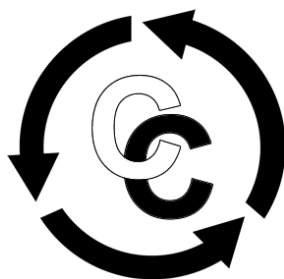


Conwy Connect For Learning Disabilities



Annual Report 2017-2018



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Our Mission Statement and Aims

Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities is a charity that promotes the rights of people with learning disabilities in North Wales.

What do we do?

- Offer independent information and advice on learning disability services
- Provide opportunities for members to meet, exchange information, increase choice through our open meetings, events and newsletters
- Increase and extend opportunities for active, meaningful involvement through consultation
- Provide person centred facilitation to enable participation and involvement
- Provide a voice to raise views and concerns to policy makers
- Take part in the planning of learning disability services





Trustees

Service Users

Jason Rowson
Shell Williams
Richard Redmond

Statutory Services

Eleri Roberts
Amy Jones

Parents/Carers

Joan Hayes
Gail Shaw
Jane McIlveen
Yvonne Davies
John Caldwell

Voluntary Organisations

Caroline Downie – PSS





Chairperson's Report

This has been another year full of challenges for Conwy Connect which have been met with new initiatives and an expansion in the number of enthusiastic staff members and volunteers.

Our long serving Senior Co-ordinator, Sue, left at the end of 2017 to explore pastures new and we were delighted to promote Cath Thornton, already a vital member of the team, to succeed her.

We also began operating under our new constitution, approved by the charity commission, at the AGM in 2017 and also welcomed new Trustees to manage our activities.

Thanks must go to all our funders for their continued financial support and mentoring to improve and update the services we offer. We have been undertaking a review of how we deliver information and communicate with all our members and those interested in our work and hope you will find it refreshing and interesting.

Finally, I wish to thank everyone for their support whilst I have been Chairperson. Unfortunately, due to ill health, and very reluctantly, I have decided I will be unable to continue as a Trustee in the future.

May I take this opportunity to wish Conwy Connect continuing success for many years to come.

Gail R Shaw



Senior Co-ordinator's Report



Sue Milburn

Catherine Thornton



January 2018 saw Sue Milburn retire and myself step up to the role of Senior Co-ordinator.

This year we continued to deliver our Engagement, Health Improvement and Connect Buddies services. Our overall funding has been maintained to continue these services along with our core activities.

We have continued to manage the staff and overall activities of Conwy Connect under the direction of the Conwy Connect trustees.

Consultation work has continued on the theme of future planning around accommodation.

We have seen the Moving on Solutions (MOS) group continue to develop more activities, such as cooking lessons, dance sessions and climbing sessions.

We hope you enjoy this Annual Report, which gives you the full flavour of our current services, showing our achievements over the past year. These services continue with the help of the dedicated volunteers and staff of Conwy Connect.



Staff Team



Sue Milburn
Senior Co-ordinator



Chris Spree
Planning for
the Future
Co-ordinator



Non Lederle
Moving On Solutions
Co-ordinator



Cath Thornton
Engagement Co-ordinator
/Senior Co-ordinator



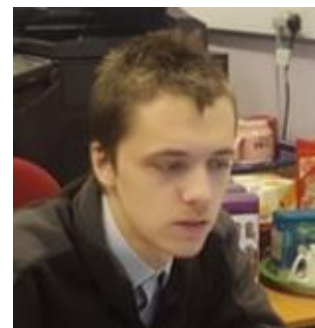
Paul Carter
Health Improvement
Co-ordinator



