

## Eich Dewis Chi Your Choice

### Your Voice Your Vote project

The Electoral Commission established the New Initiatives Fund to support and promote new ways of raising awareness about voting and democracy. We have awarded grants to local, community and national organisations working with different target audiences across the whole of the UK.

This evaluation report provides information about Eich Dewis Chi Your Choice's Your Voice Your Vote project funded by the New Initiatives Fund. In the report we highlight the aims, objectives and achievements of the project, and lessons learnt by Eich Dewis Chi Your Choice.

Eich Dewis Chi Your Choice offers independent advocacy service to people with learning disabilities. The project was delivered in the run-up to the Assembly and local elections of May 2007. It consisted of three workshops in community disability centres, a resource and information pack for care professionals and two awareness days for elected representatives to encourage dialogue with people with learning disabilities.

### Aims and objectives

The aim of the project was to raise understanding of the democratic process among people with learning disabilities.

The project's objectives were to:

- raise awareness and understanding of elections
- increase knowledge of politics, including of parties and elected representatives
- increase knowledge of political establishments, including of national and European Parliaments, the Assembly and local councils

### Funding

The organisation was awarded

a grant of £9,338, from October 2006 to March 2007.

### How successful was the project?

The project was promoted through posters distributed to local day centres, and other places where people with learning disabilities could be reached. Publicity included articles and photographs published in local papers, interviews and announcements on local radio.

Two awareness day events were held during March 2007 and were attended by elected representatives, social services and people with learning disabilities. These days helped to raise the profile of the project.

Six workshops were delivered focussing on how to vote, the importance of voting and understanding political party manifestos. The workshops took place in day centres in Cardigan, Lampeter and Aberystwyth. The project team liaised with Ceredigion County Council Community team for the learning disabled on the delivery of the workshops ensuring the sessions were delivered in the

most appropriate format. The sessions were delivered flexibly and adapted in some instances allowing for one-to-one interaction as well as group discussion. Two of the workshops had elected representatives present and were delivered in question time formats, with a panel and an audience. The project team also produced a resource pack, which was used in the delivery of the workshops and made available to interested parties. A project steering group was established to ensure participation of learning disabled people in the planning and delivery of the project.

The impact of the project was measured using a baseline assessment. This included both qualitative and quantitative data compared to a follow-up survey. Project staff helped people with learning disabilities to complete the survey. The evaluation data was supported by informal feedback from clients, support staff, social services and elected representatives. Evaluation indicators were measured in percentage points. There were significant improvements in people with learning disabilities' knowledge:

- their ability to get information about how to vote increased by 28 points
- awareness of when the next election was increased by 59 points
- who their elected

representatives were increased by 30 points

- the function of each of the main political parties increased by 19 points

Participants' feedback was positive, indicating that they felt the workshops were fun and enjoyable to participate in. Elected representatives found that they had learned a great deal from the experience.

The project met its overall objectives and increased people with learning disabilities' awareness and understanding of elections, their knowledge of politics and political institutions.

### Good practice

- The project provided the opportunity for a longer term engagement and meaningful dialogue between political representatives and people with learning disabilities.
- The active involvement of the Speech and Language section of Community Team for Learning Disabled, who advised on appropriate levels of engagement for different clients, helped to ensure that the workshops were successful.
- The formation of a project steering group ensured that people with learning disabilities participated in the planning of the project.

### Lessons learnt

Projects of a similar nature can learn from the following lessons:

- The project would have benefited from further planning on the format for the question-time events. The idea was formed and planned immediately prior to the delivery of the events.

### Further information

For further information about this project please contact:

Jan Kench  
Eich Dewis Chi Your Choice  
Canolfan Padarn  
Llanbadarn Fawr  
Aberysstwyth  
Ceredigion SY23 3QP

Tel: 01970 623469  
[jan@rkcs.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:jan@rkcs.wanadoo.co.uk)

Further information about the New Initiatives Fund and the wider work of the Electoral Commission can be found at: [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)