



Helping people with disadvantages to achieve independence through employment
Rhoi help llaw i bobl dan anfantaais ddod yn annibynnol drwy weithio

TODAY'S CHALLENGES ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGORIAD

The current political and economic landscape is one of great turbulence. This situation presents Third Sector organisations like Agoriad with not only the challenges of survival but also sustainability.

Identifying the key factors likely to impact upon the organisation is a key element in positioning Agoriad within this landscape. It is only once this is done that we are able to make the decisions and adopt the necessary strategies to be sustainable.

The 2 key impactors affecting our current strategy are:

- *The Coalition's Big Society initiative. Amongst the prime aims of this initiative is the divestment of public services to third sector organisations. This presents organisations like Agoriad with opportunities to pursue business development ideas through social enterprises and community-based activities. The critical factor in respect of this will be the rate at which the opportunities become available from the*

• Continued on page 2





TODAY'S CHALLENGES ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGORIAD

• Continued from page 1

public sector. Collaboration between the public and third sector will be vital for the planning and success of such ventures. If we all adopt a stakeholder viewpoint then we will be well on the way to ensuring that our communities get services which are appropriate.

- *Welfare reform - the introduction of the Work Programme in June will be the biggest change in welfare reform for decades. The programme will be run on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions by two appointed prime contractors throughout Wales.*

These in turn will use a range of subcontractors to deliver the services. This is another example of the macro procurement practices favoured by central government. Whilst understanding the need for efficiencies and cost savings the procurement criteria tend to favour only the larger national and international companies who can provide the necessary cash flow to get such contracts off the ground. Such organisations tend to be dominated by shareholders which inevitably shapes business approach. Third sector organisations live in hope that they will be in a position to get work as a subcontractor. This situation will provide a stern test for the Coalition's Big Society initiative.

Positioning Agoriad to be sustainable within this environment is a challenge that requires vision, determination, focus and capability.

Over the last few years Agoriad has based its competitive strategy on staff capability and considerable investment has been made in training and development. This investment has paid off well. Agoriad is able to adapt quickly and flexibly to new initiatives and opportunities, which enhances our sustainability. The level of staff competence and professionalism allows us to hit the ground running when commencing new areas of work. Concurrent with this has been a focus and clear decision by the Board on what our business is. Agoriad's work is about helping those that are disabled/disadvantaged to secure employment or training that helps them secure employment. Social enterprise development is an integral part of our approach to fulfilling Agoriad's mission.

Arthur Beechey, Chief Executive.



If you have a vacancy we may have a truly ideal applicant you may not have considered

An experienced employment and training provider with **over 20 years experience** and a real understanding of our local labour markets, Agoriad provides employers with a direct link to genuine and capable people seeking employment.

We have a team of Employment Officers located throughout North Wales with the experience, understanding and local knowledge required to match the right individual to the right job.

Our clients range from people searching for entry to professional levels as we work within the framework of Welfare to Work programmes such as **Flexible New Deal** and **Pathways to Work**.

If you have a vacancy or would welcome an informal and confidential chat about future employment issues we will be pleased to hear from you. Email: john@agoriad.org.uk



01248 361 392

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF CHARITIES IN HELPING THE LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED IN WALES

This is a very timely and important question. Unemployment is growing, huge changes to welfare benefits are on the way and the government in London is pressing ahead relentlessly with its Big Society project.

Firstly let's size up these matters.

Unemployment grew to 2.5 million in the UK this month. Youth unemployment is now 691,000 (9.4% of the youth population). The rate of employment is 70.5% - down 0.3% on the last quarter. Needless to say the figures for Wales nationally and locally are worse.

I'd like to look at benefits again when the details of the Welfare Bill are decided.

Many ask what the Big Society really means. Is it any different from Labour's Third Way and a host of similar initiatives? All these projects have tried to find a way of greater engagement, of getting people to share ownership of the problems of modern life and to be part of the solutions.

We might be sceptical about the way the Big Society idea dresses this up. We might even suspect that it has more to do with masking cuts to public spending. (The Big Society Bank has £300 million to spend. Now, tell me, how much are those public spending cuts..?)

