

Our Impact in Wales 2020-2021





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Foreword

Welcome to Leonard Cheshire Cymru's annual impact report for 2020-2021, celebrating the work we do in Wales. This year has had its challenges, but we are so proud of what we have achieved.

I am delighted to introduce this report and explain the positive impact that working for Leonard Cheshire has had on me and my career.

I began my journey with Leonard Cheshire as a carer in the Danybryn service. I was unsure of what I wanted to do with my life after leaving school and open to new opportunities. I applied for a job as a support worker, and quickly discovered my passion for caring. I love connecting with the people I support and find this part of my job really rewarding.

I knew this was going to be my career for life. No two days were the same, and this challenged me to always keep learning. I dedicated myself to developing my own skills and attributes to make me a better carer, completing NVQs in levels 2 and 3, which gave me the platform I needed to become a senior carer. This gave me the opportunity to take on more responsibility, mentor other staff and see them progress in their careers.

Within a few years, having been inspired by two nurses I worked with, Sue and Pat, I chose to become a nurse myself. This involved an Access course first, and then a 3-year nursing degree. In 2011, I returned to work for Leonard Cheshire as a fully qualified nurse.

I have since completed additional modules and am currently studying for a level 4 NVQ in management, after which I will go on to study level 5. Throughout my professional journey with Leonard Cheshire, I have always been supported and encouraged to further my skills and knowledge of care and nursing.

I am now deputy manager at Danybryn and cannot thank my colleagues enough for seeing the potential in me. Social care is such a fulfilling profession, and I am so glad that I joined the sector 20 years ago. I now make it my mission to encourage my colleagues just starting out in care to develop their skillsets and show them just how rewarding a career in care can be. I feel empowered by my profession and the relationships I have with the residents in our service are so special to me.

I am so pleased to be able to introduce our Impact Report for Wales, structured around the Welsh Government's seven well-being goals, which are 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 of our staff, residents, supporters, and partner organisations who have made this year so impactful, and who change the lives of many disabled people on a daily basis.

**Ann-Marie Long,
Deputy Manager, Danybryn**

Scan the QR code to view our:
Wales Recruitment Video



A Prosperous Wales



Changing Futures

Our Changing Futures team, operating in Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot and Bridgend, offers bespoke employment opportunities and training for disabled people and those with work limiting health conditions. Debra John, Senior Coordinator, describes the programme as “meeting and mentoring people to identify opportunities for them to progress and meet their goals.”

It helps participants develop essential skills and the confidence required to improve employability. The empathetic, individually tailored approach can have massive advantages in assisting people who find the prospect of engaging or re-engaging with the world of work daunting.

The Changing Futures team are always looking to see how they can improve the service they offer. Three of our coordinators achieved their Advice and Guidance Level 4 Qualification this year.

The Changing Futures team responded quickly to the world of work moving online. Unable to meet clients face-to-face, we supported participants digitally and on the telephone, tailoring support to individuals' needs, preferences and goals.

The pandemic also highlighted gaps in some participants' access to digital technology, with some unable to engage with online meetings due to a lack of equipment or Wi-Fi. Utilising a grant from Your Digital Family, a Digital Lending Library was set up, allowing participants to borrow equipment in order to meet their digital needs and ensure that this barrier did not stop them reaching their goals. Over the past year Changing Futures has supported 49 young people and 63 adults. Of the 20 Youth participants that have exited the project, 9 have left to employment. Other participants went on to further learning opportunities or volunteering to further progress their employability. Many participants spoke of the profound effect having a mentor and support system had on their mental health and wellbeing throughout the pandemic and beyond.

67%

of participants went into further employment, training or volunteering following the programme.



Connor's Story

“

When I first got in touch with the programme, I was incredibly shy and didn't feel confident about attending meetings on my own. I wasn't really sure what it was until I met with Cathy (the employment advisor). She explained what the project was about and how it would help me access work and training opportunities. I hoped that this would be the extra support I needed to get a full-time job that worked for me.

After joining Changing Futures, I received individual support on job searching; interview planning and any training I needed. I was happy to get training in things that I knew would help me get a job. I wanted to work on getting more structure in my life and the project helped that.

Lockdown was hard but the weekly calls and tasks helped. I left college without any work history or qualifications, so Cathy from the Changing Futures team helped by enlisting me on remote courses. The training enabled me to obtain various qualifications and certificates.

The tasks set for me were designed to build my skills, which I think made a huge difference to my success and motivation. I felt listened to and I had a voice on what I wanted. It made me feel enthusiastic for the first time.

Due to my disability, I didn't want a job with too much responsibility or pressure and I like my own space where I have time to think. I also didn't want to have to travel on public transport. With Cathy's support I applied for warehouse and supermarket jobs in my local area where I could work flexibly around my disability.

I now have a job with a local supermarket as a trolley buster, I have a routine and I'm building my confidence. This job suits me down to the ground. Thank you for all your help.

