

 **PEOPLE
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PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY TAKING CONTROL OF OUR HISTORY



PEOPLE FIRST TAKE OVER – AN EVALUATION

Take Over Day

People First is the idea that people with a learning disability have the right to speak for themselves and make decisions about their own lives. our history and culture belong to all of us.

People with a learning disability want to take part too. Many people with a learning disability have never been to their local museum or archive.

They are missing out on something that could enrich their lives, and our heritage venues are missing an unique voice within their community.

Where did the idea come from?

When Cardiff Story Museum was being set up, Cardiff People First joined the access panel. Advising on the particular needs of people with a learning disability began our working relationship.

In 2011 Cardiff People got funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to work in partnership with Cardiff Story Museum and Glamorgan Archives on the Ely Hospital Project. This was in response to members of Cardiff People First who had lived through institutionalisation and wanted to tell their own stories in their own words.

We interviewed people and put the films on our youtube channel, and we made a shadow theatre film interpreting some of the stories. We set up an interactive exhibition in Cardiff Story that had 2000 visitors.

The research we did for this in partnership with Glamorgan Archives won the Archives Wales Tell Us Your Story 2013 award for that work, and the film we made as a result of that win gained 'Best Film portraying the relevance and importance of Archives' at the ICA Congress SPA Film Festival in 2016.

We then all worked together on a multicultural heritage project, again funded by HLF – Our Cultural Lives. We made stories and films and created heritage trails you can follow in real life as well as by watching.

We heard about Kids Takeover Day and asked Kids in Museums for some advice. We thought that taking over Glamorgan Archives and Cardiff Story Museum was our next step – if kids can do it then so can adults with a learning disability. We were fortunate to gain funding from HLF to try it out.



Planning

Cardiff People First appointed a Project Officer with a learning disability to co-ordinate the event. A steering group with all partners met to look at the workplan and decide on dates and practical details. They discussed the logo and had some options designed, which were decided on after consultation with volunteers with a learning disability and staff at the Museum and at the Archives.

Training

We ran training courses in learning disability awareness for the staff at the museum and the archives. Cardiff People First courses are led by paid trainers with a learning disability. The half hour interactive presentation was followed by a Breaking the Barriers session. Most people without a learning disability have never spoken to or met anyone with a learning disability, and this session enables people to talk to each other as people first, and tackle fears and stereotypes. This brought together all the people interested in volunteering on the Take Over Day with the members of staff they would be working with, so they could begin to think of the possibilities ahead. The training courses took place at the venues, so that volunteers could begin to feel comfortable in the place they would be working. This also began the volunteers' training by looking at the possible jobs and learning what was involved. We encouraged as many people with a learning disability as were interested to take part in this training without commitment. Having a learning disability means that people are often not allowed or encouraged to go out and therefore don't know venues in their community, do not feel welcome in new places, and are used to meeting people who don't want them to be involved. They may also have their schedules decided for them which means they find it difficult to plan ahead. We trained 13 Volunteers altogether, and 8 were able to take part on the day.