But the basic idea of greater community engagement is sound and could be hugely useful. Some might even say that we have been doing this in Wales for centuries! My worries are about the lack of proper funding and the suspicion that the Big Society seems to be about supplanting rather than supplementing proper public sector provision.

Anyway, politicians can haggle. But where does voluntary and charitable effort fit in? What can smaller Welsh regional providers contribute?

It's easy to say that single job placements here and there cannot be the whole answer. But that ignores the real plight of individuals. One



unemployed person only needs one job. And that one job can change someone's life.

But how can agencies such as Agoriad be better enabled?

Let me offer three points. There should be:

- *Proper direct funding. I cannot see the justification for a main contractor top-slicing the budget and then passing on reduced resources to the people who actually do the work.*
- *Close working and accountability between the provider and the government's job finding agency and the government itself.*
- *Proper recognition of the size and complexity of the task of finding people work - leading to setting realistic success criteria.*

You will not be surprised that as a Plaid MP I also think we need devolution. I favour the small society! To me it's plain common sense that Jobcentre Plus's employment functions should come under the Assembly department which is trying to create jobs. This works well elsewhere, for example in Northern Ireland. The arrangements for local job placement would then fall into a more reasonable shape as individual providers would have the chance of a meaningful relationship with those that devise and implement policy. Now that would really be a big step forward.

Hywel Williams, MP, Plaid Cymru.

AGORIAD - INVESTORS IN PEOPLE GOLD STATUS RECOGNITION

Following a recent review of Agoriad by Christine Bracken, the Assessor on behalf of Investors in People Wales, we received the following comment from Senior Business Skills Development Manager, Jacque Owen.

"I am very pleased to confirm your continued recognition and congratulate you on the achievement of Investors in People Gold standard. Your achievement is reflected in the Certificate and the coveted Investors in People Gold logo which you will be entitled to use".

Christine's conclusion to her report is "having carried out the review process in line with the quality assurance guidelines monitored by Investors in People Wales, I can confirm Agoriad Cyf meets the requirements of Investors in People Gold status. Achieving Gold additional recognition represents achievement of world-class best practise and shows you are a truly cutting-edge organisation operating at the highest levels of people management practise".

We are delighted at Agoriad to receive this recognition. Agoriad relies on its team to make a real difference in local communities by helping people into the workplace. We continue to believe in the Agoriad way, working and training as a team to deliver the non-intrusive services in which we have specialised for over 15 years.



What does this recognition mean to the people we help? It shows that we can make a difference and that we are good at listening and have the proven skills, resources and training to find the best solutions to help you achieve your employment goals. For businesses, you can rely on Agoriad to work with you to find the right person to get the opportunity of being part of your workplace as a dedicated and committed contributor through placement and employment.



Cerist water is clear and pure natural mineral water from the home of the legendary Welsh Princes... the remote and beautiful mountains of Snowdonia.

Cerist is the true taste of the mountains from a source unchanged over thousands of years.



FROM SPRINGS
WITHIN SNOWDONIA
NATIONAL PARK



find out more at
www.dwrcerist.com

WELSH IS KEY!

My name is Rhiannon Gomer and I work as a freelance translator and proof reader. I have provided Agoriad Cyf with these services - mainly but not exclusively from English into Welsh - for a period of over five years.



For Agoriad, this is a fairly painless way of ensuring that all the documentation it generates which needs to be bilingual can be available in a short space of time, without substantial outlay or inconvenience. Agoriad has a Welsh Language Scheme where it explains in practical terms its commitment to using the language in most aspects of its work. This indicates that it is a responsible body that considers its effect on the society and the environment within which it operates.

This is particularly vital for a company that is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities and mental health issues, and those of their families; it is essential that their clients and customers are able to communicate as easily as possible in the language of their choice. Agoriad seeks to find appropriate employment for its clients within a working environment that fulfils their potential, and provides training and monitoring services. In order to do this, it works closely with JobCentre Plus and other

agencies that have programmes which provide support and encouragement until the client is happily able to live and work independently.

During the past few years, Agoriad has extended its realm of operation into the running of subsidiary companies, including Dŵr Cerist and cafés at both Bethesda and Aberffraw on Anglesey. These companies, and many other businesses throughout North Wales, provide work experience and employment within a protected environment for Agoriad clients, and no doubt a great deal of peace of mind for their families.