Alison Fletcher
Connect Buddies
Co-ordinator



Celia Lewis
Engagement
Co-ordinator



Nigel Arrowsmith
Engagement
Assistant

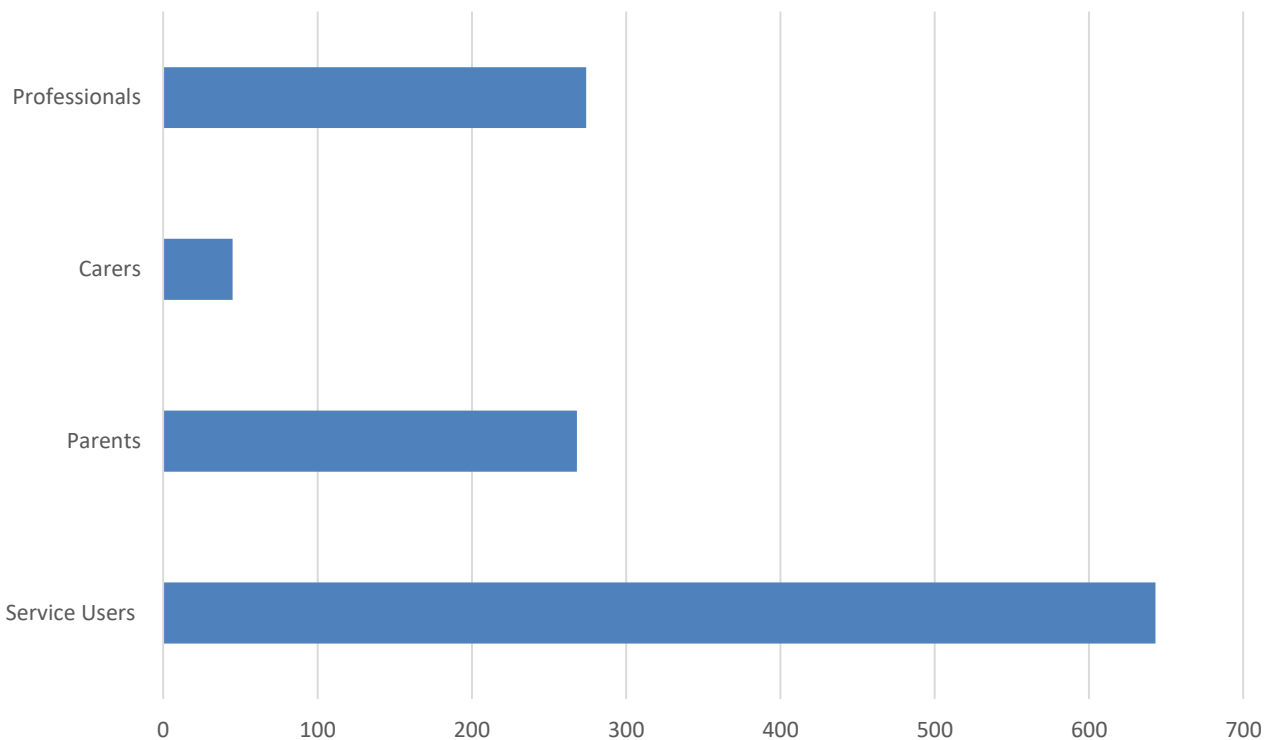


Membership

We are pleased to report that our membership has remained steady this last year with a total of 1391 people and organisations on our mailing list.

Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities has five main categories of membership as shown in the graph below.

Conwy Connect Membership 2017 -2018





Conwy Connect Annual Review Day

A focus session was held on 17th August 2017 which started the process of looking at the 10 questions of the PQASSO elements of self assessment. Chris Spree facilitated and actions were drawn up.

PQASSO Essentials is the National Council for Voluntary Organisation's (NCVO) self-assessment tool that helps third sector organisations take a systematic look at what they do, identify areas where they are doing well and not so well, and decide exactly where improvements are needed. Developed in 1997, for and by third sector organisations, it is a tried and tested approach to quality assurance and management in the third sector.





Meetings and Events

Our Rights Our Voice in 24th May 2017

- What rights are
- Why rights matter
- What to do if you are not getting your rights



We had a lot of interesting speakers and everyone who attended learnt a great deal.

OPUS

There was a great turnout of our members and their support.





Welsh Ambulance Learning and Fun Day 26/09/17

A fun day at Colwyn Bay Cricket Club in conjunction with the Welsh Ambulance Service to inform adults with a learning disability about -

- when and how to call for an ambulance
- other ways of getting medical help when an incident is not serious enough for an ambulance
- to help people understand what the ambulance service is and what it can provide
- how to resuscitate someone in an emergency
- health information stalls
- to promote Welsh Learning Disability Annual Health Checks and use of the Traffic Light Hospital Assessment Form





Meetings and Events

Planning for the Future Drop-in Event 27th September 2017



- 17 Exhibitors attended and many members and their families and support dropped in throughout the day
- Over 50 came along
- We received great feedback and will plan another drop-in event in the future



November 2017 – Conwy Connect AGM

This was held on 29th November 2017 at Colwyn Bay Cricket Club 7.00pm - 9.00pm.

