



# What makes a good self advocacy project

## A toolkit



All Wales People First



Barod CIC



Jan Walmsey Associates



**drill**  
Disability Research on  
Independent Living & Learning

## What is this toolkit for?



### This toolkit will help you:

- plan and design a project
- run a project
- show if the project has done everything you wanted.

## Who is the toolkit for?



### This toolkit is for:

- Self advocacy groups. This means a group run by and for people with a learning disability.
- People who fund self advocacy groups. This could be:
  - Councils
  - charity funders like Big Lottery and Lloyds Bank Foundation
  - Welsh Government
  - and other funders.



## What is a self advocacy project?



A project run by a self advocacy group or a group of people with a learning disability.

A project normally has a start and an end.

Some projects keep going.

## How we wrote the toolkit

We asked self advocacy groups about their projects.

People told us about running projects to:

help people make friends

help people have fun

keep safe

learn new skills

understand our culture

train police, nurses, social care workers and paramedics

learn to travel independently

check for signs of cancer


encourage people to vote




# All Wales People First MIRROR

All Wales People First wrote MIRROR.

**MIRROR** tells groups how to be good at self advocacy.

Principles of Self-Advocacy		
<b>M</b>		<b>Members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have control of the organisation, we oversee everything</li> <li>We decide what the group does and ask for help when we need it</li> <li>We are part of the management committee</li> <li>We learn skills to take on more responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>I</b>		<b>Ideas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We find out what is going on in our community</li> <li>We're not afraid to try new things</li> <li>What works for us is often a good idea for others</li> <li>We share our ideas</li> </ul>
<b>R</b>		<b>Rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have accessible information to help us know our rights and teach others</li> <li>We support each other when our rights are ignored</li> <li>We work together to make sure our rights are upheld</li> <li>We have the right to make choices</li> <li>We help decision makers to include us</li> </ul>
<b>R</b>		<b>Reflect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We learn from our experiences and the experiences of others</li> <li>We spend time thinking about what is working or not working</li> <li>We think about why we are doing things</li> </ul>
<b>O</b>		<b>Organisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We plan together</li> <li>We have good policies and ways of doing things</li> <li>Our organisation is fair and friendly to all</li> <li>We make sure we let people know what is going on</li> </ul>
<b>R</b>		<b>Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We listen to the views of members, staff and others</li> <li>We change when we need to</li> <li>We look back to see if we are doing well</li> <li>We celebrate achievement</li> </ul>

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 Welsh Government

  
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All self advocacy groups should follow **MIRROR**.

# The tools you need

If you run a self advocacy group



**Tool 1**

**Plan a new project**

**Page 5**



**Tool 2**

**Run your project**

**Page 10**



**Tool 3**

**Look at how your  
project is going-  
is it working?**

**Page 15**



**Tool 4**

**Decide if your project  
was a success**

**Page 18**



**Tool 5**

**Tell other people  
about your project-**

**Share good ideas**

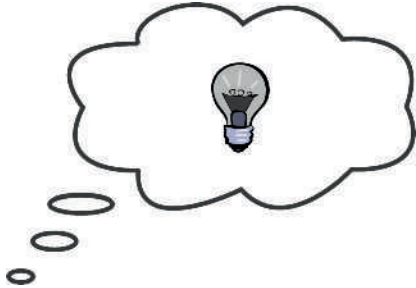
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## Tool 1

### Planning a new project

#### Step 1 Start with an Idea



It does not matter who has the idea.

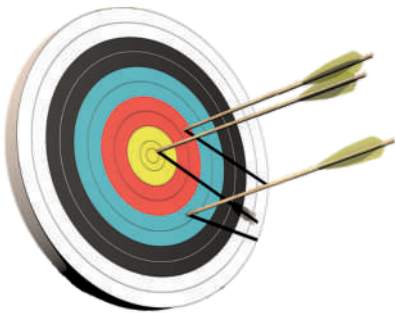
It is **important** that the **members** decide what they want to run.