Operating as it does straddling the public, private and voluntary sectors, Agoriad has seen fit from the outset to offer bilingual services where needed, and having mainly bilingual staff makes this possible. But it has also identified and responded to the benefits of developing bilingual brands simultaneously as it extends its work in the private sector. This is not only to comply with the demands of legislation, but because it recognises

that doing so reflects well on its image in the market place, attracts loyalty from its workers and clientele, and is helpful in expanding its target market.

My contribution is to facilitate this bilingual service; it includes translating and proof reading InSight - Agoriad's quarterly magazine in which this article appears, some internal documentation, website material and menus for Caffi Coed-y-Brenin and Llys Llewelyn, as well as correspondence when needed.

I am glad of my continuing association with Agoriad as it strives to find opportunities in an increasingly difficult market for disadvantaged people within our society. My company name is Rhagom, which means 'Let's move forward'. I hope it remains appropriate for Agoriad in both a linguistic and business sense.

Rhiannon Gomer, RHAGOM, Member of the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters.
Email: rhiannon.gomer@btopenworld.com or telephone 01341 430240.

FORESTRY
COMMISSION
SELECTS
DŴR CERIST
FOR ITS
OWN LABEL

The own label supply of Dŵr Cerist water continues to be a popular option for our customers to carry their own brand with the supply of spring water.

The Forestry Commission is one of our new own label customers and the attractive label looks really good. The service is not limited to large bulk customers; with a minimum order of only 5000 units a number of retail businesses have chosen to use their own label as they sell Dŵr Cerist water.

The Dŵr Cerist Cyf own label service is available with an inexpensive design option to create an attractive label carrying your brand.

Contact Sioned at sioned@agoriad.org.uk



CHALLENGING YET REWARDING

I was brought on board the good ship Agoriad back in November 2010 as an Employment Officer to work on the Flexible New Deal (FND) programme. As a former Assistant Advisor with Jobcentre Plus, it's certainly been a culture shock! In a good way, you understand.

I've certainly had to hit the ground running in the Holyhead office as the sheer volume of customers that have been coming through the door has meant that I've had to re-adjust to my new environment very quickly. Although it's been challenging, it also has its own rewards as we try to help the long-term unemployed back into sustainable employment.

The barriers that many of our customers encounter can be many and complex. However, by far the most common barrier into work on Anglesey is transport issues, as many of the customers live in rural areas all over Anglesey, with very few bus services. However, by working with the customers to find solutions to these problems we are able to move them closer towards the labour market and hopefully into a more rewarding working life. We try to offer a tailored service within a welcoming

and friendly environment to help them feel at ease with the FND process. By producing action plans with the customers, we reach agreement on specific goals and targets to help achieve their objectives, in what can seem small, but ultimately significant steps towards employment.

In this respect, my job also has parallels with another of my former occupations as a Staff Nurse. It's all about promoting independence and enabling each individual to work towards achieving their full potential in life.

Bryn Richards, Employment Officer, Holyhead.



LOUISE EVANS JOINS THE AGORIAD TEAM AT BANGOR

I was recently employed as Administration Officer in January 2011.

I'm currently responsible for office administration which includes making the payments to Agoriad's clients. I'm also involved in company marketing and publicity and the company website and the development of several company databases.

I've just been appointed company First Aider and recently passed a 3 day intensive first aid

course. I am also responsible for Health & Safety within the office.

I relocated to Bethesda from Wolverhampton in January 2011 and previously worked in office management. I've also got a BSc (Hons) in complementary therapies and worked part-time for Macmillan at the local hospital in Wolverhampton offering treatments to oncology patients. Natural therapies are my hobby and I am qualified in aromatherapy, Reiki, hot stone therapy, reflexology, Indian Head

Massage and crystal therapy. Working for Macmillan was one of the most challenging things in my life but now I am looking forward to another challenge, learning the Welsh language!

I've really settled in quickly at Agoriad and enjoy working here and I love where the offices are situated in Porth Penrhyn - it's so tranquil compared to living and working in a city. Everyone has made me feel very welcome and I hope to have many happy years working here.