”

Our Change 100 programme operates across the UK, providing paid internships and mentoring workshops to young disabled people. We focus on upskilling talented young graduates, raising awareness of inaccessible recruitment practices, and challenging employer assumptions about disabled candidates.

This year, four placements were offered with Welsh organisations, each of which was dedicated to improving employment outcomes for disabled people in Wales. Our interns completed placements with Audit Wales, Cardiff Council, Pembrokeshire County Council and Leonard Cheshire Cymru.

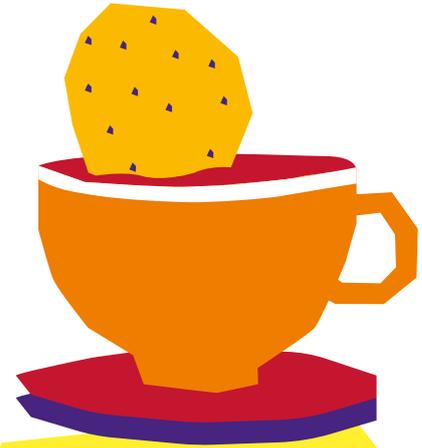


The Social Bean

The Social Bean is a pioneering venture for us in Wales. A social enterprise and fully accessible coffee shop, it opened 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, along with lovely coffee to passers-by in Swansea. Boasting a modern, attractive, step-free design, it also houses one of the only fully accessible changing places in Swansea and the surrounding area.

The Social Bean also hosts one of our Go Digital IT suites. Here, members of the public can access Wi-Fi, improve their digital literacy and learn about digital inclusion and online safety. It is an ideal space for tailored sessions between our Digital Coordinator and disabled people referred to us for IT support.

This year, using £93,000 of the WCVA's Covid Resilience funding, we developed the Roast and Post service. This allowed us to take the Fairtrade, signature coffee blend we serve and offer it online to customers throughout the United Kingdom. Those buying from our website do so knowing that all profits from the Social Bean go to Leonard Cheshire Cymru and supporting disabled people across Wales.



50%

of our Roast and Post customers are from outside Wales, with purchases made from as far afield as Dundee, Glenrothes and Belfast!



James' Story

James joined the Social Bean team as a participant in the Changing Futures employment programme. His role was as a Fulfilment Officer, and he was tasked with packaging up the coffee orders and organising delivery to those who placed orders online.

He describes his role as 'the direct link between the customers and the product'. Before joining the Social Bean, James was struggling with his mental health and anxiety. He had completed his university degree but was unsure where to go next. Through the bespoke and tailored support from his Employment Coordinator Keda, he was able to realise his potential.

Since being a part of the Social Bean team, James has improved his social skills and his anxiety is no longer holding him back. He is confident and feels much more outgoing. Working has been a huge boost to his self-confidence and motivation. He is now confident in his skills and feels proud of what he has achieved whilst on his placement.

Tech Works

Our inclusive and fully bespoke IT facility allows disabled people in South Wales to learn how to use digital technology to improve their lives. Support is also offered virtually to disabled people across Wales.

Technology is developing every day, making more and more possibilities available to everyone, no matter what their ability. Our Digital Inclusion programme Tech Works supports individuals to access the digital world, providing training and support together with the latest in accessible tech. Tech Works is delivered across the UK, assistance is provided on a 1:1 basis, and training is delivered with the person's goals in mind. This year has seen many services and healthcare systems move online, and many disabled people were isolated by their lack of understanding of virtual services.

Our digital coordinators have worked to identify people across Wales in need of support to complete daily tasks which are now done online, such as communicating with family members, ordering groceries, or requesting prescriptions.



Matt's Story

Matt lives in Neath and has been shielding since the start of the pandemic. He used to meet with his friends regularly. Due to shielding, he was unable to meet with friends and relatives in person, which left him feeling isolated.

He knew that his local choir had moved to online meetings via a video call service, but was unable to access these due to his phone not being enabled for video calls.

Through 1:1 sessions with our Digital Inclusion Coordinator, Matt learnt more about online video calls. A friend heard of his struggles accessing meetings and gifted him an Android tablet.

Once restrictions started to lift, Matt was able to visit the Leonard Cheshire IT suite in Swansea for a socially distanced 1:1 support session. He made great progress and was able to start using emails and shortcuts that made Zoom more accessible. Matt is now able to connect with his friends and stay in touch with his community.

Matt is enjoying his new-found IT skills and through more 1:1 sessions hopes to be able to connect with more people in his community and across Wales.

“ I never knew I could do so much. IT is fun when you learn how to use it. ”

A More Equal Wales

Influencing



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.

In the run-up to the Senedd Elections in May, the policy and campaigns team collected evidence from disabled people across Wales on the barriers they faced. Issues were raised around accessibility, transport, employment, social care and human rights. This extensive work resulted in the publishing of our manifesto asks for the elections.

