

# Voluntary Voice

Summer 2020

GAVO's magazine for the Voluntary & Community Sector in Gwent

*'I Gymunedau, gyda Chymunedau'*



*'For Communities, With Communities'*

It's been amazing to see the resilience, passion and community spirit shine through these challenging times!

Llanhilleth Institute gave away 2,400 activity packs and packed lunches for free, to local children as they couldn't deliver their usual Summer Holidays programme!



Facilitating, encouraging,  
enabling & empowering the  
Third Sector across Gwent.

[www.gavo.org.uk](http://www.gavo.org.uk)



Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations  
Cymdeithas Mudiadau Gwirfoddol Gwent

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**Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of GAVO**

**Mission Statement:** To support, facilitate and broker positive change in the well-being of people and communities through collaborative approaches.



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## From the Chief Executive Officer...

### Welcome to the Summer 2020 Edition of Voluntary Voice

There has been plenty for the Third Sector to be proud about during this Summer period, which we are pleased to share with you in this Voluntary Voice edition.

Even though we are still working and living in a World that has been required to rapidly change due to the Global Pandemic, COVID-19, we as a Sector continue to evolve together, continue to provide a valued service and continue to positively support our Communities.

The Volunteering effort is still at the forefront of Community support and I am confident that, even though we are still manoeuvring through uncharted territory, Volunteers and the Third Sector in general will continue, as always, to be a strong part of the support for people in the coming months.

Third Sector Organisations and Groups are actively trying to get back into Community Centres and buildings in order to engage with their Communities in the positive ways like before lockdown and our GAVO teams are

here to help, support and guide you on this, in the best way possible but I know, getting back to any type of "normal" comes with difficulties and hurdles.

Since the previous edition, GAVO's engagement with Public Services has ensured the voice of the Sector, speaking on both positive and negative learning from our Communities, has been heard. Issues in regards to Organisations not being able to get back to the old "normal" are being raised and understood, but as a Sector we need to, as I know we are, be open to change to cope with these difficulties.

The last 7 months since my appointment, I have seen first-hand how great we can be as a Third Sector and how we learn from our experiences and this fills me with confidence that we can continue to evolve and support in many new ways whilst moving forward through this terrible pandemic.

So enjoy the edition, embrace the positivity and above all, stay safe and please check our website for advice, guidance and up to date information.

*Stephen*



# Our Website Funding Page Refresh

We are continually working on the GAVO website to improve its functionality, accessibility and overall appearance; over the last month we have focused on refreshing our Funding page ([www.gavo.org.uk/funding](http://www.gavo.org.uk/funding)) as it was becoming a big wall of text.



With so many different funding opportunities, and each one containing a lot of accompanying information, we needed to make sure they were more clearly separated.

We opted for a visual approach; using a grid with related images – when you click on an image it will then take you to that funding opportunity's page on our website (or direct to the relevant external site) for the full details.

## Funding Opportunities (including those we administer)



For advice and support, get in touch with your local Third Sector Development Manager:

<b>Huw Lewis</b> Blaenau Gwent Telephone: 07483 128059 Email: <a href="mailto:huw.lewis@gavo.org.uk">huw.lewis@gavo.org.uk</a>	<b>Gina Jones</b> Caerphilly Telephone: 07483 128085 Email: <a href="mailto:gina.jones@gavo.org.uk">gina.jones@gavo.org.uk</a>	<b>Alison Palmer</b> Caerphilly Telephone: 07483 128089 Email: <a href="mailto:alison.palmer@gavo.org.uk">alison.palmer@gavo.org.uk</a>
<b>Joanne Gillard</b> Monmouthshire	<b>Mandy Moore</b> Monmouthshire & Newport	<b>Jane Shatford</b> Newport

Hovering over an image in the grid will show the funding opportunity 'title' and a brief description, to help you choose which funding to look at in more detail.

When you click on any of the images it will open the link in a new tab, so you don't lose the funding opportunities grid.

For example, when you click on the image for 'Grassroots Funding' it will take you to this page, where you can find further details on our small grants for grassroots voluntary groups.

The grid will be updated as funding opportunities close and new ones become available.

For those that have numerous rounds or are available annually, they will remain on the grid but have 'CLOSED' on them; for those that are only available for a fixed time, they will be removed shortly after they come to an end.

## Local Small Grant Schemes - Caerphilly & Newport

GAVO is pleased to have been able to secure a number of small grant schemes for grassroots voluntary groups in the Caerphilly area and one in the Newport area. Details of each scheme appear below, please note that these have resulted from solar or wind farm schemes, so are geographically focused. Application forms and guidance are available for each scheme.



**Solarplicity Community Benefit Fund**

The village of Croespenmaen. (specific geographical area applies, please contact Gina Jones to ascertain eligibility)

£79,000 available.

[Guidance Notes](#)

[Application Form](#)



**Gildemeister Energy Solutions Community Benefit Fund**

Areas within the Argoed/Crumlin ward as specified on the map

£27,000 available, Maximum grant £2,000.

[Guidance Notes](#)

[Application Form](#)



**Darran Valley Wind Turbine Community Benefit Fund**

Supporting community activities in the Darran Valley area.

Maximum grant £1,000.

[Guidance Notes](#)

[Application Form](#)



**The Caerleon Sunshine Community Grant**

Lightsource SPV 209 Limited, which owns and operates a solar farm and associated equipment at Park Farm West solar farm at land to the west of Park Farm, Malthouse Lane, Caerleon, NP18 3PB, has committed to make an annual community payment of £1,000 per MW of installed capacity.

