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# Empowering Change

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## Senior appointments to help CAIS stay fit for the future

### CAIS HAS MADE two new appointments to its senior management team.

Following a lengthy development and assessment process, Leon Marsh was named as Director of Community Services with Sandy Ackers made Company Secretary.

Both are long-term servants to the organisation, and have already stepped into their new roles after being appointed by Trustees.

CAIS chairman Dr Dafydd Alun Jones congratulated Leon and Sandy on their appointments.

"I am pleased that the Board has felt able to fill these positions from within the charity," he said.

"We will continue to support internal development programmes in the hope of affording similar opportunities in the future."

### Challenge

Leon has been working with CAIS for approaching five years, and has more than 14 years' experience in the criminal justice, housing, substance misuse and residential services sector.

Most recently, he worked as CAIS Commercial Manager, with specific responsibility for Hafan Wen and Ty'n Rodyn.

He has now taken on a new brief as CAIS Director of Community Services, with responsibility for Supporting People, Young Persons' Services, Homelessness Prevention and Residential Services, Champions' House, Counselling, Therapeutic Interventions and Parabl.



"I'm looking forward to the challenge of developing CAIS services in the community, and I'm excited by the opportunities to come," he said.

"My priority will be to position CAIS to take advantage of the opportunities that are available, and to secure sustainable platforms for growth.

"Over the forthcoming weeks and months, I'm looking forward to meeting all staff and want to take the chance to thank them for their continuing commitment to CAIS."

Sandy has been with CAIS for more than 10 years after joining the charity following a career in the private sector. She will combine the role with her existing post as Finance Manager.

She also oversees the work of the award-winning and expanding CAIS Social Enterprises.

"I'm looking forward to working alongside the Board of Trustees in this exciting new role," Sandy said.



# Volunteers walk with the animals...

**CYFLE CYMRU** volunteers are picking up fresh insight into the Secret Life of Chester Zoo as part of a new tie-up with the attraction.

Participant Keilie Wycherley is one of a group who are giving their own time to help daytrippers enjoy their visit, enhance the zoo's conservation efforts, and develop their own skills.

They are part of this year's huge volunteer intake at busy Chester Zoo – where animals and keepers were recently the stars of a behind-the-scenes Channel 4 documentary series.

Participants have completed a thorough volunteering training programme, and are

now helping visitors learn more about the 500 species and 15,000 animals at the site.

Cyfle Cymru, which is backed by EU funds and the Welsh Government, offers effective peer mentoring, training and confidence-building life skills for people with experience of mental health and substance misuse issues.

Keilie, who used drugs for more than 20 years, was introduced to the opportunity by her peer mentor George James.

"I love it – it is really good and a fantastic opportunity," she said. "When you're in addiction, you isolate yourself – you don't want to

interact with people. So you have to learn those people skills again, like having a conversation and looking people in the eye.



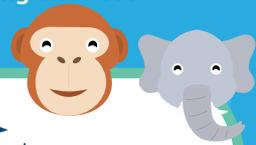
"Volunteering at the zoo has been a fantastic opportunity. If anyone is looking into

volunteering then I would really recommend it."

Cyfle Cymru is part of the Welsh Government's Out of Work Service, and is being delivered by the DACW partnership across the North Wales, Powys, Dyfed, Western Bay and Gwent areas.

The programme has already helped more than 1,000 people in Wales and delivered in excess of 10,000 hours of support in the community.

More information about Cyfle Cymru is available online at [www.dacw.co.uk](http://www.dacw.co.uk), by emailing [ask@cyflecymru.com](mailto:ask@cyflecymru.com), or calling 0300 777 2256.



## Cyfle Cymru

Cymru lach ar  
**GWAITH**  
Healthy  
**WORKING**  
Wales

Gwasanaeth  
Di-Waith  
Out of Work  
Service



## Want to help us get people talking?

**Could you help us to improve our counselling services?**

Alongside our colleagues at Caniad – the combined voice for mental health and substance misuse involvement in north Wales – we are seeking participants to join our service user involvement groups and help us make a difference!

We currently have vacancies on a new involvement group for CAIS Drug & Alcohol Counselling, as well as the Parabl involvement group Talking Heads. Volunteers will be able to use their experience to offer views and ideas, and help shape our services.

For more information on how you could contribute, please contact Tony Ormond at Caniad by email on [tony.ormond@caniad.org.uk](mailto:tony.ormond@caniad.org.uk) or call 07799 622 700.



