



Case Studies



Social Co-operation Forum
Fforwm Cydweithredu Cymdeithasol

Disability Wales

Disability Wales is a membership organisation made up of disability groups and allies from across Wales. The charity strives for the “rights, equality and independence of all disabled people”. In 2014 Disability Wales partnered with Wales Co-operative Centre to develop the Citizen Directed Co-operatives Cymru project to explore how user-led co-operatives can deliver social care and support services.

The Citizen Directed Co-operatives Cymru project is funded by Big Lottery Fund’s BIG Innovation Grant until March 2018. The project is working with a group of disabled people and supporters to set up a direct payment co-operative which will be controlled by direct payment recipients. The group have access to generous seed funding from Big Lottery Fund to get their new business off the ground.

The project has been developed to address the low take up of direct payments in Wales and aims to offer disabled people greater choice, flexibility and control over the support services they receive. The co-operative that will be developed will be based on a consumer co-operative model. This means that the people who use the services will be in control of the business.

This new co-operative will enable direct payment recipients to purchase their support services from a business which they collectively own. This approach aims to provide a solution to some of the barriers to direct payments, and support more people to choose direct payments as an option. Traditionally, direct payment recipients hire a Personal Assistant themselves and take on the responsibility of employer. However under this new approach, the Direct Payment Co-operative will be the employer of Personal Assistants. This allows individuals to enjoy the benefits of direct payments, such as flexibility and control, without having employment responsibility.

Disability Wales is excited about the opportunities for co-operatives developing direct payments and delivering care and support services in Wales:

“Citizen Directed Co-operatives Cymru will reignite the debate surrounding direct payments and will support and enable greater choice, voice and control for disabled people across Wales.”

Rhian Davies, *Chief Executive of Disability Wales*

This project aims for the co-operative to start delivering services to its members by April 2017. Disability Wales will develop a Direct Payment Co-operative Toolkit to support more groups in Wales to set up similar organisations.



www.disabilitywales.org/projects/current-projects/citizen-directed-co-operative-cymru-project/

● **Jamboree Preservers Ltd, Malvern Hills**

Jamboree Preservers Ltd is a workers co-operative based in the Malvern Hills established in 2009. Jamboree is run by its members, all of whom have a learning difficulty. Initially the group made and sold jam, pickle and chutney at farmers markets and in 2013 began running Café H2O at the Wyche Innovation Centre.

Members are direct payment recipients who purchase support from Debbie Probert and Kate Harding, who assist with the running of Jamboree. However, joining Jamboree is different to accessing traditional day services as members of Jamboree are worker owners. This means they receive shares in the business – including a share of the profits – and have an equal say in how the business is run.



The original group were attracted to the co-operative model because of its ability to empower members. The democratic co-operative structure has provided members of Jamboree with the opportunity to have a voice, make decisions, and take control of a business which they jointly run together. People with learning difficulties can often face social exclusion, particularly in employment. Through setting up as a workers' co-operative, Jamboree members are able to break down these barriers by earning their own money through sharing the profits of the business.

Moving from making and selling preserves to running a café has been a learning curve for Jamboree as neither members nor supporters had a background in catering. Jamboree Preservers Ltd also learnt that a system where all members pay for support using direct payments and individual budgets is more effective as this is an easy way to ensure all support is paid for. Debbie Probert, who supports Jamboree, advises anyone thinking of setting up something similar to just "go for it!" H2O Café in Wyche Innovation Centre has proved hugely popular. Located in the beautiful surroundings of the Malvern Hills the café is popular with tourists, and has many regular customers who work nearby.

"People keep coming back. That says it all!"

Debbie Probert

This innovative approach has enabled members to challenge disempowerment and become joint owners of a successful and sustainable business. And along the way the members have had a lot of fun, as well as learning new skills, making new friends, and increasing confidence.

● Cartrefi Cymru

Cartrefi Cymru is a not-for-profit organisation set up in 1989 by a group of parents and activists. It aims to support disabled people in Wales to live at home and in the community. Cartrefi Cymru is the 'charity that loves co-operation' and promotes a co-productive approach to delivering social care and support services.

Cartrefi Cymru has piloted this co-productive approach in Brecon with their 'Floating Support Service', which supports people with learning difficulties. Previously this service was delivered in a traditional 'top down' approach with a set number of hours allocated to individuals through care plans. (A 'top down' approach often involves care plans directing what support someone receives day to day). However, in reaction to funding cuts and inspired by co-productive principles and values, Cartrefi Cymru completely

reviewed this approach. With the backing of the Supporting People Team at Powys Council, and working closely with people who use their services and other stakeholders, Cartrefi Cymru decided to deliver their services in a 'bottom up' approach. (This 'bottom up' approach involves people who use the service in decision making, giving opportunities for more voice and control over the support they receive). Cartrefi Cymru see this 'bottom up' co-productive approach as a vital step towards co-operative models of support, as it allows people who use the service to have a real say in decision making.

Cartrefi Cymru values both staff and people using services as experts. Their approach is flexible and focuses on the preferred outcomes of the person using the service, allowing the support provided to be tailored to the individual's preferences and requirements.

Despite a cut in funding, this approach allowed Cartrefi Cymru to increase the number of people it was supporting, as well as empowering the people receiving support and staff to use their judgement in decision making.

"By valuing staff and users as co-producers of positive social outcomes, we are sowing the seeds of a multi-stakeholder co-operative."

Adrian Roper, *Chief Executive Cartrefi Cymru*

"I've got more independence. I don't phone all the time."

Individual accessing support from Cartrefi Cymru

This creative and co-operative approach to delivering services helped Cartrefi Cymru win the Enabling State Challenge Award in 2015. Cartrefi Cymru is now working with co-operative legal experts and key stakeholders to progress their journey from a top-down charity to a bottom-up co-operative.

www.cartrefi.org

