Story at 40: the lives and times of disabled people in Wales

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Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Story at 40 is an oral history project capturing the lives and times of disabled people in Wales from the 1970s to present day. It has provided an opportunity for disabled people to record their own memories and experiences to inform present and future generations.

Mark Drakeford AM will host the event which will include presentations from Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance and Leader of the House (whose responsibilities include Equalities) and from disabled people who have helped produce the film.

Mark said: “I am very pleased to be able to host this important event, at The Pierhead. The forty year struggle of the disability movement has helped transform attitudes and services, but there’s still a lot to be done. Today we’ll celebrate achievements so far, and look forward to building on them in the future”

Rhian Davies, Chief Executive of Disability Wales, explains: “This is a unique collaborative partnership supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund providing an exceptional insight to the lives of six disabled people living across Wales all aged around 40 and is a fitting legacy of DW’s own 40th anniversary. Each has shared their stories in a reflective account of their own experiences of living with impairments. What you will hear are the words and experiences unique to each individual and their own perception of ‘disability’,

“The stories provide detail of social changes including attitudes towards disabled people, provision of services and how the enhancement of technology has transformed disabled people’s lives. You will learn about people’s memories from school days, family life, relationships, work and future aspirations”.

In Story at 40, interviewee Sarah talks about how the introduction of subtitles in the late 1970s transformed her life. Ian explains how attitudes of friends changed following his MS diagnosis. Lyndzi and her mother Pat talk about her school, growing up and life with friends and family. David tells us how he became physically impaired as a result of a car accident when he was a baby and shares his views on living independently, work and family life. Ceriann provides a personal insight into living with a mental health condition and April explains how her experiences have been difficult, but they also drive her forward to live life to the full.

Story at 40 was produced by Practice Solutions on Disability Wales’ behalf, and involved a volunteer production team drawn from disabled people across Wales of all ages. As part of the project they received training on subjects including the history of disabled people and oral history as well as in interviewing, filming and editing. As a result Story at 40 is not only about disabled people but produced by disabled people and demonstrates their talents, achievements and contribution to society.

Commenting on the project Jennifer Stewart, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said, “Heritage is not all castles, museums and old buildings. Recording memories is an important and popular way of learning about our past and sharing this with present and future generations. This project has created an important record, not only of the tireless work of Disability Wales campaigning to improve the lives of disabled people, but it has enabled disabled peoples to tell

their story in their own words. As the organisation celebrates it 40th anniversary we are proud to have been able to support Disability Wales to shine a light on this untold history."

Story at 40 will be publically available to view via Disability Wales' youtube channel from today.

Notes to editors

1. Disability Wales is the national association of disabled people's organisations striving for the rights, equality and inclusion of all disabled people. It was set up in 1972 as Wales Council for the Disabled
2. International Day of Disabled People - United Nations' (UN) International Day of Disabled People is annually held on 3 December to focus on issues that affect disabled people worldwide. See United Nation's International Day of Persons with Disabilities website
3. UK Disability History Month (UKDHM) - UKDHM is an annual event creating a platform to focus on the history of disabled peoples struggle for equality and human rights. See: UKDHM website
4. HLF awarded Disability Wales a grant of £47,500 for the Story at 40 project

Further information

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