



YOUR VOICE
ADVOCACY &
WEST GLAMORGAN PEOPLE FIRST

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Registered Charity Number: 1001271

Company Registration Number: 2553487



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“YVA Helped me build confidence to allow me to become a volunteer and to sing on my own at karaoke. I have developed my computer skills so I can co-host ZOOM meetings.”

Chairperson's Foreword 2021/22

We are proud of the achievements of the YVA Team in the reporting year, it has been a positive year with strong financial results. We have made significant progress with the objectives we set ourselves and this is clear in the improved performance of the charity.

Some of our long serving trustees retired, and we are pleased to inform you that a good number of our members are now serving as trustees taking us closer to our objective of being member-led. It is fantastic to see their commitment and enthusiasm to their roles and without doubt they will be fantastic assets to the YVA.

The pandemic and lockdowns continued in 2021, but thanks to the fortitude of members and resourcefulness of staff, our member-groups continued to meet online. These provided a mix of advocacy, education and activity. By August some of these groups were able to meet face to face, and much-missed day trips also made a come-back. Sadly, several members did not make it through the pandemic, and they are reminder of the toll taken on members' mental and physical health. Two new staff joined the team bringing a mix of experience and creativity. Our Website was completely re-developed and our social media presence strengthened, reaching many more potential members, volunteers and funders.

Crucial funding and support came from Lloyds Bank Foundation, as well as from Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils, Barchester Foundation, through the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership (WGRP) and Wales Council for Voluntary Action. Their appreciation of our work has allowed YVA to 'survive and thrive' this year and realise our ambitions in 2022/23. Trustees agreed the audited accounts for 2021/22 which once again recorded an increase in our reserves, up from £29,109 in March 2021 to £37,801 in March 2022.

At the close of the year, we were fortunate to receive commissions from the WGRP to help engage people about their Learning Disability Strategy, and from the Health Board to promote Annual Health Checks and improved health outcomes for learning disabled people. These represent major

opportunities for YVA to raise its profile and reach more people in the community.

We plan to continue expanding the groupwork into new locations, including a new group for members with autism. This will require the recruitment of new staff and finding ourselves an office base from which to operate. We will also strive to offer our easy-read conversion service to more organisations.

None of this would have been possible but for the dedication of our members, volunteers, staff and Trustees (past and present) and the confidence shown in the organisation by our funders and all those who have contributed in some way during 2021-22. A huge thank you to you all!

Adelaide Morgan (Chair of Trustees)



About Us

Our Values

1. We believe in the rights of people with disabilities to **make choices and understand those choices; to live as valued individuals in the community.**
2. We recognise **our greatest assets are the people who work for Your Voice Advocacy** and we continue to value our staff, volunteers and Trustees.
3. We build on the capabilities of everyone who plays a part in the organisation and **focus on the importance of individuals.**

Our Objectives

We want adults with learning disabilities to have the same opportunities as every other person in society by supporting them to overcome exclusion and inequality and by promoting their empowerment and equal access to community life. We will do this by:

1. **Improving the confidence of members and helping them to engage, participate and connect with others.**
2. **Increasing opportunities for members to speak about their lives and shape the support and services they access.**
3. **Providing members with greater opportunity to shape and lead the work of YVA.**
4. **Strengthening the reputation and influence of YVA.**

About Us

Management Committee

- Running YVA is the responsibility of the Management Committee of Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Charity Commission Scheme and work closely with our Project Co-ordinator who oversees the day to day running of the organisation.
- *The Management Committee at year end on March 31st, 2022:*
 - Adelaide Morgan (Chair)
 - Carl West (Treasurer)
 - Eugene Jenkins (Trustee)
 - Rick Wilson (Trustee)
 - Richard Williams (Member Trustee)
 - Robert Morris (Member Trustee)
 - Kelsey Shaw (Member Trustee)
 - Lisa Davies (Member Trustee)
- *There were six changes to the Management Committee over the period 2021/22:*
 - Mike Cohen (resigned October 2021)
 - Barbara Jacobs (resigned January 2022)
 - Adelaide Morgan (Joined April 2021)
 - Robert Morris (joined February 2021)
 - Kelsey Shaw (joined February 2021)
 - Lisa Davies (joined February 2021)

About Us

Staff

As of 31/3/22 Your Voice Advocacy Project employed six staff to support the activities and services of the organisation.