67 were in attendance.

The Meeting included:

- Annual report and accounts
- Nominations were received and the committee was elected for 2017/18
- We launched the new easy read breastfeeding material and Debbie Lomas received recognition for her work with the project
- We gave thanks to our little stars
- Special video presentation to Sue Milburn to thank her for her 20 years service
- A performance by Venture Drama group





Website and Social Media

Conwy Connect
for Learning Disabilities

Cyswllt Conwy
ar gyfer Anableddau Dysgu

www.conwy-connect.org.uk

Registered Charity Number / Rhif Elusen Gofrestredig: 1082860

Home Meetings and Events Newsletter About Us Contact Us Engagement Service
Disco Health Improvement Service Planning for the Future Service Connect Buddies
Moving on Solutions

Welcome to Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities

Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities was set up in 1997 to help promote the rights of people with a learning disability living within the county of Conwy in North Wales. Our aims include ensuring people have equality of choice and opportunity in the community they live in. We provide an essential link between all stakeholders whilst keeping members up-to-date of relevant changes in learning disability services.

Read more [about us](#)

[f](#) [t](#)

The Connect Buddies Festival is BACK!

Posted on [02/02/2016](#) by [admin](#)

Connect Buddies festival is back and being held on the 26th June. (we are hoping for some sunny weather this time)

Latest News

- [The Connect Buddies Festival is BACK!](#)
- [Our next event](#)
- [Newsletter Edition 64 – Feb 2016](#)
- [Vacant Position at Conwy Connect](#)
- [Annual General Meeting 2015](#)
- [Parent/Carers Of People With A Learning Disability – WE NEED YOUR HELP!](#)
- [Edition 62 September 2015 Newsletter](#)
- [‘Check Your Health’ Event 23rd September](#)
- [Disability Sport Brochure](#)

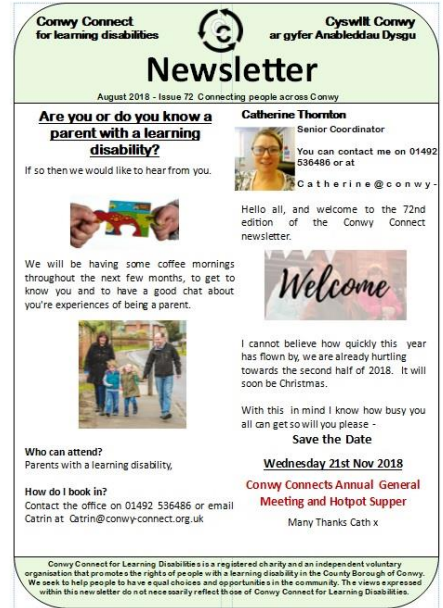
The website and social media pages are ways in which we communicate with some of our members. We have continued to develop the Facebook page during the year, together with our Twitter page.





Newsletters/Volunteers

Each year Conwy Connect publishes 3 quarterly Newsletters. 3,000 copies have been distributed to members, other organisations and statutory agencies this year. Copies can also be downloaded from our website.



Our Volunteers

Throughout 2017-18 our volunteer group has continued to help us mail out our Newsletters and information.





Learning Disability Priority Group (LDPG)

The LDPG group conducted an exercise in March about what had/hadn't worked during the past 12 months and where improvements could be made. It was decided that the Learning Disability Priority Group was to be incorporated into the Conwy Outcome Groups (COG).





Engagement Co-ordinator's Report

Catherine Thornton Engagement Co-ordinator until January 2018



The post of Engagement Co-ordinator is funded by Conwy County Borough Council. The purpose of the role is to help Service Users to become more involved in the decision making process for important things in their lives. This could be to do with services provided by the council, work opportunities, accommodation, social activities or being part of planning processes and lots more besides.



Carrying on from me, Celia will continue to raise awareness with other agencies about the importance of the Conwy strategy of “Making Things Better” and the value of Service User involvement and joining the Connect Forum.

