diverse cymru

Promoting equality for all

Hyrwyddo cydraddoldeb i bawb

Diverse Cymru

Annual Report April 2013 - March 2014

www.diversecymru.org.uk

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Background Information

Registered Name:	Diverse Excellence Cymru Limited
Charity number:	1142159
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Trustees

Alison Dacey
Gaynor Legall
Helen Bennett
Howard Teague
Jeff Champney-Smith
Keith Dewhurst
Margaret McLaughlin
Martin Gabriel
Martin Price
Mervyn Harris
Sally Fowler
Vic Cartwright

No trustees were appointed or resigned during the year.

History & Aims

Diverse Cymru is an innovative organisation in the Welsh Third Sector, created in recognition of the difficulties and discrimination faced by people experiencing inequality in Wales.

Diverse Cymru promotes equality for all. We believe that the people of Wales can work together to challenge discrimination in all its forms and create an equitable future.

We aim to make a real difference to people's lives through delivering services that reduce inequality and increase independence; supporting people to speak for themselves and to connect with decision makers; creating opportunities for participation and development; raising awareness of equality issues; and inspiring people to take action against inequality.

Our vision is a world without prejudice or discrimination, where every person is equal and diversity is celebrated.

All of our work is based around our 'Five Pillars':

Providing Information, Guidance and Advice
Demand for information, advice and advocacy will continue to grow in the coming years, both from people not eligible for Social Services provision being signposted to Diverse Cymru for assistance and because the Welsh Government will now be looking to the third sector to find ways to develop and fund a range of preventative and recovery focussed services.

Promoting and Delivering Services and Support
Increasing the use of direct payments, developing new forms of self directed care such as individualised budgets and developing our befriending and advocacy services are key themes of this Strategic Plan and are important strategic priorities for Diverse Cymru.

Ensuring the Voices of Vulnerable People are Heard
In line with our aims and values, the overall objective of all Diverse Cymru services is to advise and support people affected by inequality to obtain their rights and to represent their interests. Our Advice and Information and our Direct Payments Support Services do this by providing essential services to individuals. However, we will also seek to achieve this objective at a local strategic and policy level in a variety of other ways.

Creating Opportunities for Involvement
Volunteering is essential to creating an inclusive and mutually supportive society, and will be especially beneficial for groups at high risk of social exclusion. However, these groups also need the most support to volunteer, which will require a new level of joint working.
Diverse Cymru must also ensure that the knowledge, experience and expertise of service users is used to improve services, either through campaigning,research or promoting opportunities for engagement.

Organisational Development
Although Diverse Cymru now has sound systems in place for governance, financial control and operational management, any significant growth will require a number of organisational developments.

Joint Chair's Report

Time seems to move so quickly it doesn't seem that long ago that we were launching Diverse Cymru at the Senedd. Since that time Diverse Cymru has grown considerably and continues in its work of challenging inequality through ever increasing partnership working with communities across Wales.

In looking forward the hope remains that Diverse Cymru continues to build on its incredible start as a positive force in the world of equality addressing the ever widening array of inequality issues currently facing Welsh society, expanding our activities and engaging with those not currently aware of our work.

The continuing success of Diverse Cymru is due in no small part to continuing involvement of our supporters from all sectors and across the political spectrum, our staff and volunteers. We are aware of the time, skills and knowledge that volunteers contribute to Diverse Cymru. Among these volunteers I would like to thank our dedicated Board of Trustees Diverse Cymru who are focussed on efficient use of resources, good governance, sustainability, and their skills are used in ensuring the effective strategic delivery of our Business Plan.

Our challenges for the year ahead at a time of economic austerity, are as last year to strengthen and build on our successes which are outlined in this Annual Report, and to support new and innovative ways of managing the expectations of our organisation and supporters to ensure that Diverse Cymru continues to promote equality for all and also helps importantly to deliver equality of opportunity for all.

Keith Dewhurst
Sally Fowler

Chief Executive's Report

Another year of real progress for Diverse Cymru where we have again exceeded the aims and objectives set out in our strategic and business plans.

During the year we were successful with a number of project bids which has further expanded the range, quantity and type of work that we are undertaking. A key aspect of this expansion has been our increased partnership work across Wales where, through our engagement visits to Llandudno and Carmarthen, we were able to make a number of new contacts which has significantly improved the profile of Diverse Cymru, in North and West Wales.

As set out in the individual contributions in this report, there has been great work undertaken, and real success, in the past 12 months in all our work areas. Whilst I could highlight success and make a case for each of these work areas, two areas that stood out for me were our Advice and Direct Payments services.

- The Advice team more than doubled their advocacy and welfare benefits advice caseload and continued to provide a successful effective person centred service, as evidenced by the successful tender for the Cardiff Council Advice service in partnership with the Citizen Advice Bureau and Speakeasy.

- The Direct Payments service has continued its significant growth, which as a direct result of the Direct Payments online framework that has been designed and developed in-house, currently supports over 720 service users, the highest number of service users supported in any local authority in Wales.

Our continued success and progress as a proactive vibrant organisation has again gone beyond my expectations. This success however could not have been achieved without the efforts and contributions of the staff, board members, and the increasing number of volunteers whom I cannot thank enough for helping make our primary objective of making a real difference to the lives of those we support, a reality.