This document encompassed a set of recommendations for the Welsh Government on how they could improve Wales for disabled people, addressing transport, disability rights, access to politics, employment, housing, and many other barriers. The document was accompanied by a video of disabled people across Wales reading out the asks, led by one of Leonard Cheshire's ambassadors, Welsh Paralympian and Bronze Medallist Olivia Breen.

To complement this work, the team carried out a series of interactive virtual events focusing on four key areas: Employment, Social Care, Accessibility and Disability Rights. These sessions featured politicians and prospective candidates from all political parties, offering disabled people the opportunity to question their representatives on these issues. We also collaborated with Legacy International to push for more accessible employment, and a series of employment events were attended by more than 70 disabled people from across Wales.

We represented the views of disabled people at Welsh Labour's and Plaid Cymru's annual conferences, holding roundtable sessions on Disability Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) and the need for a Disabled Persons' Commissioner to champion the rights of disabled people in Wales. We invited guest

speakers, such as Kat Watkins from the Disability Inclusion Panel, to speak on their lived experience and the barriers they face. These impactful sessions had a key bearing on all the major political parties committing to enshrining the UNCPRD into Welsh law during the next Senedd term.

The influencing team carried out a number of virtual events reaching disabled people across Wales this year. We held a virtual day of discussions and workshops for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, including speakers such as the Future Generations Commissioner, the Minister for Education, and the Children's Commissioner. This interactive event also featured a Question Time style panel with politicians, giving disabled people the opportunity for their voice to be heard. The panel included Joyce Watson MS, Mark Isherwood MS, Caroline Jones MS and Rhun ap Iorwerth MS.

We continued to meet with disabled people and other organisations, to deliver a more inclusive, fair, and equal Wales for disabled people. We submitted over 25 consultation responses to the Welsh Government and Welsh Parliament Committees, highlighting the rights of disabled people, their lived experiences, and offering our expertise as a social care provider.

The team continues to engage with the Disability Equality Forum. Our campaigns officer was selected to be on the Covid-19 Task Force, a group commissioned by the Welsh Government to assess the effects of Covid-19 on disabled people. The 'Locked Out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond Covid-19' report was published this year, detailing a number of recommendations for mitigating the adverse effects disabled people experienced during the pandemic.



4,557 people engaged with us directly on social media to learn more about our work in Wales.

We have reached **86,681** people across Wales and beyond through our digital platforms.



“

I enjoyed the Change Makers Programme in Wales in particular because of the sheer amount of collaboration it does with external bodies, for example the Welsh Government and the Financial Times. Furthermore, the programme has boosted my confidence, in particular me dealing with other people of different abilities, which I found hard to navigate previously.

”

Kyle Eldridge, Swansea Change Maker

Our Change Makers programme is targeted at disabled people aged 16-25, empowering them to have their voices heard about the issues that matter to them, and make changes in their communities. The programme is six months long and teaches participants how to become citizen reporters in their community.

The programme currently operates in Belfast, Manchester, Glasgow and Swansea.

This year, the Change Makers in Swansea have been campaigning on the importance of relationships for disabled people, and breaking stereotypes around disabled people and romantic relationships. They spoke with local disabled people in their communities and support groups, and these discussions evolved into a petition aimed at the local authority.

This petition calls on local government to raise awareness and break societal perceptions of disabled people not being capable of forming meaningful connections and having stable, healthy relationships. The petition has been signed just under 100 times by people in the community.

A Resilient Wales



Can Do

Can Do is our UK-wide social action programme. In Wales, it operates in Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham, Conwy and Anglesey, 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 three pathways for young people, one of which was developed because of the pandemic:

- 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 12 weeks)
- 2.** One-off taster sessions – opportunities to learn new skills within local communities
- 3.** Digital sessions – digital packages online that anyone with an interest can take part in

In Wales this year, we provided 3,343 opportunities to improve the employability, confidence, and self-esteem of young people. The programme offered these opportunities to 529 young disabled people across Wales.

Our Can Doers contributed 4,287 hours to improving their communities this year. This enabled them to learn new skills, make new friends in their communities and build networks in their area. 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. In Wales, 240 young disabled people were awarded their accredited City & Guilds certificate with Can Do.

Delivery was entirely virtual this year, offering many learning opportunities for our coordinators and participants. Feedback was collected throughout, with the virtual delivery model refined to get the most meaningful interaction from online activities.

Online ways of working have allowed us to partner with even more organisations across Wales, including a new partner – the NPTC Group of Colleges – who asked Can Do to support it in engaging students with additional needs during lockdown. Working together, we developed an interactive, fun, digital 'menu' of activities for students to choose from, which included: virtual museum tours, beatboxing, fully inclusive fitness classes, social action, and grassroots campaign training. Can Do organised 10 sessions per week, reaching 41 young disabled people who were isolated during lockdown. Feedback on these sessions was very positive, and the NPTC have asked us to deliver further projects.



