbeing.

All staff in care services have access to Reiki sessions, and mental health 'first aid' is accessible to staff members at any point whilst they are on shift or post. We provide a discounted lunch to all service employees whilst they are working, ensure they take a lunch break and seek to remove any unnecessary stress. We promote healthy, active lifestyles, and provide smoothies, fruit and nutritional snacks to employees.

Staff members can access our Cycle to Work scheme in partnership with Evans Cycles, enabling them to obtain a voucher to buy a bicycle and pay back the remaining cost with a percentage of their salary. Encouraging individuals to experience nature and opt for an active form of travel allows them to arrive at work feeling rejuvenated and motivated.

We also recognise staff members when they complete challenging tasks or overcome barriers, ensuring that they feel valued. For example, we operate employee of the month schemes, staff raffles and cards from team members to celebrate the completion of demanding tasks. Alongside these health-related benefits, we also have a shopping discount scheme known as EXTRA. This scheme allows our employees to get money off when shopping at popular retailers.

Staff members also have access to a variety of benefits that are aimed at improving their mental and physical health and wellbeing. The Hospital Saturday Fund allows Leonard Cheshire Cymru employees access to fast, reliable and quality health and wellbeing care should they require it. This is an easy and affordable way for employees to cover the everyday costs of healthcare (such as dental, optical and physiotherapy) whilst also giving support for more serious healthcare issues. This scheme allows our employees to avoid stress related to healthcare for themselves, their partner, and their family.

Community Events

We love to find innovative ways to bring physical activities and fundraising together. The sense of community spirit from our Welsh supporters has been overwhelming this year and we thank you wholeheartedly for continuing to support our work to allow disabled people to live as independently as they choose.

In August 2019, we held a Golf Day in partnership with The Haywain Sizzling Bar and Grill at the St Pierre Marriot Hotel. This fundraising event brought

together members of our community who have a passion for golf and supporting disabled people. The event included a raffle, with prizes kindly donated by a number of organisations including the Sizzling Pub & Grill. The event raised over £2,600, and highlighted the value of sport and physical activity to disabled people. Funds raised from the event allowed us to support our programme Strictly Cymru.

Tour de Cymru

First begun in 2017, Tour de Cymru is Leonard Cheshire's annual cycling challenge in which participants travel over 350 miles from North to South Wales. So far, the project has raised £30,000 to provide further sporting opportunities.

The fundraising event highlights the value of accessible sport and social activities for disabled people, towards a healthier and more inclusive Wales. Last year the event also identified the inaccessibility of a number of 'access all' cycling centres along the route, shining a light on the inequalities that disabled people still face.

The message behind Tour de Cymru is providing sporting opportunities that positively impact entire communities. We asked residents and participants what they wanted to do with the funds raised and the resounding response was to provide more access for sporting opportunities. To do this we set up Boccia clubs in some of our services and provided opportunities to residents to visit their first live football and rugby games.

The money raised is also used to support Strictly Cymru. This project is now in its third year and reaches more than 400 children and over 250 adults in Welsh communities.



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Volunteering

Volunteering allows us to stay connected with communities and provides opportunities for individuals to learn new skills. In total our volunteers contributed just under 9,000 hours from April 2019 to March 2020.

This year we have been delighted to welcome an influx of new volunteers, bringing with them a variety of skills, backgrounds and ages, which has benefitted our residents and the people who use our services with new opportunities, along with support, befriending and communication. The volunteers themselves have reaped the benefits of feeling more connected, joining a team and gaining a new experience. The ability of volunteering to create new relationships and connections is so important to us and our goal of creating cohesive communities in Wales. This year, we have had volunteers contribute their expertise in every area of our organisation – from policy, campaigns and events, to services and wellbeing support to staff.



10,480*
hours of volunteering were
completed this year *10,478.92 hours

This year, we have partnered with
18 corporations/businesses who
completed a total of 1686 hours of
volunteering.

