



# Taking Part



# Annual Report 2019-2020





# Taking Part in our AGM 2019



... adding a little spice



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I think it is fair to say that the 2019/early 2020 year seems like a lifetime ago due to the world changing events we have all been affected by and the huge communication, delivery and support difficulties thrown at us.

For us, 2019/20 was a year of uncertainty too with contracts re-tendering, new tender opportunities, and inevitably changes to staff roles etc. However, Taking Part rose to the occasion.

As a team of trustees we brought our diverse skills to the table by



hosting 1 to 1 sessions with staff members, which I think were appreciated. We sat in on a couple of brainstorming sessions, which I certainly found to be a revelation in terms of the depth of knowledge, skills, enthusiasm for trying new ideas

and the focus to push through a busy year our staff demonstrated.

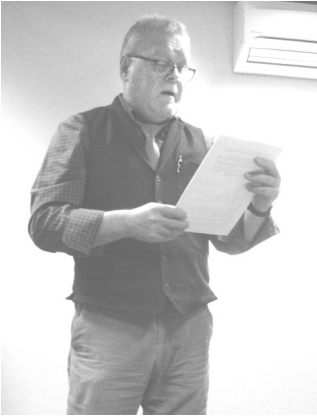
I don't really want to embarrass anyone by mentioning them by name but as a board we were deeply impressed by the mutual support shown to each other and the willingness to accept change. Information on all the contracts, tender submissions, contract delivery etc are detailed elsewhere in this report so I shall leave that to those better qualified to inform.



Taking Part maintained a good bank balance throughout the year and ensured funds were ring fenced as necessary in line with Charity Commission requirements.



## Trustees Report



The year was not an easy one but I'm happy to say that our staff team, volunteers, experts by experience and our new trustee Jean Harris all stepped up to the plate and I believe found themselves in a good position to roll with the punches 2020 has presented us all with.

Peter Simmons Chair of Trustees

### My First Unusual Year

Hello, my name is Jean Harris and I joined Taking Part as a trustee last year after being made redundant from my job as a Mental Health Advocate.



It was my good fortune to meet Julie, our C.E.O. at an event to showcase support systems for the people of Shropshire and Telford.

She invited me to apply to be a trustee and following the necessary interview I was elected onto the board.

I was just getting into the swing of things, and quickly learning about all the great work this charity does in supporting people with a range of health and social care needs, when we were struck with the Corona Virus pandemic.

This has made it much more difficult to continue with meetings to discuss any issues and to plan for the future. However, with a little effort and ingenuity things have continued to work well.

Thank goodness for Zoom!!

I'm looking forward to next year when I hope I can continue to learn more about the work of Taking Part and be able to support the team in person.

Jean

# Telford and Wrekin work



Wellbeing Independence Partnership (WIP) is a telephone information, advice and guidance service for adults in Telford with care and support needs funded by Telford and Wrekin Council.



Up until September 2019 this was My Choice.

From October 2019 this became known as Wellbeing Independence Partnership



Telford.



# Telford and Wrekin work

## Beech Spinney

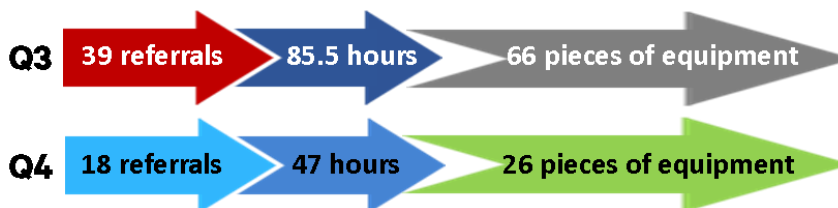


We were commissioned by T&W local authority to complete a consultation exercise with 3 of the residents at Beech Spinney, and their families, with the aim of establishing how the residents felt about their living arrangements, whether they were happy being there with each other and whether they would like to move to another home. This piece of work was commissioned because the existing block contract for the delivery of services at Beech Spinney was coming to an end on 30.11.2019 and so the local authority were exploring various options in respect of the continuing provision of care.

To give the residents the best chance of effectively communicating their thoughts and feelings to us, and to ensure that we were consistent in our questioning, we visited the residence and took loads of photos in and around the building to represent where they lived and what they liked doing. We then used these photos when we spoke to the residents and we recorded their reactions to gauge how they felt about each one.

This was a really successful consultation exercise. Our methods of communication worked really well and we got some valuable responses from the residents, which were fed back to the local authority ensuring that their wishes and feelings were heard.

