

*The quarterly  
newsletter of  
Interlink - The  
voluntary council  
for Rhondda  
Cynon Taff*

The

# LINK

Issue 43  
Autumn 2008

## World Mental Health Day - 10 October 2008



Once again there is a full programme in Rhondda Cynon Taff for World Mental Health Day, with the Voluntary Sector taking an energetic and active part. This year's theme is: "Making Mental Health a Global Priority: Scaling up services through Citizen Advocacy and Action".

Featured this year are a number of interactive drama productions. Performances are running in three locations by Forum Theatre based on people's experiences of illness, treatment and recovery.

Gofal Cymru are leading a group of several organisations in Rhondda, to include NCH Young Carers, in an event based around a drama staged by Spectacle Theatre.

Amongst other highlights of the week are an open day at New Horizons, a Merthyr and the Valleys Mind craft stall in Pontypridd Market and a joint event between Hafal and Age Concern Morgannwg.

Contact Chris Gale at Interlink on 01443 485337.

Cefnogi gweithredu gwirfoddol  
yn Rhondda Cynon Taff



Supporting voluntary action  
in Rhondda Cynon Taff

Registered charity No: 1069044

### THE LINK

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**DATE FOR YOUR  
DIARY**

**Interlink AGM  
"Voices for Change"**

**3 December 2008**

**Rhondda Heritage  
Park Hotel,  
Trehafod**

***Interlink  
Maritime Offices  
Woodland Terrace  
Maesycloed  
Pontypridd  
CF37 1DZ***

**Tel: 01443 485337**

**Fax: 01443 486107**

**[www.interlinkrct.org.uk](http://www.interlinkrct.org.uk)**

***New projects help give the sector a higher profile***

*Can your voice change things for the better? Do you offer public services that you want to expand? If yes, WCVA wants to help by linking your organisation to two new projects:*

***Voices for Change Cymru*** which aims to put individuals and organisations with real experience of life in Wales in touch with the people who make decisions about life in Wales

***Services for Wales*** which will alert public bodies to the services you offer; keep you informed of public service developments; offer advice on how to find invitations to tender for new services.

*For further information about the projects contact WCVA on 02920 431700.*

*The views expressed within "The Link" are not necessarily those of Interlink. If you would like to contribute to the next edition, please contact Rebecca Wright. Deadline for the next issue is 26 November 2008.*

**Interlink welcomes two new members of staff**

**Minu Mandora – Expert Patient Programme (EPP) Trainer/Coordinator**



Minu has worked in the voluntary and statutory sector and has spent 5 years working for a Healthy Living Programme in Cardiff. Her current role based at Interlink is to promote and coordinate the Expert Patient Programme for Rhondda Cynon Taff.

The EPP is a free NHS based self-management course for adults with any long-term health condition. Volunteer tutors, who have a long-term health condition, deliver the course. Participants learn skills to manage symptoms; deal with stress and learn relaxation; manage pain; eat more healthily; work more closely with carers and plan for the future, there is also a course for Carers. The many benefits participants have recorded include greater ability to cope with their condition; better relations with carers and health professionals and a decrease in fear for the future.

Minu is also a Mental Health First Aid Instructor and a Yoga Instructor.



**Helen Rees - Project Worker Mental Health Act Service User Involvement in Training**

Helen joined Interlink this month and has been involved with the Service User Involvement Project for about 3 years. She has given talks about her personal experience of mental ill health, taken part in recruiting new students and staff and is a member of SURE research group. Helen is looking forward to using her experience to support other services users and joining the Interlink staff team.

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## Health & Well-being Event 2008 at The Big Bite

Over 20,000 people attended the Big Bite Event at Ynysangharad Park this year, which provided an ideal opportunity to be able to share information and raise awareness of the services provided to improve health and well-being in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

The opportunity was taken this year to launch the Rhondda Cynon Taff Health Social Care & Well-being Strategy 2008-11. Also launched was Health Challenge Rhondda Cynon Taff.

The Extreme Culture Bike Shop in Pontypridd sponsored a competition to win a BMX bike to promote physical activity. An excited 14-year old from Hopkinstown became the proud owner!

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## Success for Routes to Recovery

Kath Jones and Rachel Williams have been working hard on the Routes to Recovery (R2R) Project supporting people with mental ill health, to date 22 people have successfully completed their Open College Network certificates in R2R and will be receiving their certificates at a presentation event on 7th October 2008.

One service user said *"I found the whole experience fulfilling, rewarding, enriching and I felt a great sense of achievement when I received my qualification."*

If there is anyone who suffers with a mental health problem and they are interested in joining any future groups then please contact Kath Jones on 01443 485337.