Our volunteering team are transforming their offerings from more general activities within our services to a wide range of opportunities that work around each individual's skills, and which build on community projects. Tina, who began volunteering in April 2019, wanted to offer up her administration skills gained in her previous job, so she worked alongside our volunteer coordinators, aiding them with taking minutes, tracking actions and mapping processes. By learning about people's interests and skills we are able to create community networks within volunteering, where volunteers are able to talk to those we have matched them with - as well as members of our teams - to build a sense of camaraderie. We have also had volunteers who specialise in wellbeing, and they have been a valuable asset in designing and implementing our wellbeing strategy across Wales, whilst also delivering wellbeing support to colleagues and staff in services.

We have also benefitted from volunteers joining from our local corporate and non-corporate partners. In the last year we had 18 groups from these partners who completed a total of 1,686 hours of volunteering. This benefits employers with team building opportunities and allows us to gain new contacts within the community.

The Erasmus Programme is a European funded project that allows volunteers from different countries to experience volunteering in the UK, and vice-versa. This cultural exchange creates a relationship between volunteers from all around the world. We have international volunteers in our services from Japan, Turkey, France, Spain, Italy who spend 12 months here. Participation in this programme has enhanced our global volunteering community, giving overseas volunteers and our own volunteers new opportunities around the world.

Our community projects and local service volunteers are also a fundamental part of our organisation, responsible for creating activities and events that help get the people we support and volunteers together. The initiation of events - such as holding coffee mornings for local residents in our services - strengthens community ties, blending our services with the local population and allowing an open conversation and relationship between them. We have also been aided by local volunteers with the upkeep of services' gardens, and with community improvement projects that everyone can take part in.

Roy's Story

I originally started to volunteer with Leonard Cheshire Cymru to get out of the house and socialise with other people in my community. Before I started, I had recently lost my job and became quite lonely. I heard about this volunteering opportunity at a service near to me and it sounded perfect. I used to care for my mother and began to feel like I missed caring for someone, I missed knowing I had made a difference to someone's life in a positive way.

I started volunteering as an Activities Volunteer at the service in Eithinog. Its given me a reason to get up and out of the house in the morning, it gives me purpose! I have two days a week where I know what I will be doing, I have a routine, which is something I lacked.

Being an activities coordinator and visiting the service twice a week makes me feel like I am part of a community. Making a difference to the lives of the residents makes me happy and I feel like I am doing something worthwhile for others. I love being with the residents within the home, I enjoy assisting them with activities and seeing that I am making a difference.

Since starting my volunteering journey, I have also got involved in other opportunities Leonard Cheshire has to offer. For the last two years I have taken part in Strictly Cymru. Volunteering with Strictly Cymru was pleasure, it was nice to see the smiles on the participants faces, and I enjoyed taking part and dancing with the participants. It was a good way to exercise and gave me some motivation to focus more on my physical fitness. I have also volunteered at the Royal Welsh Show stand that Leonard Cheshire do every year, operating the Eye Gaze machine that allows users to play games using only the motion of their eyes. I love the sense of community that I get by being part of the volunteering community.

Volunteering with Leonard Cheshire has helped me improve my physical and mental health. Staff in Leonard Cheshire have helped me organise a routine inside and outside of work, they have assisted me in learning new ways to organise myself in preparation for work, for example, washing my clothes before I come to work, putting deodorant on before I leave the house etc... these may seem like simple tasks, but it wasn't something I focused my attention on properly before

I started. Now, thanks to the helpful staff at Eithinog, it has become part of my everyday routine and I am grateful.

Since lockdown, we have remained in contact, and even have coffee mornings and monthly volunteering meetings to catch up and stay in touch. This has been a lifeline for me at a time where I could feel isolated. It also allows me to meet volunteers from different teams within Wales, and learn about how they are making a difference.

I have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in a wide range of volunteering opportunities with Leonard Cheshire and I would absolutely recommend it to anyone who is seeking a new adventure!



Swansea Citizen's Panel



Following positive feedback from My Voice, My Choice, we established our first Citizen Panel. This panel is based in Swansea, and we act as a facilitator by providing meeting spaces, expertise, and our platform as a disability charity to facilitate their individual campaign visions. The journey to this panel began in September 2019, when we held an introductory session for anyone who was interested in learning about how to run a successful campaign. At this meeting, we invited local councillors, disability-rights campaigners and members of the public to share their issues and campaigning journeys up to this point. This evening was an informative experience for our Policy and Campaigns Team, who listened to feedback carefully to reflect these views in upcoming campaigns.

