



EQuip Project Information Pack

Disability Wales



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Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

Introduction

This document contains information about Disability Wales and our EQuip project, funded by the Volunteering Wales Grant.

This information is broken down into basic overviews of our organisation, the aims and objectives of the EQuip project and what a Disabled Persons Organisation is.

It shall also cover the more detailed elements of the EQuip project, such as the duration of the placements, the type of work envisaged and the process of becoming involved.

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About Disability Wales

Disability Wales is the national association of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)¹ striving to achieve rights, equality, and independent living of disabled people in Wales.

Disability Wales promotes the adoption and implementation of the Social Model of Disability, which identifies that it is environmental, organisational, and attitudinal barriers that disable people and prevent their full participation in society not their medical conditions or impairments.

Disability Wales engages member campaigns, consultations, research and policy development to influence the development of government policy and practice in respect of disabled people. We provide information, training and support to members across Wales through social media as well as conferences, seminars and events.

Our Reach (July 2021)

Disability Wales is an umbrella body with:

- Approximately 100 national and local member organisations
- A core group of 29 local Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) across Wales

Our reach is further extended by:

- Over 350 individual members
- 4739 on Facebook
- 14,100 twitter followers

¹ DPOs are organisations led by and for disabled people, with a minimum of 51% of their membership/board/trustees identifying as being disabled.

The EQuip Project

Disability Wales has received £19,720.80 from the Volunteering Wales Grant, which is organised by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). This funding is for a new project called EQuip which will run until 31st March 2022.

Building on our experience with student placements and Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs), we will be organising work experience for disabled students with a variety of DPOs across Wales.

Goals

We are aiming to work towards 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals.

A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

There are several DPOs in Wales that are involved in campaigning for better access to heritage sites, the natural environment and participation in art and creative activities. Through this project, students will be helping to build the capacity of the DPOs in their work. In addition to this, we will have an active interest in having Welsh speaking students involved in placements, assisting DPOs to develop simple bilingual communications which could be continued after the student's placement has ended. This will help us work towards a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

A Prosperous Wales

There are two key issues when looking at making a prosperous Wales. First, Disabled Peoples Organisations struggle with capacity due to a dwindling number of volunteers as well as a lack of sustainable, long-term funding. Disability Wales noted a marked decline in membership of DPOs during the same five-year period as the levels of poverty amongst disabled people increased in 2013. Feedback from Disability Wales's members suggests volunteering for DPOs has declined as would-be volunteers have had to focus more on securing enough income to survive.

Secondly, there is currently a 31% employment gap for disabled people². Through this project, disabled students will gain invaluable work experience which will provide them with a better chance at employment. This will in turn help decrease the employment gap and poverty gap currently seen in the disabled community.

A More Equal Wales

To work towards a more equal Wales, an understanding of the reasons of the employment gap is required. In 2008, a review of the labour market in relation to disabled people provided some insights into this³. There were several factors that influenced the employment gap. These were:

- Employer perceptions of lower productivity amongst disabled people relative to non-disabled peers
- Employer discrimination
- Disabled people with impairments or health conditions that practically preclude their engagement from certain occupations
- The utility of low wage employment does not outweigh that of social care benefits for some disabled people

In another research paper, it was concluded that ‘the low employment rate of people with disabilities is not due to their reluctance to work⁴. Using case studies from this project, we can actively challenge the negative perceptions regarding disabled employees, which will help work towards a more equal Wales.

² Business_Wales. (n.d.). *Disabled People's Employment*. Retrieved 07 01, 2021, from <https://businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/disabled-peoples-employment>

³ Jones, M. (2008). Disability and the Labour Market: A review of the empirical evidence. *Journal of Economic Studies*, 10-13. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Melanie-Jones-13/publication/23528725_Disability_and_the_Labour_Market_A_Review_of_the_Empirical_Evidence/links/02e7e51cc076654309000000/Disability-and-the-Labour-Market-A-Review-of-the-Empirical-Evidence.pdf

⁴ Ali, M., Schur, L., & Blanck, P. (2011). What types of jobs do people with disabilities want? *J Occup Rehabil*, 199-210. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.731.6584&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Placement Specifics

General Details

Duration:

The placements are envisaged as 8, 6-hour working days in total. This set up can be adapted to suit students and organisation's needs.

