

# Conwy Connect

For Learning Disabilities



Charity Number  
1172199

## Annual Report 19/20





# Our Mission Statement and Aims

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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



# Introduction from our chair

## Introduction from our Chairperson

Hello everyone and welcome to the annual report for Conwy Connect for April 2019 to April 2020.

As everyone knows, COVID 19 started to be a big problem for us all in March 2020 when we went into the first lockdown. Fortunately the team at Conwy Connect rallied round and was able to make lots of changes to activities and events. More about this in next year's report!

My personal highlights of 2019-2020 were the Makaton choir, working with Denbighshire Connect and the Llanrwst mapping service. These were all new for 2019 to 2020 and are very interesting developments. Check out the information about all our activities in this annual report.



The Trustees meet every two months or so and check out how things are going at Conwy Connect. They look at all aspects of Conwy Connect including the finances, funding for future development, and staffing. We have a good range of Trustees but we do need some more, particularly parents and carers. Please contact Cath Thornton – 01492 536486 – if you would like to help.

A big thank you to all our wonderful funders. Without your support we couldn't provide our services. We know these services are very much appreciated by members and their families and carers. We hope you will be amazed at the range of activities described in this report.

All the best,

Janet Byatt



# Our Trustees

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## **Service Users**

Jason Rowson

Richard Redmond

Roy Hepper

Shayna Harris

## **Parents/Carers**

Janet Byatt

Yvonne Davies

John Caldwell

Jacqui Renwick

Alex Fryer

## **Statutory Services**

Eleri Roberts

Amy Jones

Ruth Wyn Williams

## **Voluntary Organisations**

Caroline Downie – PSS



# Welcome from our Chief Officer



## Catherine Thornton

Catherine@Conwy-connect.org.uk  
07925966009

As I sit and write this report in what has been the most challenging of years for everyone across the globe, I have felt comforted by looking back at the work we did before the Global pandemic.

Looking at all the photos of us together made me smile, and look forward to when we are able to see each other in person again.

It always amazes me when I sit down to compile our Annual Report just how much work Conwy Connect has to report on, and 2019/2020 was no exception. We saw growth in both the team and the services that we deliver. More importantly, we continued to deliver and strengthen the core services.

I am extremely proud of everything the team and myself are reporting on in this annual report.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our funders, who are hugely supportive of our ethos and organisation.

*“Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.*

*Even though the future seems far away, it is actually beginning right now. While we are living in the present, we must celebrate life every day, knowing that we are becoming history with every work, every action, every deed.”* Mattie Stepanek



# Staff Team



Catherine Thornton  
Chief Officer



Paul Carter  
Health Improvement  
Officer



Non Lederle  
Deputy/Moving on  
Solutions Officer



Michele Pipe  
Engagement Officer



Chris Spree  
Planning for the  
Future Officer



Helen Kenyon  
Rural Mapping Officer



Delyth Lloyd Williams  
Family Support  
Officer



Shell Williams  
MOS Coordinator



# Membership

We are pleased to report that our membership has remained steady this last year with a total of 1357 people and organisations on our mailing list.

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





# Engagement Service



This has been a funny year for Conwy Connect Engagement & Participation service as we said hello to 3 different facilitators!

From April to August, Celia had the role of Engagement Officer.

Then in September, Delyth joined us as the new Engagement Officer. At the end of December 2019, Delyth moved jobs in Conwy Connect.

So I then became the latest Co-ordinator – and I'm still here!

This report tells you about the Engagement and participation service this year.



## April 2019 – August 2019



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Celia supported the Conwy Connect Forum and members at National Group meetings. Celia left Conwy Connect to get married.







# Engagement Service

## September 2019 – December 2019

Delyth met with the Forum group in Llandudno who told her what was working well and what wasn't. They said not everyone could get to Llandudno to meet. So the group tried meetings in Abergele.

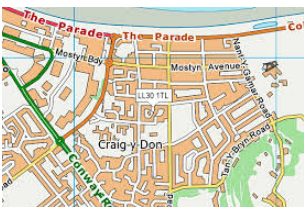


Members were worried about the cost of leisure passes and issues with public transport.

Delyth told lots of people about what the Forum group did.

## January 2020 – March 2020

Michele became the new Engagement and Participation Officer. Delyth and Michele met. This is what happened next...



Michele met with the Forum group at the Canolfan Riviere Centre.