Alan's idea is to go to schools to talk about bullying and name calling.

He knows this is a problem because he sees his friends being bullied.



#### Step 2 Change your idea into an aim



Think about what exactly you want to achieve.

You can see some ideas in the middle of this book.

Alan's idea changes into an aim.

"We want to change the local school children's ideas about people with learning disabilities so that they stop calling us names."

We will call the project

**Stamp out bullying in Carmarthen**



## Step 3 **Decide how you will know if you have reached your aim**



### **Think about:**

- How will the lives of members change
- How will the group change
- How will other people change
- Are there steps on the way to your success?

There are a lot of ways to see if your project is a success.

### **Alan's group chose to:**

- Count how many schools said yes.
- Make evaluation sheets for students to fill out after each session.
- Take photos of the trainers at work and outside each school.



1 month after each session they will ask members who live near the school if they have noticed less name calling and if the school children are more friendly.



**Don't forget you need to ask permission to use peoples photos!**

There is a lot of information you can gather.



**Collect local press reports**



**Ask your steering group**



**Focus groups**



**Facebook and twitter**



**Counting**



**Evaluation sheets**



**People's stories**



**Interviews**



**Taking photos**



**Check Inspiringimpact.org website for more ideas!**

**Remember!**

Think about the questions you are going to ask to measure if you have met your aims.

- How many people?
- What is their age, sex, race, language?

Collect information as you go.

You can make a film or recording.



**Ask the team as you go along**



## Step 4 Action. What will you do to get there?



You know what you want to achieve. You know how to measure your success. Now it is time to decide what you need to do to achieve your aim.

### Alan and his group decided to:

Design a workshop for school children.

Write to all schools in Carmarthen town to ask to run a session with Year 6 children on bullying and name calling.

Use the Open University Anti bullying exercise.

Run the workshops with 4 of the schools who said yes.



### Make sure everyone has a voice



It is important that everyone has a say. Remember to check everyone is involved in your project.

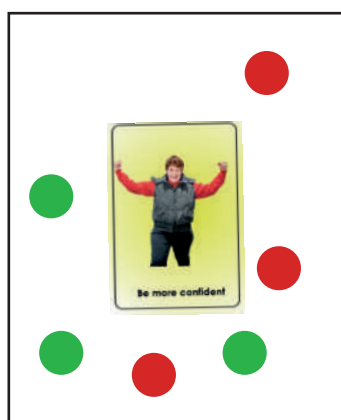
## To decide on your project aims:

You can use the cards that come with the toolkit.

There are 16 cards, each card suggests an aim for your project.



- Put all the cards on a table.
- All the members choose what they think the aims of the project are.
- Put each aim that you picked on an A4 card. Stick these up on the wall.
- Give everyone 5 coloured stickers.
- Put a sticker on the aims you think are important.
- You can put up to 5 stickers on a card if you think it is very important.
- The aims with the most stickers are the aims that members think are the most important.





## Tool 2

### Run your project

Now you have a **plan**. You know what you want to achieve, how you will **measure** it and what you **plan** to do to achieve it.

The next step is to think about how you will run the project.

Who will get paid?  
Who will pay?  
How will we raise the money?



**Money**

Do we need help?  
Who would make it fun?  
Do we need a steering group?



**Who joins in**

**Who might learn**



How will we share what we are doing?  
Who will we tell what we found out?