Location:

All placements will be held virtually; this is to improve the range of placements available as well as prevent any difficulty should covid-19 restrictions change throughout the year.

Student age limits:

These placements will be available to all disabled university students between the ages of 18 and 25.

Use of the Social Model of Disability:

We will not require evidence of a diagnosis to prove a student is disabled to apply. Instead, we shall ask what barriers you face as a disabled person.

Recent graduates:

We shall accept students who have finished their final year until the start of the next academic year. Please remember that this project only runs until the end of March 2022.

GO Wales:

Disability Wales will collaborate with the GO Wales teams at universities to provide a wider range of options for their students

Potential placements:

These placements are not restricted by what degree a student is studying, it is all about providing the best experience possible for the student.

From research conducted through a survey and focus group on what kind of work DPOs need to improve their capacity for, the following options were suggested:

- Assistance with Website development e.g. creating information pages
- Assistance with Video creation and captioning promoting the work of the host DPO
- Assistance with creation of social media sites including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc
- Befriending services volunteer
- Assistance with event planning and delivery e.g., setting up Eventbrite page, communication with participants, devising monitoring and evaluation forms

This is by no means a definitive list but suggestions as we work alongside DPOs to create specific placements to suit both parties

Training for students during placement:

During a placement, Disability Wales will also provide basic training and resources to students on the Social Model of Disability as well as current laws in Wales that can be used to advocate for your rights as a disabled person.

This training will be conducted by the project officer, utilising our current resources such as our updated Know Your Rights pack.

Disability Wales membership:

Neither students nor DPOs are required to be a member of Disability Wales to take part in the Equip project. However, if you are a DPO and not currently a member you will need to have a constitution which states that 51% of members and management committee self-define as disabled people (51% rule).

Both students and DPOs will also be encouraged to become members if they aren't already.

Process of connecting DPOs and students

Disability Wales is currently in the process of advertising the EEquip project to universities and DPOs. Once this stage is completed the process for connecting the two will begin.

Both the DPOs and students will also be asked to agree to a media consent form to allow us to promote the project and create important case studies that can be available in the long-term. This will be part of our work in tackling discrimination and misconceptions of disabled workers. The way this case study will be made, e.g., written, video etc will depend on what is right for yourselves.

Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs)

- Get in touch with project officer
- Informal conversation discussing your organisation and what you are looking for
- Development of placement plan
- General description of your organisation and placement will be added to online database to be accessed by universities and university students
- You will then be approached by the project officer when there is interest in your proposed placements
- An informal discussion will occur between the student, project officer and yourself to make sure it is the right match for what you are looking for – if you are going through the GO Wales programme your case worker will also be invited to this
- Placement begins

Students

- Find out about opportunity through GO Wales, careers team or other sources
- Discussion with project officer in what you are looking for – if you are going through the GO Wales programme your case worker will also be invited to this
- Project officer will provide DPO descriptions and potential placements to find appropriate opportunities

- Informal discussion with DPO and EQuip project officer to make sure the placement is the right fit and look at the specifics of the placement – if you are going through the GO Wales programme your case worker will also be invited to this
- At the same time, the project officer will also collect some data on the student such as their confidence levels. This is done to reduce any form filling on the student's part to make it as simple a procedure as possible

Get In Touch!

If you are a student, university staff member or Disabled Peoples Organisation who wants to know more and get involved please get in touch!

Our EQuip Project Officer is Leandra Craine and can be contacted by emailing leandra.craine@disabilitywales.org

Alternatively, you can call our office and arrange a call back with the project officer. The phone number is **02920 887325**

If you have any accessibility requirements when communicating with us, please let us know!