



# Living through the pandemic: The impact of COVID-19 on people with learning disabilities in Wales

A Report derived from the UK Coronavirus and people with learning disabilities study



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*"I think people with learning disabilities found the study successful. It helped them have a say in the lockdowns and improve things during the hardest times. I think it will help us continue to have a voice. I just hope the politicians listen because improvements are still needed to help people with learning disabilities to gain greater independence and support when they need it, especially during the hardest times."* - James Tyler, Chair of the All Wales People First National Council

### **1.0 Background**

The COVID19 pandemic has had an overwhelming and long-lasting impact on everyone. There have been many surveys across the UK that have sought to determine its impact on people. It is not clear from these surveys what the impact has been for people with learning disabilities. Many of these impact surveys would have not been accessible to many people with learning disabilities, and even if they were, the number of participants identified as having a learning disability would have been relatively small. People with learning disabilities were more likely to experience an adverse outcome from a COVID-19 infection (see [here](#) for a summary). We know less about what it was like for people with learning disabilities to live through the pandemic. The study on which this report was based was designed specially to consider the impact of the pandemic and its associated restrictions on adults with learning

disabilities across the UK. The study is the largest study involving adults with learning disabilities and family carers/ paid support staff, to date.

The study was funded by UK Research and Innovation. Key publications from this study can be found [here](#). This was a UK wide study consisting of teams of collaborators within each of the four countries of the UK. This report, however, only deals with the impact on adults with learning disabilities in Wales.

The study was not the only study of the experiences of people with disabilities during the pandemic in Wales. In 2020, many disability organisations in Wales expressed concern about the disproportionate impact the covid 19 pandemic was having on the lives of disabled people. Following discussions in the Disability Equality Forum, chaired by Jane Hutt MS, then Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, the Welsh Government commissioned the Forum to examine the situation in more detail. An enquiry was established, and findings published in July 2021 in a report entitled Locked Out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19. This report can be found [here](#). Our study reported focused only on people with learning disabilities, their families and paid support staff. Both reports should be read together.

In the remainder of this report, more information about the research study is provided. We offer an overview of the findings and highlight their relevance for the ongoing development of the Welsh Government Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan. The report will describe how adults with learning disabilities in Wales positively participated in the civic response to the pandemic not just for their own safety but also for the safety of others. The impact Covid-19 had on the well-being of individuals with learning disabilities, family carers and paid support staff was considerable. Family carers were left unsupported for many months with the sudden closure of day centres and respite services. It shows that many people with learning disabilities also experienced a significant bereavement during the pandemic and how only

few people received professional help to cope with this. Although services resumed, people felt that they were not getting the same level of support as they had before the pandemic. Despite signs of recovery in our data, how people had experienced the first 18 months of the pandemic left them with considerable pessimism about the future and what might happen should there be further restrictions.

Our findings highlight a need to address three immediate concerns. These are giving thought: about people with learning disabilities during this any future pandemic; to how to make good the deficit in support people have experienced from health and social care services; and about the possible longer-term impact that living through the pandemic may have had on the health and well-being of people with learning disabilities and those who support them. People with learning disabilities have largely and positively engaged in public health measures to curtail the spread of COVID-19, at some cost to themselves. They should be involved in discussions and decisions that will impact upon them long into the future.

## **2.0 The study in the UK and Wales**

The study in the UK was led by Prof Richard Hastings (Warwick University) and Prof Chris Hatton (Manchester Metropolitan University). In Wales, the study was led by Prof Stuart Todd and Dr Edward Oloidi (University of South Wales) and Dr Steve Beyer (Cardiff University). In each of the four countries of the UK the researchers worked in partnership with key learning disability organisations. In Wales, the researchers worked with All Wales People First (Tracey Drew) Learning Disability Wales (Cath Lewis and Karen Warner) and the All-Wales Forum of Parents and Carers (Josh Law and Gwen Anslow).

The work of the collaboration in each country of the UK involved considering ways to recruit people into the study, developing study documents, identifying the key themes to discuss with study participants and how findings should be

shared with others. At key points, we consulted with small groups of people with learning disabilities and family carers in Wales about these issues. The study had to ask questions that were important to people and that they be addressed sensitively. These discussions were facilitated by members of the collaboration and those involved in them were paid for their time. The outcomes of those discussions were shared with the UK research team.