Wrexham Can Doers have been documenting their experiences during lockdown using photography. They have been learning how to use a DSLR camera, creating pop-up studios in their classrooms and learning the art of photography. The group documented what lockdown meant for them, and how it affected their community. The photographs will be displayed at their college, and our Project Coordinator is also looking to collaborate with a local gallery to display the pieces, raising awareness of disability and the ways that the lockdown and the pandemic have affected young disabled people.

Looking forward to this year, our coordinators have spoken with Can Doers across all locations about the projects that they would like to get involved in. From these discussions, 'Makers' was created. We have since facilitated four focus groups to establish a project-wide Social Enterprise Steering Group, which comprises 36 Can Doers from all locations. 'Makers' projects began in September, supporting young disabled people to design and create their own goods, while developing skills in e-commerce, website management, business models, money management and becoming 'self-starters'.

81%

of Can Doers in Wales said that they enjoyed being part of Can Do.

77%

of Can Doers in Wales said that they would like to take on further volunteering and training.

68%

of Can Doers in Wales said that they had learnt new skills to help them in the future.

Dan's Story

"I live in Cwmbran, listen to a lot of music, and even have my own keyboard and guitar. I have never really been into extracurricular stuff, but now feel like I'd really like to try more. I've noticed during lockdown that my confidence was decreasing. However, the Can Do sessions have helped me change this.

I met lots of interesting people during my digital Can Do project like Paul, who worked at Blue Cross, and Dean the beatboxer who was very talented and had some great stories to tell!

I told my family and friends about the harmonica and beatboxing sessions and how they had inspired me. I am now doing a voiceover project for an animation my friends and I are working on. We have lots of ideas and characters. Can Do helped me gain the confidence to try these new things out and find things I was really interested in. I want to help the homeless and keep a positive attitude. I would like to get into gaming, graphics and build on my music skills.

I still feel uncertain about the future, but I know I want to help people. I'm looking to build my confidence and skills so that I can support the people I care about.

If I could give one piece of advice, it would be to talk to someone, always, never bottle it up because it will get worse. In the end you'll be back on top, and it will pass. My experience with Can Do has been extraordinary, and I'm so glad I got involved in the project."



Radha's Story

Radha started a disability rights community association, Exercise for All, in 2017. Having become a wheelchair user in adulthood, she cared passionately about the rights of disabled people, and wanted to promote awareness of disabled people's need and desire to exercise. She finds that exercise has made a "huge improvement to mental and physical health."

She first engaged with Leonard Cheshire at our My Voice, My Choice workshop on accessible exercise, as her community association shared their considerable experience and insight.

Through direct local campaigning, Exercise for All have secured Active Passive bikes in eight leisure centres in the Cardiff area. Radha said: "we went straight to the private sector provider, and said to them: 'look, there are lots of people who come to a leisure centre and can do nothing, so here's a piece of equipment you can install,' and they did." This means that disabled people using those facilities now have at least one piece of equipment suited to them.

Radha said, that when attending the workshop, her association, "met a lot of people, disabled and non-disabled, who were there to raise awareness of inequality that wheelchair users face on a daily basis in terms of trying to access the exercise they need to maintain their health." The workshop featured a demonstration of the Motomed bikes in use, which encouraged one attendee from the Swansea area to campaign for one in the leisure centre he uses.

Following the workshop, Radha chaired a roundtable event on behalf of Leonard Cheshire at the Plaid Cymru party conference, describing it as: "a great event which gave me that chance to spread our message and meet other people who are interested in furthering equality. It gave me a lot of hope in terms of trying to deliver changes on behalf of the people I represent. The event ensured people with disabilities had a voice, which is so important: hearing the lived experiences of disabled people was priceless and it is not heard very often."

We look forward to a continuing relationship with Radha and her association.

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.

This year has been challenging for our residents and social care staff alike. Many of our residents were unable to see their family members for months at a time. However, through Challenge Cymru, supporters and staff members raised £18,500 to enable residents to keep connected. Coupled with a £10,000 grant from the Awards for All fund, this enabled interactive tablets

and interactive tables to be supplied to services to improve access to digital technology and provide fun activities for services in lockdown. Many residents learnt how to do video calls and connected with their families virtually for the first time.

We also focussed on improving our outdoor spaces, with support from various funders across South Wales. Many of us benefitted from being outdoors this year, and we took the lockdown as a chance to further enhance the provision of green spaces at our services, offering opportunities for increased wellbeing and decreased risks associated with Covid-19.

This year in Wales we've delivered almost **11,000** hours of person centred care.

Eithinog Kitchen

Plans for a new kitchen in our Eithinog care home were drawn up in November 2019. The kitchen was donated by Howdens, who were keen to grow their understanding of accessibility for wheelchair users around their products. The building work and decoration for the kitchen was paid for via legacy funding.