## Telford Trusted Assessor



The TA role ended at the end of September 2019 and all cases were closed soon after this. The role provided a service seeing 57 clients,

normally within a week of the initial referral being received and having equipment delivered a few days after this. The service was well received by the clients who were grateful for a prompt service to enable them to carry on living independently and safely in their own homes.



Telford.

# Shropshire work

## Advice, Advocacy and Welfare Benefits

### Advocacy



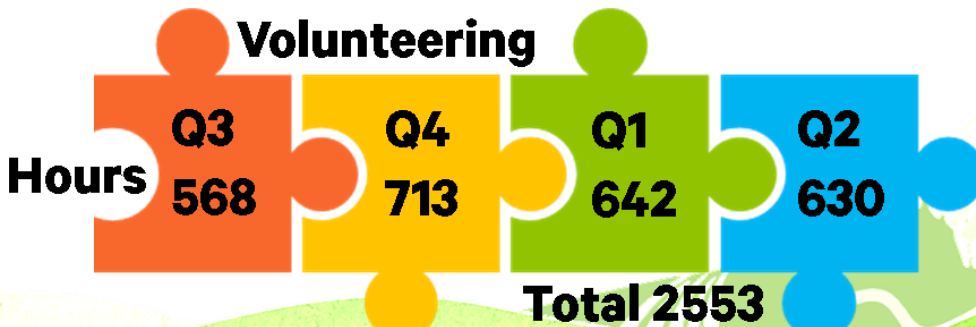
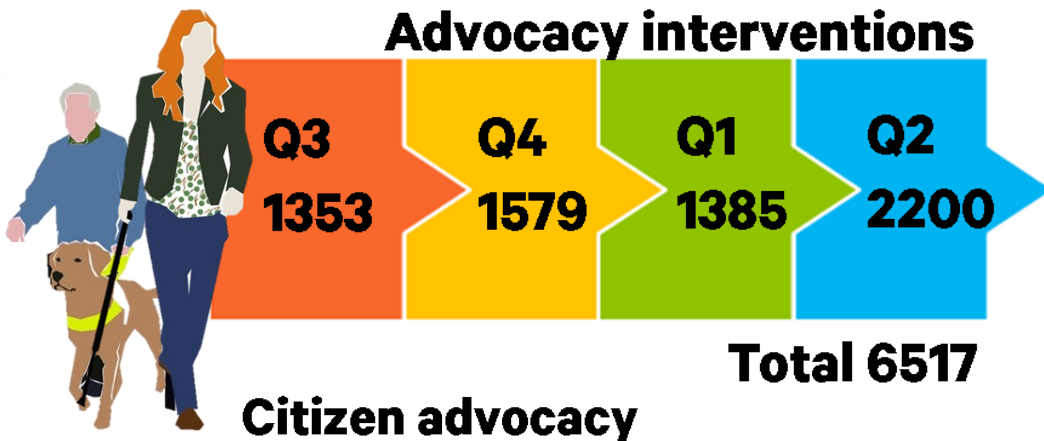
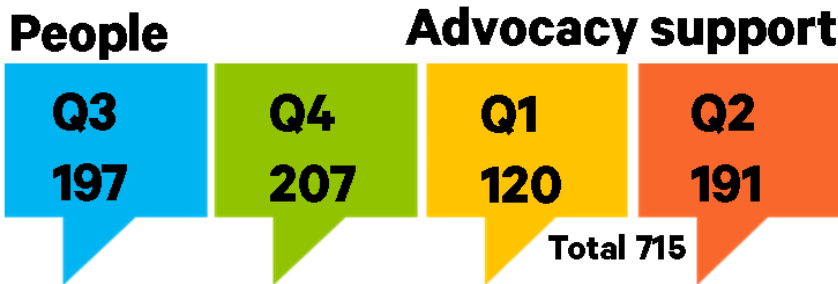
### Information



### Signposting



This contract, which began in October 2019, was a very exciting new challenge for the Shropshire advocacy team. Previously, our work had focused on supporting people who have a learning disability or difficulty. Under the new contract, we are now commissioned to provide advocacy support for all people who have a disability and/or care and support needs. This means that the team are working with a much broader client base, meaning the team began a journey of new diagnoses, new issues, new learning and new skills. Our combined skills and previous experience has enabled us to provide effective support right from the start and the new contract gives us the opportunity to increase our knowledge base and experiences further.