Following this session, individuals were asked if they would be interested in becoming part of a citizen-led panel, which could assess issues that matter to disabled people in Swansea and address them using grassroots campaigning. From this event, we allocated 13 individuals - from a variety of backgrounds and ages - to the panel. They were united by their desire to change their local communities for the better, and to improve accessibility for disabled people.

The panel expressed a desire for bespoke training that could teach them how to co-produce campaigns and adopt a campaigning strategy. To deliver these sessions, we Practice Solutions with another Welsh organisation named Practical Solutions, who had previously delivered citizen panel projects for the Welsh Government. All panel members found these sessions innovative and educational.

Since then, the panel has strategized on the campaign projects it wants to adopt. The panel meets fortnightly, as the members were eager to stay connected and collaborate throughout the initial stages. Key priorities they have identified include accessibility, disabled parking, and consultations on new buildings. They have fed into a number of building consultations based around Swansea City Centre and have been invited to conduct further work with key councillors who are members of relevant committees for Swansea City Council. We continue to support this panel and attend meetings to provide our support and expertise on launching official campaigns, although our long-term ambition is for the panel to become fully independent and self-supporting.

The establishment of this panel has provided Leonard Cheshire Cymru with the opportunity to consult with disabled people on future campaigns and have their input via their experiences and stories of issues they have faced. Allowing us to stay connected to the communities we support and delivering grassroots campaigning has been an invaluable experience and we hope to continue this work in the coming year. In the future, we intend to develop a toolkit to share with other organisations on how to establish citizen-led campaigning groups and the difference they can make at a local level.


A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

Wales' culture and language are central to our work. Our team celebrates culture and opportunities for using the medium of Welsh at every opportunity. We promote the use of Welsh at our events, in our correspondence with key decision makers, and in both our Wales-based and UK-wide publications.

A key part of our work is to improve access to the arts for disabled people whilst also honouring the heritage of our country. Our programmes encourage a lot of opportunities to get involved with Welsh heritage. For instance, Can Do participants were asked to take part in a photography challenge of capturing what Wales means to them. This project, titled 'Spirit of Wales,' is available to view and purchase in our social enterprise café.

We also aim to be a consistently bilingual organisation and have implemented a Welsh Language Promotion Plan, setting out a strategy for the promotion of Welsh in our external communications. Provisions include guaranteeing Welsh speakers as a point of contact for individuals should they wish to communicate via Welsh, both in person and via telephone and email communications.

Our Implementation plan sets out several targets for 2020-2021. We aim to provide email signatures bilingually, to demonstrate our continued commitment to Welsh culture and language. We also have set targets for the Wales specific pages of our website to ensure they are easily located and entirely bilingual.

A photograph of two young people, a man and a woman, dancing on a stage. They are wearing white t-shirts and dark pants. The man is on the left, wearing a headband and glasses, with his mouth open as if singing or shouting. The woman is on the right, wearing a headband and has long dreadlocks, with her arms raised in a dance pose. The background is dark with many small, bright lights, creating a starry effect. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

We delivered dance sessions to nearly 300 people this year, with 25 individuals receiving bespoke 1-2-1 coaching to co-produce their final routine.



Strictly Cymru

Leonard Cheshire Cymru is committed to hosting events that support the Welsh culture and language.

Strictly Cymru is a pan-Wales inclusive dance programme that enables disabled people across the country to take part in dance. Heats are held across Wales led by professional specialist dance instructors. Participants are taught a genre they can adapt with their own flair and abilities, at the regional heats. Then, judges select 2 acts from each heat to compete in the grand final, who receive 1-2-1 coaching to give them the skills and confidence to compete in the final. This heart-warming project has given disabled people the chance to try something new, boost their confidence and increase their wellbeing.

Mainstream dance coaches often do not understand the barriers disabled participants often face, and the mainstream classes do not suit their needs.

Strictly has had a meaningful impact on participants; it has enabled Helen to re-engage areas of her brain, contributing to her improvement in speech. It has enabled young people like Sarah to develop their passion for dance and to go on and mentor others.