Dr. Charles Willie
Chief Executive Officer

Black History Month 2013

Diverse Cymru successfully managed and supported the delivery of the all Wales activities for Black History Month 2013.

Black History Month Wales aims to educate people in Wales, challenge negative perceptions, celebrate the positive contributions and promote the history of people of African Diaspora heritage.

We helped deliver an exciting and thought provoking programme of events and activities with 'Unity through Music: the Rhythm of the Diaspora' at its core, promoting music and musicians from Wales and bringing world music and musicians to Wales.

This involved supporting a series of events that included a photographic exhibition at St. David's Hall, Paul Robeson schools' workshops, live performances showcased at the Wales Millennium Centre on Saturday 19th October and a Wales-wide participatory arts and heritage workshop schedule. The programme also hosted a number of partnership fringe activities including film screenings, library events and museum and school activities.

The project was jointly funded by Arts Council of Wales and Cardiff Council and further financial and in-kind support came from Wales Millennium Centre, and was led by a team of 31 professional and grass roots community representatives.

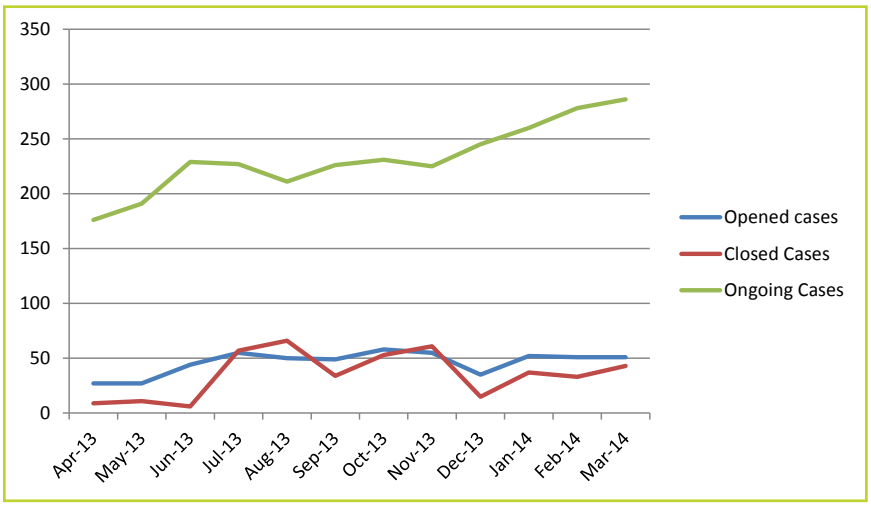
Diverse Cymru supported 12 partners by hosting the financial, administrative and line-management of the project that programmed 42 workshops and performances that employed 29 workshop facilitators, 98 artists and performers (including Catrin Finch and Ballet Nimba) and was seen by 10,584 participants.

Advice

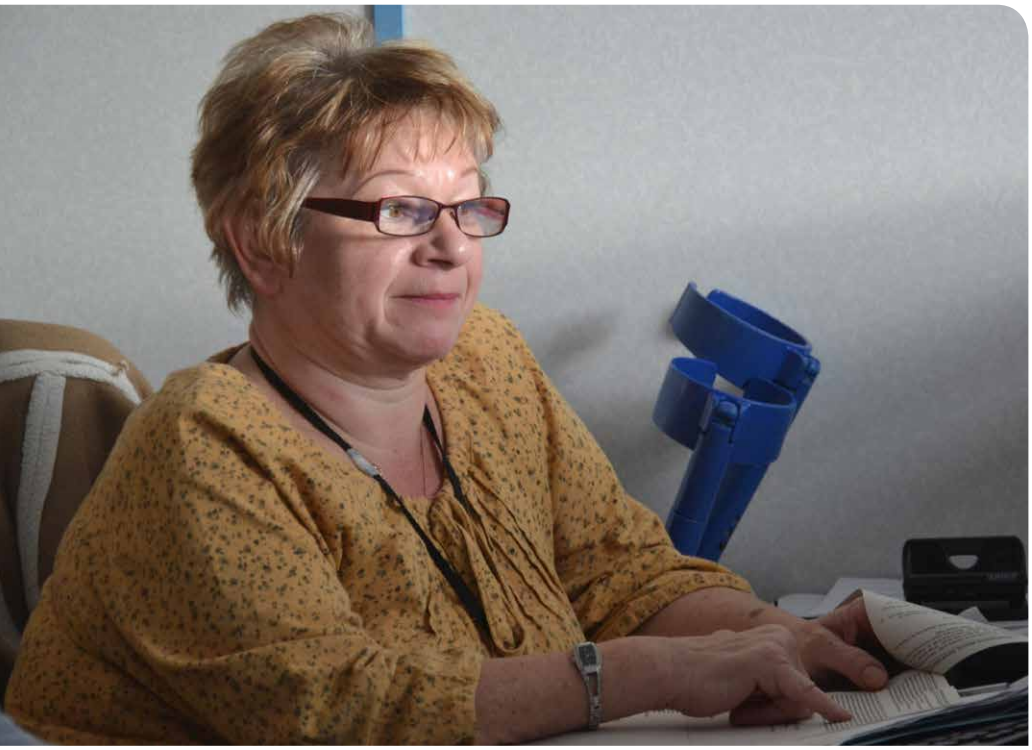
The Advice Service saw big changes in 2013/2014. Just as the two existing advisors were at breaking point owing to the number of cases each of them was handling, Diverse Cymru secured extra funding and was able to recruit another full time advisor and three further part time advisors. This enabled us to deal with existing clients and quickly increased numbers of new cases, as well as running new projects; Families First and the Advice Service in the Cardiff Council Advice Hub.