Based on the planned capacity of 3.91 MW, a total annual fund of £3,910 will be available.

[Guidance Notes](#) [Application Form](#)



Clicking on the 'Funding Wales' image at the top of the page will take you directly to the central funding search platform for Wales.

This allows you to search hundreds of grant and loan finance opportunities from local, national and international sources.

Searching and applying for funding can be a daunting task, if you need help or are feeling overwhelmed by the process, do get in touch with our friendly Community Development Team – each of our Third Sector Development Managers have many years' experience in the field and will be happy to support you.

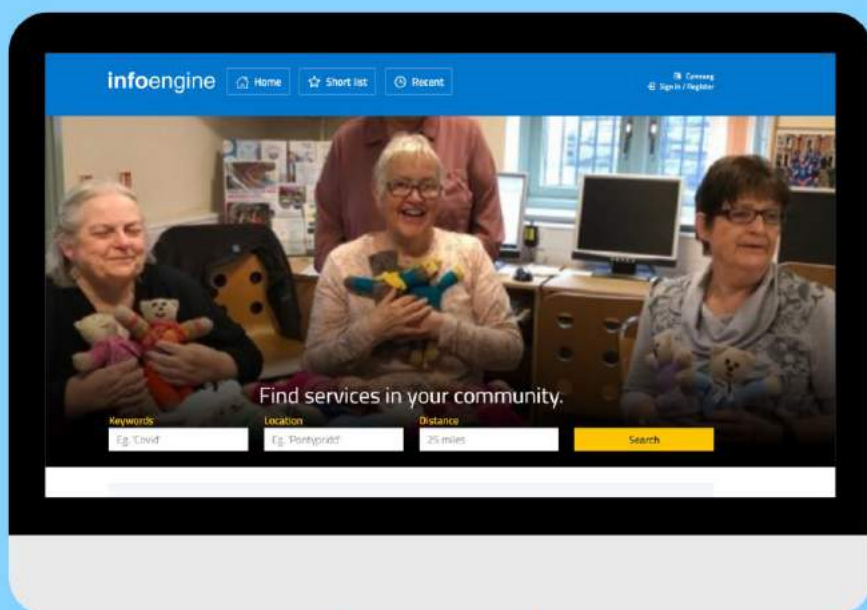
You can find their details at the bottom of the Funding page <https://www.gavo.org.uk/funding> or Third Sector Support page <https://www.gavo.org.uk/third-sector-support> you'll also find lots of other useful information on governance etc.



# Infoengine – Are You Promoting Your Services?

## infoengine

Have you registered on infoengine, Wales' online directory of Third Sector services?



Registering your Group / Organisation and your services, takes no more than 10 minutes but could make a huge difference to someone's life!

Infoengine is really useful for both Third Sector Organisations and the people who could benefit from your services. Your Organisation / Group can have its own **free** profile page, on which you can add your logo, photos and leaflets etc. and provide details of the services you deliver.

Join thousands of others and register today – there is now a short 'How To' Guide to help you through the **three simple steps**, which can be

found on our website: <https://www.gavo.org.uk/infoengine>

If you require any further help, email [claire.lewis@gavo.org.uk](mailto:claire.lewis@gavo.org.uk) or your local GAVO Third Sector Development Manager

### 1 Create an account



Go to: [www.infoengine.wales](http://www.infoengine.wales) and click Register now

#### Register your service

Join the premier directory of third sector services in Wales.  
Simply create your organisation in infoengine and list the services you provide.

[Register now >](#)

### 2 Add your organisation



Once you click create account, you will be asked what type of account you require. To add your organisation details, select the yes option

Thank you for registering with infoengine. Your account is now set up.

Do you work for an organisation and want to add your information to infoengine?

☐ No, I want to save information to create shortlists

☒ Yes, I want to register my organisations information on infoengine

### 3 Add your service



You need to add at least one service to your organisations account for it to appear on infoengine, if your service is the same as your organisation you can copy the information across.

Just like for creating an organisation you can add the details of service name, description and contact details

# Helping ABUHB Deliver Home-Based Support Packages

It was proposed that Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) deliver a home-based support package for those who have existing health conditions that require ongoing management during the pandemic.

The well-regarded "Education Programmes for Patients" (often referred to as 'EPP') was an obvious choice as it was already an established pathway for meeting the aims of supporting patients in the community. Therefore, plans to convert the existing face-to-face courses to virtual courses that could be delivered online were commenced by GAVO's EPP Team, to enable participation from home during COVID-19, when community-based delivery wasn't possible.

The Home-Based Support Package aims to:

- Ensure the person's health conditions are adequately managed
- Encourage them to manage their condition(s) and undertake recommended activities
- Maintain their baseline cardiovascular and respiratory fitness
- Promote a good diet
- Promote and support mental wellbeing
- Work closely with Primary Care through Neighbourhood Cluster Networks (NCNs), supporting patients from their first point of contact with GP's
- EPP to deliver a complete support & health management programme via to patients with chronic health conditions in the comfort of their own home



It has been a new learning experience for our two EPP Co-ordinators, Jules & Sue, as well as their dedicated team of Volunteer Tutors, but also an exciting opportunity to use their problem solving skills in developing some wonderful virtual courses.

