



# Cardiff People First Pink Ladies

## Year 3

October 2016 till September 2017  
Final year





### **Outcome 1**

More women with a learning disability will feel more confident about speaking up about their issues after taking part in the project.

#### **Indicators:**

- Women will say that their level of confidence has increased.
- Families, support workers, service provider staff, say that women's level of confidence has increased.

### **What we did**

Cardiff People First worked in partnership with Cardiff University and Alain Thomas Consultancy to co-produce research on all our work – our Big Ask. Dawn and 2 women who have been involved in Pink Ladies were part of the evaluation group and gained experience and forthcoming accreditation in research.

We based questions around our outcomes:

- 93% agreed that they are more confident.
- 82% agreed that they are more confident to organise activities.

### **Project lifetime**

At all of our meetings, training and events, the women attending are encouraged to take part and feel ownership and responsibility for what they talk about and plan. Everyone has some part to play in making the project a success, depending on their skills and what they want to contribute. For some people, confidence is about being told they can make their own cup of tea at a meeting, for others speaking in front of a large audience about their experiences, or seeing their films on the big screen. 147 women took part over the 3 years in total.

The women, as a group and as individuals, took part in many joint projects with service providers who were really impressed with their skills, knowledge and determination, and gave them opportunities to show that. Some became community champions for screening, one became a community champion for the Welsh Ambulance Service. Being taken seriously and encouraged gives them real confidence in their abilities and potential.

Employing Dawn Gullis, a woman with a learning disability, as Project Officer showed others that they too can be confident, in control and leading. Services usually have paid staff who don't have a learning disability, and women are used to seeing them as capable and in charge in a way they can't aspire to. We actually lost a few women to the project who had been inspired to get paid employment, volunteering or training.

Some found it hard to relate to Dawn at first because it is so unusual to take help and advice from someone who seems to be one of their peers. She had to fight to be taken seriously by women with a learning disability and also with service providers we worked with. We think she succeeded really well in this: anonymous comments from the women she worked with include:

“She’s a good listener”; “Really good”; “Amazing!”; “She’s good staff”; “I like coming to her groups”.

We were very proud when she won Chwarae Teg’s Womenspire Awards 2017 in the Community Activist category, from a longlist of hundreds. One of the comments she got was from Zoe Richards at Learning Disability Wales:

“You make the work you do ‘real’. Congrats on the award!!! Very well deserved.”

We believe that her visibility in a role like this makes a difference to all women with a learning disability. The work that the group has done together has also shown that women with a learning disability can be confident and capable of working alongside professionals to get accessible information out to other women on things like health screening.

## **Future**

The women all had ideas about what they would like to do. In terms of confidence, some were keen on learning more about speaking in public, taking self defence classes and taking part in more social activities.

Our Events for All project helps people to get involved in events in their local community: volunteering to help plan, organise, run and take part in events. The events range from small geographical community festivals to large national events in Cardiff such as Pride Cymru. Many of the Pink Ladies are already involved in this and we are making sure that all know they have the chance to take part in future.

Friendships have been encouraged during the project, and more have felt able to meet up independently. Two women have been on a holiday together as a result of taking part. Our evaluation shows that 92% of our members make more new friends.

We are looking into members’ training on public speaking, and self defence.



## **Outcome 2**

More women with a learning disability will have an increased understanding of how to express their views.

### **Indicators:**

- Women attending courses know who to raise particular issues with.
- Women attending courses report having raised issues.

## **What we did**

94% agreed that they have been able to tell powerful people what they think. 78% have learned more about jobs, 85% have gained new skills or qualifications.

We ran courses on screening and Check 4 Change, as well as on the basics of self advocacy, health and happiness, overcoming barriers to work, and learning development.

## **Project lifetime**

We ran a wide range of courses to give women the knowledge, confidence and resources to take control of their own lives: from the small things that affect them every day to the big things that make a difference to everyone. Over the 3 years we helped 121 women.

Courses on basic self advocacy are run by our staff who have a learning disability, and are really informal to give everyone a chance to contribute. We worked with partner organisations to reach more women.

We also ran our own courses and workshops on subjects like getting to know your local area, health workbooks, housing.

Dawn and members of the Pink Ladies also worked with outside organisations who gave them training in things like health screening and human rights so that they could cascade information to others, as well as working on accessible films.

We also brought in partners to give training in their areas of expertise. These included Adult Learning Wales, Communities First, Welsh Government.

Pascale Hill, Tutor with Adult Learning Wales said:

“It was a real experience to work with such a solid and inspiring group of women, who had done much work together over a long period and achieved so much both individually but also as part of the group. They are a great example of resilience and determination, coupled with humour, enjoyment and fun. They made their mark in so many areas of work and it was a privilege to work with them.”

## **Future**

The women all had ideas about what they would like to do to help themselves and others learn to have their voice heard by people who have power over them. They want to find out more about politics and voting. They want to learn more about benefits, and to understand more about disability.