The study depended upon engaging many adults with learning disabilities across the UK to take part. Adults with a learning disability (group 1) were interviewed by telephone or online platforms such as Zoom. The interviews started in December 2020 (part 1). People were asked what their lives were like prior to the pandemic and what was happening to them now. The study was repeated in April 2021 (part 2) and August 2021 (part 3). This enabled any changes during this time to be captured. In August 2021 489 adults with learning disabilities took part in the study. This was 79% of those who took part in December 2020.

Not everyone with a learning disability was able to take part in a face-to-face interview. To make sure their experiences could be captured family carers or paid support staff of adults with learning disabilities completed an online questionnaire on behalf of a person with learning disabilities (group 2). Again, this was completed on three occasions. 280 people took part in the online survey in August 2021. This was 74% of the number that had taken part in December 2020.

People with learning disabilities in Wales are well represented within the UK study. 173 adults with learning disabilities from Wales were interviewed at Time 3 - about a third of the total UK participants. 56 family carers or paid support staff completed an online survey – about a fifth of all UK participants. The retention rate during the study in Wales was high, 78% for group 1 and 67% retention for group 2.

### **3.0 Research findings**

The findings in this report explore how adults with learning disabilities and those who care for them experienced the many restrictions designed to control the transmission of the virus during the pandemic in Wales between December 2020 and August 2021.

#### **3.1 Who took part in our study?**

50% identified themselves as male and 48% of participants identified as female. 54% were aged younger than 35; 31% were aged between 35 and 55; and 14% were older than 55. 94% identified as white. The study had difficulty in recruiting people with learning disabilities from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Wales. This was repeated across the UK. To develop a more rounded account of how the experiences of all people with learning disabilities in Wales, future studies and consultations must find innovative ways of working with people with a learning disability in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

#### **3.2 COVID-19 infections**

In January 2021, 68% of people with learning disabilities in group 2 and 55% of those in group 1 had underlying health conditions that were of concern to them if they caught COVID. The most common were asthma and epilepsy. Also at part 1, about 30% of people in both groups said they recently been tested for Covid19. About one in five of those tested were confirmed as having Covid19. This was higher than reported for the wider population. If we include those who believed they had had Covid19 but had not been tested, this means that 4.5% of the total study group had had Covid19 between December 2020 and January 2021. Of this group, one in 4 said they had been

hospitalised. By August 2021, 13% of group 1 and 6% of group 2 had had Covid19 at some time.

### **3.3 Compliance with Covid regulations:**

50% of people in group 1 reported at part 1 that they were shielding. By part 3, 6% of people were still shielding. More people in group 2 (16%) were still shielding in summer 2021.

At part 1, 89% of group 1 and 73% of group 2 reported wearing a mask when out. In August 2021, 72% of the study group said they thought that mask wearing, and social distancing should be maintained even when restrictions were lifted.

*"I'm happy that restrictions are starting to ease. But I also feel very anxious that people are starting to not wear masks and socially distance."*

*"I'm a bit torn on this as I really want to get back to normal and be able to catch my friends, but I also think that people should still wear masks in enclosed spaces like shops etc".*

In January 2020, 83% of people stated they would take the vaccine if offered. By August 2021, 95% of group 1 and 86% of group 2 had been fully vaccinated. 94% said that they would be willing to take a booster jab. Also in August 2021, 83% of our study participants felt that it should be compulsory for support staff to be vaccinated.

***People with learning disabilities in Wales engaged with public health advice for their own safety and for the safety of others.***

***People with learning disabilities thought that social distancing and mask wearing was important. They felt these measures should be maintained as they would give them greater confidence in re-engaging with their local communities.***

### **3.4 The impact on people's health**

Just over 60% of group 1 and group 2 rated their health as 'good' in December 2020. This was more or less the same in August 2021.

To promote early detection and treatment of health problems, people with learning disabilities in Wales, are entitled to an annual health check. 74% of participants said that they usually had an annual health check. In January 2021, 36% of group 1 and 24% of group 2 had had their annual health checks. By part 3 this had increased slightly, 38% of group 1 and 37% of group 2. Fewer than half of the people who used to have an annual health check had had one by August 2021.

In 2020, about 42% of people said they used to regularly see their GP. During the first lockdown, 93% of group 1 and 70% of group 2 said they saw their GP less or not at all. By Time 3, 36% of both groups had seen their GP in the last 4 weeks with most consultations (61%) being done remotely.