This project provides real links to sports communities for participants, so that they can continue to stay active and meet new people. Diane took part in the competition in 2019 and was part of the final. As a result of her participation, she joined a local dance club in Bridgend, and went on to receive a Gold medal at the ParaDance championships as part of Team Wales. Diane has since supported dance instructors at this year's heats along with Sarah in North Wales.

As dance forms a key part of Welsh culture, events such as Strictly give the participants confidence and the ability to promote dance in their local communities. The Welsh culture promotes inclusivity, and this was an important part of Strictly as it is a pan-disability and pan-Wales with no barriers to entry. The success of the event has inspired competitors to go back to their local communities and promote dance for people who, like themselves, did not feel confident to dance in the first place. Not only does this add to the culture of the local community but also encourages the overall inclusivity of the Welsh culture.

“

Ffion never wants to try new things and often attends activities that are too young for her – She's a young woman and that should be reflected in her chosen activities. Strictly has given her a newfound confidence, a lease of life and most importantly given her the self-belief that she can try something new.

”

Janet, Ffion's Mother



Sarah's Story

Sarah has always loved dancing, so when she found out about our inclusive dance competition, she was eager to get involved.

Sarah took part in the Strictly Cymru competition in 2018 and 2019. Sarah's performances were popular amongst the judges, earning her a place in the final in Cardiff where she danced a swing number with her partner Wil. The pair went on to win the 'best dressed as a couple' award!

In 2019, she was successful yet again, winning her regional heat and being put in a group with Sion, James and Will to form the 'Gold Squad' for the final in Caernarfon. At the final, Paradance selected one wheelchair and one inclusive dancer for a bursary award, who would go on to become trained to be able to deliver assisted dance sessions. Sarah was selected out of the 35 dancers who entered, and won the Judges' bursary.

This year she has returned to Strictly once more, but this time as a coach and mentor to the other participants. Sarah helped to coach both our Anglesey and Wrexham heats and gave us an exclusive performance. She told us that she loved passing on her skills and love of dance to others: "Dancing makes me feel happy and proud, and more confident. I love teaching other disabled people to dance – I want to help them to feel like I feel when I'm dancing."

Her experience with Strictly has encouraged her to get involved with Leonard Cheshire in other ways too – she's also taking part in our Can Do programme, which is helping to further develop her confidence and skills.

Gala Dinner



Leonard Cheshire Cymru hosts the Gala Dinner annually, which aims to fundraise and raise awareness about our impact. The event provides a forum to network and recruit new partners.

It also enables those who benefit from our services and programmes to meet, mingle and enjoy the dinner.

This year, the event was held on St. David's Eve, as we wanted the event to be a celebration of Welsh culture. We used local Welsh suppliers who supported the event through donations of prizes including overnight stays for people to visit the countryside. All the suppliers were Wales-based, indicating our commitment to working with local economies and communities.

The event was attended by Welsh Paralympians Olivia Breen and Mark Coulbourne MBE, as well as our UK ambassador Amar Latif. This promoted Wales as an international example of a disability confident nation that promotes and celebrates its cultural heroes. They were able to promote the work we do to improve inclusivity and illustrate our wider messages of community cohesion in Wales. We also set out our ambition to make Wales an international example of a disability confident nation.



Mark Coulbourn MBE, Olivia Breen and Amar Latif at the Gala Dinner

A Globally Responsible Wales



In our wider work, we demonstrate a commitment to global resilience, wellbeing, and economies. As previously mentioned, we support global Fairtrade coffee growers. We ensure that any organisations we work with meet our standards for environmental impact, social responsibility and fair working practices. By doing this, we hope to encourage more organisations to be aware of the practices of the businesses they support, both locally and internationally. We always want to ensure that our decisions we make in Wales are also beneficial to our wider work in the UK as well as further afield.

Several of our programmes and wider work initiatives have global elements and opportunities for participants. As part of our Can Do programme, participants have the opportunity to travel overseas and complete Building Communities projects in other parts of the world. This benefits the young people we work with, allowing them to experience different cultures and contribute to global communities.