- Sandi Mitchell (Peer Advocacy Officer)
- Louise Peck (Development Worker)
- Neil Williams ('Lived Experience' Worker)
- Bill Williams (Project Coordinator)
- Marion Lowther (Development Worker)
- Alex Hills (Website/Social Media Officer)

Services

To achieve our aims and objectives YVA runs several services supporting people with learning disabilities: These include:

- **Social/Participation Groups** - supporting people with learning disabilities to take a fuller role in their communities and enjoy social interaction.
- **Peer Advocacy** - empowering service users to support themselves and their peers and take part in co-production.
- **Independent One to One Advocacy** - representing someone who is facing a particular problem or issue in their lives
- **Easy-read Conversion** – helping other organisations to communicate in a way understandable to people with a learning disability.

- **Co-production Support** for members participating in the writing of strategies and the design of health and social care services.



Members Highlights

2021-22 has seen our membership grow to nearly 200. The intention is to build a genuinely member-led organisation, placing members at the centre of decision-making by ensuring that the majority of the Trustees Board is made up of members.

For most of the year, members received a monthly newsletter/activity sheet, with plenty of engaging things to do and highlighting members' achievements. Articles celebrated memorable day trips, events and 'Amazing Members' who worked especially hard for YVA or achieved something in the wider community.

The August edition featured one member's home-made greetings card celebrating 10 years of Zoom which so impressed the American company that they sent him a gift. Another member became our Sight Loss Champion.

Volunteers

Volunteers provide a unique and invaluable service. Coming out of the pandemic our seven member volunteers delivered an incredible 1174 hours of groups online and in person. Our eight outside volunteers gave up 304 hours of their time to work for YVA, despite the pandemic severely restricted their contribution.

Website and Social Media

Our tired and outdated Website was given a complete face-lift and the colours in YVA's logo were combined with line drawings of members to give the site a clear identity. In addition to our presence on Facebook, we started to post more on Instagram, Twitter and even You Tube. We have found that social media is the preferred way for many members to keep in touch with each other and the outside world.

Recovering from the Covid 19 Pandemic

2021-22 was a year in which our services steadily returned to normal and by popular demand, from August onwards members were once again able to meet face to face. This also meant our very popular Ponty Friends group could a comeback.

Social/Participation Groups

These started the online, but by August 2021 things had improved enough for them to start meeting in person, which meant finding suitable venues while continuing to take sensible health precautions. These were the groups that took place. Between 45 and 50 members attended one or more groups each week.

Group	Sessions	Total Hours
Advocacy & Training	61	122
Arts & Crafts (online)	18	36
Arts & Crafts (in-person from August 2021)	19	63
Bingo	33	66
Films	58	136

Karaoke	49	147
Ponty Friends (from August 2021)	21	38
Miscellaneous including wellness, birthdays, quizzes, competitions.	25	25

Peer Advocacy

Some of our members are keen to speak for themselves but lack the confidence. YVA built that confidence by supporting them to speak in the safe space created by our groups. They gained the skills and self-belief to speak on their own behalf and represent others, or to take up education, training or employment. Although all our groups do this for members **Advocacy Group** was most in demand to help write policies, take part in research work, join interview panels and organise events.

Independent One to One Advocacy

Individual support was offered to people who are struggling with a whole range of problems. Most people were just trying to get what they are entitled to such as welfare benefits, access to services or suitable accommodation. If their problems were too complex, we still helped them to find a service that could help. We offered one-to-one meetings, accompanied people to appointments, wrote letters/sent emails on their behalf and researched solutions. People either referred themselves or had a friend, relative, support or social worker do it for them. Eight cases were closed during the year, leaving nine still open at the end of March 2022. We had also responded to several hundred, calls, texts, emails and Whatsup messages asking for help and advice.

Easy-read Conversion

One way of making services more accessible to people with a learning disability is to produce information that is easy to read and understand. More and more organisations embraced this principle in 2021/22 and YVA offered a service that used images and simplified text to produce 'easy-read' versions of what would otherwise be complex and difficult documents. Organisations that commissioned this service in 2021/22 included the Community Health Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board, South Wales Police and Swansea Council. In total YVA spent 280 hours on this valuable work, earning over £5,000 in income.