In 2020, 18% of group 1 and 31% of group 2 said they used regularly used to see a community or learning disability nurse. During the first lockdown, 70% of group 1 and 79% of group 2 said they now saw them less or not at all. By part 3, 14% of group 1 and 28% of group 2 said they had seen such a nurse in the last 4 weeks.

*"I didn't know how to get help or who to ask for help."*



*"I was worried that it would mean having to leave the house."*

### **3.5 Impact on well-being of people with learning disabilities**

In December 2020, the number of cases of Covid-19 increased and this led to Wales's Chief Medical Officer, Frank Atherton, advising households on 9<sup>th</sup> December not to mix unless necessary in the weeks preceding Christmas. On 26<sup>th</sup> December Wales entered a national lockdown. 84% of people in group 1 in January 2021 reported feeling lonely, worried or sad most or all of the time. By August 2021, restrictions had eased somewhat, and people were able to meet up more often. At this point, 46% of people in group 1 reported that they were lonely, worried, sad or anxious.

*"I'd like to go out again without worrying about dying and giving people coronavirus."*

In group 2, about 66% were said to be more sad or worried than they were before lockdown. This reduced to 52% in August 2021. However, family members and paid support staff for 46% of people with severe or profound learning disabilities said that visitor restrictions made life worse for the person they supported. One parent commented

*"My son has only recently moved into a care setting, so it is hard to judge. But from my point of view, I find it extremely distressing and difficult. I think he does as well."*

Parent carers and paid support staff of people with a severe and profound learning disability were very concerned about the impact on behaviour and well-being of the person they supported. These experiences are further captured in the comment below. One said:

*“There is a severe decline in his behaviour. He frequently walks about shouting and rocking. Sleep patterns are completely disrupted, and he has frequent bouts of temper and frustration. There is almost a complete unwillingness to cooperate with carers at home.”*

During the pandemic about 33% people across both groups reported that someone they knew well had died during the pandemic. For about a third of people who had experienced a bereavement, they felt that this death meant ‘everything in life had changed’. Only 9% of people who experienced a loss said they received specialist support.

*“I was and still am in a total mess and shock...I still can’t believe it. It was cancer related as far as I know.”*

***Access to mental health services was severely constrained in the first phases of lockdown and continues to be limited.***

***People with learning disabilities experienced poor physical health and emotional wellbeing during lockdown. There have been some improvements in emotional wellbeing, but less so for people with more severe and profound learning disabilities.***

***Some of these difficulties people experienced might be related to factors beyond living through a pandemic. Many people with learning disabilities experienced the death of a significant other in their lives.***

### **3.6 Use of services**

Just over half of group 2 were said to use a day service regularly (30% 3 days a week and 25% less than once a week) prior to lockdown. By August 2021, this had reduced to 30%. Around 33% people in both groups said they had used a

respite service regularly prior to lockdown. By August 2021, 25% of people in group 1 said they had done so again in the previous 4 weeks. For group 2 it was about 16%.

In August 2021, 26% of group 1 said they did not receive support from any service. Of those that did receive support, 32% said they were receiving less overall support than before lockdown but 17% said they were receiving more. In group 2, 9% said the person they supported was not receiving support from any service. Of those that were receiving support, 48% said they were receiving less overall support than before and 10% said they were receiving more overall support than previously.

*“Personal support or support workers used to support me but not in the last four weeks.”*

In April 2021, 28% of people in the study received a direct payment. Of these, almost one in three (30%) said they were paying for services they were not receiving. It is unclear whether refunds were made for services not provided.

In August 2021, parent carers or paid support staff of people with a severe and profound learning disability told us about the impact the changes to services were having on the person with learning disabilities. A family carer told us:

*“She is frustrated at lack of meaningful activity and is not allowed to go to a day service that she used to enjoy, even though it has been open since April”*

***The support from statutory services available to people with learning disabilities disappeared or was markedly reduced during 2021. Although there has been some positive change by August 2021, it had not resumed to pre-COVID levels. Not as many positive changes from early in the pandemic were reported for people in group 2.***

### 3.7 Impact on social relationships

Most of the people in group 1 were living with families (50%). Others were living with other people with learning disabilities (23%) or with a partner (5%). 21% said that they lived alone, with or without support. Of those with a partner, 83% said they got on well, the remainder said it was 'up and down'. The majority of people in group 2 lived with families (53%), while 46% lived in a supported living setting or care home. Only 1 person lived by themselves. 52% of people in group 2 were getting on well with those they lived with and for 43% it was 'up and down'. 5% said they were 'not getting on at all'. By August 2021, this had not changed for either group.