As part of the Advice Service we have provided weekly drop-in sessions at the Cardiff Council Hub in Marland House. Despite a slow start and the number of clients seen in the Hub being lower than expected, we have provided initial information and advice to a number of clients there and on several occasions assisted them further from the Diverse Cymru office.

In total the Advice Team opened 554 new cases in the period from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014. As predicted, Government changes to the welfare system have had a huge impact on our services in terms of client demand and the issues dominating our work. The table below shows the number of cases opened and closed each month demonstrating a steady growth of ongoing cases.



The new benefit Personal Independent Payment (PIP) was introduced in June 2013 and in the first 9 months we have dealt with 85 PIP applications, including assisting applicants at their face-to-face assessment. The process has proved extremely lengthy; clients faced several months wait for assessment and further delays in decision making by the DWP afterwards. By the end of March we were only able to close 4 PIP files, 3 with positive outcomes.



Changes to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) have also had a great impact on our work. New legislation has resulted in many clients appealing the decision awarding them ESA with the work-related activity group component and seeking to be placed in the support group (in which there is no time limit). Many clients were unaware of this legislation and only sought our advice upon the arrival of a letter from the DWP terminating their award. In these cases our advisors generally assist the client to re-apply for ESA.

Advice

Representation at benefit tribunals has remained a significant part of our work, with over 73% of tribunal hearings won.

The table to the right shows the number of tribunals and their outcomes month by month.

For the first time Diverse Cymru assisted a client to appeal to the Upper Tribunal against a decision made at First-Tier Tribunal. We succeeded in our challenge, and the decision was set aside and the case remitted back for a rehearing.

Our reputation has been growing, as demonstrated by the number of referrals from numerous sources including Cardiff Council, Housing and Health Services, a partnership between Speakeasy Advice and Cardiff and Vale Citizen's Advice, other Third Sector Organisations, and even the Job Centre and Tribunal Service themselves.

	Won	Lost	No change	Total
Apr 13	6	1		7
May 13	4	2	1	7
Jun 13	6	5		11
Jul 13	13	1	1	15
Aug 13	12	2		14
Sep 13	9	2	2	13
Oct 13	13	6		19
Nov 13	7	3		10
Dec 13	2			2
Jan 14	6			6
Feb 14	6	1		7
Mar 14	3	3	1	7
Total	87	26	5	118

We also continue to receive very positive feedback from our clients and below are a few examples:

"You guys are very good in what you do; I do not think anyone else could do better. I am very grateful for your help. It has made my life and children's lives a lot more comfortable and beautiful. Thank you."

"You were very supportive. The lady who helped me complete my DLA form was very helpful and understanding. She made me feel completely at east and assured me that further help would be available if needed. Thank you so much."

"I would never have got through this process without you. I would have given up and struggled on. You do a very special job and you're very good at it."

"Thank you so much for everything you have helped me with. I have found you kind, extremely professional and efficient and most of al I didn't feel like a case number because you listened and made me feel like I was a person not a number."

"I would not have been able to fight for my claim without your assistance. Could not ask for more, was kept up dated throughout. Your service is very good, but there are a lot of people like me out there who don't know there is help out there. Thank You."

BME Mental Health

It's been another busy year for our Section 64 funded mental health work as Suzanne has again been travelling around Wales making contacts, contributing to discussions and actions to improve the cultural sensitivity of mental health service delivery and improved working with mental health organisations and service providers across Wales to ensure improved inclusion and greater accountability of needs of BME communities.

A snapshot of some of the work that she has undertaken:

- Interim member of the National Mental Health Partnership Board (NMHPB)
- Contributing to discussions and consider actions from the Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan
- Joint Operational Group meetings helped re-design the Primary Mental Health Support Service (PMHSS) leaflets to include equality issues as well as the GPs PMHSS information around asylum seekers and refugees health entitlements.
- Joint Wales Alliance for Mental Health (WAMH) and Mental Health Action Wales (MHAW) meetings to strengthening service user and carer membership of the NMHPB by recruiting members from all over Wales
- High Needs Collaborative Partnership with Hafal, Bipolar UK and The Mental Health Foundation national campaign Lights! Camera! Action!

The aim of Lights! Camera! ACTION! was to mobilise service users and carers in Wales to get the best results from the new Mental Health Measure and Mental Health Strategy – both individually in their own lives and collectively in order to work with the NHS, social services and Welsh Government (and all the other agencies who can assist people with serious mental illness) to sustain the modernisation and improvement of services.