**Managing the project**



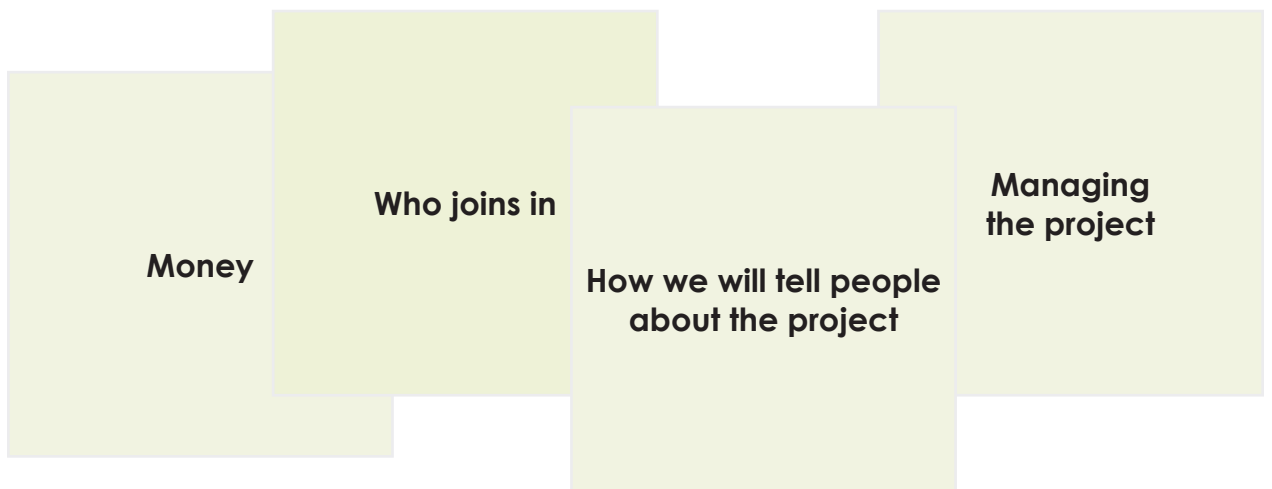
Who will do the work?  
How will we make sure members make the big decisions?

## Make sure everyone has a voice



It is important that everyone has a say.  
Remember to check everyone is involved in your project.

Put each of these headings on a large sheet of paper.



For each sheet ask the the questions on page 12.



Get the group to write or draw their answers on post its and stick them on the sheets.



Collect up all the post its and make a list of all the things to do.

Make a plan to say who will do what.

## Things to think about

Will you need special equipment like cameras or iPads?

Who will manage the project?

How long will the project last?

What happens when it ends?

What new skills do people need?

Will they need training?

Do you need a steering or advisory group?

Who should be on it?

How much money does your group need to run the project?

How many people do we want to reach?

Will you pay members who run the project?

How much?

Will their benefits be affected?

Is it about having fun, or about changing society to make things better for people with learning disabilities?



## Alan's Project

Alan's project is called Stamp Out Bullying in Carmarthen. The project will take 1 year.

### Money

We need money for:

- 3 trainers
- an iPad to record what the trainers do
- an extra half day a week for our support worker, Jean

We think a local charity may give us money.

### People

We want Jean to write the funding bid and manage the project.

We want a Steering Group with teachers and a councillor.

Alan will sort the Steering Group. It will meet 3 times.

Jean and Alan will write a timetable for the project.

We will meet every month to review the project and make sure members are still in charge.

### Publicity

We will use our Facebook page.

We will tell the local papers.

Every month, we will agree what we want to say, who will write it and who will send it.



**You can find examples of how to do meetings here**

**[www.allwalespeople1st.co.uk](http://www.allwalespeople1st.co.uk)**

Alan's meeting summary is on a flipchart for everyone to see

Stamp out bullying Steering group

## Who

- Local Councillors  
- Jean
- Teachers  
- Alan
- Parents of a child who goes to the school  
- Kath

What will we do next?

Invite people to the next steering group - Alan

Date for steering group

- 14 December





## Tool 3

### Look at how your project is going- is it working?

Now you have your funding, and the project has started.

You agreed to meet every month to:

- make sure the project is on target to meet its aims
- share information about how the project is going
- check the project is being run well – Are the members involved in big decisions?
- check that you are getting the information you need.

### **Alan's Project Evaluation Meeting**

We have done training in 2 local schools.

The trainers wrote reports.