Our residents were involved in all aspects of planning the kitchen, using a theme board for kitchen style, appliances, decoration, blinds. For a brief period, the whole activities room had to be closed, in order to create a brand new, much bigger room, with easier access for both residents and their support workers.

Whereas the previous kitchen had been impractical, including worktops which were too high, feedback on the new kitchen has been excellent from residents and their families. Everyone gets involved, cooking meals, cakes, breads, and international cuisines with our resident overseas volunteers.

One resident said it has changed his life for the better and that he looks forward to getting up in the morning and thinking of new meals to prepare. He said that even those residents who are not able to do as much in the kitchen still derive enjoyment from watching others putting the new kitchen area to the test.



Ty Cwm's Sensory Garden



A sensory garden is a place which creates all-sensory experiences, focusing on Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight and Sound. At Ty Cwm residential care service, we wanted to create a sensory experience for all residents to enjoy throughout the four seasons. Sensory gardens are primarily designed to connect people closely with nature, encouraging birds, bees and other wildlife into the garden for residents to enjoy.

The sensory garden had previously had a number of changes, including: a new summer house, new planters, a pergola, and concrete-work in preparation for a greenhouse. Residents got involved with designing the sensory garden, picking out the plants, and taking progress photos. Julius is a very keen gardener, and enjoyed being out in the garden mapping out what to include in the new planters to engage the five senses. He has also taken trips to the local garden centre to plan the foliage that will be included.

The garden is still a work in progress, but our residents have thoroughly enjoyed getting involved and designing the garden from scratch.

We are very grateful to our funders, Comic Relief, ICF Connecting People, and our corporate partners for making this work possible and recognising the importance of green spaces for mental health.

Staff Wellbeing

This year we have invested significant time and resources in wellbeing initiatives for our staff in Wales, recognising that our own staff's wellbeing is critical in enabling us to support disabled people.

Members of our team have voluntarily taught virtual Reiki and Hypnotherapy sessions, to both staff and residents. Feedback suggests that these sessions have been vital when staff members were isolating or unable to see friends and family.

We also recognised staff members when they completed challenging tasks or overcame barriers. We operated employee of the month schemes, staff raffles and cards from team members to celebrate the completion of demanding tasks.

Staff members continued to have access to a variety of benefits aimed at improving their mental and physical 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 access healthcare for

themselves, their partner, and their family. Our EXTRA shopping discount scheme also allows our employees to get money off when shopping at popular retailers.

Thanks to the WCVA Recovery Funding we received, we recruited volunteers who specialise in wellbeing, and they have been a valuable asset in designing and implementing our new wellbeing strategy across Wales, whilst also delivering wellbeing support to colleagues and staff in services. This strategy encompasses employee benefits and the schemes and support networks they have access to that promote healthy wellbeing. We regularly collected feedback from staff on their wellbeing and recommendations on how we could support them better.

We have also asked staff what they would like us to do as an organisation, recognising that while we can't change everything around pay, we can value our staff in other ways. Wellbeing action plans have been developed based on staff feedback, with a number of staff volunteering as wellbeing champions to deliver against these action plans. This work is ongoing and staff have been tremendous in stepping up and really wanting to make a difference for their colleagues. Staff will be attending mental health first aid courses across our services to help their colleagues who need support. We will then be applying for 'Healthy working Wales accreditation' to support continuous improvement in providing a healthy workplace for our staff.



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Welsh volunteers contributed just under **9,000** hours from April 2020 to March 2021.

Volunteering

Volunteering allows us to stay connected with communities and provides opportunities for individuals to learn new skills. We have welcomed 128 new volunteers this year, bringing with them a variety of skills, backgrounds and ages.

Our volunteers reported feeling more connected to their communities as a result of their volunteering. We have had volunteers contribute their expertise in every area of our organisation, including: policy, campaigns, events, services and wellbeing support to staff.

Our volunteering team offer a wide range of opportunities that work around each individual's skills, and which build on community projects. 25% of our volunteers this year were based in services, whilst the remaining 75% were based in community teams and programmes.

We have had many overseas volunteers join us this year through the Erasmus scheme (an EU-funded project that allows volunteers from different countries to experience volunteering in the UK, and vice-versa). This year we welcomed seven individuals from overseas, including volunteers from Turkey, France, Spain and Italy who have all volunteered in our services and community programmes. We are now piloting a new Overseas Volunteer community-based programme for a further five volunteers to get involved with in the coming year.

The senior management team would like to extend a huge thank you for all the work of volunteers during the last year and the invaluable work that they have done to support the organisation. A particular thank you to overseas volunteers for all the work that they have provided in our services.

“

Living and working at Danybryn has been a great learning experience that I will never forget. I have met some lovely people and have had the opportunity to work in different areas and projects. I would like to say thank you ever so much to my coordinators and to the entire care home team of Danybryn that makes the quality of life of disabled people go further and beyond.