Celia Lewis Engagement Co-ordinator January 2018 onwards





Connect Forum/Connect Advocacy Group

Things the Connect Forum spoke about were:

- Students from Bangor University came to talk to us about Mindfulness
- Transport Eligibility within Conwy County Council
- the Citizen Panel, and also our opinion on a leaflet the health board were in the middle of producing
- National Council Feedback and Conference
- Conwy County Council Website
- Training with All Wales People First – Group to feedback
- How we want our Regional Voice to be heard
- Mencap legal toolkit and the WISE project



In January the group decided to change their name to Conwy Self Advocacy Group. The things they spoke about were:

- Re-established the group, group rules and how they want it to run
- Feedback on Learning Disability Strategy event
- Conversations around work opportunities



Cath supported Michelle Williams our National Council Representative at the April, May, October and December National Councils.



Cath & Alison supported Shell, James, Catherine, Shayna, Richard and Mark at the All Wales People First Conference in Newport in October.

Cath supported Debbie and Sheila in taking part in a Regional event at The Interchange on 29th March 2017. They spoke about their relationships.





Engagement Service

The Connect Advocacy Group, whose members are representatives of Service Members groups, has continued to meet on a monthly basis.



Things we have spoken about are:

- Name change of the group
- Encouraging new members to join
- Ground rules for meetings
- Chair to be chosen at each meeting (to give each member a chance to chair)
- Icebreaker at the beginning of each meeting
- Group would prefer to be called 'service members' rather than 'service users'
- Continued discussions on how to progress from voluntary positions to paid employment. This led to an event in April called 'To Work or Not to Work'
- Number 12 Bus was brought onto the agenda as standing item

Reports and newsletters are regularly produced. Connect Advocacy Group minutes are recorded in an easy read format after each meeting. These are then posted out along with the agenda to the members for the next meeting.



Engagement Service

Regional Participation Meetings/Events



Regional meetings were held at Llys Elian in January. Reps reviewed options of moving forward with a co-ordinator.

Shayna was asked to represent the group and give the feedback to the Regional Partnership Meeting . Michelle also gave a joint presentation with Joe Powell about why Self Advocacy is so important and how it should be funded through the Local Authority.





Engagement Service

Big Regional Event Colwyn Bay Cricket Club 22nd February

Tracey Drew asked Michelle Williams and Katherine Watchorn to co-chair the meeting.

In the morning the meeting looked at options of how and where the Regional Co-ordinator was to be appointed and who that would be.

Feedback from the Connect Advocacy group felt that the morning was good and productive.



In the afternoon, Alaw Pierce and Dr Alan Dowey came to talk about and show the draft version of the North Wales Learning Disability Strategy Easy Read Version.

Feedback from the Connect Advocacy group was given by Debbie Lomas at the L.D.P.G.





Connect Buddies

Alison Fletcher
Connect Buddies Co-ordinator

My role as Connect Buddies Co-ordinator is funded by the Gwynt Y Mor Community Fund. I develop and sustain the service of Connect Buddies. It involves supporting individuals with a learning disability and volunteers to pair up and take part in social and community activities.



Celia Lewis joined the Connect Buddies team in January 2018 as a co-ordinator.



This year we have focused on 3 main areas of work:

- **Recruiting volunteers**
- **Matching buddies and volunteers**
- **Promoting the service**





Recruiting volunteers

Connect Buddies matches up buddies with volunteers who have the same interests.

They then do things together at times that suit them.

Volunteers make Connect Buddies happen! We have been working with local volunteer organisations and community networks to tell people about volunteering with us.

Connect Buddies recruited 12 volunteers in the first year of the service. But we need more volunteers to meet the demand for the service, so volunteer recruitment will remain a priority.

We have taken our information stand out to shopping centres and community events and we use social media to raise the profile of volunteering with Connect Buddies.





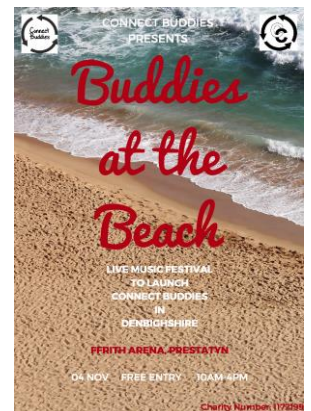
Promoting the Service

We have used a range of activities to promote the Connect Buddies Service this year, taking opportunities to have information stands and talk about the service and volunteering.