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	<b>Gofal Cymru Fundraising Event</b>	
<b>Friday 17 October 2008 at Pontypridd Golf Club</b>		
Take part in our auction and purchase some fantastic items		
A night with "Amber Dextrous" including buffet, entertainment & awesome raffle prizes		
<b>Tickets £12 per person Corporate booking £10 per person</b>		
Contact Julian John on 01443 49A0 570 or e-mail <a href="mailto:julianjohn@gofalcymru.org.uk">julianjohn@gofalcymru.org.uk</a>		

## Bursaries available from Wales Mental Health in Primary Care

A bursary could enable you to deliver a project that makes a significant difference to the people you work with. The bursary scheme also forms part of commitment to support and disseminate best practice - providing the opportunity for participants to contribute more widely to developing primary care mental health.

Deadline for applications is 31 October 2008. For further information or to submit your entry contact Lesley Hills at the Royal College of General Practitioners, Wales on 02920 504516.

## SNIPPETS



### **Promote Your Fundraising Events For FREE!**

*How2fundraise.org is a brand new website for members of the Institute of Fundraising. The website is a one-stop-shop for fundraising advice, case studies, practical tips and events listings specifically for volunteers.*

*The site also features 'How2news', an online magazine which will be regularly updated with the latest news and events of interest to volunteer fundraisers.*

*If you are a charity or community group and are not a member of the Institute of Fundraising then why not join up now so your organisation can also benefit from promoting your fundraising event/and or campaign for free. Visit [www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk](http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk)*

## **Volunteering and Young People**

Sometimes engaging people to volunteer can be difficult and often it is the same people who volunteer every time. However, the opportunity to attract younger volunteers is increasing with the value of volunteering increasingly promoted in schools, by employers and by the Welsh Assembly Government via schemes such as Millennium Volunteers and the Russell Commission. Volunteering is now part of education and development programmes for young people, including:



- The Welsh Baccalaureate rolled out across all Schools in September - as part of the programme all young people need to undertake 30 hours of volunteering
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards requires young people to undertake a volunteering element for the Award
- Access to further education is often further enhanced if young people have undertaken volunteering

*"I believe in getting involved - If you help people you can see them grow. It's great". Thomas Gruer, young volunteer with Elite Supported Employment Agency*

*"Volunteering helped me get the job that I wanted when I left school and it looked good on my CV"*  
Young volunteer

We need to make the most of this opportunity to engage young people, enriching their lives and those of their communities.

Interlink is looking to work with any organisation who is interested in young people to increase the number of quality volunteering opportunities for young people in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

To get involved or to register your volunteering opportunities please contact Thomas Crockett or Bev Hampson at Interlinks Volunteer Centre on 01443 485337.

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## CRB for Volunteers Guidance Published

The Cabinet Office has published new guidance for organisations that make use of volunteers to clarify when Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks need to be carried out.

The guidance explains how CRB checks work as part of a proper risk management process and will help cut unnecessary red tape by identifying when checks are not necessary.

Minister for the third sector said that the Government had a duty to protect vulnerable people, and CRB checks played an important role in doing that.

*"However, it is a real waste if volunteers are being put off doing their hugely valuable work because checks are being carried out unnecessarily," he said "Risk has to be managed properly and proportionately and I hope that his guidance will help organisation by giving them a clear step-by-step process to follow!"*

The guidance is available on the Cabinet Office's website [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

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### Volunteering in Wales Fund

Volunteering in Wales (VWF) operates exclusively in Wales and is designed to recruit and train new volunteers for those volunteering organisations where volunteering is underdeveloped. This very popular grant scheme is particularly interested in recruiting volunteers from the following categories:

- Under 25 years of age
- Disabled
- Over 60 years
- BME groups.
- Unemployed

The Grant must be used to recruit and support new volunteers.

Application forms for 2009/10 are available from the WCVA's Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329 or [help@wcva.org.uk](mailto:help@wcva.org.uk) from. Closing for applications is 5pm, 31 October 2008. For further information visit [www.wcva.org.uk](http://www.wcva.org.uk)

### Millennium Volunteers Grant

Millennium Volunteers is a UK wide programme for young people who are interested or involved in volunteering. The purpose of the programme is to promote and recognise a sustained commitment by young people aged 16-24 to voluntary activity which makes a clear impact on the community.

To be eligible for Millennium Volunteer funding you need to be a voluntary or statutory organisations that is able to offer volunteering opportunities, which will enable young people aged 16-24 to complete 20 hours of volunteering. Applications can be made from between £50 to £7,000 to cover volunteers' costs. There is no restriction on the number of applications that can be made.

Closing date for the next round of applications is 5 November 2008.