”

Fernando, Overseas Volunteer, Danybryn

Maria's Story

Maria is an overseas volunteer in our service in Llanhennock, Newport. She is from Spain and began her 12-month long placement with us recently. Her main role is as part of the Activities Team. This varied role involves daily support, crafts, baking, leisure activities, games, going on trips, shopping, and more.

Maria has a background in psychology and neuropsychology and was studying for her Master's degree when she began looking for the next step in developing her professional and personal skills. Her research led her to Leonard Cheshire's overseas volunteer programme.

She brought with her many skills and experiences to support our residents.

She is relishing the chance to "try new things, explore other ways to live, work in another country with a different language and culture." She improves her (already impressive) English language skills every day.

Maria collaborates on our Can Do programme, and through that has done music sessions with our young participants, supporting them and taking photos. Video work and photography are a keen hobby of Maria's, and they are showcased in her video about the work of our overseas volunteers in Wales.

Soon Maria will start one-on-one sessions with some residents, doing memory activities and cognitive stimulation, enabling her to practice her skills as a psychologist and neuropsychologist, and support residents who would benefit from such activities.

Maria feels she has been well supported, and that if any issues arise she finds there is always someone to help. While working with disabled people is a continuation of Maria's previous work, study and interest in the field, she has nonetheless gained new and valuable insights in her time with us. She says, "when you are part of the community, you start to become aware of the improvements we still need that you might not have realised before."

Maria's time with Leonard Cheshire has also encouraged her to "take things slowly and enjoy the small things, which are the important ones," and also "to respect and be more open-minded, sharing from different points of view but always trying to understand each other."

She is looking forward now to sharing her experience with the new overseas volunteers that will be joining us and has volunteered to act as a mentor. When asked about her favourite thing about her role, she said:

“ Always the time with the residents, connecting with them, learning about their lives, and supporting them. That is the best, I am very proud and grateful to have had that experience. ”



Disability Inclusion Panel

The Disability Inclusion Panel originated from our 2019 My Voice, My Choice programme. This group – independent of Leonard Cheshire Cymru – is made up of disabled people and campaigners, with a core goal of improving accessibility in their local area. The panel is based in Swansea, with Leonard Cheshire Cymru assisting them with the provision of meeting spaces, expertise, and our platform as a disability charity to facilitate their independent campaign visions.

This year has been challenging for the panel, as they have not been able to meet face-to-face due to a number of members of the group self-isolating. Despite this, they have strategised, planned, and consolidated their roles as a group. Kat Watkins has been elected as Chair, and an official code of practice and complaint procedure have been agreed.

“

The Disability Inclusion Panel gives me a sense of belonging and a belief that accessibility in my local area will get better for disabled people. It's comforting to know you're not alone: I have people in the panel with me, who are also fighting for the same cause, and we support one another along the way.

I was one of the first members of the panel, and it is such a privilege to see what it has become. I feel proud to be a part of it, especially now My Voice My Choice will continue and reach more parts of Wales.

In the future, I hope we can use our experiences to educate others on the issues affecting disabled people every day. The impact we have on our community as a collective voice can be huge. I would like to see our panel become the model and guide new citizen-led groups across Wales to enact real change in their communities. ”

Lee Ellery, Vice Chair of Disability Inclusion Panel

The panel have contributed to Leonard Cheshire consultation responses, on a broad range of topics, including changing places, social care, and accessibility and transport.

Following significant consultation with other disabled people living in Swansea, the group have determined that their first campaign objective will be Beach Access, addressing a lack of accessibility along the coastline, particularly for wheelchair users. Using their own lived experience, and the campaigning tools and expertise provided by Leonard Cheshire, the panel held a drop-in session this year for members of the public to engage with the group and share their stories. The panel is currently working on producing a short film aimed at demonstrating the lack of access and impact this has on disabled people in Swansea.



Kat's Story

Kat lives in Swansea and has been involved in campaigning since a young age. She is currently studying to achieve her Master's degree in Development and Human Rights.

Soon after joining the Disability Inclusion Panel, Kat was asked by other panel members if she would take on the role of Chair, given her previous experience in campaigning in Swansea. Kat has also gotten involved with Leonard Cheshire's campaigning work in other ways. She spoke about her experience in overcoming barriers disabled people face in Wales at the Labour party conference, and chaired a 'Question Time' panel as part of our Manifesto Asks discussion series.

With each of these opportunities, Kat's confidence has grown. When she was offered the opportunity to interview Ruth Owen OBE, CEO of Leonard Cheshire, she seized the chance. She also won The Director's award at our Volunteer Awards 2021. This was her first time winning a volunteering award and she was extremely proud.

A theme through Kat's involvement with us has been challenging herself to step outside of her comfort zone. Kat says she can be a bit shy, even though some people might not think so. She says what she has done with and for us has pushed her to do a lot more, and to realise that she is a lot more capable of doing these things than she thought.