These have included going to:

- Trakz Festival
- Denbighshire Learning Disability Forum
- Rhyl College
- TAPE
- Carer's events
- Volunteer Network events in Conwy and Denbighshire
- Health and Social Care Network events in Conwy and Denbighshire

...and the Connect Buddies Live Music Festivals – Buddies yn Betws, Buddies at the Beach and Buddies in the Bay





Matching buddies and volunteers

Buddies and volunteers have been busy doing all sorts of things together:

Faye and her buddy like cooking and doing crafts



Bobby and his buddy meet for coffee and a chat every week



Kieran and Stephen like going to the cinema to watch films





Paul Carter Health Improvement Co-ordinator

My post started in September 2013. I work 15 hours a week as Health Improvement Co-ordinator for Conwy Connect. My role is to work alongside the Learning Disability Acute Liaison Team nurses to provide support to reduce health inequalities which may be experienced by adults with learning disabilities. The Health Improvement Service is funded by the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board.



Due to an extended period of illness in late 2017 and early 2018, some of my duties as Health Improvement Co-ordinator were carried out by other members of the Conwy Connect team in my absence.



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board



11/05/17 Conwy Learning Disability Priority Group (LDPG)



I reported to the LDPG about our event 'Your Love Life' (28/02/17) and in particular about my talk at the event on 'Contraception and Staying Safe'

We asked about the policy for Sex and Sexuality for Conwy Learning Disability Team and whether it was up to date

Since it was not we will now be involved in the drafting of a new up to date policy



Public Health Wales Easy Read Breastfeeding Leaflet

- Continued to give feedback and advice about the text of Easy Read Breastfeeding leaflet
- Leaflet for people with learning disabilities put together by Fatima Sayed (Public Health Practitioner, Public Health Wales)
- Contains easy to understand information about how to breastfeed and look after a new born baby
- Leaflet was completed and launched at our Annual General Meeting on 29th November 2017 by Nia Thomas of Public Health Wales

Easy Read

All about breastfeeding

For new mothers in North Wales



'Easy Read' breastfeeding information leaflet



Conwy Connect Annual General Meeting



Continued work to promote Welsh Annual Learning Disability Health Checks

- I have continued to work to encourage people to attend their checks by telling them about 'Your Guide To Your Health Check' – an Easy Read leaflet I adapted for North Wales from a Mencap guide for English health checks
- It is available online and at Conwy Connect events
- Adults with a learning disability in Wales can have a free annual health check
- It is important as it can pick up underlying health problems
- Less than half the people who are eligible for a check actually have one
- As a result of the Task And Finish Group about Health Checks last year which I was part of, people will once again be sent a letter from social services to remind them to have a health check



Free Health Check



you can have a free health check 1 times every year

you will need to ask your doctor for a health check



you can ask your doctor by phone



you can ask your doctor by writing a letter

Social Services Health Check Reminder letter



Medical Student Sessions



This initiative was introduced by Conwy Connect with the aim of improving communication between people with a learning disability and their families and carers with the medical students. It has continued during the past nine years with funding from the Health Authority. We facilitated 5 sessions during 2017/18.

What happens in a session?

- Parents, carers and occasionally siblings talk to medical students about their experiences with GPs, hospital staff and other medical personnel**
- The sessions have been well attended by students who have given positive feedback**
- The main aim was to help improve medical students understanding of the additional challenges facing people with a learning disability and their parents and carers in accessing medical care**

We are very grateful to those parents and carers who give their time to attend the sessions. They are helping to mould the next generation of health care professionals.

We are always looking for new parents/carers to share their experiences.



Planning for the Future Service



Chris Spree
Planning for the Future
Co-ordinator



Supporting individuals with learning disabilities and their parents/carers to plan for and help them during their transition into independent living

Working in collaboration with Conwy Local Authority



Initially Funded for 3 Years from June 2015
Continuation Funding agreed for a further 3 years (to June 2021)

Funded by.....

LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION

England & Wales



Here's what some people have said:

My world has grown bigger

I am known to the Local Authority. It is good that they are involved



Planning for the Future Events



“Living Options”

Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities
LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION
CONWY

**Planning For the Future Service
“Living Options”**
Your questions explored
Pop in to find out more
Including a free buffet lunch

Stalls to include

- Conwy Well Being Team and DEWIS
- Disability Sports
- PSS
- Welfare Rights Deputy Unit
- Telecare
- Carers' Officer Stand
- Crest

Plus more to be confirmed.....