The children filled in evaluation sheets. We did not ask if the children know anyone with a learning disability. We will ask Jean to add this question to the evaluation sheet.

We did not ask the teachers to write reports, but they did.

Their reports are helpful. In the future we will ask teachers to write reports.

We agreed the agenda for the Steering Group meeting.

We will ask how to get more schools interested.

We set the date for our next meeting.

#### **Actions:**

Ask members if they have noticed any changes.

Ask Jean to tell the funder how it is going.

Ask Jean to put an update on Facebook, with photos.





What do people think about how it is going?

Have we spent the money properly?



**Is the project on track?**

What do we want to tell to funders, and the Steering Group?

What shall we put on our Facebook page or website?



**What do we need to tell others?**

**What information are we getting?**



**Are members involved in big decisions?**



Did you collect the information you planned?  
What does it tell you?

Do you need more information?  
Do you need to get more or different information?

Is everyone happy with how the project is managed?

Decide if you need to make changes to the project aims or the way it is run.

## Make sure everyone has a voice



Remind everyone about the project aims.  
You can use the cards.



Ask people to share what they have done.

You can use:

- photos
- videos
- stories and story boards.



### Look back at your aims:

- How much do you know now?
- What else do you need to find?
- How will you collect that information?



## Tool 4

### Help other people check your project

You have come to the end of the project. The money has run out, and the deadline for your Report to your funders is a month away. You need to:

- Check how the project was managed.

Were the members involved in big decisions?

- Did the project meet the aims?
- What difference did you make?
- Look at the information you have collected.

What does it tell you about what went well, what didn't go well and things you might measure next time?

- Agree what you will tell your funder and other people, and who will write the report.
- Decide on your big message.



## Looking back at Alan's project

### How was the project managed?

- ✓The members were involved in big decisions.
- ✓The money was well spent

### Did we meet our aims?

- ✓We did training at 4 schools with 120 children.
- ✓A lot of children said they had called people names.  
Most of them said our training made them think again about name calling.
- ✓Teachers all said the children had understood what we were trying to do. The children talked about it after. The children told each other off for name-calling.
- ? We are not sure if our members are getting less name-calling. We need to train more children and allow more time.

### Telling everyone

We agreed the headings for the Report. Jean will write it and we will check it.

We will have an Easy Read report and a longer report.

We will ask the Steering Group what to do next.

We will tell policy makers: Teach children about bullying in schools. The best people to do this are self advocates.



Do the measures say the project was a success?

Get people's opinions of how it went.

Was it fun?

Did people learn new skills, meet new people, make friends?

What do we want to tell to funders?

What shall we put on our Facebook page or website?

Who should we tell about the project?

What is the BIG MESSAGE for people in power? How will we tell them?




**Did the project meet its aims?**



**What do we need to tell others?**

**What do the measures say?**



**Were members involved in big decisions?**



What do the measures tell you?

Were they the right measures, did they tell you what you needed to know?

What might you do differently next time?

Do we need to get more information?

Ask people if they felt involved in the big decisions about the project.

Find examples.

Ask people to say one thing they want to tell the world about the project.

## Make sure everyone has a voice



What is the big message from our project?

Go around the table, ask everyone:



What do you want to tell the government after our project has finished?



Write down what everyone says.

Think about what you want to say.  
Think about how you can say it in

**one short Easy Read sentence.**

What pictures will you use?

## Tool 5

### Telling other people about your project- Sharing good ideas



What we discovered when we did our research was that groups were doing great things, but they were not good at telling other people about it.

So here is a tool about sharing the stories.

These are things to think about.

**Your aim** – what stories can you tell about your aim and why it matters

**Alan explains why we did this project.**



I was shocked a ten year old yelled 'Spaz' at me. When I talked to other members I realised this had happened to them too. Some of them were scared to go out.

## What sort of stories?

### They could be numbers and facts

#### Our Story

We spoke to **120** schoolchildren in **4** schools. Half of them said that they had called people names; **60%** of these said they would think before doing it again.