How we did in 2021-2022

Active Members
in 2021/22

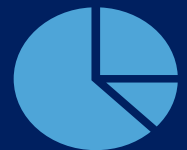
45



Total group
sessions
delivered

284

380



Hours of Easy
Read Conversion

"Now I've got the confidence to
speak up for myself"

"I couldn't have done it without YVA's help - they were amazing!" Thank you for helping me to talk to people and be understood."

Zoom **929**

Hours delivered by member-volunteers

In person

245 


"Thank you for helping me to talk to people and be understood."

17
People helped through Advocacy

"Thank you for helping me to talk to people and be understood."

How much money we received this year → 

£147,719

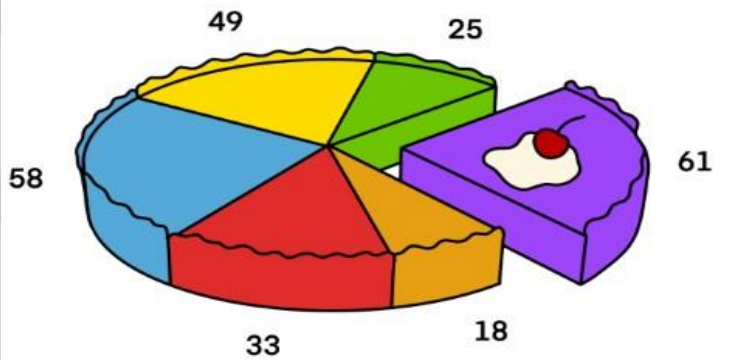
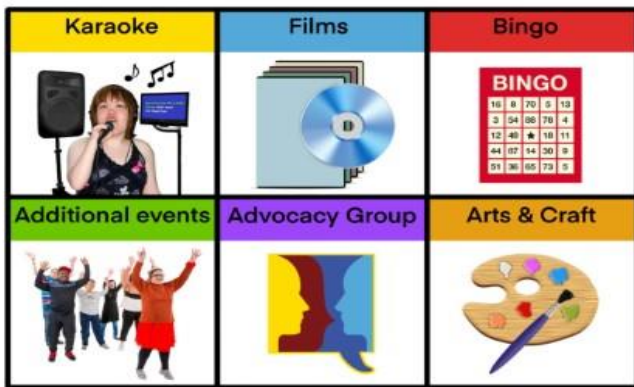
How much money we spent this year → 

£84,188

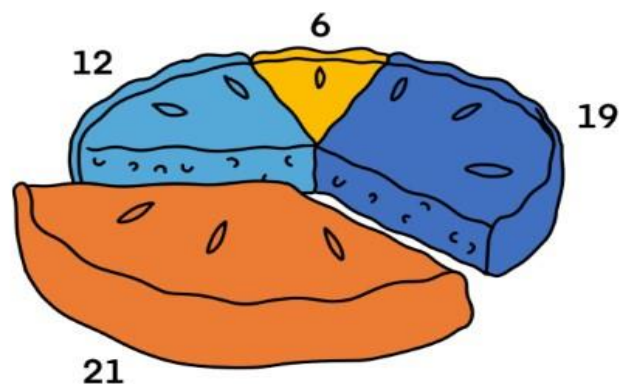
"YVA is always there for me and never lets me down."

How Your Voice Advocacy groups and activities divided up in 2021-22

2. Online activities



1. In person activities (from August 2021)



Our Funders 2021-2022

Your Voice Advocacy would like to thank all our supporters and funders who have helped us in 2021-22.



Annual Accounts

**YOUR VOICE ADVOCACY PROJECT
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

Expenditure on charitable activities	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Wages and salaries	58,650	49,363
Pension costs	1,849	810
Rent	1,592	7,960
Rates and water	24	616
Light and heat	–	494
Repairs and maintenance	–	228
Insurance	388	388
Other motor/travel costs	1,443	326
Legal and professional fees	299	120
Telephone	3,249	6,285
Other office costs	7,761	4,528
Depreciation	615	970
Sundry expenses	570	87
Staff training	128	96
Advertising and Publicity	3,148	838
Event costs	1,845	539
Governance costs - accountancy fees	2,574	2,406
Bank Charges	70	56
Expenditure on charitable activities	84,205	76,110

Contact Us

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