Wednesday 27th September 2017
Drop in between 11.30am – 2.30pm
Spillane Suite, Colwyn Bay Cricket Club
77 Penrhyn Avenue, Rhos-on-Sea
Colwyn Bay, LL28 4LR
(map on reverse)

Wednesday 27th September 2017 at Colwyn Bay Cricket Club. A brand new approach for this year’s event: “Living Options – your questions explored” was an expo-style event whereby people could simply drop in and look around the various stalls. Many different exhibitors were available to answer questions and give information about their service.





Asking questions about:



Where I Want to Live



The Type of Place I'd Like



Being Involved in My Community



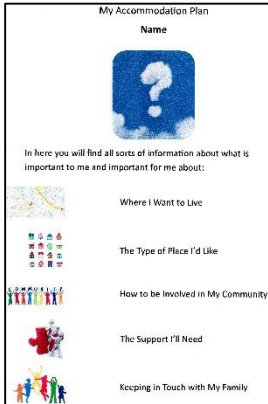
Keeping in Touch with My Family



What, if any, Support I will Need



Planning for the Future Service



During the course of the year, 15 plans completed



The process of 1st and 2nd Reviews continued, and.....

.....CONGRATULATIONS to the 12 people who had moved by March 2018





Connect Disco

What have we done? April 2017 – March 2018

- Held 23 discos at Llandudno Junction Community Club 7.00pm - 9.30pm with an average of 69 members attending
- Produced, printed and widely circulated flyers advertising the dates to members
- Written to volunteers and circulated a rota to them
- Co-ordinated staff and volunteers
- Ensured the income is accounted for, invoices submitted and appropriate payments made
- Liaised with the Llandudno Junction Community Club Staff and DJ
- Ensured there is appropriate insurance in place
- Checked the Health & Safety Risk information is up to date





Moving on Solutions

**Non Ledele
Moving On Solutions and Events
Co-ordinator**

My role involves overseeing all the activities currently available, identifying potential new groups and liaising with other organisations regarding social inclusion and integration. I will also be able to advise groups with regards to funding opportunities.

Members opinions and suggestions are really important and I would be more than happy to hear from you and your families.

I will continue to complete the bulletin to keep everyone updated on forthcoming and ongoing events and report back to Conwy Connect.





Activities



It's been a really busy year.

The MOS Social nights have been increased, climbing has continued, cookery courses have been enjoyed and water sport taster sessions tried.



Cookery



Fun and Fitness with Lisa



Chocolate Workshop



Thank you for funding received



Moving on Solutions

MOS Social Nights with the Confucius Institute. Tai Chi / Calligraphy / Music / Song and Dance



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY





Other Work



As well as all the MOS work, I have been working alongside Shell and the Friendship Group.



Have assisted with events.

Started inputting finances.

Undertaken minute taking.

Complete 2 bulletins for MOS / Friendship each year.

Write a column for the newsletters MOS / Friendship with Shell.

Completed funding bids and generally helped wherever I can.

I could always do with suggestions about what to organise next, so please get in touch.



Shell Williams organised successful activities for the Friendship Group 2017/2018 with support from Non Lederle

The Events included:

- **Karaoke evenings in April, July, September and February.**
- **A Beauty Evening at Llandrillo College**
- **An evening out with The Friendship Group to see Grease at Venue Cymru.**
- **Enjoyed a few good Friendship walks over the year**
- **We also started using Vicky's Coaches. We had a few good trips out with them.**
- **We finished the year with a Christmas meal at The Station pub in Colwyn Bay**





The Events (continued):



- Trip to the theatre for the Christmas Pantomime, Peter Pan
- Bowling in the Frith in Prestatyn in January
- A trip to Betws y Coed on the train in February



It has been a good year. We have done some nice things and visited new places.

We would really like to see more new faces on the trips.

Let us know where you would like to go and we will try and make it happen.





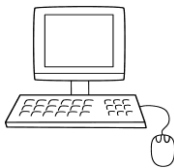
Contact Details



Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities
Rear Annex
7 Rhiw Road
Colwyn Bay
LL29 7TE



TEL/FAX: 01492 536486



Email: Catherine@conwy-connect.org.uk

Website: www.conwy-connect.org.uk



Twitter: [@CC4LD](https://twitter.com/CC4LD)



<https://www.facebook.com/CC4LD>