**We are currently delivering the following virtual wellbeing courses each month:**

- **Living with Chronic Pain** - 1.5 hour sessions over 6 weeks
- **Living with Long Term Health Conditions** - 1.5 hour sessions over 6 weeks
- **Living Well with Diabetes** - 1.5 hour sessions over 6 weeks
- **Cancer 'Thriving & Surviving'** - 1.5 hour sessions over 6 weeks
- **Stance Diabetic Footcare** - a single 1.5 hour session
- **Introduction to Self-Management** – a single 1.5 hour session

There will be an introductory session to accompany each course, so you can 'dip your toe in' to see if it's right for you.


**NB: You will need to be 17yrs+ to attend our courses.**

If you are interested in signing up for a virtual wellbeing course, please complete a Booking Form (which can be found here: <https://www.gavo.org.uk/epp>) and return to [jules.godden@gavo.org.uk](mailto:jules.godden@gavo.org.uk)

Do get in touch with Jules if you have any questions about the EPP project or any of its courses.

### Feeling stressed, anxious or overwhelmed?

**EPP Relaxation Sessions** ▶ **PLAY ALL**  
Relaxation Sessions created by the EPP Team at GAVO



**A Walk on the Beach** 9:48 GAVO  
**A Body Scan** 9:38 GAVO  
**Relax and Visualize** 13:40 GAVO  
**A Walk In The Country** 10:35 GAVO

Make sure to have a look at our wonderful Relaxation videos on our YouTube channel to give yourself a wellbeing boost! They have been thoughtfully created by our EPP Team (with the help of our IT Officer, Joe) during the lockdown period for everyone to enjoy – we hope you find them beneficial.

[EPP Relaxation Sessions - YouTube](#)

## Against All Odds – Getting People into Employment During a Pandemic

**GAVO's Communities for Work (CfW) and Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) Programmes in Blaenau Gwent, have continued to support people into work** *written by Rhian Padfield, Employability Programmes Delivery Manager*

Overcoming the challenges of working from home, on a Programme that relies heavily on face to face intervention, has not been easy, but the numbers of people who continue to be supported on the Programme is testament to the dedication and the resilience of our delivery team. They have had to face their own personal challenges, such as home schooling and supporting elderly relatives, while maintaining a very professional attitude to the positions they hold.

I believe that this determination and all of the planning that the staff have been involved in, will allow us to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people and the economy in Blaenau Gwent, so that we may respond to what we envisage being a 'surge' in those who will require our support.



While working from home has allowed the Mentors to maintain contact with their participants over the phone, the lack of face to face interaction has been difficult for them and for their participants, and the majority of participants who continue to be supported through Mentor caseloads, have not been required to meet the conditions of their client commitment and therefore have not been prioritising looking for work.



In addition to this, childcare has posed a major problem for participants with school and day care provisions all having closed, participants have not been able to go to work and instead have had to remain home and care for their children.

All staff have continued to contact community members through alternative methods (such as Facebook) while they have been working from home and have achieved some amazing results which have included engaging 188 people and supporting 75 into employment which equates to 40% (figures March – August 2020).

Below are two good news stories that demonstrate the positive impact our Employability Programmes have made during these difficult times.

### **Case Study No.1 (anonymous)**

#### **Summary**

This Participant self-referred at the start of 'lockdown', after she was made redundant from her 20-year plus retail position, due to the shop closing down. After being employed all her working life, the participant was left feeling anxious and vulnerable at the prospect of being unemployed.

#### **The Engagement**

This Participant self-referred to CfW at the start of lockdown after she was made redundant from her 20 year plus retail position due to the shop closing. The Participant has been employed all her working life, she explained she had been in employment for so long she had never had a formal interview, never had a CV and didn't know how to start looking for employment.

The Participant explained how apprehensive she was about searching for work. Despite having a vast knowledge in the world of retail and having an excellent work record, she explained how exposed and vulnerable she felt. The Participant was computer illiterate, she discussed how she had learnt to use the tills and the equipment she needed in work but didn't even know how to turn her own computer on.

The Mentor supported the Participant to set up an email address, produce a CV and Cover Letter and start uploading them and applying for jobs. The Participant's spirits were lifted when she started to get interviews - two in one week, one for a 15-hour post working locally in a large supermarket and one as an Assistant Manager working in a small store in Cardiff. A barrier fund was submitted to pay for the travel costs for the Participant to get to the interviews.



The Participant was invited to a work trial in Cardiff and after a week was offered the position. That same week she was offered the 15-hour post working locally. The Participant was unsure what to do as the travel to Cardiff was inconvenient but she was really enjoying the job and her colleagues were very accommodating. The Mentor discussed doing a better-off calculation to see how she would fair financially with both positons. The calculations worked out that with the travel costs to Cardiff, the Participant was only marginally better off working full time.

The Participant and Mentor discussed both options not only weighting up the costs and times of being in work but the job satisfaction working full time and the difference between working for a large supermarket and a smaller retail store. Weighing up all options the Participant decided she would rather go for the full time position. The mentor put in a barrier request to support the Participant for her travel costs for the first three months and for suitable work clothes to allow the Participant to start.

The Participant expressed how invaluable the support she was offered in a time where she felt very vulnerable.

## **Case Study No.2 (BT)**

### **Summary**

This good news story is such a positive outcome during what can only be described as uncertain times. Support from a Mentor and the CfW+ Programme was provided during a time when the country was still in a lockdown. Normal daily routines and lives were put on halt, however for many key workers, working on the front line during this pandemic, life went on. This story highlights how the support of the Programme was just as vital as it always has been, to support individuals into employment.

### **The Engagement**

BT was referred to the CfW+ Programme at the end of June 2020, having contacted our CfW+ Facebook page seeking support. BT was a Care Assistant for a local care company in Abertillery. She was on a 0-hour contract doing under 16 hours per week, hence her eligibility for the programme and the support it could provide to her.