Alongside this, we also receive requests from volunteers overseas who express an interest in coming and volunteering in our services. This year, we had some volunteers who came to work with us from other parts of the world. These included volunteers from France, Czech Republic, Italy and Japan. We were delighted to host these volunteers and give them the opportunity to learn a new set of skills, and become part of our volunteering community.

"I am learning a lot from everybody. I never thought that this experience could change me so much. I used to take for granted a lot, but now I think that I am more conscious about myself and the people around me. I will have good memories about this period of my life."

Adyi Cisse (Volunteer at Dolywern)

Covid-19 Annex

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has altered the way we work, learn, and interact with our community. Many of our social care services, community programmes and influencing work have rapidly adapted to meet this unprecedented challenge.

This annex sets out how we have collaborated between teams and other organisations to bring innovative new ways to connect with disabled people across Wales.

Social Care

In response to the pandemic, and the public health measures associated with it, our services had to adapt their practices at a rapid pace. Staff put the wellbeing of our residents first, remaining positive and motivated to deliver quality care, with a number volunteering to live in services for the lockdown period to protect residents from exposure to the virus.

We are also grateful to several local organisations who donated PPE to our services at times when we were struggling to source them through the council. Special thanks to Mens Sheds Cymru, Bridgend Coronavirus Support Group, and Bridgend Ford Engine Plant workers and members of the community who collectively donated over 500 masks and face shields to services across Wales.

Virtual sessions - including volunteer led coffee mornings, film nights, yoga, reiki and mindfulness sessions supported our residents' mental and physical wellbeing.



Linda's Reiki Sessions

During lockdown, a couple of our staff members named Lisa and David began offering Reiki sessions free of charge to employees and service users. They did this to improve wellbeing and a sense of community between services and are both trained in this relaxing and healing practice.

Linda has been attending these sessions weekly. She told us that Reiki is the most relaxing thing she has ever experienced.

The sessions are conducted over Zoom, allowing service users and staff to take part no matter where they are in Wales. Relaxing music is played, and the session begins. These sessions focus on mindfulness and releasing anxiety. For Linda, this has been vital during Covid-19. She has been doing these sessions for 5 months now and intends to continue post-pandemic.

"Reiki makes me feel fantastic! It makes me feel like I am floating on thin air like a bird in the sky. I also sometimes feel like I am floating on water. I also see a nice range of colours during my Reiki sessions, such as, red, blue, orange and white.

I have one reiki session a week and would strongly advise others to experience what Reiki is like and how Reiki makes you feel. If I could do it more regularly I would! It really is a fantastic feeling and is for everyone and anyone!"

Our staff also created videos for family members and supporters to watch, helping families keep connected with their loved ones, and combatting the effects of isolation and loneliness. We celebrated the efforts of essential workers, with a simultaneous rendition of 'We are the champions', across all our services in Wales. The video made of staff and residents singing together reached over 30,000 people on social media, while feedback from family members described how it provided them with much needed reassurance about their loved ones' wellbeing.

