

Our Journey

PAN Cymru began as PAN West Glamorgan, driven by a core belief: parents involved in child protection benefit deeply from support offered by those with lived experience. With professional collaboration, parents and practitioners can co-create services that elevate parent voice and improve outcomes for families.

Inspired by international models—particularly David Tobis’s work in the U.S.—the concept began as a research project and grew into a practice-based initiative. Crucially, Neath Port Talbot’s senior management team in children’s services recognised the potential early on. Their vision and commitment to compassionate, just approaches led them to back the initiative with financial, developmental, and structural support.

They showed real foresight in freeing the project lead to begin laying the groundwork. A parent with shared passion joined soon after, and together with a few key professional allies and parents, they formed the PAN steering group—marking the beginning of authentic co-production between parents and professionals.

The group expanded with support from the West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board and professionals across NPT, Swansea, health, and other services. The group learned together, navigating the complexities of trauma-informed collaboration while maintaining a shared commitment to change.

Parents helped co-design the Parent Peer Advocacy and Support (PPAS) model, built on the principle that parent advocates should be employed—not volunteering—to shift the tone of professional dialogue and bring lived experience to the heart of service design.

In 2022, the full-time secondment of the project lead enabled further development across NPT and Swansea. By 2023, Welsh Government seed funding supported the PPAS model, and Be Strong Families training launched the Parent Café model locally.

In June 2024, the PPAS service was commissioned to Mental Health Matters, with one of the employed advocates also serving on PAN’s volunteer board. In December 2024, PAN Cymru became a Community Interest Company, with a parent now co-chairing the Board.

Today, PAN Cymru remains largely volunteer-led, focusing on advocacy, especially collective advocacy, consultation, training, and support. We are working to secure sustainable funding and staffing, with a clear mission: to ensure parents are not only heard, but employed, empowered, and leading peer advocacy across Wales—transforming systems to support families and communities to thrive.