## Citizen Advocate Volunteers

Our team of over thirty volunteer citizen advocates continue to work hard with their advocacy partners in all areas of Shropshire. Some of these partnerships have been active for many years and we celebrate how Taking Part volunteers are right there in the community for people with care and support needs giving them a voice and working through some very complicated issues, such as social care, housing, health, benefits & finances and general preventative care. We are very grateful for the time and effort our volunteers put into a well established and effective model of advocacy.



## My Choice Volunteers



In Telford our team of five volunteers continued to carry out their regular Tuesday evening work on the My Choice My Voice project, which is really adding value to the work carried out by the Wellbeing & Independence Partnership. They have contacted many members of the public in Telford & Wrekin who have used the My Choice service, making over 170 calls to gain feedback about how My Choice has helped them.

Feedback about the My Choice service, and in particular the work of Taking Part has generally been very positive and many people who we called were grateful that the service checks back on outcomes.



## Shropshire work

## Working with local providers

### Bradbury Lodge



Taking Part continued to offer advocacy support to the people living at Bradbury Lodge. Bradbury Lodge in Whitchurch is an assessment and transition service for up to a maximum of six adults with learning disabilities and complex behaviour. The

service aims to enable people to acquire the skills and stability to progress to more independent living arrangements. The advocacy has been privately commissioned by Bethphage, who run Bradbury Lodge, and our advocate Tash visits the project every month providing regular advocacy support to the people living there.



**Tash**

## Working with local partners



### Information Advice Support Service

This project came to an end in August 2019 so we had 1 terms worth of delivery in the year covered by this annual report.

Between April and the end of Aug 2019 we delivered 3 full workshops (6 Sessions) which were attended by 44 individuals. We also delivered a round up session to the Student Council Group which was attended by 15-20 individuals (some only attended half the meeting)

Disappointingly the funding came to an end, but we felt that the students had got tremendous value out of the IASS workshops we had delivered during the project.



*Thank you for helping us with the meeting... we can't wait to see you again*

*Thank you for teaching me about IASS for 2 years in derwen while I have been in college I will miss you*

*I thought the information you showed us was very impressive. Thank you*

Here are some of the comments we got during that last lot of workshops.



# Taking part in...



## Q Checkers

Following the success of our first year in delivering this service review assessment we were invited back to visit Bethphage clients in their own homes and find out what they think, in their own words, about the service they receive, about whether they had achieved the goals they set themselves in the last year's review and whether they had any issues they would like to raise.



## Checking the little things that matter

3 of our own staff, ably assisted by 3 willing Taking Part volunteers visited 37 Bethphage clients this year. Some of these clients were supported during the visit by their care staff but most were able to speak to us on their own and they did a great job telling us all about the services they receive and about their lives in general. We are really grateful to all the clients who took part in the Q Checkers meetings – the Bethphage staff were delighted with the reports we produced and have asked us back to complete the Q Checker reviews next year so we look forward to seeing these clients again in 2020.



# Experts by Experience

## Why is being able to take part important?

'It helps me help to help people'  
'Being part of a team'

'It's good meetings and I make new friends. I feel I am part of something and people listen to me now I have Taking Part'

'It makes a difference with people who have got a disability and help them understand and it makes a big difference, it really can and I REALLY enjoy them'

'To be honest I think there'd be a lot of people who would benefit from a group like ours'

'Learn things from it whatever we are talking about and I just love being involved with everything I do and also love easy reads, I also love the support'

'The meetings are very important, good meetings helping people with things like easy read so people can understand, because how can you take part if you don't understand'

If you don't understand you can't Take Part!



## Our group is making plans for the future

made with photo symbols

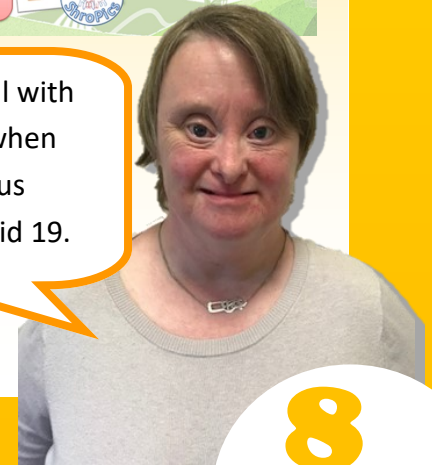
Photosymbols are good they have lots of templates. That will make it easier for us to do easy read documents

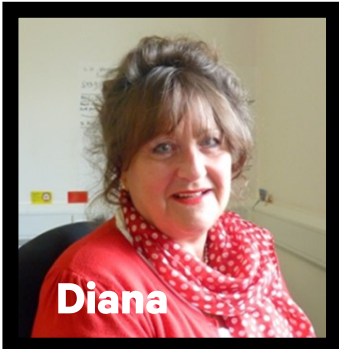
BUT We will work with our peers to make a local Photobank Doing our own Pictures!