# Great student counsellors help CAIS tackle substance misuse



**CAIS COUNSELLING is going from strength to strength thanks to the incredible work of our student counsellors.**

All new counsellors must accrue 100 hours of one-to-one client work before they qualify, and placements can be extremely hard to find.

But CAIS has been able to help the counsellors of tomorrow progress in their training and career, by providing valuable opportunities to gain the practical experience needed to develop as professional practitioners.

## Thrilled

Since September 2016, CAIS has recruited 10 counsellors onto our student placement programme – and we couldn't be happier with the contribution they are making to clients in need of support.

"We are absolutely thrilled to have such a fantastic group, each with their own individual style and personality and yet all with the same passion and commitment to counselling," said counselling and Parabl manager Nicola Blackwell.

"Their dedication to delivering a high standard of service is commendable and we simply couldn't manage without them.

## Proud

"I am incredibly proud of the fact that we can provide student counsellors with the opportunity to complete their qualification.

"Having started my CAIS career as a student counsellor, I can speak from personal experience when I say how much it means to have a service believe in you."

## In their own words: *student counsellors on their experiences with CAIS*

### Tracey

**I've always had an interest in people and human behaviour, and believe that everyone has a unique story to tell.**

For some people, that story carries difficult, confusing, or even painful experiences – making life a daily challenge. In becoming a



person-centred counsellor, I want to support those struggling by listening to their story, without judgement, in the hope that they can find a way forward.

Every member of staff has been welcoming, helpful and supportive. There is an obvious team spirit within CAIS and I have felt included in this team.

### Tiffany

**After leaving school I went straight into a sales career, but I had always admired how counsellors were able to help others through their struggles – and wanted to do something fulfilling.**

I took on an evening course in counselling skills at Wrexham Glyndwr University, then a diploma.



It's challenging emotionally and academically but I couldn't be happier with the choice I've made.

It's an enormously supportive environment and I feel like I've developed personally as well as professionally. Getting to see real clients allows you to put all you've learnt into practice, and CAIS is a great place to do that.

### Kate

**I have experienced hardship and the power of counselling, and I also have an innate desire to see people grow and reach their full potential – so counselling seemed like the perfect fit for me!**

My CAIS placement is great, on two levels. Firstly, it's very different to my other placement – so I am



experiencing a whole different client group, and agency set up.

Secondly, the staff at Champions House and the people around are so awesome! I have really enjoyed their welcoming smiles and helpfulness. It's been a joy to be around them!



# Celebrating the stories of recovery at Wrexham event

**USERS OF CAIS services were amongst more than 50 people to be presented with certificates at a special recovery celebration at Wrexham Memorial Hall on Bodhyfryd.**

The event – which was organised by the North Wales Service User, Family and Carer Forum – encouraged people in recovery to celebrate their progress and achievements and think about their next steps, and was attended by officials from North Wales Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the North Wales Area Planning Board for Substance Misuse, Wrexham County Borough Council, HMP Berwyn and support agencies.

The day included a keynote speech entitled Recovering Recovery from CAIS chief executive Clive Wolfendale.

Interim chair of the forum Brian Lewis said he was delighted to be able to



show that support is available for people who need help to tackle drug use and other life challenges.

“Whether people have taken small steps along the road or big strides towards a bright new future, it’s

important that we recognise and encourage progress in recovery,” he said.

“We are pleased to celebrate those steps and to help people to continue to move their lives forward.”

## CAIS hits the standard for staff wellbeing

**CAIS HAS BEEN awarded the Bronze Corporate Health Standard in recognition of its efforts to protect and support the wellbeing of more than 200 staff across the organisation.**

The new mark, issued by Public Health Wales, shows that CAIS has an ongoing and demonstrable commitment to workplace health at a senior level and that appropriate plans, policies and systems are in place.

Last year, CAIS launched Cadw CAIS – a confidential internal support service for staff who need advice, practical health and wellbeing support, and information.

The team behind Cadw CAIS circulate a monthly newsletter packed with information and tips, make resources available to staff on the internal CAIS Sharepoint pages, and host regular wellbeing draws and events to promote healthy living and working.



Guidance on offer includes help to tackle smoking, information about the benefits of regular exercise, advice with healthy eating, stress, pressure and mental health, and other personal support.

Any member of staff who needs help with difficulties at home or at work can contact the Cadw CAIS team of Nicola Blackwell and Olwen Evans at any time.

“We’re delighted to have received this award because it evidences the commitment CAIS has made to the emotional and physical wellbeing of staff,” Olwen said.