For further information contact Thomas Crockett on 01443 485337 or email [tcrockett@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:tcrockett@interlinkrct.org.uk)

# SNIPPETS

## **BBC Sports Unsung Hero 2008**

*With the Olympic and Paralympics in Beijing producing so many British medallists, this award seeks to recognise the people who devote their time, energy and effort to helping more people enjoy sport around the UK.*

*Nominations for this years Award can be made at [www.bbc.co.uk/sportsunsunghero](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sportsunsunghero) Closing date for nominations is Friday 31st October 2008.*

## **Campaign to Change Benefits System**

*Does the benefits system stop your organisation from paying people to do part time or sessional work? A campaign has been launched to establish the Community Allowance to enable community organisations to pay people to do work that strengthens their community without it affecting any of their benefits. Visit [www.communityallowance.org](http://www.communityallowance.org) for further information.*

## **Elizabeth Finn Care**

Elizabeth Finn Care is a charity offering financial support to people living on low incomes. They have funding specifically reserved to help families in Wales, particularly Rhondda Cynon Taff, Cardiff and Swansea, with the aim of alleviating poverty and if appropriate, supporting their return to work through covering the cost of retraining.

Support can consist of:

- Small regular income of up to £20.00 a week
- A fund to draw on when substantial unexpected expenses occur
- Support with vocational course fees of up to £1,000 a year
- Transport expenses up to £750 a year
- House and home grants towards essential repairs, or replacing household items.

Applicants will need to meet the Elizabeth Finn Care qualifying criteria, please visit the website for more information. They welcome applications from all individuals, not just families, in Wales who are in need. Please contact them to discuss how they can help. Dawn Jackson, Casework Manager, tel 0207 396 6725, email [dawn.jackson@elizabethfinn.org.uk](mailto:dawn.jackson@elizabethfinn.org.uk).

## **Home Energy Efficiency Scheme in Wales**

The scheme provides grants for up to £2,000 for towards energy efficiency measures such as loft insulation, low energy light bulbs and gas room heaters and also offers energy advice

You are eligible to apply if you are receipt of the following benefits and have a child under 16, or are pregnant: income support, working tax credit (with an income of less than £15,460), council tax benefit, child tax credit (with an income of less than £15,460), housing benefit, income-based jobseeker's allowance.

To apply contact the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme free on 0800 316 2815.

## A place where people can grow

Radio 2 regular and gardening expert, Terry Walton, rolled up his sleeves to launch a new horticultural centre to support people with learning disabilities in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Thanks to a £150,184 grant from the Big Lottery Fund in 2005 'Drive', an organisation that provides support services to people with learning disabilities, has been able to realise its dream of constructing a purpose built horticultural centre that will have tremendous benefits for people with learning disabilities in the county.

The new building of timber construction has a range of environmentally friendly features befitting an organic horticultural centre. Set in a rural environment the project will be an attractive place to work that is easy to access for the people it will serve. It employs organic methods including plans for accelerated composting and will maintain sustainability as a driving force in all its activities. The local community will also benefit from the project both as an information resource and for volunteering opportunities.

Terry Walton was full of praise *"Projects of this kind are close to my heart and I've always promoted the health benefits of eating organically grown produce and keeping fit by gardening."*

For further information about the Big Lottery Fund and how you can apply for funding, please visit [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk) and use the 'Wales' specific search facility.



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## MONEY AND ADVICE MARKET 2009 - HAVE YOUR SAY

Where do you want the 2009 Money and Advice Market to be held?

- Llantrisant
- Hawthorn
- Abercynon

Or do you have a suitable venue that will hold 100 people with car parking facilities. Contact Kath Price at Interlink on 01443 485337.

## £70m to unlock the talent of Wales' workforce

A £70 million three year project which aims to raise the skills of the workforce in Wales' most deprived areas has been announced by Deputy Minister for Skills, John Griffiths. The new Modern Apprenticeship World Class Skills project will help more than 22,500 people raise their skill levels - with more than 14,000 training places made possible thanks to £40 million of European funding.

### **A pantomime with a difference.....**

*Llanharan drop-in Centre, through the E3+ scheme presents.....a modern day fairy tale about Llanharan and Brynna performed by Jordan's Drama Group, which is made up of children and young people aged between 4-25 years.*

*Performances will be held on 12 December at 7.00pm and 13 December at 2.00pm. Tickets are £1.00 per child and OAP and £3.00 for adults and are available from Sian at Llanharan Drop-in Centre on 01443 229723.*

### **Gift Aid**

*Charity Finance Directors Group and accountants Sayer Vincent have produced, Gift Aid made simple, a downloadable leaflet aimed at charity finance professional and is available at [www.sayervincent.co.uk](http://www.sayervincent.co.uk)*



### **Fframwaith Partnership – Supporting Children and Young People**

Emma Rees and Sue Phillips have been working to support the Fframwaith Partnership on completion of a Single Plan to help improve services and facilities for Children and Young People in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

This has included 'Yes U Can' -a Fun Day for children, young people and families to promote the Single Plan. The event was a resounding success, with over 600 people attending Hawthorn Leisure Centre on the 15 August 2008 including 400 children and young people; 95 parents and carers and over 100 people who support children and young people.