In addition, BT was also a single parent to a child of school age, therefore like many she was also responsible for home-schooling, as well as juggling child care duties as best she could. BT was really keen to remain in her Care Assistant position, however as a non-driver, her workload and capacity was limited, as she had to rely on walking to the destinations. This therefore also meant she couldn't be offered full time work.

For BT, the biggest barrier stopping her from progressing into full time employment in a sector she really felt passionate about was the fact that she couldn't drive. Her hours were limited due to this but the demand for work was at its most prevalent.

BT had passed her theory test and actually had her own car, that was sat outside her house doing nothing. BT explained that despite having a car, she was supported to get this and now she just wasn't in a position to afford to pay for driving lessons.

After signing BT up as a participant of CFW +, completing the personal development plan and gaining a real understanding into her circumstances and ambitions. The Mentor sought out confirmation from her employer, that if she were to pass her driving test her hours would be increased as a result. This wasn't just that she would gain more hours on a '0-hour contract', we were seeking out a new contract where she would be guaranteed at least 16 hours per week.



After liaising with the employer, they confirmed via email that if BT were to pass her driving test they would in fact give her a new contract of at least 16 hours per week (however BT could take more hours if she wished per week and in the current situation the hours were most certainly there).

Over the past 6 months, the DVSA had put a stop to all driving lessons due to COVID 19. However, during August, with certain restrictions being lifted including the restarting of driving lessons as long as specific guidance was followed, it meant we could look into options for BT.

The Mentor liaised closely with a local driving instructor in the Abertillery area, who was re-starting lessons. He determined BT would need around 24 hours' worth of lessons (including her test time) and as BT was a key worker, the driving instructor was happy to complete the lessons as soon as possible.

With this confirmation, I was able to put together a barrier fund case to management that if the CFW+ could support her with the funding of her driving lessons, a local driving instructor would provide her with the amount of lessons they felt she would need and also book her into the practical test.

At the end of July, BT had her first driving lesson and over the next few weeks she completed her 24 hours' worth of lessons. By the beginning of August, I was informed by BT that her practical test had been booked for August 21<sup>st</sup> - BT sat her driving test and passed first time.

Such fantastic news for this determined individual. For BT it meant that she would now be able to increase her hours and start work full time.

BT was absolutely ecstatic and confirmed on 16<sup>th</sup> September that she had signed her new contract of at least 16 hours per week and had commenced this.

Writing this good news story has been so positive during a time where there is so much uncertainty. It highlights the sheer determination and motivation of this participant, working on the front line as a single mother during lockdown in a sector where people are at their most vulnerable and striving to increase her hours and be able to come off benefits. The CFW+ programmes versatility and support has now been able to open many more doors within the sector for this participant.

# Supporting Early Language Development From Afar

The COVID-19 pandemic, has seen a big shift in the ways we now need to support each other and communicate.

For GAVO's Early Language Team (funded through Flying Start and Families First), it was not about downing tools and waiting for the lockdown and restrictions to be lifted, we needed to find a way to continue the support for the families in Caerphilly County Borough.

If nothing else good comes from Coronavirus, then for many it has shown us how important communication is and that we live in a world of possibilities when it comes to communicating from afar.

If nothing else good comes from Coronavirus, then for many it has shown us how important communication is and that we live in a world of possibilities when it comes to communicating from afar.

In the first few months', families were contacted to ensure they knew people were still available and ready to listen. Additionally, the Project was part of a resource drop where hundreds of book and activity packs were delivered across the Borough to families with small children. A number of families identified in further need were dropped bags of creative materials, messy play and craft to ensure they could effectively engage with their children at home in a fun and stimulating way.

Families are also offered a more holistic support mechanism, tailored for their individual child and family circumstances, via Joint Support Plans. Families are able to share videos of their child and work one to one with a consistent member of staff, to improve the speech and language of their child.

These plans are in place of the usual group support and are being well received and already we are seeing the impact of small changes within the home environment on speech and language.



Each month families are offered email support via newly developed 'Supporting Speech and Language at Home' booklets which offer tips, activities and ideas for creating opportunities for



Lastly, the Project has a growing Facebook page, dedicated to the promotion of early language speech and language development. The @GAVOEarlyLanguageTeam page posts videos, tips, links and activities for supporting the early language of children in the early years and is available to everyone who likes the page. Many posts have been created by the Project staff who have taken to the screen to create videos to make key messages, songs, stories and sign come alive.



**GAVO Early Language Team**

@GAVOEarlyLanguage · Not a business

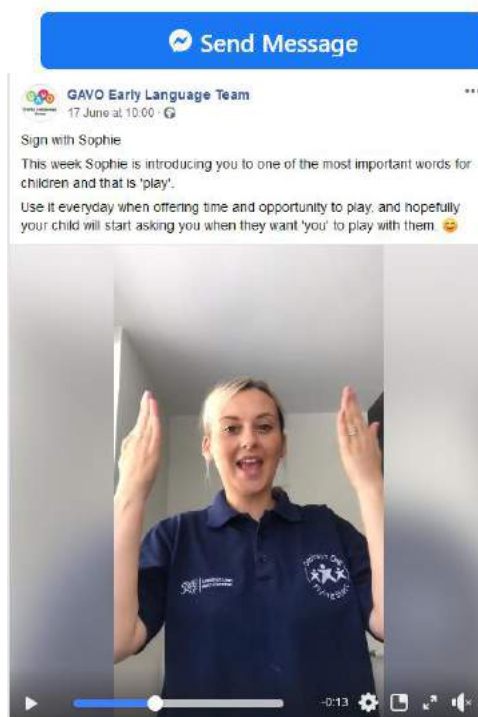


**GAVO Early Language Team**

25 September at 10:30 · 🌐

Song time with Linda

Come and have a sing song with Linda this morning - she has found a little friend!