It's important to us that government, health, the local authority and all services listen to us about what we think can help us. To make sure we are taken seriously we are working towards being more professional. We have a plan for (user lead) easy read work shops. We need to buy a new Photo symbols license.

We were doing really well with our plans for the future when things happened to stop us meeting even before Covid 19.

But we are keeping in touch with our Whatsapp group and planning video meetings ..so watch this space!





**Diana**

### National Advisory Group for People with Learning Disability and Autistic People



The topics covered during this year included the NHS Long Term Plan for People with Learning Disabilities and Autistic

People; Plain English – to ensure the language used is plain English and Restrictive Practices in all settings.

**NHS  
Long Term  
Plan**

**#NHSLongTermPlan**



**Michael**



### West Mercia Police-Disability Independent Advisory Group and Local Independent Advisory Group

We continue to monitor all Hate Crime involving protected characteristics. We were given information on the rise of County Lines in our area. We also monitor the Stop and Searches and Body Worn Camera incidents. Finally, we were asked to look at the Constabulary policy on people with all disabilities once they are in custody.



### Learning Disability England

At the end of February Michael and Diana attended the first meeting of the new initiative from LDE. We explored how self-advocacy groups can continue to function and engage with people. The project wants to offer practical advice and support for the groups to remain viable.



Learning Disability England

We believe our Taking Part experts by experience are in an ideal place to become involved. Due to the Covid pandemic, the work has been delayed.



**Taking part in...**

# Moving and Grooving



We are proud to celebrate another year of funding for Moving and Grooving at the Sports Village Leisure Centre in Shrewsbury as part of the "All In"

Program of activities for disabled children. The "All In" Program is part of the Early Help Service for children aged up to the age of 18 who live in Shropshire and have a disability. These monitored services offer families and children the opportunity to have fun and enjoy the centre's activities. Taking Part is proud to have delivered this service for the past 9 years and our team of specialist support staff have enabled families to have a valuable and supportive all inclusive environment and the opportunity of much needed respite.

## *Moving and Grooving*

The Moving & Grooving Team continues to provide ongoing group support at the Sports Village Saturday Club and Cycling session.



"The support and encouragement provided, combined with the enthusiasm and understanding of my child's abilities has given my son a chance to join in games confidently!"

"The Moving and Grooving staff fully understand my child's disabilities, limitations and her unpredictable behaviour."

"The Leisure Staff have got more experienced as they spend more time with children with special needs."



## Taking part in...

# Escape



I introduced more themed nights this year, based on suggestions from participants, these ideas were sent via email and delivered verbally during Escape nights, including 1980s music night. Some participants even decided to wear fancy dress in response to the themes.

While participant numbers have slightly reduced at the Hive nights, the Buttermarket participants figures steadily rose, we believe that participants, especially the ones in their 20's and 30's, want to party in a venue that is designed for club nights, however the chillout area the Hive provides continues to be popular and welcome respite to the noise of the main dance area.

For some of our participants Escape nights are the only times they can engage with certain friends. However, we decided to finish the sessions at 9 p.m. because taxi times and staff rotas meant that often there were only 3 people left at 9.30 p.m

Feedback has been positive. In general participants prefer music from pre year 2000. Occasionally there is anxiety for some who arrive very early for the sessions (before even staff arrive) and so they have to wait until the opening time to be allowed in. As a staff team we decided that we would not allow early entry because that little bit of time before the start was our team time to mentally

prepare for the events and discuss, in private, any concerns or issues we may have.

Participants respond well to the continuity of staff, so names, song requests, hobbies etc are remembered and remarked on by staff. With the support of individuals, their carers and families,

this year has been joyous and fun.



We had 20 sessions with 986 people partying!





Taking Part has in place robust management, equality, health and safety and governance procedures and is fully GDPR compliant. The work we do is provided by 8 paid staff.

