

Easy Read

Cross Party Group on Learning Disability

September

24

Notes from the 10th meeting on 24 September 2024. The meeting was on Zoom.



People who came to the meeting

- **Sioned Williams MS** – Member of the Senedd, Chair
- **Sara Pickard** – Mencap Cymru, co-Secretary
- **Samatha Williams** – Learning Disability Wales, co-Secretary
- **Andrea Meek** – Cardiff University
- **April Samson** – Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- **Davina Carey-Evans** – Family Fund
- **Debra Cooper** – Green Party
- **Emma Alcock** – Cwm Taf People First
- **James Dash** – Pembrokeshire People First
- **James Radcliffe** – NAS Cymru
- **Jennie Lewis** – Bangor?
- **Joe Powell** – All Wales People First
- **Julian Hallett** – Down's Syndrome Association
- **Julie Isaac-Evans** – TSW Training
- **Kelly Stuart** – All Wales People First
- **Lucy Hinksman** – Pembrokeshire People First
- **Lucy O'Leary** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Marg McNeil** – SEE Around Britain

- **Michael Fullerton** – Achieve Together
- **Sam Taylor** – RCT People First
- **Simon Rose** – Learning Disability Wales
- **Steven Crane-Jenkins** – BASW Cymru
- **Tracey Drew** – All Wales People First
- **Tracy Thomas** – Pembrokeshire People First
- **VictoriaWaller** – Gig Buddies Cymru
- **Walter Owino** – Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- **Zoe Richards** – Learning Disability Wales



People who said they could not come to the meeting

- **Grace Coppock** – All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers
- **Humie Webb**
- **Mark Isherwodd MS** – Member of the Senedd
- **Sian Owen**

About this document



This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained in a box below the word. You can see what all the words in **blue** mean on **page 16**.

1. Welcome and introductions



Sioned Williams is a Member of the Senedd and **Chair** of the Cross Party Group.

The **Chair** of the group is the person in charge of the meetings.

Sara Pickard works for Mencap Cymru and is co-Secretary of the Cross Party Group.



The **Secretary** is the person or organisation in charge of organising the group. For example, booking meetings and sending out agendas.

A **co-Secretary** is when more than 1 person shares the job of **Secretary**.

Sioned and Sara welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Video presentation about the My Vote, My Voice campaign



Sara told the group that the My Vote, My Voice team were very sorry but they did not have time to make a video to show at the meeting.

3. Presentation about people's experiences of voting in the UK General Election



James Dash and Lucy Hinksman from **Pembrokeshire People First** talked about what voting in the UK general election was like for people with a learning disability.



They made a survey to ask members of Pembrokeshire People First about voting in the UK general election.



James talked about the survey and what people had said.



Out of the 19 people who answered the survey, 11 people voted in the election and 8 people did not vote.



3 people voted by post and 8 people voted in a **polling station**.

A **polling station** is a place where you go to vote in elections. It might be in a school, church hall or somewhere else in your local community.



Here are some of the reasons people did **not** vote:



- Did not know how to vote or who to vote for.



- Not interested in politics.



- Do not trust politicians. They say 1 thing but do the opposite.



- Do not understand how to vote.



- Tried to do postal vote but it did not work.



10 people said they could vote independently and 2 people said they could not.



8 people had support and 4 people did not have support to vote.



This is what people said about what it was like to vote in the election:



- It was simple. I felt it was well organised.



- It was overcrowded. There were too many people which made me anxious.



- I enjoyed it.



- I just ticked any box because I did not know who to vote for.



- It was ok.



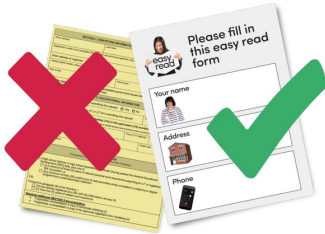
- I was worried that I would forget my ID. And I was worried about carrying my ID around in public.



Here are some of the ways people said voting could be made easier:



- Easy read information about voting.



- Making everything easier to read and understand, like:

- Forms
- Postal vote
- Polling card
- Ballot paper.

- Easy read **manifestos**.



A **manifesto** is a list of things that a person or political party says they will do if they win the election.



- Support for people with a learning disability at the **polling station**.