Restrictions on visits from family or friends were imposed on people living in supported living or care homes. 23% were not allowed any visits, 76% partial access while only 1% were said to have full access to visits from family and friends. By August 2021, 35% had experienced full access, 51% partial access and 4% no access.

Prior to the first lockdown in March 2020, 86% of both groups took part in community activities (e.g., community groups, shopping, cafes). After this, 72% of people in group 1 and 83% of group 2 reported that this was no longer the case. By August 2021, 57% of group 1 and 48% of group 2 were taking part in community activities. Engagement in community activities had not reverted to pre-pandemic levels. Some people said that they were now having more contact with local neighbours and people living nearby than ever before.

*"I am chatting more to my neighbours, and I am feeling more confident in talking to the people who live close to where I live. I think I have now met all of my neighbours since the pandemic started. My neighbours have also been helping each other out when people have needed it".*

About 1 in 3 people in group 1 said that they had a paid job prior to lockdown. During the first lockdown, 1 in 5 of those with a job said they were no longer working or were on a furlough scheme. By August 2021, 21% said they had a paid job or were on furlough.

Many people with learning disabilities in our study had access to the internet. This figure may reflect our recruitment and data collection procedures. 98% of people in group 1 and 100% of people in group 2 had the internet at home. 98% of people in group 1 had a phone they could use while 41% of people in group 2 had a phone they could use with help. 33% of those in group 2 used the internet compared to 92% of group 1. Not everyone was able to use the internet independently and whenever they wanted to. One parent highlighted the impact of not being able to see her son, who lives in supported living, on her and the rest of the family:

*“He needs constant reassurance that his family love him, need him and can see him. He finds it difficult to engage fully via Zoom. Not being able to see his family in person resulted in his mental health suffering, as did the mental health of his family”.*

Many people with learning disabilities followed guidance given to the public during the pandemic. Some also had to deal with additional restrictions because of where they live and how they received support. Often, decisions about going outside or receiving visitors, for example, were felt to have been made without involvement from the person themselves. Care and support services have worked hard to adhere to rules to keep people safe but often people did not seem to be involved in making decisions here. For some, these additional restrictions continued after the public were able to live with fewer restrictions.

***The social lives of people with learning disabilities were severely restricted during Covid and have yet to fully recover.***

***There was evidence in what people told us that some people felt closer to people in their neighbourhoods than before lockdown***

### **3.8 The future**

One in three people in Group 1 said they thought their lives might go back to how it used to be in 12 months or more. Most (42%) said they were not sure when this would happen. People were asked about what would be important to them if there were to be future lockdowns. There were many ideas but most focused on the following: help with shopping; support to see a GP; support to get medicines; more accessible information about lockdowns; and support to use the internet or a mobile phone. The quotes below give some indication of what people were looking forward to doing in the future:

*“Very small things. Going for a coffee with a friend. I want to go to watch the rugby but my mum isn't ready to let me. I want to go back to horse riding as well.”*

*“I'm looking forward to spending time with most of my family and siblings and my sister's baby is due very soon.”*

### **3.9 Impact on carers**

We also asked family carers and paid support staff about the impact the pandemic had had on themselves. 68% said they felt stressed in December 2020 and in August 2021, it was much the same (71%). In December 2020, 64% said they experienced disturbed sleep, 60% felt tired and 47% depressed. By August 2021, these levels were similar: 61%, 78% and 43% respectively. In 2020,

Only 8% in 2020 said 'none of these experiences' applied to them. It was 7% in August 2021.

When family carers were asked what would help if there was another lockdown, most (73%) said more help to keep the person they cared for occupied. Some also said better coronavirus information (48%), more help to access a GP when needed (41%), and to know that staff that worked with the person with learning disabilities were vaccinated (38%).

In August 2021, we asked carers when they thought things might return to how they had been before the pandemic started. About 1 in 4 people (27%) said they were not certain when this might happen. Most people (50%) said next year 2022 or later. About 1 in 10 people (14%) said "never".