The members talked about rules for the group and how to keep in touch. The group decided to have a WhatsApp group. Peter set this up for everybody.



We met in January and February.



# Engagement Service



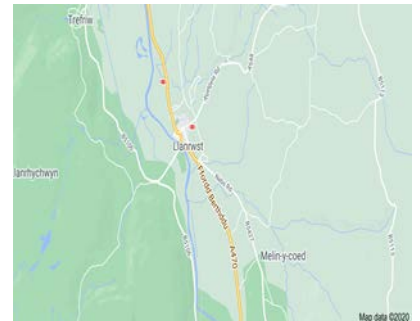
Shell represented Conwy at the All Wales People First (AWPF) National meetings. Shell and Michele went to the AWPF conference. We went to lots of interesting sessions and stayed in a hotel.

We wanted to plan an event to happen in March. We set up a Planning Group and met in a café or the library. People had lots of ideas. We decided the event would be about Hate Crime. We had to cancel the Event because of CV19 virus.



**It eventually happened on Zoom on November 26<sup>th</sup> – with a new theme!**

Michele also met with Helen (our Rural Navigator). We met people who lived near Llanrwst to talk about setting up a group. This would mean members who lived South Conwy could meet.



We were just about to get together when CV19 meant we had to stop.

## Last words...



I've really enjoyed my first few months as Engagement and Participation Officer.

To all the members and their parents and carers, thank you for making me feel so welcome.



# Events

**LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION**  
England & Wales 

## Planning For the Future Service

**“Thinking about your future”**  
**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019**  
**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October**  
**2019**

A different style of event this time where professionals were ready at tables to help on a one to one basis. An under 25 and an over 25 session worked well and were attended by 22-25 people.





# Groups & Good Times



**Porth Eirias Watersports** enabled our members to have great fun on the water.



## Music

Following on from the success of musical mayhem last year we continued with offering sessions to all age groups. We have some truly musical members!



STARTS 25 JANUARY

### RHYTHM & GUITARS

For Learning Disabilities  
 DYSERTH Community Hall, 29 Cwm Road, LL18 6AY  
 11.00 am - 12.00 pm Under 18's  
 12.00 pm - 1.00 pm Over 18's  
 £4.50 per person  
 BRING YOUR OWN GUITAR

Contact: Noneconwy-connect.org.uk  
 Limited spaces so make sure to book




SUNDAYS DEWIS SANT, RHIW ROAD, COLWYN BAY  
 SPYGE HUB, RHIF ROAD, LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

### RHYTHM AND GUITARS

Limited places so must be booked.  
 Message below or contact Non  
 Non@conwy-connect.org.uk  
 Starting January 5th  
 4-5 pm Under 18  
 5-6 pm over 18






# Groups & Good Times

## The Emporium

Members learnt new skills and created their own jewellery. They did an amazing job! Evie was very proud of them all.



## MOS Social Nights

Have got even busier! Eva does a fantastic job running the sessions. There is a lovely vibe and many happy faces every session.

## Climbing

Has moved from Gogarth to The Boat House in Llandudno.



Horse riding, skiing, football and pool have all been enjoyed in various locations.





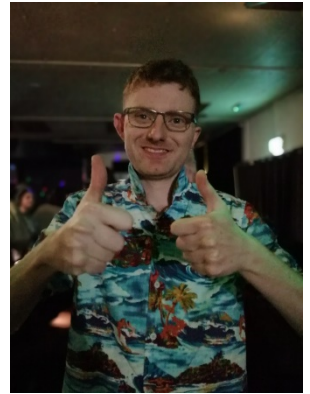
# Groups & Good Times

## Venture Drama and Picasso

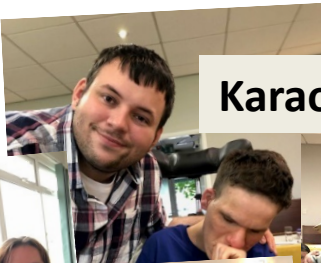
Both groups have remained popular throughout and have continued to impress us with their artistic creativity.



Disco has been enjoyed on a regular basis. Themed fancy dress sessions happened throughout the year with a fun Christmas disco combined with a MOS/Friendship party as the highlight of the year.



Karaoke is always a fun evening enjoyed by all.