- Making the signs in the **polling station** clear and easy to understand.



- Giving people with a learning disability more time to vote.

4. Questions and ideas



After the presentation some people asked questions and shared their ideas.



Joe Powell from All Wales People First said that disabled people's issues are not mentioned in the **manifestos** of UK political parties.



Sioned said that people with a learning disability need to feel that politicians care about the issues that affect them and listen to them.



They need to believe that being involved in politics and voting in elections can make a difference to their lives.



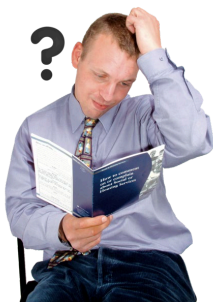
Sioned said that the group could write to the new UK Government to tell them what people with a learning disability said about making voting more accessible.



Kelly from All Wales People First said that some of their members said they needed better information about who to vote for in elections.



Some people also did not get their postal votes until very late so they did not have enough time to fill them in and send them back.



Victoria from Gig Buddies Cymru said the information that comes from local councils about elections is not easy to understand.



A parent said that she supported her daughter to vote at a polling station. But she was made to feel like she had done something wrong by the staff.



There should be clear information in the polling stations about how you can support someone to vote.



Sioned said that there are going to be lots of changes to Senedd elections soon.



Sioned will write to the Minister and the Electoral Commission to ask what they are doing to make sure everyone understands the changes.



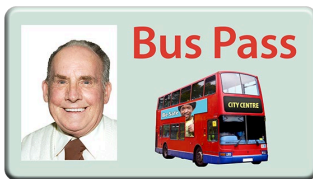
The group will also write to each political party in Wales to find out who to contact about learning disability issues.

5. Any other business and ideas for future meetings

5.1 Public transport



Sioned said that the new Minister for Transport Ken Skates MS replied to the group's letter about problems with disabled people's bus passes.



The Minister said he would meet with Sioned to talk about the problems with bus passes.



Sioned has not been able to arrange the meeting yet but she will keep trying.



There have also been some problems with new fines on trains for anyone who does not buy a ticket before they get on the train.



This can be difficult for people with a learning disability if they cannot use the ticket machines at the station.



Sioned will talk to the Minister for Transport about the problems with buying train tickets when she meets with him.



Simon from Learning Disability Wales said that Welsh Government are looking for a person with a learning disability to be in a film to help train taxi drivers.

5.2 Stolen Lives campaign



Sioned, Hefin David MS and Mark Isherwood MS are trying to get a debate in the Senedd about the Stolen Lives campaign.

5.3 Cuts to benefits



Joe Powell from All Wales People First said that he is worried that the UK Government will make more cuts to disabled people's benefits.



Disabled People Against Cuts
DPAC.UK.NET

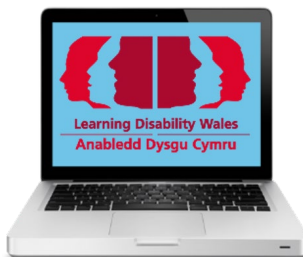
He said that we could invite someone from **Disabled People Against Cuts** or **DPAC** to talk to the group about this.

5.4 Next meeting

December

11

The next Cross Party Group meeting will take place on **11 December 2024** at 12.15-1.15pm on Zoom.



Sam Williams will send out the information about how to book for the next meeting.

It will also be on the Learning Disability Wales website: www.ldw.org.uk/project/cross-party-group-on-learning-disability/.



Sioned asked the group to email any ideas for things to talk about at future meetings to Sam Williams: samantha.williams@ldw.org.uk or Sara Pickard: SaraE.Pickard@mencap.org.uk.



Sara thanked James and Lucy for their presentation.



She also thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.



You can find all the easy read agendas and notes of the Cross Party Group here: www.ldw.org.uk/project/cross-party-group-on-learning-disability/

Hard words

Chair

The Chair of the group is the person in charge of the meetings.

Secretary or co-Secretary

The Secretary is the person or organisation in charge of organising the group. For example, booking meetings and sending out agendas.

A co-Secretary is when more than 1 person shares the job of Secretary.

Polling station

A polling station is a place where you go to vote in elections. It might be in a school, church hall or somewhere else in your local community.

Manifesto

A manifesto is a list of things that a person or political party says they will do if they win the election.