- Delivering BME mental health awareness sessions in Cardiff, Swansea and North Wales to mental health and social care practitioners
- Mental Health Core Dataset Project for Wales.
- Swansea City of Sanctuary
- Cardiff City of Sanctuary
- Development of Intercultural Awareness Skills Training Pack to deliver to health practitioners, front-line workers, etc.
- Newport MECHANIC (Minority Ethic Communities Health Association Newport Implementing Change)
- To provide a forum for information sharing, networking and partnership/collaborative working.
- In partnership with University of South Wales and University College Dublin, produced and published a research paper, 'Inpatients From Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds in Mental Health Services in Wales: A Secondary Analysis of the Count Me In Census' which was printed in the Diversity and Equality in Health and Care. The paper provides baseline information on key protected characteristics of inpatients in mental health hospitals and facilities in Wales over a 6 year period; contributes to the evidence base on the metal health pathways of people from BME backgrounds and provides evidence to underpin future research priorities for regional and national policy initiatives in Wales.

The above are just highlights of how Diverse Cymru has helped make a difference in raising awareness and improving the delivery of BME Mental Health Service in Wales.

BME Mental Health

Since April 2013 – March 2014 the BME Mental Health Project has had 47 cases referred to them, 44 of which have been refugee or asylum seekers.

We have delivered training sessions on BME Mental Health to healthcare practitioners at Whitchurch hospital and the Primary Mental Health Support team at the Hamadryad Centre. Feedback from those sessions has been extremely positive.

We continue to run information sessions for asylum seekers/refugees at Oasis offering various workshops around hate crime, education/employment, volunteering and BME mental health awareness.

Last year we worked in partnership with Mind Cymru to initiate and deliver a pilot project with the specific objective of researching mechanisms that could improve the mental health outcomes of young African Caribbean men aged between 16-25, and to use the findings and outcomes of this research as evidence for a larger piece of work in the future. The research concentrated on areas of Cardiff and involved working with the local community education centres and youth workers.

The project 'To Improve the Mental Outcomes of Young African Caribbean Men' ran for 6 months and a report was produced called 'Better Outcomes New Approach'.

In partnership with the BME Mental Health and Social Care Advocacy project and Journeys we designed and developed information leaflets about depression in 5 different languages.

Diverse Cymru staff have also been involved with a research project in partnership with the University of Wales into the "Impact of the Asylum Seeking Process on the Mental Health of Asylum Seekers/Refugees".

BME Mental Health Advocacy Project

The project has been running since June 2013, and is funded for three years by Comic Relief, with the aim of improving outcomes for BME people and increasing awareness among voluntary organisations and statutory service providers

There was initially one full-time staff member working on an all-Wales basis. This was reviewed when there was a staff change, and we employed part-time regional coordinators. This means that we have an operational presence in North, West and Mid Wales for the first time, and can better reach those in need of support and can work with more organisations and local Health Boards to help them offer a more accessible service to BME people. We have held successful Mental Health awareness raising sessions with BME community members, with over 140 individuals benefiting from the project since its beginning.

This is what project beneficiaries had to say:

> **It was such a relief to be able to talk about my difficulties in a safe place.**
> **It was so nice to hear that I am not alone with suffering from depression.**
> **I have never been able to talk about my mental health issues.**
> **I want to be able to help other people with depression.**
> **I want to learn more about how to cope with being depressed and feeling stressed.**

FUNDED BY COMIC RELIEF

Community volunteers have signed up to register to work on our project after attending our "Voices of the Community events". This has given them an insight into how they can get involved in BME people having improved access to culturally appropriate advocacy locally. This will be achieved through working with partner organisations (existing advocacy services and BME organisations) the Community Champions, focus and role will be to support and raise awareness with these partners.

Co-Creating Healthy Change

This project is part of the Co-Creating Healthy Change portfolio of 10 projects which are working to encourage the citizens of Cardiff and the Vale to share their views on health, social care and well-being services, and to help them influence service provision and decision making.

Shelagh and Roz came into post at the end of May as Service User Involvement Officers.
Since coming into post, they have been engaged in promoting the project to service providers and community groups in the local area to encourage involvement. As well as meeting with individuals from the health board and local authorities, they have also made links with a variety of community groups in Cardiff and the Vale.

To promote the project they have attended a wide range of community events and festivals, such as Pride Cymru, Vale 50+ Forum events, and a range of events for World Mental Health Day. They have also promoted the project by presenting at local network meetings such as the Vale Voluntary Action Network.

The whole Co-Creating Healthy Change portfolio launched in the Senedd in November 2013 where Mark Drakeford AM gave a speech about the value of co-production. Diverse Cymru's own Co-Creating Healthy Change project launched at events in Cardiff in January 2014 and in Barry in February 2014. During the launch events, there were presentations about the project, guest speakers (to give service user and health board perspectives), as well as taster training sessions on 'effective communication' and 'co-production.' Both events were well attended both by service providers and members of the public with over 45 individuals attending each event.

The project at Diverse Cymru works in particular with:

- BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) people
- Carers
- Disabled people
- LGB (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people)
- Older people
- Transgender people

An advisory group has also been set up for the project, meeting regularly in Cardiff and the Vale.

Promotional materials have also been developed in five different languages and articles have been placed in local newsletters such as the Vale of Glamorgan Caring Times and the Nexus newsletter. Shelagh and Roz have also appeared on Radio Cardiff and Bro Radio to talk about the project.

Training on communication skills and confidence building for citizens involved in the project is due to start in May 2014, with the first forum meetings taking place in Cardiff and Barry in May and June 2014.