Three family carers shared their experiences on caring during the pandemic: -

*"As a family, we have worked around the clock to minimise the negative impact on our son. We are absolutely exhausted but as he is happy, it is worth it."*

*"My son cannot be left at home safely alone. The main impact has been on me. All the responsibilities are on me."*

A paid support worker commented:

*"The person I support used to have four days a week, now its 2 days every 2 weeks. This means his carer has an even greater workload"*

***Family carers and paid support staff felt that they had taken on increased caring responsibilities for much of 2020 and this continued into 2021 as service reductions persisted.***

***Many people reported this had a negative impact on them and their well-being during 2020. By August 2021 the negative impact upon many carers had not changed.***

#### **4.0 Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan**

The findings reported here echo many of those reported in the *Locked Out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19* report. Taken together they both have important implications for policy and service development in Wales. Our study focused only on people with learning disabilities and, but to a lesser extent, family carers and paid support staff. We hope then that it will be of use to those in Wales involved in discussions around the development of learning disability policy. At the time of writing, we are aware that the Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan is being developed. We highlight the resonance between likely priority areas and outcomes and our findings. Priority areas and outcomes are reproduced in bold.

**Publication of a new 5-year Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan: The needs of people with a learning disability are met through the development and implementation of Welsh Government policy over the full term of government.**

As can be seen from this report, the study team have gathered detailed evidence about the lives of people with a learning disability, their family carers and paid support staff. This covers life before the pandemic and during the pandemic (up to August 2021). We hope that our findings will be shared in discussions about the development of the Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan and with the Ministerial Advisory Group, and with other arms of Welsh Government.



**Race Equality Action Plan - Welsh Government learning disability policies fully meet the needs of people with a learning disability in black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.**

As previously mentioned, despite best efforts, including contact with various organisations including BAWSO, Race Council Cymru, Eyst, and Diverse Cymru, the numbers of people from the black Asian and minority ethnic communities who took part in the study was low (94% identified as white). It is highly likely that the experiences of people from those communities will have been different. We therefore echo the importance of developing an action plan that considers the experiences of people from those communities. However, based on our experiences the involvement of people from those communities in shaping policy and sharing experiences will need new and innovative ways of working.

**A National Learning Disability Observatory for Wales - To support the development of a comprehensive body of evidence to inform policy decision making and service planning.**

The Covid emergency highlighted for us a dialogue gap between learning disability researchers and stakeholders in Wales. The current study was developed rapidly and re-ignited partnerships across these groups. It was successful in that these groups worked together to develop areas of concern for the survey, building participation in and engagement with the study and making use of the results. The experiences we had in this study highlight the importance of developing partnerships in evidence finding, taking, and making. These can be built upon future research. Ways of maintaining dialogue about research across stakeholders should continue.

This study shows something of the experiences of people with learning disabilities during a pandemic. Much remains to be known about the longer-term impact of Covid-19 and its associated restrictions on people with learning

disabilities. This seems an important area for future research activity. Routinely collected data in Wales could help monitor longer term impacts and to help prioritise health and social care interventions.

**Joint working, co-production and collaboration - Ensuring the needs and opinions of people with a learning disability, their families and carers are fully considered in the development of policies.**

Over 220 people with learning disabilities, family carers and paid support staff contributed to this during a very challenging time. This required new and quicker ways of engagement. These could be capitalised upon in future consultation exercises in Wales. Most people who participated said they would be interested in taking part in future research.

### ***Covid Recovery and Well being***

**Evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and carers - Development of appropriate, person-centred policies to maximise opportunities for Covid recovery and Evaluation of the impact of Covid restrictions on services for individuals, families and carers - Development of appropriate policies based on lessons learnt to assist in the development of recovery action.**

The study clearly highlighted the impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of individuals, family carers and support workers. People experienced social isolation, missed health care appointments, had health anxieties and worries about the future. 18 months into the pandemic there were signs of recovery in access to services and an uplift in wellbeing. This was less evident for family carers, whose well-being was low throughout the study. We do not know, however, what the longer-term impact of these experiences may be for people even if and when services return to pre-pandemic levels.

Many existing support structures were removed or reduced dramatically because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in challenging and complex caring situations being exacerbated. As well as thinking about recovery and a 'return to normal', thought also needs to be given to considering the likely longer-term impact of living and caring through the pandemic.

It is critical that wellbeing outcomes can start to be met, and that conversations with families about exploring alternative options continue to happen to enable greater voice, choice, and control. It is therefore essential that discussions and plans for improving health and social care services for people with learning disabilities include plans to better support carers in the longer term.

While the pandemic has created much hardship for individuals and families, there will have been positive lessons to have learned from how people lived through this time. In this study we saw the value of digital inclusion. Some people with learning disabilities felt better connected than before to people in their immediate neighbourhoods. Digital platforms extended the range of opportunities to keep in touch further. There will be other examples of resilience and creativity, of inclusive and new ways of working and the provision of support. These examples should be identified and developed further.