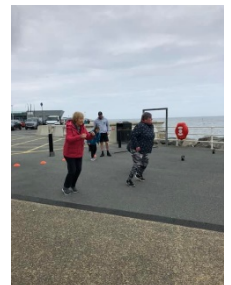




# Friendship Group

## The Friendship Group 2019/2020 organised by Shell Williams and Non Lederle

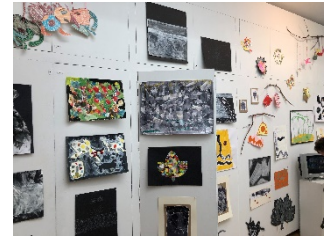
- Our own strictly style dance sessions.
- Trip to Conwy Castle.
- Pantomime trip to see Aladdin.
- Picnic in the park.
- Enjoyable Friendship walks.
- Bowling.
- Cinema visits.
- Zoo days with a membership.
- Friday fitness.
- Swimming sessions
- Joined with Connect Buddies and went to Alton Towers.





# Groups & Good Times

Some of our members were also lucky enough to complete art sessions with Royal Cambrian Academy in Conwy.



**Makaton Choir**, kindly funded by the Learning Disability Transformation Team, is the highlight of the week for many. Not only have members and parents/support learnt to sign to songs, but friendships have also been made and laughter is always present.







# Health Improvement Service



Hi. I'm Paul and I am the Health Improvement Officer. As you might expect, that means my work is about health issues that affect our members. This can be lots of different things, from telling people why it is important to have an Annual Health Check, to making sure people have all the latest health info in a format that is easy to understand. Below is a list of some of the things I have been up to.

- **Conwy Council Relationships Policy Task and Finish Group 5<sup>th</sup> June – attended with Conwy Connect member to represent point of view of people with Learning Disabilities**
- **What Matters 3 – Health Edition – interview with member, photo story about health checks, interview with NHS Learning Disability Champion**
- **Edited Learning Disability Acute Liaison Team Film about Learning Disability Annual Health Checks to make it suitable for our members**



# Health Improvement Service



- **Medical student Learning Disability and Autism Awareness Training – 5 sessions**
- **25<sup>th</sup> November – attended Police meeting with Alex Fryer (Quality Patient Safety Nurse Manager BCUHB) at St. Asaph about content for a training day for police officers about learning disability and mental health**
- **23<sup>rd</sup> May Nurse Stakeholder meeting at Bangor University – to decide content of new curriculum for nurse training**
- **16<sup>th</sup> September CVSC Safeguarding Training**



**Medical Student Learning Disability Awareness Training**

- **9<sup>th</sup> December The Big Chat – Conwy Town Hall – link meeting for mental health services – to find out about mental health support services available for our members**
- **4<sup>th</sup> January – meeting with Aberconwy Mind to learn about monthly Mental Health info hub**
- **14<sup>th</sup> February Hospital Passport consultation at Canolfan Riviere, working to support University of South Wales staff to consult with some of our members**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> March attended Screening Information Training by Public Health Wales**
- **March - regular posting of latest coronavirus related information in ‘Easy Read’ format**



# Planning for the Future

**During the year:**

**At the end of the year:**



Completed plans:  
13  
2 In Progress

First Reviews:  
7 Completed  
8 In Progress

On Hold:  
7

Ready to start:  
5

Second Reviews:  
3 Completed  
5 In Progress

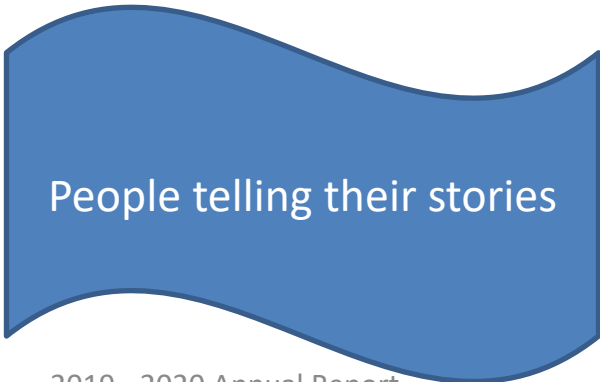


**Since the Start of the Service:**

“Movers”



24





# Denbighshire Planning for the Future

## Denbighshire Planning for the Future Service

### Planning for the Future (16 hours a week)

I began by meeting with Chris Spree, the Conwy Connect Planning for the Future Officer, who was generous with his time and expertise, to the extent of arranging for me to shadow him at a home visit. My role was to publicise the service so in January I arranged a presentation to the Denbighshire Complex Needs Team, ensuring that these professionals, encompassing health and social services, and based throughout the county, were aware of the service and could bear this in mind when dealing with their caseloads.