Engagement events are also continuing to take place in Cardiff and the Vale, linking in with community groups including a coffee morning at Rita's Café in Cadoxton and an event at the Sbectrwm Centre in Fairwater.

Communications

The website has grown in the last year and has seen 17,000 users, up 60% from last year. We have also continued to maintain and update separate websites for the Direct Payments and Training teams. These have also seen a corresponding rise in users and pageviews. Users are now able to apply for Personal Assistant jobs and book training through these websites.

Followers on social networks have also increased; facebook likes by 50% and twitter followers have doubled in a year. These are a great way of sharing our news through status updates, photos of the office and events, and links to useful research and news items.

We also launched a show on Radio Cardiff, which we have produced and broadcast every Tuesday afternoon. We concentrate on equality and diversity issues affecting Cardiff and Wales, discuss topical stories and promote the events of local charities. We also interview two organisations every week to give our listeners an idea of what services are available to them in Cardiff's thriving third sector.

The show is hosted by our Information & Communications Officer Stewart, but he has been joined by 12 other members of staff who have co-hosted on a week-by-week basis. Many of these and others have also appeared as guests on the show to promote their work within Diverse Cymru.

In September, we organised an event in Llandudno in order to make contacts and broaden the potential for partnership working. The event was extremely successful, and many representatives of a broad range of organisations attended. We held presentations and workshops on the first day and we were then hosted by Mind Aberconwy on the second to meet interested parties on a one to one basis and discuss issues further.

Over 180 people attended our Winter Ball and Awards evening in December. We were treated to some fantastic live music, good food and plenty of dancing into the night. We were joined by our board members and representatives of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils to hand out our annual awards to recognise excellence in equality and access.

The communications has recently grown to incorporate Community Involvement (page 14) and Co-Creating Healthy Change (page 10). We hope this restructure will allow us to attend more events to not only promote our activities, but to support other organisations and their projects.

Training

Our Training services are about so much more than numbers. It is about promoting awareness of equality, diversity, dignity, respect and well-being and being clear about equality issues that prevent us from reaching our full potential. We think education is the key to addressing discrimination and unfairness. The great feedback we receive from clients regarding improvements made in the workplace and people's well-being is testimony to the fact that the service is making an encouraging, positive difference. Having said that, here are some numbers:

- 299 delegates attended open courses (Mental Health First Aid and Reducing Stress & Increasing Emotional Resilience open courses had the greatest attendance, followed by Understanding Hate Crime and Transgender Awareness)
- 8 organisations booked an in-house course on Reducing Stress & Emotional Resilience (and for some we provide the course more than once).
- 5 organisations booked several in-house Introduction to Mental Health Awareness courses
- 6 organisations each booked several Equality & Diversity courses.
- 79 learners, undertaking accredited units, were registered with Agored Cymru.
- The highest uptake for in-house courses was from Housing Associations.

A third tutor, a new administrator and a volunteer joined the team. We continued to run courses, such as, Mental Health First Aid, Equality & Diversity and Making Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled People, added some new ones and delivered some bespoke courses.

We also facilitated sessions on Understanding Disability Equality and Addressing Homophobia at school and for Equality Champions on how to conduct Equality Impact Assessments and Transgender Awareness. We also delivered lectures at universities and colleges on subjects such as the Social Model of Disability and Working with BME Communities.
We developed a new Agored Cymru accredited unit on Challenging Extremism for Instructors which we ran for 5 learners. We worked with the Care Council for Wales and Agored Cymru to update our accredited unit for Personal Assistants and replaced it with a new unit - 'Introduction to Working as a Personal Assistant for Direct Payment Service Users'. This new unit is aimed at people considering becoming a Personal Assistant and as a part of this we agreed partnership working with Job Centre Plus to assist with recruiting people looking for work. We also ran an Agored Cymru accredited unit - Introduction to Advocacy unit for young people.

Our tutors provided courses, such as, an Introduction to Professional Boundaries, Transgender Awareness and Equality & Diversity and we arranged external provision of courses for Diverse Cymru staff on Lone Working, Results Based Accountability and an Introduction to Assessment (for tutors providing accredited learning).

Consultancy

Members of our Equality Assessment Group include experts from a range of organisations and staff members from Diverse Cymru. During 2013-14 members provided independent equality and diversity advice on:

- Cardiff Council's Local Development Plan (2006-21);
- The development of Natural Resources Wales' draft Equality Plan and impact assessments on their Voluntary Exit Scheme and Corporate Plan;
- The National Assembly for Wales' guidance on the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, which included simplifying the process and providing a straightforward template form

We continued to coordinate, for a 5th year, service user and carer involvement in the training of social workers for Cardiff Metropolitan University's degree course and Cardiff University's master course. Involvement activities included, for example, service users, carer and Diverse Cymru staff attending programme management meetings, annual reviews with the Care Council for Wales and interviewing applicants.

Other work included developing an Equality Tool Kit, for the Arts Council for Wales, which involved interviewing a range of arts organisations and providing advice to Cardiff & Vale College on their plans for a new campus.