Our Standing Up Speaking Out meetings are held once a month for anyone with a learning disability in Cardiff, and have guest speakers who give information on issues like this. We've made sure that women feed their opinions about topics into this, so guests reflect their choices.

We have started to trial a meeting group where people can talk about politics, and are helping people decide what form they would want that to take.

We will continue to run a course on voting and elections once a year, and we are looking into setting up a course on the social model of disability and how that relates to people with a learning disability. We are also taking part in trainer training to advocate with carers about people's rights to sex and relationships.



### Outcome 3

More women with a learning disability receive services that are appropriate for them and accessible after intervention from the project.

#### Indicators:

- Learning disability services provide more events / services for women.
- Women with a learning disability feel more accepted into mainstream women's services.

### What we did

88% feel they are a valued member of their local community, and 87% have taken part in more activities in their community.

We worked with Dimensions Cymru, a learning disability housing support providers to hold a joint event for women based around health and happiness. Sam Garrick, Personalisation Lead for Dimensions Cymru said:

[“The Women’s Health Day was a great success with the women we support. Everyone had a great time and found the material that was used very good, easy to follow and understand.”](#)

Quest Supported Employment referred 8 women to our courses. We contributed to many events run by learning disability services.

Women from our project were the first women with a learning disability to have training from Macmillan Cancer Care Check 4 Change, and have cascaded that training. We ran a consultation group on Public Health Wales information about the HPV virus; making sure it was accessible to all. After training from Screening for Life we ran a session during cervical screening week.

### Project lifetime

We worked with 20 learning disability services in total. They were all really open to us working with them and talking to women who used their services. Samantha Williams from Learning Disability Wales said:

[“I came along to the launch of the film about cervical screening for women with a learning disability and thought this piece of work was fantastic. It is so important that people with a learning disability understand the importance of screening and are able to access good quality accessible information about health and wellbeing so that they can make informed choices. The Pink Ladies project did so much valuable work in this area and I personally enjoyed working with you.”](#)

Dimensions Cymru worked with us to run a joint event on International Women's Day, for the women who use their service.

We found that we had to be really specific in talking about issues like health that only affect women in order for learning disability services to prioritise events and activities just for women. While women who had taken an active part in the Pink Ladies also talked about the importance to them of strong female friendships and support, most services are based on individuals and their own particular circumstances. Our group were seen as the experts, who were called upon by services to provide input for women who use their services. Strong friendships between women were coming through our group, where they could be themselves, rather than through any services they used.

Many of the mainstream services we contacted were keen to work with us, and that led to other opportunities. For example, our work with Public Health Wales led us to their Screening for All initiative where we co-produced an accessible film on what to expect from a smear test, which has had 2.3K views to date. This then led to working with Macmillan Cancer Care and women being trained as community champions for screening. This has also benefited the whole organisation, as we then gained a piece of funding to report on Annual Health Checks, and have been asked to work on the accessibility of things like the bowel screening campaign.

## **Future**

We continue to be involved in training and consultation around health in general, and women's health too. We continue to support women to cascade accessible information around health and screening.

We feel that, as the experts on self advocacy, women and services see us as the best place to make friendships and to have the confidence to speak up about issues they have with services. Although we will continue to work with other organisations and encourage them to include and involve women with a learning disability, we still have an important role to play in accessibility.

The women are interested in finding out more about education, volunteering and keeping fit. Our Standing Up Speaking Out meetings have been looking at services provided at leisure centres, and our Brecon Beacons Challenge gave people the chance to do a series of walks in the countryside. Women have taken part as volunteers in our initiatives like 'Take Over Day' at our local museum. We give information on education to all our members.

One thing the women highlighted to us is that they have no information on periods and menopause – both coming as a surprise to those who have experienced them. These are big issues that affect their choice, control and self esteem, so we are looking for funding to run a project based on this.



## **Outcome 4**

There is an increased understanding in the community of the issues of women with a learning disability after contact with the project.

### **Indicators:**

- People will raise their awareness by hearing from women with a learning disability.

## **What we did**

Dawn Gullis, Project Officer, won Chwarae Teg's Womenspire Awards 2017 in the Community Activist category, from a longlist of hundreds. This national award created awareness of her achievements, and of the project.

Cardiff People First won WCVA Third Sector Awards Cymru Health Social Care and Wellbeing Award; another national award bringing awareness of our work and the issues of people with a learning disability. Our work with women's health was a key factor in this.

## **Project lifetime**

Pink Ladies Present: Our Inspiring Lives is our range of films of inspirational women with a learning disability. The playlist is on our YouTube channel and has 323 views to date, with 714 total views of the 15 individual films.

Posts from the Pink Ladies on our facebook page have had a total of 294 likes, 28 comments and 17 shares, with a top reach of 1,632.

Congratulations Dawn, you have always inspired me xx  
Great to see your work being recognised and rewarded!  
Congratulations Dawn, we at the Paul Ridd foundation are very proud of you, the support you have given us has been amazing.

## **Future**

We will continue to employ women with a learning disability, and to give others the chance to take on leading roles in our projects, and as Trustees. We will continue to publicise our work.