“Our senior management team created the Cadw CAIS employee support service because they believe in the power of a happy and healthy workforce. The Bronze Corporate Health Standard award acknowledges the recent efforts made towards achieving this.”



# Growing confidence



*"When you plant something and it grows, you can say 'I did that!'"*

**HEATHER LOVES** the sense of achievement she gets from spending time at the Seeds2Grow Farm near St Asaph.

Alongside the rest of the team, she's spent recent weeks harvesting a healthy crop of rhubarb and preparing for the summer growing season ahead.

"It's really good, I really enjoy it," she said. "My favourite job is the strimming, but I like planting too."

"There are some seeds in the polytunnel that we planted a couple of weeks ago, sunflowers, tomatoes, some salad and onions."

Heather, who has Asperger syndrome, said working there had helped to make her more physically active and meet new people.

She lives locally and is able to walk to the farm every Friday to take part in activities there. She hopes to pick up some part time work as a result.

"I like outside stuff," Heather said. "It's structured, and there's always something to do."

"I've met new people and made some new friends, and I've learned a lot. Being outside helps, and helps how you feel too."

"Watching everything coming to life is a nice thing. You get a sense of achievement. When you plant something and it grows, you can say 'I did that!'"



## Staff Profile

*Introducing...*

**Kay Ribbons-Steen**  
Training Officer, Seeds2Grow

**IT'S OFFICIALLY SPRING**, the busiest time of the year on the Seeds2Grow farm. My name's Kay, and I jumped at the opportunity to be a part of this fabulous project.

Following in Alec's footsteps, I am now looking forward to developing the farm into an even better and bigger site – one which helps clients recover and gain the skills they need to be ready for the working world.

There are already beds full of rhubarb, broad beans, cabbages and onions, but as we sow seeds for the summer we also plan on creating a new sensory area and plants that attract wildlife.

I also run ecotherapy activities such as fire lighting, nature art and bushcraft which help boost clients confidence, self esteem and wellbeing.



Along with this, clients have access to free accredited training in a variety of topics, including CSCS cards.

Seeds2Grow is open to people over 25, from Gwynedd, Conwy or Denbighshire, with a work-limiting health condition.

Seeds2Grow is supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government, as part of the Active Inclusion Fund managed by WCVA.

To find out more visit [cais.co.uk/seeds2grow](http://cais.co.uk/seeds2grow), download our leaflet, or email [kay.ribbons-steen@cais.org.uk](mailto:kay.ribbons-steen@cais.org.uk)



# Porter's

SIOP COFFI • COFFEE SHOP

## Porter's takes the capital by storm

**CAIS SOCIAL ENTERPRISES** has opened a brand new branch of its successful Porter's Coffee Shop chain – this time taking its successful mix of quality food and drink and catering training to the capital!

The third Porter's outlet opened at the newly-refurbished Llandaff North and Gabalfa Community Hub in Cardiff at the end of February. It offers a great menu of tasty treats including healthy eating snacks, breakfasts, fabulous sarnies and delicious drinks inspired by the success of Porter's Coffee Shop and Bistro in Colwyn Bay.

Award-winning CAIS Social Enterprises will also work in partnership with colleagues at Living Room Cardiff and mental health charity Hafal to offer meaningful and rewarding training and volunteering opportunities.

The vibrant, bright and fresh Llandaff North hub is one of eight across Cardiff, and provides access to groups, classes, activities and support services as well as a one-stop-shop for City of Cardiff Council services and community groups in the area.

### Change and improve

The new outlet comes hard on the heels of the opening of Porter's Coffee Shop at Rhyl Library and One Stop Shop earlier this year.

In November, CAIS Social Enterprises was named as one of the leading community businesses in Wales after picking up first place in the health and social care category at the Social Business Wales Awards.

## Gongs for gadgets with digital inclusion award win

**CHANGE STEP'S** Digital Inclusion project has been recognised with a national award.

The project, delivered in partnership with BT and Digital Communities Wales, was named joint winner alongside the RNIB in the Digital Inclusion category at the annual Third Sector



Cymru Awards run by the WCVA.

Judges said Change Step's nomination had stood out because of its "reach, sustainability and innovative delivery model". Linzi Jones and Steve Stokoe are pictured collecting the award on stage in Cardiff.

**Read more:** [bit.ly/2pGtUv1](http://bit.ly/2pGtUv1)

## DragonTale takes to airwaves at castle launch day

**MOBILE RADIO** project DragonTale took to the airwaves with a live launch broadcast across three local stations from Gwyrch Castle.