> **"....thanks for the session you led for us. The feedback has been extremely positive." (General Teaching Council for Wales)**
>
> **"Thank you very much for the EIA – it was really useful and will provide some useful ideas to embed into the rest of the organisation as well" (Natural Resources Wales)**

Direct Payments

Diverse Cymru has continued to provide exceptional support to Service Users in receipt of Direct Payments within Cardiff, a fact emphasised by the continued growth in the number of Service Users in receipt of Direct Payments in Cardiff. At March 2014 standing at 682 (compared with 482 in March 2013). From the additional 200 Service Users, 190 opted for the Diverse Cymru Managed Banking service. It is evident from these figures that the Diverse Cymru Direct Payments services, and in particular the integrated Managed Banking, has had a positive effect on the take up and, importantly, the retention of Direct Payments Service Users.

In line with the increase in Service User numbers, there was also an increase in staff numbers to fifteen support workers and 1 administrator, each support worker managing a caseload of up to 55 – 60 cases.

One area we have noticed a larger increase of referrals has been from Children's Services. In March 2014 there was 93 children and young people in receipt of Direct Payments compared with 30 in March 2013. This continued growth has been a result in the Direct Payments Team strengthening their relationship with Social Workers based in Children's Services and Partnership working with the Direct Payments Link Advisor based within Children's Services.

The Direct Payments Team is also striving to continue to promote Direct Payments amongst families. We are planning a Children and Young Persons forum event where families can attend to share experiences, explain any issues they face, gain access to information and network with each other.

Internally there have been some changes to the structure of the Direct Payments Team. The team has been divided so that three Support Workers will be designated to managing all the Children's Services referrals. This has been a positive change for the Direct Payments Team. We have received positive feedback from families who have stated when they are explaining the Direct Payments process to friends, relatives, peers and other professionals they have found it useful to be able to provide names of Support Workers who will act as a point of contact for information on Direct Payments or if a child or young person is referred for Direct Payments be able to guarantee they will be assigned one of the three support workers.

Diverse Cymru has continued to deliver its Agored Cymru accredited and Care Council approved Personal Assistant (PA) training courses to an increasing number of PAs. Between April 2013 and 2014, another 51 Personal Assistants completed all 4 modules of the course, and have gained the OCN Qualification 'Preparing to Become a Personal Assistant'.

It has been an exciting period for the team who are continuing to promote awareness of Direct Payments. Our efforts have proven to increase the referral rate of Direct Payments and maintain a strong retention rate. We are looking forward to the year ahead and seeing the Direct Payment referral rate increase further.

Of particular interest in the coming year will be the introduction of an online Service User / PA Matching system, which we hope will deal effectively with the ongoing finding of PA reliefs, that has always been seen as a barrier to the take up and retention of Direct Payments.

Families First

Through Families First we provide a free advocacy and benefit advice service for families with a disabled child.

Since the beginning of the project, Christine the Advocacy Officer (who started in May 2013) and Dawn the Welfare Benefits Officer (who started in July 2013) have dealt with a total of 105 cases, comprising of 37 advocacy cases and 68 welfare benefit cases.

Ian worked as a Direct Payments Support worker and worked with 56 families and 24 groups.

The issues dealt with by the Families First team covered the following areas:

- Special educational needs, and issues with mainstream schooling
- Social care and issues around service provision
- Accessible housing, adaptations and occupational therapy assessments
- Referrals for social care
- Welfare benefit claims for all members of families with a disabled child or young person
- Attendance at and support with medical assessments
- Requests for mandatory reconsiderations (previously reconsiderations)
- Requests for appeals
- Attendance at HM Courts & Tribunals Service for appeal hearings to present evidence and support the client.

We have had many successes as mediators between schools, parents, and the Local Education Authority. We have also obtained successful outcomes from initial welfare benefit claims, mandatory reconsideration decisions and at tribunal hearings.

We continue to build successful relationships with other organisations, including Cardiff Accessible Homes, support workers and the other Families First organisations to ensure that our clients receive the services they require.

Policy

The policy department involves gathering views of people affected by inequalities in Wales through our other teams and feeding in views and concerns in relation to equality into public sector organisations and into consultations, inquiries, calls for evidence, and policy across Wales.

Our volunteer, Jonathan, is still supporting the social policy team and has been a fantastic support. We also link with our Researcher, Hannah Mason, to support the evidence for our policy work.

We prioritise responses that have the greatest impact on people from protected characteristic groups, especially where it affects the whole of Wales on equality policies; legislation; health and social care; education; and welfare reform.

68 responses were submitted to consultations and policy between April 2013 and March 2014.