A huge amount of credited should be given for the Project staff, who adapted so quickly and continue to change and adapt to meet individual needs of families. And a huge thank you and well done to all the families who continue to do their best with their children, in a time of such challenge and uncertainty.

If you have a child under 3 in Caerphilly and you would like support with their speech and language development, please feel free to contact us via email, phone or Facebook.

E: nicola.davies@gavo.org.uk lisa.brook@gavo.org.uk | M: 07415 348967

# An Update from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – The Grange University Hospital is Opening Early!

The Grange University Hospital will officially open mid-November this year, instead of the original planned date in March 2021.

The new facility based in Llanfrechfa, just outside Cwmbran, will provide emergency and urgent care, bringing together services previously provided at the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport and Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny.



The 60-acre site, will have a 471 bed capacity and feature a 24-hour emergency assessment facility, intensive care facilities, and comprehensive diagnostic facilities, inpatient beds for major emergencies and complex surgery and theatres.

Every household throughout Gwent will receive a leaflet during November which explains in more detail the changes that are happening when The Grange University Hospital opens.

Please get in touch with us via email: [engagement.abb@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:engagement.abb@wales.nhs.uk) if you have any questions about the Grange University Hospital or any of our other hospitals.

## Our website: [www.abuhb.nhs.wales](http://www.abuhb.nhs.wales)

**Check out 'Restarting Services'** – this section of the website is updated every Monday, with the latest information about services as they restart following the COVID-19 Pandemic. It also contains answers to the most Frequently Asked Questions.

## Facebook Live Sessions

Please keep an eye on the Health Board's Facebook Page for weekly 'Live Question & Answer' sessions. The next Q&A, taking place week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> October (2pm) will focus on Nevill Hall Hospital and the services that will be provided there, once the Grange University Hospital opens.

Please note that you don't need a Facebook account to watch these broadcasts – just visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/AneurinBevanHealthBoard>

The broadcasts remain on the Health Board's Facebook page after the live events, so people can watch them back.

We welcome contributions through the medium of Welsh.

## Can you help us share our messages?

Now, more than ever, we need **Community Champions**. We are looking for people within Gwent who can help the Health Board to raise awareness and share key messages as widely as possible as well as help to dispel any myths that exist regarding Health Services within the community.

Community Champions can come from a variety of backgrounds and represent a range of ages, cultures, genders, and professions. If you know anyone that is part of a social group within your community or would just like to be part of our Network and receive regular information, please get in touch or pass on our details and we will be excited to have new Champions on board!

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS UPDATE**

**If you have any questions, please contact the Engagement Team:**

**Telephone: 01633 435908 Email: [engagement.abb@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:engagement.abb@wales.nhs.uk)**

## Caerphilly Miners' Centre for the Community – excellent example of resilience & community spirit



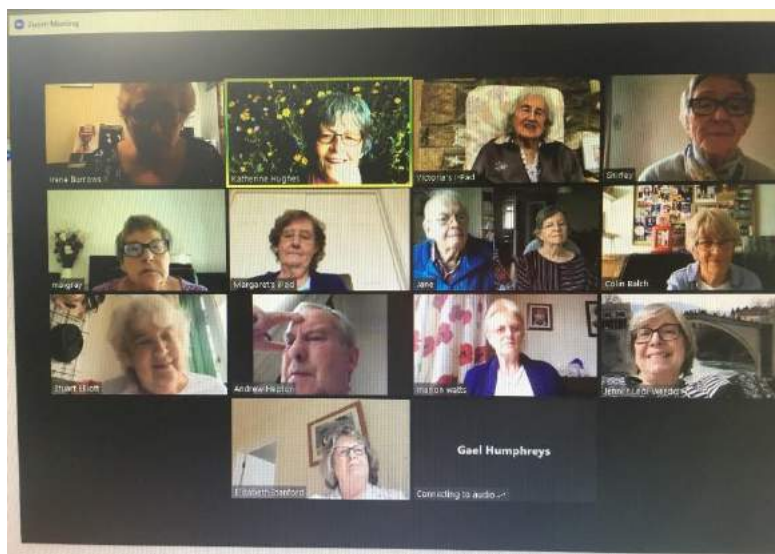
Established in 2008, they are a group of local residents with a common aim of restoring the old Caerphilly Miners' and bringing new life to it, for the benefit of their community. They are working to create a local place where community members can enjoy themselves, feel part of the community, learn from each other, invest in their family's future, and celebrate their heritage. They aim to make a positive difference to people whatever their age or circumstance.

They provide a wide range of affordable and accessible activities to the community, offer opportunities for volunteering and provide community space for hire. Activities are funded through grants, room hire, activity charges and the community café. Last year they supported 61 volunteers who donated 7,500 hours.

The Health & Wellbeing grant awarded 2019-20 aimed to expand and broaden volunteering opportunities, train volunteers, create better individual records and opportunities for social networking.

This paid off through lockdown, with volunteers meeting regularly on Zoom and the Elderberries Planning group ran a buddy scheme for 60+ older people. They set up a knitting project which encouraged 40 + volunteers from across the county to knit 200 rectangles for blankets. Their marketing volunteers spent 40+ hours a week, upgrading the website and regularly updating social media and stewards, not shielding, checked the Centre on a daily rota.