The project, which has received £500,000 in lottery funding, sees CAIS partner with AVOW and Glwydwr University to tell stories from across North Wales.



It builds on the success of the Recovery Radio programme, delivered by AVOW at Champions' House, and will train ambassadors in recovery to record, edit and produce high-class radio content.

Look out for the DragonTale purple and gold van near you!  
**Read more:** [bit.ly/2p41tLh](http://bit.ly/2p41tLh)





# Crew-it caters for success

**CONWY JOBSEEKERS** have collected **almost 200 qualifications as part of hospitality and customer service training schemes run by an award-winning CAIS Social Enterprises**

Participants from council-backed Crew-it and EU-funded At-Your-Service joined programme leaders and special guests at Station Court in Colwyn Bay to collect certificates and celebrate their successes.

Under the two schemes, a total of 82 people have been given training and practical work experience by the team behind the popular Porter's Coffee Shop and Bistro.

Backed by Conwy County Borough Council's Community and Enterprise Development Scheme, Crew-it helped 25 people get into work and supported the attainment of 166 work-related qualifications over the last three years.

At-Your-Service – which is supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government, as part of the Active Inclusion Fund managed by WCVA – delivered 11 new roles, 30 qualifications and 5 volunteer posts.

The programmes, which both targeted the tourism and hospitality sectors, provided opportunities for people furthest from the jobs market to join industries which together contribute

hundreds of millions of pounds to the economy of Conwy, and sustain thousands of jobs.

CAIS Social Enterprises was recognised as one of the best social enterprises in Wales late last year after winning the health and social category at the Social Business Wales awards in Cardiff.

## Important factors

CAIS chief executive Clive Wolfendale said finding work was "one of the most important factors in helping people get back on their feet" following significant life challenges.

Deputy Mayor of Colwyn Bay Jeff Pearson hailed the success of the programmes.

"I'm impressed with all the hard work which goes into providing the training people need to find work, and to see the results," he said.

"It means people can have a new start in life, can rebuild confidence and their place in the world – and it could even be the start of a brand new career."

**The new At-Your-Service-2 scheme now offers catering, hospitality and customer service training to people who face barriers to employment in Conwy and Denbighshire.**

Find out more at [cais.co.uk/ays2](http://cais.co.uk/ays2)



**WCVA CHIEF EXECUTIVE Ruth Marks also joined the celebration to learn more about volunteering and voluntary projects backed by CAIS.**

She said she had enjoyed meeting CAIS deputy chief executive Lynn Bennoch and other staff.

"It was great to meet with Clive, Lynn and colleagues, as well as a number of volunteers, and to hear about the great support on offer from CAIS," Ruth said.

"I was particularly interested to learn about CAIS' range of volunteering roles and wide range of partnerships, which help extend the reach of services to people who can so often find themselves in vulnerable circumstances."





# Recovery in Action clean up in Wrexham

**VOLUNTEERS FROM Champions' House are cleaning up Wrexham with their new Recovery in Action project.**

Their regular clean-ups in the community are attracting the right kind of attention, and showing that people with past experience of substance misuse can give something back to the area they live in.

So far, the group have taken around 100 bin bags full of rubbish off the streets of Wrexham – including drugs paraphernalia, broken glass and countless bottles, plus dozens of sharps.

Their visible and high-profile efforts have won praise on social media from members of the public, positive comments from community leaders and councillors, and attention in the local press and national media.

The project has been funded by a project grant from Wrexham County Borough Council's Together in Wrexham fund and

support from the North Wales Police and North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner's Your Community Your Choice scheme. It is also supported by Keep Wales Tidy.

## Great example

"This is just another great example of what can be achieved by people in recovery," project manager Elen Richards said.

"It proves that people with experience of substance misuse can move on in their lives and make a great contribution to Wrexham."

Volunteers from EU-funded Out of Work Service Cyfle Cymru have also joined in.

Recovery in Action works with community councils and local councillors to identify areas which need to be addressed. Volunteers have cleared areas around Trinity Church, King Street, Rhosddu Park, Gerald Street, Watery Lane, Cunliffe Street and Bryn Offa with many more to come!



**Clive Wolfendale**, Chief Executive  
**Lynn Bennoch**, Commercial Director & Deputy Chief Executive  
**Geraint Jones**, Director  
**Leon Marsh**, Director of Community Services  
**Sandy Ackers**, Company Secretary  
Newsletter produced by James Williamson

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