These were:

- 21 responses to Welsh Government
- 18 Council tax reduction scheme responses to Local Authorities
- 13 responses to Local Authorities across Wales on various policies
- 6 responses to UK government departments including Ministry of Justice and DWP
- 5 responses to National Assembly for Wales committees
- 5 budget consultation responses to Local Authorities
- 3 responses to Welsh public sector bodies – the Care Council for Wales; Natural Resources Wales; South Wales Programme Board (NHS Wales)
- 3 responses to Fire and Rescue Services on their annual improvement plans
- 2 responses to Local Health Boards
- 1 response to the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery (Wales)
- 1 response to the Older People's Commissioner for Wales on Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives
- 1 response to the Work and Pensions Committee (UK)
- Department of transport; Attorney General's Office
- 1 response to the Judicial Appointments Committee (UK)
- 1 response to the Law Commission
- 1 response to the Office of National Statistics
- 1 response to Big Lottery Fund for Wales

Key meetings attended this year include:

- Arts Council for Wales equalities monitoring group
- UK Government Equality Office and Welsh Government round table on the future of the UK Public Sector Equality
- Welsh Government – Active Travel Wales Bill delivery guidance workshops
- NHS Wales equalities stakeholder reference group
- Law Commission advisory group on Electoral Law
- Welsh Government Hate crime framework consultation meeting
- Welsh Government Third Sector Consultation Equality Impact Assessment Round Table Discussion
- Welsh Local Government Association and NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights - Joint Annual Conference - Equality in 2014: Luxury or Necessity?
- National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group on Disability

Key responses included:

- The future of equality and human rights in Wales
- The Active Travel (Wales) Bill
- HMRC supporting customers who need extra help
- Equality Impact Assessments on the European Structural Funds
- DWP - Moving Around Activity of the PIP assessment
- DWP - the Fourth independent review of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA)

Citizen Involvement

This year has been another varied and busy time as Citizen Involvement incorporates all Diverse Cymru volunteering projects.

The Diverse Cymru Disability Access Group (DCDAG), our longest established volunteering project, continues to involve disabled and non-disabled people looking at solutions to disability access issues. This is an excellent example of citizen involvement in action. The DCDAG has advised on major building projects, and more low key local issues.

The DCDAG chair was taken by Martin Vaivods (above), our longest serving volunteer.

Diverse Cymru has been the independent arbitration organisation for the Wales Millennium Centre and New Theatre and following engagement with disabled people and disability organisations a set of automatic eligibility criteria was set. For applicants that are not automatically eligible, they can contact us for an independent review.

From this, we have been approached by Creu Cymru to co-tender for an Arts Council initiative to develop an all Wales free Carer's ticket scheme. If we are successful the one application will be accepted at venues across Wales with our previous experience serving as the model.

Service User Involvement continues at Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University student Social Worker programmes. Service Users are involved in the selection and recruitment of student social workers from initial UCAS applications to interviewing prospective students. Some attend lectures and are involved in seminars. Practice Assessment Panels (PAP) and portfolio monitoring at both universities involves Service Users reviewing course work.

We were asked by the Corporate Events Team at the National Assembly for Wales to review accessibility for Welsh Government Committee meetings. Following a request from the Health Committee, we developed a guide for bariatric patient's participation.

St Fagans Museum of Welsh Life has invited Diverse Cymru to join its Equality and Diversity forum looking at different exhibits and how they reflect the diversity in Wales.

Cardiff Council has asked for support and advice on its alley-gating scheme. There may be an opportunity to replicate the theatres arbitration model for residents that oppose the installation of alley gates.

The Direct Payments Peer Support Group continues to support and advise Direct Payment Service Users, which is another peer led group and is chaired by Cath Husband.

We have attended disability awareness days at Cardiff and Vale College sites at Trowbridge, Cardiff and Barry. These are always lively and, for some students, informative days.

Volunteering

Despite Annie, our Volunteer Co-ordinator being away from the office for a few months, Diverse Cymru's volunteer programme continued to recruit volunteers. Jyoti Preet-Ryatt, Citizen Involvement volunteer and Cathy Rogers, Jobs Growth Wales placement trainee administrator took up the reins, with Cathy focusing on recruiting volunteers for our Gwirvol funded young people's peer led Advocacy project.

'Mix it Mean it' is a peer advocacy project delivered by young disabled and BME volunteers providing advocacy through community languages to overcome barriers to accessing advocacy and support for young BME people.

The course content was written for a Level 2 (equivalent to A*-C Grade GCSE) Agored accredited unit Advocacy for Children and People, and the workshops were delivered by Annie and one of our trainers Rob Withey.

We hope that this successful project will be the start of more youth involvement.
To see the feedback visit: http://bit.ly/GwirvolVideo

This was the final year of the Lankelly Chase BME Mental Health Mentoring programme, which was a successful programme recruiting Mentors to support BME people who are experiencing mental ill health. The social event in May was bitter-sweet. It highlighted how wonderfully empowering it has been but relationships have been built over the last three years that we hope will continue outside of the programme.

Alongside the Lankelly Chase programme, the BME Befriender project funded by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board offers one to one volunteer Befriender support to BME people experiencing mental ill health encouraging them to participate in their communities and combat social isolation.

Diverse Cymru is also a Community Partner in the Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded accessible volunteering project. The aim is to change the demographic of volunteers at St Fagans Museum of Welsh Life. We are in our second year and already the changes have been made to access. Community Partners and staff developed the Project Coordinator job description, short-listed the applications, interviewed candidates and appointed Loveday Allen to the post.

We were asked to review the volunteering processes at the Cardiff Castle Frontline Museum. This successful collaboration has led to a positive and ongoing relationship.

(Left) Volunteer of the Year winner Sian Woodward receives her award at our annual Winter Ball.