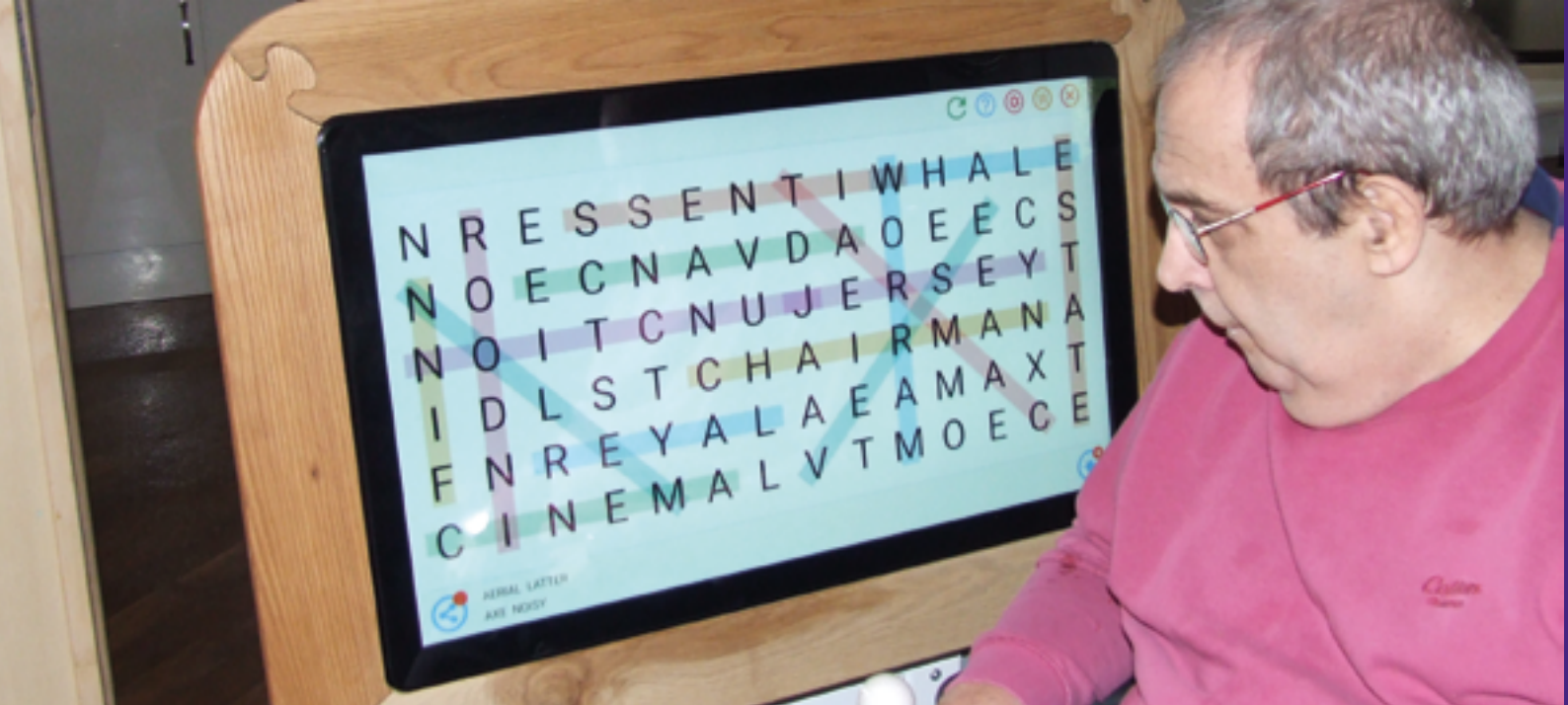
Programmes

Our employment programme, Changing Futures, has rapidly adapted to delivering remote training and support. Training materials were developed into video formats, allowing them to be shared digitally with participants, or were otherwise physically sent out in the mail. Follow up calls enabled coordinators to talk participants through the training materials, and answer participants' questions.

Due to the virtual nature of programme delivery, collaboration between Go Digital, Changing Futures and Can Do is the most beneficial it has ever been. This has led to us collaborating with other organisations who offer virtual delivery; allowing us to provide the best possible digital support to disabled people.

Similarly, our Can Do coordinators designed virtual workshops and Activity Packs sent out to participants to keep them engaged and to reduce any loneliness and anxiety they might be feeling. The online workshops included comedy and drama for confidence building, music, meditation, yoga, art and even environmental workshops. The team have also collaborated with other organisations to deliver interactive tours with Monkey World and Chester Zoo, as well as scavenger hunts and quizzes.





Challenge Cymru

Challenge Cymru was coordinated with the aim of raising funds to buy digital technology, to reduce loneliness and isolation for disabled people in Wales. Driven by our events staff and residents, it was developed in the midst of the national lockdown, when many of our larger fundraising events were threatened with cancellation due to being reliant on face-to-face delivery.

Challenge Cymru allowed residents, staff and volunteers to set their own fundraising challenges, facilitated with bespoke support from our events team to establish Just Giving webpages, and highlighted using Leonard Cheshire's social media. The challenges enabled participants to keep themselves active and complete personal goals, and included virtual bike rides, runs, walks, workouts, hair-shaves, quizzes and mindfulness sessions.