Many of the committee had to learn how to use new platforms to communicate with members and the community e.g. creating virtual discussions through Zoom, especially for specific planning groups of volunteers and intend to use these to plan for Lockdown exit in order to reengage the community.

For those, not as technically active, they set up a Buddying scheme where staff and volunteers telephoned people in the community that were more isolated (for example their 62 Elderberries, cinema club and chair exercise classes), and regularly texted or phoned those community members and volunteers who did not respond to emails.

The gardening group recruited new members and planned future work. The caterers exchanged recipes and the crafters created a craft wall. Their volunteering project has had a positive impact on people's mental health.



They also received resilience funding from WCVA and health and social care funding from GAVO during the Covid-19 lockdown.

“ GAVO has helped us in many ways during lockdown, especially with information and resources, guidance on funding, supporting our volunteer efforts and especially in helping us to apply for capital funding to expand our premises. They were 'there' for us throughout lockdown and they helped us to move forward to return to the centre. Funding from GAVO enabled us to better support the wellbeing of our community and volunteers.

The information, guidance, funding advice and practical support have made us more robust and resilient with capacity to address many of the Covid-19 challenges. Thank you!

Caerphilly Miners' Centre for the Community

# Llanhilleth Institute – Keeping Active During COVID Summer 2020

Each year, Llanhilleth Institute offers an extensive programme of activities, trips and workshops for local children during the six-week summer holiday. The programme usually offers free activities for children of all ages, including drama, cookery, craft, sports and fitness and provides free lunches for children to help tackle 'Holiday Hunger'.

With the challenges presented by COVID-19 and lockdown in 2020, the team at Llanhilleth Institute knew that they would need to take a fresh approach to working with local children this year. Laura Price, Children's Development Officer, said: **"We had to close our Clwb Llan children's centre in March and we also knew that local children would be missing our usual holiday programme - which has been a summer highlight for several years".**

The programme ran, Mon-Fri for 5 weeks over the summer holiday.

The dedicated workers devised a weekly programme of children's activity packs, also differentiated by age, which they collected from the Main Hall at the Institute with a parent so that social distancing could be observed.

On a Monday, the children received Art and Craft packs, Tuesday was a Gardening and Nature Pack, Wednesday was a Cookery pack, Thursday was a Sport Pack and each Friday was a book club, in which children were given a book to keep and read at home.

Amongst other things, children painted pebbles, went on bug hunts, held family sports days, made chocolate cookies, pitta pizzas and designed their own pasta salads, made bird feeders, wind chimes and dream catchers.







The children were all given a starter pack of a water bottle, hand sanitiser and a stationery pack including glue, scissors, felt tips etc. so that they had the materials to complete the daily activities.

Each child was also given a free packed lunch each day.

140 children were registered and approximately 85 children attended the Institute each day to collect the packs. The children and their parents completed the activity packs at home and often posted pictures on the Clwb Llan Facebook page.

**During the five weeks, we gave away 2,400 activity packs and 2,400 free packed lunches to local children.**

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the activity packs were such a success that Clwb Llan at Llanhilleth Institute is now delivering weekly after-school activity packs for St Illtyds pupils during the autumn term and we will be delivering a similar during

the October half-term, with daily themed packs being provided for all local children who enrol on the scheme.

Evaluations were collected from all children and parents, along with larger community surveys. One local parent talked about the real impact the scheme had in Llanhilleth:

“ Having Clwb Llan in the Institute this summer has generated a 'buzz', which is really needed and appreciated by all the children and parents who have collected packs. It has helped children to see that it is safe to go outside when all the correct precautions are taken. ”

Other parents also mentioned that it helped their children, who had been out of school for months, to get back into a routine of getting up at a regular time and engage in informal but structured activities and their children were more prepared to return to school in September as a result of the scheme.

**Hayley Davies**, Children's Development Officer, Llanhilleth Institute



# Need Advice or Support with Hearing Loss? – ‘Live Well with Hearing Loss’ can help you

## One in six people in Wales is living with hearing loss.

The Live Well with Hearing Loss service supports people with all forms of hearing loss, deafness and tinnitus to access services, connect with their community and improve their knowledge around using devices to help with managing difficult situations.

We can give you tips how to hear better on the phone, or how to reduce the overall volume of the TV. If you are a hearing aid user, (NHS or private), we can instruct you how to use and maintain your hearing aids and demonstrate equipment that may support you in using them appropriately to your needs.

If you are working/seeking employment, we may be able to offer alternative solutions to work-based issues. We have regular contact with NHS audiology departments all over Wales, so if we don't know the answer, we know someone who will!

## Can you help us?

We are currently recruiting befriending volunteers. The aim of our Befriending service is to support people with hearing loss to build up their confidence, reduce feelings of isolation and reconnect with and feel valued members of their local communities.

Befrienders may accompany someone to the shops, help them video call their family and friends, or simply have a chat over a cup of tea or coffee in their homes.

All volunteers will be DBS checked to make sure they are suitable for the role. Each of our service users will have met a staff member of the team prior to the visit of our volunteers.

Whether you need help or you know someone who does, we are here for you! Get in touch with us and our friendly team will get back to you.

Live Well with Hearing loss is a newly funded initiative funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by Action on Hearing Loss Cymru (formerly RNID) in partnership with Centre of Sign-Sight-Sound.