Recently, Kat put herself forward for a role with Disability Wales as their DPO Fund Coordinator. She was successful in this process and has just begun her role at this organisation. She attributed her success to her involvement with Leonard Cheshire and the panel, pushing her out of her comfort zone and making her realise she was capable of achieving more.



Scan the QR code to watch Kat's interview with Ruth Owen OBE.



Together as One is delivered across Wales, funded by the Welsh Government's Innovate to Save fund. It is a pioneering project that revolutionises the way social care is delivered, enabling Local Authorities to create efficiencies and fulfil the 41% of unmet social hours need in Wales.

At the start of the pandemic, we re-designed our Together as One activities to take place virtually. The

team designed a host of online sessions in partnership with activity providers. Feedback from partner organisations demonstrated the benefits that digital delivery can have on inclusion and accessibility of sessions. In particular, sessions that previously would only be open to a local area could now be offered across Wales, with no set participation size.

Co-production is crucial to the delivery of Together As One. Our coordinators in North and South Wales dedicate time to meeting and reaching out to new organisations and raising awareness of how direct payments can be utilised. Two other organisations have asked us to adapt our bespoke webtool for their own users. They now have a personalised version of the webtool to share their activities virtually.

As restrictions ease, Together As One is planning to introduce in-person activities to run alongside the existing virtual delivery. The programme has also partnered with Mencap Mon to run taster cycling sessions, helping disabled people to get active.

Dan's Story

Dan took part in the Together As One project during lockdown. With the support of our Together As One Coordinator, he developed an animation explaining his experience and story of how he has coped during this time.



Watch Dan's Story by scanning the QR code.

A Wales of Vibrant Communities



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 our publications.

Events and Fundraising

This year has been challenging for us as an organisation and the communities we support. A lot of our events and fundraising work had to adapt to fit new ways of working and interacting with the world.

This year we received
£1.2 million

from our funders to support and enrich our projects, initiatives and services across Wales.

Strictly Cymru

Strictly Cymru is an inclusive dance programme that enables disabled people from across Wales to take part in dance. Heats are held throughout the country, led by professional specialist dance instructors. Participants are taught a genre they can adapt with their own flair and abilities. This heart-warming project takes place year on year and has given disabled people the chance to try something new, boost their confidence and increase their wellbeing.

Contestants competed from across Wales, with finalists selected from each of the six heats. 230 participants took part in the project, learning dance and improving their wellbeing as a result.

Bespoke training was delivered virtually by our inclusive dance instructors, allowing participants to be involved regardless of lockdowns and what part of Wales they were from.

The final was streamed live on our social media channels and showcased the work of our talented finalists. A total of 13 acts made up of 28 disabled people of all ages reached the final of the project.

Participants in the project spoke of how learning to dance has significantly improved their wellbeing. Many commented that it provided their only form of exercise through the pandemic, and for some it also offered their only opportunity to speak with people on a regular basis during the lockdowns. Opening up dance to everyone, regardless of age, ability, and experience brings our Welsh communities closer.

690 hours of regional dance delivery, engaging online with **7,982** people across Wales to ignite passion for inclusive dance

Inga's Story

Six-year-old Inga was our youngest competitor in Strictly Cymru this year, taking the whole audience on a journey to Arendelle with her Frozen-inspired routine. She stunned with a dance full of energy, smiles and spins and was our overall winner in the wheelchair category.

Inga has a rare condition called Spinal Muscular Atrophy which affects her mobility and growth. Since starting to dance both her strength and her confidence have come on leaps and bounds. When she first started, she struggled to complete spins as she found it tiring and didn't quite have the strength in her arms. However, she was determined to do it and was proud to finally achieve this in her second online session. By the time of the final, she was spinning like a pro!

Inga has absolutely loved being part of Strictly this year – she told us that dancing makes her feel happy, and she loves learning new moves. Her Dad often finds her dancing in her room, trying out new routines. Inga now has the dancing bug and plans to keep on dancing at her local dance school. Her confidence has increased to such an extent that she has even begun to try a few moves out of her chair. Lou, our project manager for dance delivery, said: "She is now able to hold her balance with a seated posture. Her confidence is oozing which wasn't there before... without the experience of Strictly Cymru we wouldn't have got to this stage."

Paula Moulton, Strictly Cymru judge and a professional wheelchair dancer who competes for Team GB in Para Dance, said: "Her ability to dance is phenomenal." She couldn't quite believe that Inga was able to master the one arm turns at just six years old.

Inga's family are all really proud of what she has achieved. Her dad told us: "It's amazing, when the pandemic started we thought Strictly Cymru would have to stop. We had such big expectations: we saw that Inga had finally found her passion. Thanks to doing the lessons online, everything was possible. I can only imagine how important it was for other competitors who had the motivation to keep on dancing and that feeling of being part of a community. Inga is very happy."