### Or human stories

Jason, aged 10, told us that he regularly calls his friends '**Spaz**' when they do daft things. He won't do it again.



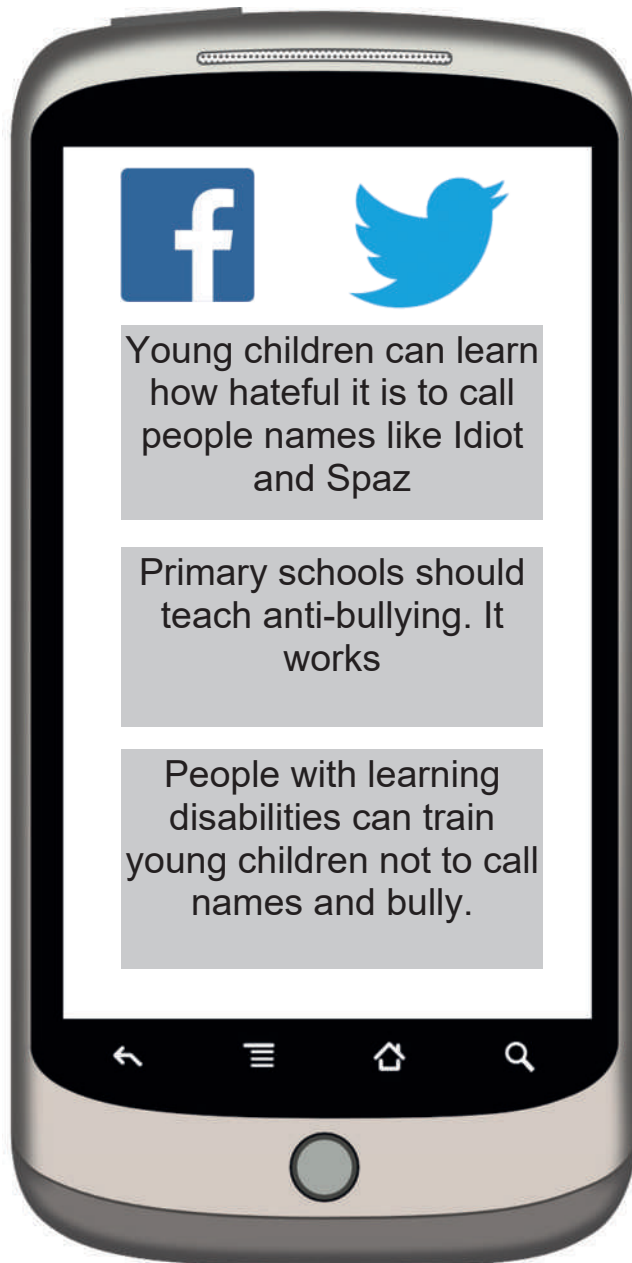
### You could do a video

The trainers could say what it was like to visit the schools. The teachers can say how the children have changed.





## What have we learned?



Say what you have learned in short messages.

Think about how you can use Facebook and Twitter.

Use plain English.

Use photos or cartoons to get peoples attention.

## What do we want people to do?

Your message should say what you want to happen next.

Primary schools should invite us in to train children about disability discrimination

Welsh Government to put Disability Discrimination on National Curriculum

We can design signs for your hospital which will make it easier for everyone to find their way around

## Who do we tell?

Think carefully about who needs to know what we have learnt.



**Policy makers** – the Welsh Government told us that they welcome messages about how they can make things better. Local authorities like to know how they can support people to be more independent. Health people need to know how to support people to lead healthier lives.



**Professionals** - what are the messages for the local hospital, social workers, people who provide services?



**Other self advocacy groups** – they will be encouraged by your success. They might want to know how you ran the project, what measures you used, or how the members made big decisions.

## How can we share?

There are lots of ways to share your messages once you know what you want to say.



Use Facebook and Twitter.