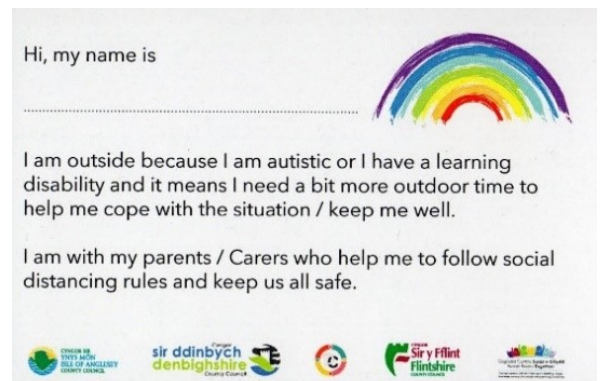
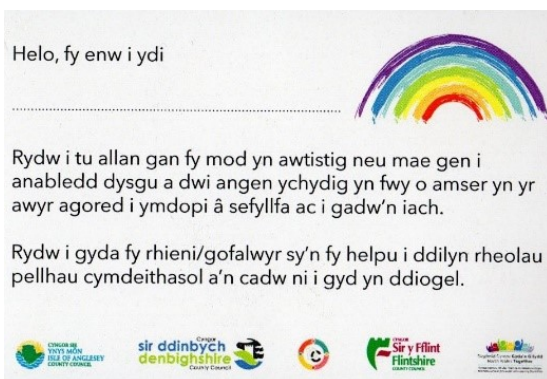
In order to access a wider audience, I worked with Denbighshire Learning Disability Forum to set up a Planning for the Future event to be based in a community hall in Denbigh, offering speakers, workshops, stalls and opportunities for networking. This was planned as a large event for the end of March but we hadn't expected Covid-19 and that is currently on hold. I also arranged to be interviewed on Sound Radio to publicise the service and did a short piece on a Welsh television current affairs programme.



# Denbighshire Planning for the Future

Social media was an essential tool so I began using a Denbighshire Connect Facebook page and recorded short videos which reflected both my posts. As time went on it became clear that Planning for the Future was something that could be fed into the Supporting Families work in many ways and I regularly took opportunities to bring the subject up with families.

As Covid hit, I recognised the extra difficulties facing individuals with a learning disability and/or autism. As a result, I spoke with North Wales Police, the Welsh Government and Denbighshire County Council and the Learning Disability Transformation Project about the creation of a card to identify individuals who needed more freedom to travel and the Rainbow Card resulted in being distributed across North Wales, with our Conwy Connect logo side by side with county logos and that of the Learning Disability Transformation Project.





# Denbighshire Connect

Looking at the geography of Denbighshire, it was clear that there was a need to provide services in both North and South, especially considering that the people targeted were carers who are by definition very busy people. I began monthly drop in sessions in the North in a community hall in Dyserth, purposefully coinciding with Gateway's night there. This was in order to give carers an opportunity to pop in while their family members enjoyed their own activities. Following a meeting with the Gateway organiser, we were able to work together and complement each other's events. In the south of the county, I began monthly drop in sessions in the centre of Ruthin in a well known building used by the voluntary services. Again, co-operation between us meant that they kindly publicised the sessions through their large mailouts.

During this time I also met up with representatives from NEWCIS and NWAAA in order to ensure that we all knew each other and could work together, avoiding overlaps and opening up possibilities of referring to each other. I have since referred more than one family to NWAAA as what we offer is not advocacy. Likewise, I have shared NEWCIS details on some particular Carers subjects where they have the expertise. NWAAA likewise, have sent one family my way as the carers were looking for support, rather than the family member with learning disabilities. Again, Covid had an effect on the service offered and I set up Zoom sessions instead, making them weekly to reflect the extra stress felt by family carers at this time.



# Denbighshire Connect

With Person Centred Planning being at the heart of everything I do, I became a regular member of the PCP Community of Practice group, taking an opportunity to give them a presentation about both my posts. This has proved to be an ongoing learning experience for me as well as a regular opportunity to liaise with a cross section of professionals, meaning that as and when a family I support may need to be signposted somewhere, I have more opportunities to do that.