Participants raised an incredible £18,500, with over 750 donors supporting the challenge. The money raised was used to buy technology that helped residents in our services connect with their loved ones, and the environments around them, helping to tackle feelings of loneliness and isolation. Andy, one of our carers in Eithinog, did a 12 hour cycle challenge to raise money for more digital technology in services.

“

I know Leonard Cheshire would be so proud of his legacy in Wales.

”

Ged Beaumont, Volunteer

“I’ve always had the drive to help others, I get so much out of seeing the joy my efforts bring, whether that is fundraising or volunteering. It’s the feeling you get when you’ve made a difference. Those residents need and deserve more devices and better equipment. I know Leonard Cheshire would be so proud of his legacy in Wales.”

Ged Beaumont, Volunteer

Through the challenges set by our supporters and services across Wales, our organisation has been able to promote a healthy sense of collective wellbeing whereby everybody has come together for a single cause, and actively participated in the fight to reduce loneliness and isolation. By sharing the success of each staff member, volunteer or service-user on our social media platforms with #ChallengeCymru, the project has connected people who may otherwise never have had the opportunity to interact face-to-face, overcoming physical boundaries through a virtual space.

“I think the way that services and community have really banded together has been really positive... Challenge Cymru has allowed us to connect our communities in an innovative and purely digital way.”

Emma, Fundraising Manager (Wales)

The project has displayed the creativeness of our staff, supporters, and residents, and highlighted their resilience and unity in an extremely challenging time. As a result of this project, services across Wales have benefitted from digital technology and the opportunities that virtual initiatives can offer.

Events

This year, Strictly Cymru has been delivered as two projects: Strictly Community and Strictly Schools.

Funded by BBC Children in Need and in partnership with Ballet Cymru, Strictly Schools was redesigned for digital delivery, to ensure that young people in schools across Wales had the opportunity to take part and learn dance. This is the first year of Strictly Schools, and it superseded our expectations and now has over 450 pupils from 9 schools taking part. This demonstrates how digital technology can enable us to reach and support more individuals across Wales. Bilingual video tutorials have also enabled more a wider range of schools to participate in this cultural event. All the dance coaches have now filmed sessions and will be delivering 1-1 coaching virtually. Thanks to their support, we will still be able to deliver Strictly Schools this year.

We will also be able to hold a virtual final for Strictly Community. Following on from the heats previously held prior to the pandemic, finalists for the event will be receiving afternoon tea baskets to their homes, with ingredients sourced from local Welsh businesses to mark the special day and celebrate their achievements.

Influencing

The pandemic has illustrated the inequalities in health outcomes, standards of living and mental health between disabled people and their non-disabled counterparts.

Our campaigns and policy team rapidly collated the experiences of disabled people across Wales during the lockdown period, identifying key themes which were then highlighted in our official Manifesto Asks for the upcoming Senedd Elections in 2021.

This document encompasses a set of recommendations for the next Welsh Government on how they can improve Wales for disabled people, addressing transport, disability rights, access to politics, employment, housing, and many more related barriers for disabled people. The document was accompanied by a video of disabled people across Wales reading out the asks, led by Welsh Paralympian Olivia Breen.

Our engagement in varied networks has continued through the pandemic. Recently, a member of our campaigns team was selected to sit on the Measuring the Mountain Citizens Jury, enabling us to feed into their work on social care services, person centred care and paid and unpaid carers.

Virtual methods have enabled us to connect with a wider range of people and deliver workshops and focus groups to areas across Wales without barriers related to transport and location. We have carried out focus groups on issues such as accessibility, transport and grassroots campaigning, with workshops accessed by participants from all over Wales, along with individuals from Ireland and Canada.

Joshua, our campaigns officer, filmed his daily life and experiences during the early stages of the pandemic in March and April 2019, creating the 'Isolation Diaries'. His videos highlighted pertinent issues affecting disabled people, including mental health, loneliness, access to vital services and digital inclusion.

Each episode reached over 800 people providing support to hundreds of disabled people across Wales experiencing similar challenges as a result of shielding. The videos resulted in Joshua getting the opportunity to interview the American disability rights activist Judy Heumann, who features alongside Michelle Obama and fellow campaigner James Lebrecht in the popular Netflix documentary, 'Crip Camp'.