## Get in touch

Email: [Livewell.cymru@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:Livewell.cymru@hearingloss.org.uk)

Call or text: 07551 635 439

Write to us: Action on Hearing Loss Cymru, Anchor Court North, Keen Road, Cardiff. CF24 5JW



# JobSense – Offering Pre-employment Support to Adults with Sensory Loss



Having read through the previous Spring edition of Voluntary Voice, it is amazing to see that so many services have come together, to continue supporting communities in the best way we can. At ELITE Supported Employment, we have experienced similar positive outcomes during this difficult and worrying time and continued to operate JobSense project.

JobSense is a three-year project and ELITE works with partners, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru and the Centre of Sign-Sight-Sound (COS), to support individuals with Sensory Loss to access employability opportunities. It is fully funded by WEFO (Welsh European Funding Office) and we aim to enhance and upskill people over 25 who are blind or visually impaired, economically inactive and/or long term unemployed, providing specialist support to enable them to enter employment, or move closer to the labour market through appropriate training.

ELITE is continuing to operate its pre-employment support to new and current participants, using a range of technology to maintain accessible contact and provide employability support. We hold a weekly Job Club on Microsoft Teams and/or a telekit conference call depending on individual preference and use this as an opportunity for participants to meet in a group and share concerns. To date we have held interactive sessions on Creating Online Profiles, Customer Service, Wellbeing and Exercise, Equality and Diversity, Confidence building and many more topics.

## Example Participant feedback on sessions:

“ I thought the session was helpful during this time when I have low confidence. ”

“ It provided me with ways in which to build confidence and help me relax with the mindfulness exercises. ”

“ Training was effective in that it contributed towards health and safety competency for employability and encouraged a greater awareness of the kinds of accidents and other causes of ill health. ”

ELITE staff are homeworking and make regular individual telephone and video conferences calls to continue building on our participants' employment skills and confidence. We also provide support with people's mental health and wellbeing at this difficult time.

It is essential that our current participants are aware of all the recent guidelines for staying safe and are informed of other available from organisations, so they do not become socially isolated. Our team are friendly and encouraging, helping our participants to stay motivated and ready for when the restrictions are lifted, giving them the confidence and skills to find suitable employment soon.

We are also keeping in touch with organisations in all areas to stay informed of community services and we continue to provide a person-centred service to new and well-established participants. Jane McCann from Sight life has referred several participants to the project from the Cardiff area and has seen first-hand how much of an impact the project is making to people's lives:

"The ELITE programme in Cardiff is hugely successful and there is a very high demand for it. Our members who are currently working with ELITE speak very highly of it indeed. They appreciate the regular contact; the structure and it is a pleasure to see their confidence grow. Those who have finished on the project say how much they miss it afterwards, but they are noticeably better able to self-advocate than before, as well as more confident to engage in leisure activities too."

Rob from Cardiff, has been on the JobSense project since last year and since then, has completed further training to compliment his impressive CV, including a First Aid course, and is now a well-established Volunteer Administrator.

"Employers are impressed with applicants who have the ability to rise to a challenge and to persevere. Volunteering has improved my communication with colleagues and supervisors and has allowed me to work as part of a team, stay organised and meet deadlines. This has ensured I gained on-the-job experience that I could potentially leverage into a future paid opportunity comprising interests that I've never formally pursued before.

When looking for paid work and requiring help with job searching, this scheme has been helpful because of training and volunteering. JobSense has reconnected me with local services and communities through working and educational related routes. This project understands that everyone is unique, with different needs and requirements, impacting on their step into the world of employment, education or training".

Amey, Employment Advisor from JobSense says "At first we were like everyone else, unsure of how it was going to work out, whether people would want to stay on programme or if we'd be able to facilitate our support effectively. We certainly didn't expect to have any new starts on programme whilst in lockdown, as we were unable to meet face to face, so we were delighted when we did! We have also just had a job start, which we are over the moon about."

It is important to us to make sure our specialised support is still in place for people who need it. If you are aware of anyone with sensory loss looking for work who would benefit from the JobSense project, please do get in touch. We welcome new referrals to our program and our Employment Advisors are always willing to discuss individual cases to assess eligibility.

### **Contact details**

**Newport/Monmouthshire:** Amey Chappell [achappell@elitesea.co.uk](mailto:achappell@elitesea.co.uk)

**Vale of Glamorgan/Cardiff:** Maxine Levett [mlevett@elitesea.co.uk](mailto:mlevett@elitesea.co.uk)

**South Powys:** Tina Hewitt [thewitt@elitesea.co.uk](mailto:thewitt@elitesea.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://elitesea.co.uk/our-projects/jobsense/>





# The Parent Champions Scheme

When lockdown and the need to work from home became a sudden reality The Parent Network (Caerphilly) had just been about to embark on training interested parents to become Parent Champions (PCs).

**What are they I hear you ask?** Well the Scheme was originally set up in London, so that parents could pass on messages and tell other parents about their experience of early years' childcare. Our Scheme has been going for about a year or so. We had previously trained up to 8 PCs, but it was only a small part of our work and most had gone back to work or study or not able to continue in the role.

We had also decided to adapt the Scheme to enable parents not only to signpost to childcare and early years' education, but to services and also giving messages like 30 hours' free childcare if parents were working or telling about Flying Start Services and health related messages such as Minor/Common Ailments Scheme.

Fast-forward to January this year, where we had a dedicated 5-hours to devote to the Scheme and a member of staff supporting me and we were keen to get started improving the Scheme.