### **Loneliness and isolation - better understanding of the prevalence and causes of loneliness and isolation for people with a learning disability and action taken to improve inclusion and involvement**

The study looked at how people with a learning disability were engaging with others during the pandemic – many used digital means. These were useful. However, online support should be seen as an addition to and not a replacement for in person support.

For many people with learning disabilities, a sense of loneliness and isolation may have heightened during the pandemic. Not necessarily and only because of restrictions. People with learning disabilities experienced bereavement. Indeed, COVID-19 has probably implied that more people with learning disabilities than before experienced bereavement. Many of these losses were reported to be significant and life changing. There was little evidence that people were receiving professional help here. The study team have shared their findings with the UK Bereavement Commission through the Wales Stakeholder Event and with those involved in developing and implementing the Framework for Bereavement in Wales.

### ***Advocacy, self-advocacy, engagement, and collaboration***

**To promote voice, choice and control for people with learning disabilities and their carers. To include advocacy and self-advocacy and digital inclusion and support for sibling carers. People with learning disabilities to have their voices heard, are listened to, and are supported to make choices and control their own lives.**

People with learning disabilities, family carers and paid support staff took part fully in the response to the pandemic. It is therefore important that future decisions about the shape of services involve people with learning disabilities. They also took part willingly in our study right across Wales and shared their experiences with us over 8 months. A study on this scale might not have been imaginable pre-pandemic. It suggests that there are more opportunities than we may have previously realised to engage people in local and national decision making.

## ***Employment and skills***

### **Learning from the Engage to Change programme - maximise employment opportunities for people with a learning disability.**

Employment was a major concern for those who had been working and something others felt might become harder to achieve in the future. We saw positive patterns where people were picking up jobs again. However, we do not yet know the long-term impact of COVID19 on patterns of and opportunities for employment. Additional support to protect and enhance opportunities for people with learning disabilities to engage in paid employment needs to be considered.

### **5.0 Preparing for further COVID outbreaks and lockdowns**

Any future public health response to health emergencies needs to take account of the impact on the social and emotional wellbeing, quality of life, and equal rights of people with learning disabilities. People in this study did not feel that their situations had been considered when decisions about restrictions were made.

Official guidance from government agencies in relation to COVID-19 should be reviewed to ensure that, in the future, it fully considers the needs of people with a learning disability and their carers. This review should be undertaken in consultation with people with learning disabilities, family carers and those managing services for persons with learning disability.

Any guidance produced by Welsh Government must be provided in an accessible format. It might also consider how services make individual contingency plans for the continuation of support to people with a learning disability and for family carers.

## **6.0 What have we been doing to share our work**

The study team in Wales has hosted 3 online events to share the findings from the study. These were held on 17 May, 21 June and 27 September 2021. We plan to host another event in March 2022. We would like to see such events continue and to broaden the themes they might cover.

Throughout the study, we have produced easy versions of findings from Wales after each Wave of data collection. These provided a little more data on the findings at each time period than are reported here. Links to these briefings can be found at the end of this report.

The study team continues to work with colleagues in the wider UK collaboration. We share ideas about the implications of our work for future research and policy. There are now several publications coming from our UK work, and more are planned in the next few months.

We have and will continue to present our findings to key agencies and organisations in Wales. If you would like to know more about our research, please contact Dr Edward Oloidi at the University of South Wales ([edward.oloidi@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:edward.oloidi@southwales.ac.uk)).

## **7.0 Thank you!**

This was a successful study in terms of finding people in Wales to take part in the entire course of the study. This happened in the most challenging of times. The study would not have been successful without people with learning disabilities and their family carers/paid support staff taking the time, during a difficult period of their lives, to share their experiences with us. *Thank you.* A study of this size and complexity also required a small and dedicated team of interviewers to work flexibly during a difficult time for themselves too. *Thank you.*

## **8.0 Links to study briefings from Wales**

*[Risks and Coronavirus](#)*

*[Vaccinations](#)*

*[Digital lives](#)*

*[Access to health and social care services](#)*

*[Impact of caring \(1\)](#)*

*[Impact of Caring \(2\)](#)*

*[Restrictions](#)*

*[Impact on physical and mental health](#)*

*[Access to support and services](#)*

*[Bereavement](#)*