People First Take Over Day 4 July 2017

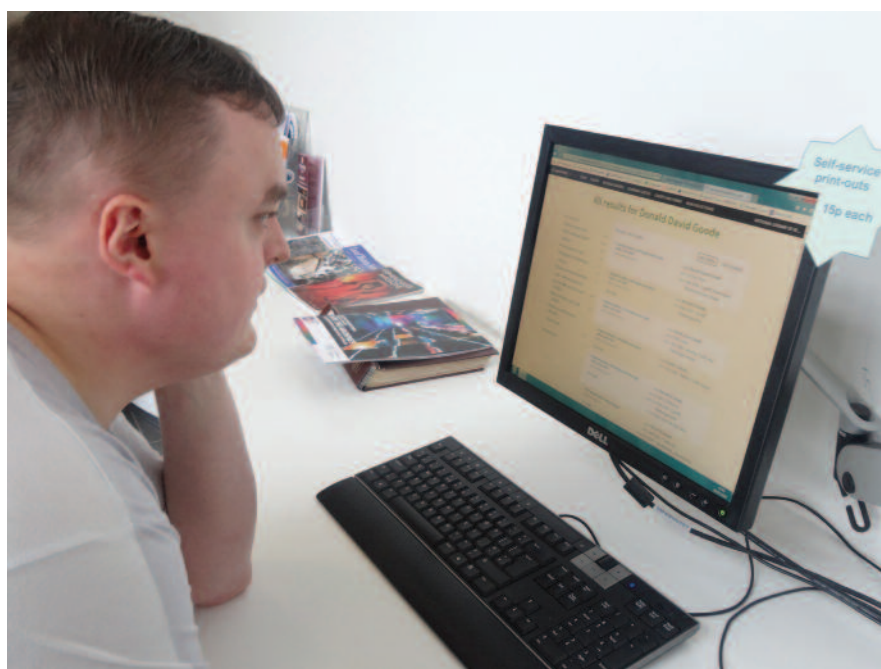
At Glamorgan Archives

Martin gave talks in the foyer on our Ely Hospital project to showcase our pop up exhibition on display there, and gave guided tours. We set up free tour tickets online and signed people up on the day.

George worked in the search room. He took documents to and from the strongrooms for visitors, and helped deal with requests or information.

Emma worked in conservation, cleaning documents.

Simon catalogued a large number of photos of local pubs, identifying names, and if they still exist! He also focused on social media, taking over Glamorgan Archives twitter and facebook, as well as posting on Cardiff People First facebook.



At Cardiff Story Museum

Anthony, Lisa, Brian and Jacques spent the morning preparing, training and practising for the afternoon sessions. They welcomed visitors to the museum at Front of House, and showed them around the exhibition space.

They ran object handling sessions for the public. They worked behind the scenes to create their own exhibition, with objects and ideas of their own.



Evaluating the project

Staff were asked to fill in evaluation forms on the training sessions. They are asked at the start what worries they have, and at the end what they would say about those worries. Most were concerned that they wouldn't understand people, that they might insult or upset someone if they said or did the wrong thing, and that they might not be able to help. After the session all were more confident, and comfortable that they would be able to communicate and work together. We recorded comments from volunteers, as well as anonymous feedback from staff.

Comments reflected that prior to the event there was still some uncertainty: for example 1 staff member at the Archives confessed to having been worried how they would support the volunteer as well as help customers; but after the event said that the volunteer had been such a great help that the work had gone more quickly, and that customers had a great service. The 4 volunteers at the museum all said on feedback forms that they were looking forward to the day, but when spoken to personally, they all talked about how nervous they were at the start. It was a very big deal for them, more than perhaps would have been recognised by the staff working with them. This is reflected in the comments afterwards on what they had learned: talking about learning to use gloves to handle objects; correct ways of handling objects; to treat the objects with care and respect, and what a privilege it was to be able to handle them. A staff member told us that when a photographer came in and asked one of the volunteers to hold a cup by the handle for the photo, he immediately refused and explained why you don't hold museum objects that way.

When asked about what could have been better, they wanted to meet more visitors, and one in particular wanted to know much more about the objects and the museum so he could be more professional and answer visitors' questions. This particular volunteer had never visited the museum before the event. Staff and volunteers had a meeting together after the day to evaluate the project. The meeting felt that more concentration on publicity, and planning events like tours in advance, could have encouraged more visitors. We hadn't been sure beforehand how the volunteers should dress for the day, so at the museum they wore smart casual wear and lanyards, while at the archives they wore bright Cardiff People First t shirts, so we could compare. We decided that ideally, we would have worn staff t shirts overprinted with the People First Take Over logo to give the impression of professionalism and belonging as well as 'taking over' as a group.

Overwhelmingly, staff and volunteers would not hesitate to do a Take Over Day again, and some volunteers are keen on continuing their volunteering now. We want to continue and expand the Take Over Day to enable more heritage venues, and people with a learning disability, to work together.



Cardiff People First is run by people with a learning disability. We speak up for ourselves. We stand up for our rights and campaign to get better services and enjoy more opportunities.

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Cardiff Story Museum, in the beautiful and historic Old Library building, is rich in stories, objects, photographs and film telling the history of Cardiff through the eyes of those who created the city—its people.

www.cardiffmuseum.com
cardiffstory@cardiff.gov.uk
 029 2034 6214



Glamorgan Archives collects records relating to the history of Glamorgan and its people. We catalogue records so that people can locate material which may be of interest to them. We preserve and conserve records. Members of the public can access records in our searchroom and we can advise on using the records.

www.glamarchives.gov.uk
glamRO@cardiff.gov.uk
 029 2087 2200



We are very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for supporting this project. From the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks we love, from precious memories to rare wildlife they use money raised from National Lottery players to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about.

www.hlf.org.uk