Write an article for the paper, radio and TV.



Write to professional magazines that the people you want to reach will read.



Invite someone from the local university to help you write articles about your work.

## Make sure everyone has a voice



### Telling people about the project



Everyone can help share the big message.

Ask people to think about what they can do.



They can:

- post on Facebook
- talk to their councillor, AM or MP
- tell their friends and support workers.



Make sure everyone has all the information they need to share.



## If you are a funder

### When to use this toolkit



**Decide about funding for a project** Page 29



**Check if a project is doing what you agreed** Page 15



**Decide if the project was a success** Page 18



## Decide about funding for a project

When evaluating a self advocacy project, either to decide whether to fund it, or to measure its success, we suggest that you take the following factors into account:

### Is it a self advocacy project?



Use the **Mirror Principles** from page 3 to determine whether it is a self advocacy project or (for example) a health project involving people with learning disability. Who is in control, and what role will the self advocates have in running the project?

### Who is doing the evaluation?

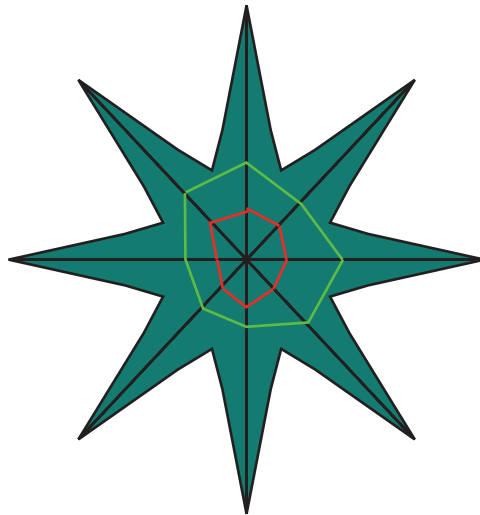


If an external, independent evaluation is required, then can the external evaluation team involve self advocates? Self advocates are involved in service audits, patient and service user groups where they are required to make judgements. These people, or others, would add to the validity and usefulness of an evaluation.

## Are the measures right for the project?



Funders have told us that they prefer project leads to decide the right measures for their project. However, we have plenty of examples of projects where the measures are inappropriate.



Most projects will not involve enough people to make the 'quantitative' analysis of the results robust.

Using soft outcome tools like outcome star or 'distance travelled' tools (eg Richter Scale and The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) can change the shape of the project.



Recording reflections of those involved in the project either as individuals or as a group is far more informative.

## What format should reports be in?

funders expect a written report at the end of a project. This will exclude some self advocates, even if an easy read version is also produced.

You can include more self advocates in reporting and have more impact with funders if you:

- develop a script and record it
- use a digital story or video format
- create and perform a short drama.





## Notes and ideas



## Notes and ideas



## Notes and ideas



# How we wrote the toolkit



We wrote the toolkit with self advocacy groups.

They told us:

- what is important to them.
- how they would show others how their projects have worked.



We went to self advocacy groups and held workshops.

We talked to People First facilitators, funders and people who pay for self advocacy projects.

## These self advocacy groups helped us



RCT People First



My Life My Choice Oxfordshire



Newport people First



Cardiff People First



Carmarthenshire People First



Conwy Connect



Blaenau Gwent People First



Torfaen People First

This research was funded by Big Lottery through DRILL (Disability Research through Independent Living and Learning).





**Better healthcare**



**Get out more**



**Feel safe**



**Be more confident**



**Learn new skills**  
**Get better at skills**  
**we already have**



**Change people's**  
**ideas about people**  
**with learning**  
**disabilities**



**Make new friends**  
**meet new people**



**Less bullying**  
**Less hate crime**



**Members earn  
money**



**Learn more about  
ourselves and our  
culture**



**Better signs and  
information**



**Help us to  
become more  
independent**



**Lead healthier lives**



**Money to help keep the group going**



**Have new experiences**



**Change the way people work with people with learning disabilities**