

# Winners announced at the 2018 Promoting Independence Awards

The winners of the 2018 Promoting Independence Awards were announced on Friday 30 November at a ceremony in Cardiff hosted by Cymorth Cymru. Now in their twelfth year, the awards recognise the work and achievements of the homelessness and housing-related support sector in Wales. The evening was opened by Joy Kent, founder-director of Joy Unlimited and former director of Cymorth.

**Katie Dalton, director of Cymorth Cymru, said:**

“These awards recognise the passion, dedication and success of the people and organisations who deliver housing and support services in Wales, as well as celebrating the achievements of people who have faced and overcome some of the most difficult challenges imaginable.

“Deciding on winners wasn’t easy, but the judges have recognised some excellent examples of innovation, hard work and collaboration. These qualities define the housing and support sector in Wales, and these successes will continue to inspire us all in 2019.”

## The full list of winners in each category

### Homelessness Prevention Award – sponsored by *Crisis*

- **Winner:** The Salvation Army, for their project, Housing First Cardiff

The winning project is the first of its kind in south Wales. The Salvation Army has taken an evidence-based, internationally recognised model and worked in partnership with multiple agencies to implement it. The service supports people with complex needs who have been homeless for long periods of time, with the aim to help them leave the streets and live sustainable, inclusive lives within their communities. With a strong emphasis on psychologically-informed environments and being trauma-aware, this entry evidenced the project’s success at preventing homelessness.

**Yvonne Connolly**, Regional Manager for The Salvation Army’s Homelessness Services Unit Wales and the South West said:

“This is a wonderful milestone moment for our team and the achievements of our service users on their personal journey out of homelessness. Whilst still only in its first year of operation Housing First Cardiff is already achieving groundbreaking results working with some of the marginalised and hard to reach rough sleepers in our capital city and it is recognised as a unique Housing First project in Wales for its 100% commitment to all of the principals of Housing First and in particular to its strong partnership framework.”

### Personal Achievement Award – sponsored by *Pobl Care and Support*

- **Winner:** John Hill
- **Winner:** Stephan Dyer
- **Winner:** Sophie Russell

**Highly commended:** *Adel Botterill, Damion Jones, Jordan, Sarah McVeigh, Fflur Owen, Emma Pilot, Daniel Porretta, Melissa Richards, Simon Smith, Mark Riley, Gary Smith, Geri Stephenson, and others.*

The people nominated for this award have developed their confidence and self-esteem, inspired their peers, provided advice and support to other people, spoken up about their experiences, managed their mental health, reduced their substance use, learned new skills, started volunteering, and entered employment. Every story is different, but all are worthy of recognition. The people listed above have been supported by Crisis South Wales, Digartref Cyf, Dimensions, Gofal, Gorwel, Hafan Cymru, Hafod, Llamau, Merthyr Valleys Homes, Mirus, Newport Mind, Pobl Care and Support, Stepping Stones, Taff Housing and The Salvation Army.

### **Commissioner of the Year Award – sponsored by *United Welsh***

- **Winner:** Cheryl Emery, Domestic Abuse Commissioner at RCT County Borough Council

Those who nominated Cheryl highlighted her openness to new initiatives and her focus on developing services that are person-centred, needs-led, strengths-based and trauma-informed. She was praised for developing her insight through direct engagement with survivors and described as working passionately alongside support providers. Cheryl's flexibility and understanding was said to support the adoption of new methods and improve the opportunities and wellbeing of the people who use services, as well as highlighting the resulting impact on survivors of domestic abuse.

### **Learning and Work Award – sponsored by *Hafan Cymru***

- **Winner:** Gorwel (part of Grŵp Cynefin), for their project, Youth Shedz

The Youth Shedz project was praised for being led by young people within a supported housing project, with the principles of co-production at its heart. With an asset-based community development approach, it provides a nurturing, safe environment for young people aged over 16 to explore their identities and develop pro-social relationships as well as life and employability skills. The project was also praised for its engagement with the wider community, challenging negative stereotypes.

### **Co-production Award – sponsored by *Co-production Network for Wales***

- **Winner:** Volunteering Matters, for the SAFE Project (Sexual Awareness for Everyone)

The SAFE project enables young women with learning disabilities and autism to support their peers to improve their knowledge of healthy relationships, consent, sexual health, and safety on the internet and in person. It aims to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation and the social stigma surrounding sex and disability. The project has delivered workshops to more than three hundred young women with learning disabilities or autism, with twenty-eight peer volunteers. From writing the original funding bid to the design and delivery of workshops and project evaluation, people with learning disabilities and autism have been at the heart of this project.

### **Creativity Award – sponsored by *Tai Pawb and Llamau***

- **Winner:** Innovate Trust

Innovate Trust has embraced technology to improve the lives of adults with learning disabilities living in social care. Judges praised the project's involvement of service users, which led to the

discovery of innovative applications of technology that project staff hadn't thought of. The organisation has changed lives, challenged existing approaches, enabled independence, promoted inclusion and reduced stigma. The organisation was said to be future-focused and with their projects set to shake up the sector and improve the sustainability and quality of services.

- **Highly commended:** Cadwyn Housing Association in partnership with Flying Start Cardiff for Nightingale House

The judges were impressed by the cross-programme collaboration demonstrated by Cadwyn Housing Association and Flying Start Cardiff, as well as their focus on trauma-informed environments. The project recognises the importance of trusting relationships and a safe atmosphere within supported accommodation, and how working differently could deliver better outcomes for families.

### **Supporting Survivors Award – sponsored by *Welsh Women's Aid***

- **Winner:** West Wales Domestic Abuse Service (WWDAS)

WWDAS were recognised for their efforts to tailor their services to meet the needs of different groups. Despite the challenges of operating in a rural area, they deliver a wide range of outreach services, so that domestic abuse survivors can access support, housing and legal advice and counselling. They also address the causes of domestic violence, working with young children and their non-abusive parents to develop safe, trusting and respectful behaviours, co-run the Bystander Programme and work with men and boys to prevent violence.

- **Highly commended:** Cardiff Women's Aid and partner organisations for RISE Cardiff

This service is open all hours and enables survivors to access support through a range of remote communication methods, through the Council's neighbourhood Hubs. Cardiff Women's Aid works in partnership with the health board and the third-sector to support female victims of any age from a range of protected characteristics, but especially black and minority ethnic, lesbian, bi-sexual, trans and those with additional health needs.

### **The Antonia Watson Inspirational Colleague award – sponsored by *The Big Issue***

- **Winner:** Jackie Amos, of Taff Housing Association

Jackie was said to have demonstrated huge passion for improving the experiences of people who use services, has inspired her colleagues, and fought for the interests of support services at a strategic level. She has transformed one particular scheme through her passion and dedication to psychologically-informed approaches, and following her work, the number of incidents in the scheme has fallen dramatically. In the words of her colleagues, Jackie "lives and breathes support; researching new theories and ways of working that will keep staff providing a first class service to clients". She not afraid to fail, and inspires her colleagues to succeed.

**-Ends-**

**Notes for Editor**

- Cymorth Cymru is the umbrella body for homelessness and housing-related support providers in Wales.
- The Promoting Independence Awards are open to all people working in housing-related support or homelessness services, whether they are members of Cymorth Cymru or not.

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