Staff List (1st April 2014)

Charles Willie - Chief Executive
Ceri Haslam - Direct Payments Manager
Michael Flynn - Director of Development
Paul Warren - Director of Policy & Planning
Suzanne Duval - Director of Operations

Adele Goodwin - Training & Consultancy Manager
Anna Worgan - Advocacy Officer
Annie Duddridge - Citizen Involvement Officer
Beata Jakubiak - Direct Payments Support Worker
Christine Morgan - Families First Advocacy Officer
Colin Heyman - Training Delivery Manager
David Singh - Direct Payments Support Worker
Dawn Ashton - Families First Welfare Benefits Officer
Deborah Thomas - Training Administrator
Derek Tilley - Direct Payments Support Worker
Donna Sibanda - BME Mental Health Support Worker
Ele Hicks - Social Policy & Funding Officer
Ellie Lewis - Welfare Benefits Officer
Gareth Bond - Database Manager
Graeme Butterworth - Welfare Benefits Officer
Gwenlli Haf Evans - BME Mental Health Advocacy Co-ordinator
Hannah Cook - Direct Payments Senior Support Worker
Hannah Mason - Researcher
Hannah Way - Receptionist
Hayley Curzon-Chappell - Direct Payments Support Worker
Ian Proudfoot - Families First Direct Payments Support Worker
Jyoti Preet-Ryatt - Consultant
Katherine Rands - Direct Payments Support Worker
Kirsty Russell - Direct Payments Deputy Manager
Laura Armytage - Direct Payments Senior Support Worker
Laura Conboy - Direct Payments Support Worker
Laura Rees - Welfare Benefits Officer
Mark Williams - Training Delivery Manager
Maxine Perera - Direct Payments Administrator
Patras Sharif - Finance Clerk
Paul Daley - Welfare Benefits Officer
Rebecca Clemett - Direct Payments Senior Support Worker
Richard Winkler - Accounts Manager
Rob Withey - PA Training and Service User Involvement Assistant
Roz Warden - Service User Involvement Officer
Samira Salter - BME Mental Health Support Worker
Sean Gilmore - Direct Payments Support Worker
Shelagh Maher - Service User Involvement Officer
Sophie Williams - Direct Payments Support Worker
Stephanie Brown - Direct Payments Support Worker
Stewart Harding - Information & Communications Officer
Tamina Ali - Direct Payments Support Worker
Zainab Nur - BME Mental Health Advocacy Co-ordinator

Finance Report

Results for the year

This is the third year of operation for the Charity, although the activities undertaken are those of two existing organisations which have merged, being Awetu and the Cardiff & Vale Coalition for Disabled People. Awetu was a registered charity and Cardiff & Vale Coalition for Disabled People a Company Limited by guarantee.

Growth in operations

One of the activities of the Charity is the management, on behalf of Cardiff County Council, the Direct Payment matters for registered Support Users. This is seen as a way of assisting the Support Users in their independence and Cardiff County Council in providing that service. At the start of the year there were just over 480 registered support users which increased considerably, to over 680 at the year end. Indications show that there could be a slight slowing down of the rate of growth. This increase has required the recruitment of 4 additional members of staff

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees believes that the Charity requires a sufficient level of reserves to cover the on-going work of the Charity and its administrative functions. It also aims to maintain, in a Designated Reserve, three months running costs in order to ensure there are reserves to cover unexpected occurrences with the aim of having an amount equal to 3 Months Employment costs which currently equates to £240,000. The balance brought forward was £50,000 and it was agreed to transfer £10,000 bringing the balance up to £60,000. The aim now, as the Charity grows, is to now build up these reserves to cover this target.

At the year-end there were Unrestricted funds of £49,773 and Restricted funds of £30,761 being unspent grant funds.

The Trustees regard the on-going review of the reserves level, target and policy as part of managing the Charity. The operating results are identified and reported each month in the Management Accounts. On completion of the Audit of the Annual Accounts unrestricted funds are identified and analysed. The reserves policy is then reviewed by the Board of Trustees as part of the Charity's strategic planning process. The review ensures that the policy is still relevant as the Charity develops and changes its strategy.

Principle Funding

The principle funding of the Charity is through Cardiff Council by supporting our core operations for £121,500 (2013 - £135,000) and the Direct Payments operations for £536,731 (2013-£391,328).

Material Investments Policy

The Bank Account is reviewed daily. At present the Charity does not consider itself to have sufficient funds to invest elsewhere and receive a beneficial return. This however is a matter which is continually under review.

Accounts

	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		88,603
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank and in hand	117,792	
Debtors	257,437	
	375,229	
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	(292,031)	
Net Current Assets		83,198
NET ASSETS/LIABILITIES		171,801
Equity		
Unrestricted funds		
Balance as at 1st April 2013	134,134	
Net Incoming Resourses	11,167	
		145,301
Retricted Funds		
Balance as at 1st April 2013	0	
Net Incoming Resourses	26,500	
		26,500
Total Funds		**171,801**

diverse cymru

Promoting equality for all
Hyrwyddo cydraddoldeb i bawb

Diverse Cymru is an innovative organisation in the Welsh Third Sector, created in recognition of the difficulties and discrimination faced by people experiencing inequality in Wales.

We promote equality for all. We believe that the people of Wales can work together to challenge discrimination in all its forms and create an equitable future.

www.diversecymru.org.uk

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Diverse Cymru is a registered charity (1142159) and a company registered in England and Wales (07058600).
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