(Left to right)

**Me, Leanne Chapman and Leanne Williams on the way to the Parent Champions Conference, London**



Myself and two members of staff had been invited to the PC Conference in London, early March, to give an overview of the collaborative work we were doing in Caerphilly Borough and to share good practice – **we were totally blown away with the interest people had in the work The Parent Network was doing.**

This really fired us up and we left energised and ready to train more PCs – this was a week before lockdown, after short delay we set about training the parents. Fortuitously, we already had active chat groups going and had an idea of the number of parents who were interested. Unfortunately, in our discussions, parents were not that keen to use apps like Zoom for several reasons –could eat into their data, which was needed for home-schooling; children using tablets, computers & laptops for their schoolwork or not being able to spend a block of time training due to other commitments, including home-schooling.

Together, with the parents, it was decided the preferred method was using our established Messenger chat groups, supplemented with the training guides and workbooks from the Scheme. Another issue was that the books were written for England, so alternative information was needed to cover the specific differences in childcare and education in Wales.

A group of 22 parents and four staff started out training; the group was split into four more manageable groups. Each group had a mix of staff, current volunteers and Parent Network members so they could support one another too.

Each day we would pose a question or two and find out what was known and discuss it, writing down answers, so that I could pick up any issues or people struggling and find which topics needed more in-depth training.

Although we were active during the day, some parents were unable to comment due to childcare needs, so they were able to answer when convenient for them. I also carried out a number of one-to-one sessions supporting those who had been quieter on the chat or needed more support.

Despite parents initially saying they couldn't commit to a 3-hour block of training, even if split down further into more manageable blocks, the prospective PCs were fully engaged and committed to the process and did far more than 3 hours training.

We received positive feedback from the parents, the flexibility allowed them to contribute when it was convenient for them and while they would prefer face-to-face learning, they felt this was a good comprehensive option. Also, due to the time it took to go through the course, the parents bonded and gained confidence, and improved their IT skills too.

**We now have 22 new Parent Champions**, who are already signposting other parents to services, despite the lockdown. We are looking forward to meeting in person again and further training opportunities and other Champion roles.

Once this cohort has bedded in, we will look to train up more PCs. 'Watch this space' for more news on how they get on and how they develop their roles further.



**The Parent Network  
Caerphilly County Borough**



# New Multi-Lingual BAME Helpline

Many BAME organisations in Wales have witnessed increased service demand from BAME community members impacted by Covid-19 needing advice and support around a range of areas. A partnership of organisations working together has launched a brand new national multi-lingual BAME telephone helpline to respond to this demand.

EYST, working in partnership with Women Connect First, Henna Foundation, ProMo Cymru, Wales TUC, and key BAME Stakeholders has received funding from the Welsh Government via the Voluntary Services Emergency Fund managed by WCVA to deliver the helpline, initially as a six-month pilot project.

The helpline provides an accessible first port of call for information on a range of specialist, mainstream and community organisations, with call handlers speaking a range of community languages.



**New Multi-lingual BAME Helpline**

**For support on a number of issues such as:**

Employment & welfare | Education | Housing  
Personal safety | Health issues

**Available Monday - Friday, 10:30am to 2:30pm**

**Call 03002 225720 or SMS text 07537 432415**

**For more information, visit [www.bame.wales](http://www.bame.wales)**

 **Lein Gymorth BAME Cymru**  
**BAME Helpline Wales**



Tim Cymorth  
Lleiafrifodd Ethnig  
& Ieuencid Cymru



Building on years of experience working with partners, the helpline will provide an opportunity for increased partnership working to meet the needs from the BAME community during the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond.



**Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt welcomed the new initiative stating** "I'm delighted to be supporting the new BAME Helpline through the Voluntary Services Emergency Fund. Its launch will help remove language and cultural barriers to ensure all communities in Wales can access the support they need.

Welsh Government is committed to creating a more equal Wales, and we're working to break down the long-standing inequalities that still exist. We're currently inviting BAME organisations to work with us to develop a Race Equality Action Plan, which aims to implement and embed the systemic change we want to see."

**Wales TUC General Secretary, Shavanah Taj said** "Many workers in Wales from BME backgrounds, have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, due to a range of long-standing socio-economic factors. A high number of anonymous reports into the Wales TUC whistleblowing site and grassroots community feedback, demonstrated the need for trade unions to play a key role in accessing often hard to reach workers, not covered by union recognition.

More often than not, BME workers are left feeling ostracised, vulnerable, exploited, work zero hours, on precarious contracts faced with bad bosses, unfair and dangerous work practices with no recourse to public funds. We hope to change this through working with EYST and other organisations involved in this important project. All workers deserve to be safe and protected at work with a strong voice at the negotiating table but to do this they first need to understand how to access their rights at work."

## Organisations Involved

**EYST** works to uplift and empower BAME young people, individuals, families, refugees and asylum seekers throughout Wales, by offering targeted and culturally sensitive support with many concerns including education, employment and health <http://eyst.org.uk/>

**Women Connect First** empowers BAME women in South Wales and helps them realise their full potential through training, volunteering, advice, advocacy and counselling <http://www.womenconnectfirst.org.uk/>

The **Henna Foundation** enhances the lives of Muslim women, children and families by offering culturally sensitive support and acting as brokers between marginalised sections of the Muslim community and wider society <http://hennafoundation.org/home>

**ProMo Cymru** works to ensure young people and communities are informed and heard, using technology to create and strengthen links between people and public and Third Sector services <https://www.promo.cymru/>

**Wales TUC** represents around 400,000 workers in campaigns for fair deals at work and social justice at home and abroad <https://www.tuc.org.uk/wales>