Volunteering

Our volunteers contribution has been essential in helping us to keep people connected throughout the pandemic. For many of our service users and programme participants, having people to connect with and to have conversations with - whether it be over the phone, via skype, or popping into the garden when safe to do so - has helped maintain their mental health. Our volunteers have also assisted our staff in supporting phone calls between residents and their families, keeping people connected and reducing loneliness and isolation.

During lockdown, we gained an additional 181 new volunteers (many of whom had been furloughed themselves) and they brought with them a variety of expertise and skills. Some volunteers have supported us in delivering campaigns, policies, and events, including the writing of this Impact Report. We have also had volunteers working with our digital team, with one volunteer taking their dog for walks in scenic areas so that our service users could experience these walks themselves via Virtual Reality headsets.

Our volunteers have been amazing throughout the pandemic, contributing 7,146* hours to helping our communities over the pandemic period.**

* 7,146.48 hours

** This is in addition to the 9,000 hours completed from April 2019 to March 2020.



Jennie's Story

"A while ago an opportunity came up for me to befriend a volunteer with Leonard Cheshire Cymru. This includes being in contact with and supporting the volunteer by lending a friendly ear and helping their wellbeing. I have to say that this has been a very positive experience. We have built up a good rapport and really enjoy our chats online and over the phone.

Recent world events have been exceptionally challenging and worrying which makes it even more important for us all to try and help each other in whatever way we are able. Sometimes just knowing someone is there for you when it is needed can be quite empowering and I hope my role has made a difference. I would encourage anyone to volunteer with Leonard Cheshire. We all have something unique to give to each other."

Together as One is delivered across Wales, funded by the Welsh Government's Innovate to Save Fund. It is a pioneering project that will change the way social support is delivered, enabling Local Authorities to create efficiencies and fulfil the 41% of unmet needs in Wales. The project will offer people who receive social care the choice to share activities, like swimming, with other disabled people in their area, rather than having to receive it on a one-on-one basis.

Working in partnership with other organisations, Together as One will broaden individuals' access to social opportunities across Wales and improve individual outcomes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a detrimental effect not only on a disabled people's way of life, but also local authority social care budgets. Together as One will foster collaboration between disabled people, other organisations, and local authorities to address the issue of funding and support. It will enable local authorities to deliver services far more efficiently and tailor support to individuals by giving them full choice and control over their support needs.

Conclusion

The pandemic has been a challenging experience for everyone, and every organisation, across Wales. Every life lost because of the virus is one too many, an empty space at the kitchen table, a loved one that families will mourn for years to come. But throughout this adversity we have adapted, remaining dedicated to improving the lives of disabled people, connecting with more communities across Wales than ever before, and provide much needed support in these dark times.

To all our supporters, volunteers, staff, families and service users, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you for continuing to motivate us and our communities, to work towards a better future for disabled people in Wales.

Afternote

I am delighted to conclude our first Wales-specific impact report highlighting all the great work we are doing in Wales to enable people to live, learn and work as independently as they choose. Our reach and influence have grown considerably, and we wanted to illustrate our impact and how our work aligns with the 7 Well-being Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act⁵.

We are **Proud** of what we do every day in supporting disabled people in Wales. We are **Pioneering** in our work to revolutionise the way disabled people receive care and support and ensuring they have full choice and control over their care. We are **Positive** about the future despite the pandemic, and optimistic that we can influence societal changes for disabled people to ensure equality. We are passionate about enabling the experts we collaborate with to be the drivers of change in building a better Wales.

I am incredibly proud of the 600 staff working across Wales and value immensely the contribution of all our wonderful volunteers and every hour they give. I would like to thank every person for their efforts and contribution over the last year and during the pandemic. Finally, I would like to thank the people we support for enabling us as an organisation to learn from them; they empower us in our journey to support disabled people in Wales in a better way.

⁵ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. 2015.

Glyn Meredith, Director for Wales





Want to get involved?

Please contact our policy and campaigns officer Emma Burke

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📘 @LeonardCheshireWales

🐦 @LCCymru

leonardcheshire.org

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