NEW COURSES, NEW QUALIFICATIONS AND NEW WAYS OF WORKING WITH AGORIAD

Essential Skills Wales

Since September 2010, Basic Skills has been phased out in Wales and has been replaced by the new Essential Skills Wales qualification.

The new standards have been developed to ensure that everyone in Wales has the skills they need to succeed in life.

In line with this change, Agoriad now offers the opportunity for its clients to study ESW qualifications.

Essential Skills Wales is divided into three different skills qualifications: Communication, Application of Number and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Agoriad can offer tuition and accreditation at all Entry Levels (1, 2 and 3) and at Level 1.

Essential Skills Wales focuses on the skills required for success in all aspects of education, training, work and life in general. They are therefore appropriate and relevant to candidates of all ages and ability.

The achievement of ESW qualification is recognised by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) tariff for admissions to higher education.

Engagement Gateway Project Anglesey

On the 7th February Agoriad launched a new project on Anglesey. The project, funded by WCVA as part of the Engagement Gateway programme, will run for 12 months and engage with 20 economically inactive

individuals who are on the disability register, within sheltered accommodation or within day care services on the island.

This project will deliver an innovative and comprehensive training programme designed to improve individual skills, confidence and ability required for employment and help each individual progress towards becoming economically active.

The 26 week programme will focus on the skills required to look for and gain employment and will include:

- Centre based training
- Vocational placement and training
- Ongoing individual support, review, coaching and mentoring
- Progression planning and evaluation

The training package will target the skills required to gain employment and the skills needed within the workplace. It will also target literacy and numeracy through the new Essential Skills Wales initiative.

Each individual will have the opportunity of a work placement to develop vocational skills in a real work environment.

The course tackles the fundamental skills needed in everyday life, including: communication skills, confidence building, environmental awareness and individual needs required to enable that person to access the labour market.

Call us on 01248 361 392 for an informal chat - we're here to help.



There's so much to find out on our website

Check out all the courses and the ways we can help

www.agoriad.org.uk

TRADITIONAL

Anglesey Eggs

COURTESY OF CAFFI COED-Y-BRENIN

500g/1lb 2oz potatoes, peeled

3 leeks, sliced

6 eggs

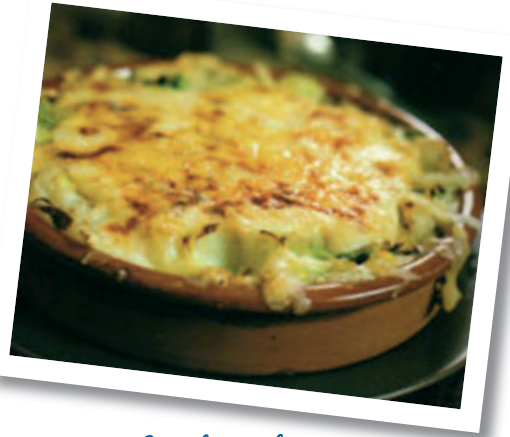
600ml/1 pint milk

50g/2oz/3 tbsp butter,
cut into small pieces

50g/2oz plain flour

100g/3½oz Caerphilly cheese,
grated

salt and ground black pepper



Instructions:

1) Cook the potatoes in boiling, lightly salted water for about 15 minutes or until soft. Meanwhile, cook the leeks in a little water for about 10 minutes until soft (leeks can also be cooked in the microwave in a covered dish with no water). Hard-boil the eggs, drain and put under cold running water to cool them.

2) Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Drain and mash the potatoes.

3) Drain the leeks and stir into the potatoes with a little black pepper to taste. Remove the shells from the eggs and cut in half or into quarters lengthways.

4) Pour the milk into a pan and add the butter and flour. Stirring continuously with a whisk, bring slowly to the boil and bubble gently for 2 minutes, until thickened and smooth. Remove from the heat, stir in half the cheese and season to taste.

5) Arrange the eggs in four shallow ovenproof dishes (or use one large one). Spoon the potato and leek mixture around the edge of the dishes. Pour the remaining cheese sauce over and top with the remaining cheese.

6) Put into the hot oven and cook for about 15-20 minutes, until bubbling and golden brown.

A nice variation is to add a little freshly grated nutmeg to the cheese sauce.