I have worked to maintain a good relationship with the spectrum of professionals that supporting various families have involved me meeting and have been glad to see referrals beginning to come through from social workers. Feedback from families and professionals has been positive and this service appears to be needed and valued.





# Llanwrst Mapping Service



What is going on in your area



WHERE CAN I GO IN MY AREA ?



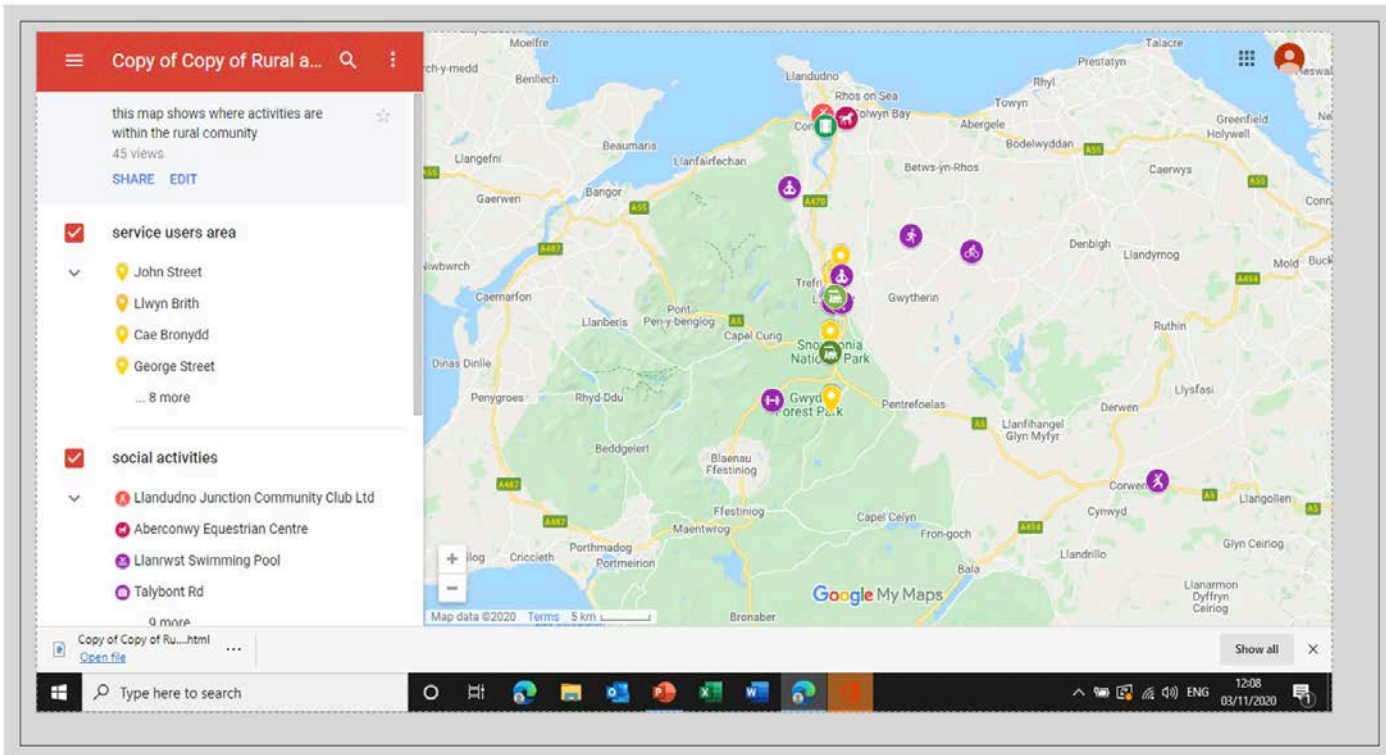
We all sat down together and talked about what we want to do in our area and filled a form in together.

So I got to work looking at what I could find in Llanwrst and started to make a map of what people wanted to do





# Llanwrst Mapping Service



We also had to deal with Covid and all the restrictions, so we started to work from home and have zoom sessions so we could all stay connected with our friends and keep safe





## Contact Details



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**Rear Annex**  
**7 Rhiw Road**  
**Colwyn Bay**  
**LL29 7TE**



**TEL/FAX: 01492 536486**



**Email: [Catherine@conwy-connect.org.uk](mailto:Catherine@conwy-connect.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.conwy-connect.org.uk](http://www.conwy-connect.org.uk)**



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



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