Challenge Cymru

With your help, we raised £18,500 to connect disabled people to their loved ones

Challenge Cymru was coordinated with the aim of raising funds to buy digital technology, to reduce loneliness and isolation for disabled people in Wales. 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.

Over 750 donors supported 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.



Scan the QR code to watch one of our residents using the EyeGaze in Danybryn!

A Globally Responsible Wales



National Outcomes

In our wider work, we demonstrate a commitment to global resilience, wellbeing and economies. 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 offer training and consultancy support to businesses in Wales on disability awareness and they can become more inclusive disability confident employers.

We always want to ensure that any decisions we make in Wales are also beneficial to our wider work in the UK, as well as further afield.

We demonstrate our commitment to the wellbeing of the people we support on a daily basis through all of our programmes and support services. The disabled people we support have a voice through every branch of our work in Wales.

In 2019, Welsh Government published its National Outcomes Framework for people who need care and support and carers who need support. These outcomes set a benchmark for all future delivery in Wales for social care and supporting services.

We are committed to ensuring the best outcomes for the people we support and collecting meaningful evidence of this so we can share with our networks, supporters, and Welsh Government.

Can Do

Can Do regularly collects feedback from participants in Wales on their progress towards their personal goals and national outcomes. Below are the national outcomes that Can Do delivers under:

National Outcomes Indicator	Programme Outcomes
I speak for myself and contribute to the decisions that affect my life or have someone who can do it for me.	446 people reported an increase in self confidence.
I can learn and develop to my full potential.	378 have developed and built independent living skills. 349 people reported that they have learnt leadership skills.
I contribute towards my social life and can be with the people that I choose to belong.	390 people reported that they have become a befriender and have built relationships with other people.
I feel valued in society.	446 people reported to have raised awareness of disability in their communities.
I engage and make a contribution to my community.	406 people are more confident taking part in activities in their local communities.

Strictly Cymru

Strictly Cymru is Wales' first and only inclusive dance competition.

National Outcomes Indicator	Programme Outcomes
I engage and make a contribution to my community.	Upskilled staff, participants and support workers. Volunteer and supporter hours: 638 Increased connection to the community through virtual methods.
I am healthy and active and do the things to keep myself healthy.	Improved health and wellbeing of residents who engaged.
I can learn and develop to my full potential.	Improved staff and residents' understanding of technology. Gained new skills and confidence.
I contribute towards my social life and can be with the people that I choose.	Participants reported that they now attend more activities in the community.

Together As One

Together As One is a website booking system for individuals in receipt of direct payments that connects disabled people to a range of activities in Wales, opportunities to learn new skills, and connects them with support in their local area.

National Outcomes Indicator	Programme Outcomes
I know and understand what care, support and opportunities are available and use these to help me achieve my well-being.	Programme participants report a greater understanding of support available and how to access it.
I am treated with dignity and respect and treat others the same. I speak for myself and contribute to the decisions that affect my life or have someone who can do it for me.	Programme delivery is focused on empowering individuals to choose the care and support they receive. Individuals have reported greater independence when receiving direct payments.
I engage and make a contribution to my community.	Individuals have greater confidence when accessing activities in their community.
I am healthy and active and do things to keep myself healthy.	Individuals feel more motivated to get involved with activities happening in their local area.

Changing Futures

Changing Futures empowers those who are over 18 with a work-limiting health condition and are not in employment, education or training in Swansea, Bridgend or Neath Port Talbot.

National Outcomes Indicator	Programme Outcomes
I am supported to work.	Bespoke employment training and placement guides participants.
I can learn and develop to my full potential.	Programme tailored to individual aims and goals.
My individual circumstances are considered.	Participants receive bespoke employment training tailored to their needs.
I engage and make a contribution to my society.	Many go on to complete further volunteering or training within the community.

Director for Wales Afternote

I am delighted to conclude our second Wales-specific impact report, which again highlights the tremendous work we are doing in Wales to enable people to live, learn and work as independently as they choose.

I am incredibly grateful to our staff across Wales and our fantastic volunteers, and would like to thank every single one of them for their efforts over the past year. You are what makes us an organisation to be proud of.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our reach and influence have continued to grow, thanks to our pioneering efforts in adapting the way we work on behalf of disabled people.

It's this work which keeps me positive about the future, knowing that for all the challenges that have been thrown at us, the unbeatable spirit of our staff and volunteers will enable us to continue delivering meaningful societal change.

We are passionate about our work, and we should be proud to be passionate. Behind the numbers of the various statistics listed in this report, there are individual lives enriched and changed for the better. Together we make a difference.

Glyn Meredith, Director for Wales



Want to get involved?

Please contact our policy and campaigns officer Thomas Pinder

 Thomas.Pinder@leonardcheshire.org

 [@LeonardCheshireWales](https://www.facebook.com/LeonardCheshireWales)

 [@LCCymru](https://twitter.com/LCCymru)

[leonardcheshire.org](https://www.leonardcheshire.org)

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