*" Three of us took 6 kids along, all 6 kids, including my 3 yr old, had probably their best day out of the summer holidays! It was amazing how many activities you managed to cram in.....it had a great atmosphere from the start."*

The event was supported and funded by the Fframwaith Partnership to encourage the active participation of children and young people, which is one of the key aims of Fframwaith.

Just some of the activities included tots toys; story time; teddy bear activities; digital photography; driving simulator; dance, pilates and keeping fit; the playzone; respect workshops; info zone; fire service; inflatable fun; cartoon artist; t-shirt art; theatrical makeup and face painting; circus skills; sports; global citizenship; giant trampoline and climbing wall.

It was a packed event, with something for everyone! Members of the Fframwaith Support Team, partners, and staff from Interlink worked tirelessly to make the event successful and memorable for all who attended.



## Summer Fun in the Sun!

You'll be pleased to know that despite some horrendous, and at times biblical weather, children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taff had access to many play opportunities throughout the summer. This year Matt Cook from Interlink and other trainers from the Quality in Play Project successfully delivered the P3 Playwork Principles into Practice to all the summer playworkers. Thanks to this training



and the support of the Flying Squad the quality of play opportunities available to children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taff has improved. If you are interested in becoming a playworker, or would like to run a playscheme, please contact Matt Cook at Interlink on 01443 485337 for an informal chat.

Remember *"You don't stop playing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop playing!"*

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## Consultation on Children & Young People Workforce Strategy & Common Core of Skills and Knowledge

The Welsh Assembly Government charged the Care Council for Wales with developing a Children and Young People Workforce Development Network to bring forward a Children and Young People Workforce Development Strategy to develop a Common Core of Skills and Knowledge; and to develop a Qualification Framework for the workforce. This consultation requests views on the both the Workforce Strategy and Common Core of Skills documents.

Comments to be emailed to sandie.grieve@ccwales.org.uk by 17 October 2008.

## Community Congress

The Rhondda Cynon Taf Partnership Congress was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> July themed on alcohol.

Young People gave their own views on alcohol and how it affects friends and family within their own communities. Their whole presentation was extremely powerful and got the message across about the harm that alcohol can cause. These young people are a pleasure to work with and put across their own views in a way no adult can.

*"It was great to be a part of the Community Congress, because we could give our own views on the affects of alcohol from our own perspectives. For one of us in particular, the story told was very close to home and told from the heart"* Young person Single Planning group

***New Social Enterprise Launched***

*Cwmpas is an exciting new venture supporting Community Mediation Services-RCT, a charity based in Pontypridd.*

*This new enterprise will be delivering a wide range of training courses in communication, mediation interpersonal skills and providing Workplace Mediation throughout Wales and Community Mediation in the County Boroughs of Caerphilly, Merthyr, Blaenau Gwent & Bridgend.*

*For further information contact Cwmpas on 485337 or email cwmpas@btconnect.com*

***New Minister for Heritage***

*Alun Ffred Jones, Assembly Member for Arfon, will become the new Minister for Heritage.*

*If you would like to organise meetings to brief the new Minister, contact Meilyr Ceredig, Grayling Political Strategy on 029 2046 2547, email meilyr.ceredig@wa.grayling.com.*

**Interlink Accredited Learning**

Learn a new skill in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and gain recognition for it, Interlink now offers Accreditation for Community Learning. Open College Network (O.C.N) is a recognized national qualification giving you the opportunity to gain credits for the courses you attend. No exams are required, just continuous assessments of your new skills, which you will gain by regularly attending and enjoying the experience.

Subject areas include

- Routes to Recovery – Knowledge, Skills, Looking to the future
- Core Curriculum for Community Regeneration level 2 "level 3 coming soon"

Voluntary and community groups are invited to discuss the possibility of interlink facilitating accredited learning contact Leigh McPherson, Community Learning Coordinator at Interlink on 01443 485337.

**Tremendous Achievement for Interlink's Apprentices**

The Skills for Regeneration project was successfully completed in August when Paul Tucker was appointed as Menter Iaith's Communities First Welsh Language Participation Officer. After Joanne Hoare's success finding work as RCT Homes Tenant Liaison Officer, this means that both apprentices have found work within the sector, and have completed the work required for their NVQ Level 3 Qualifications in Community Development.

Interlink is currently working to create a consortium of organisations in Rhondda Cynon Taff which can apply for funding to run a follow on Community Development Apprenticeship project. Anyone interested in joining the consortium should contact Simon James at Interlink on 01443 485337