## Trustees

Chair	Peter Simmons
Secretary	Susan Godfrey
Trustee	John Godfrey
Trustee	David Willett
Trustee	Jean Harris

## Taking Part Contracted Staff

Chief Executive Officer	Julie Mellor
Shropshire Advocate and Paid Rep.	Diana Morgan
Shropshire Advocate	Michelle Evans
Shropshire Advocate	Tash Gilmore
Shropshire Advocate	Keith Billson
Telford Advocate	Keith Billson
Telford Information & Advice Officer	Beth Brooker

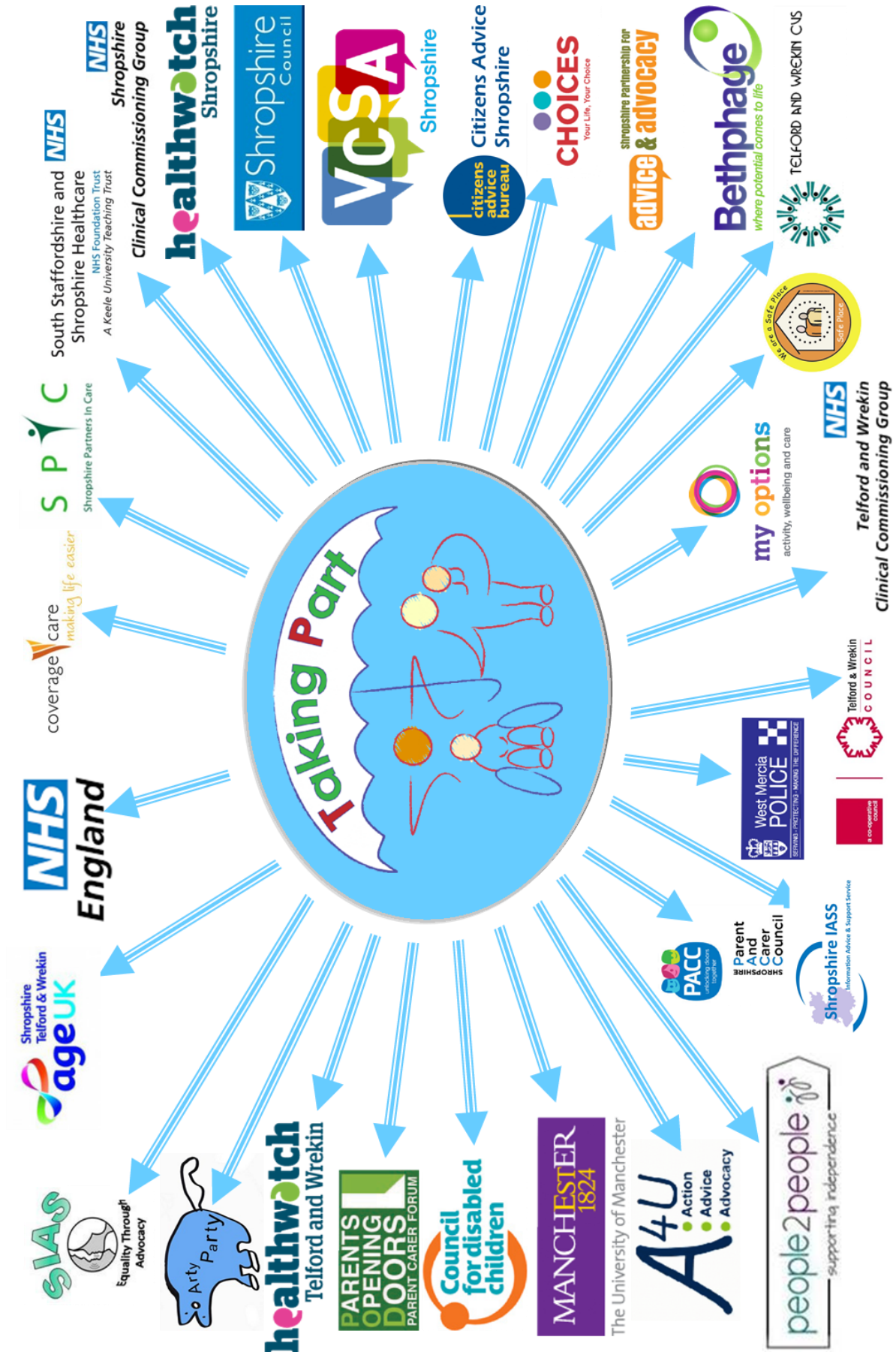
## Sessional Members of Staff

Business Support Officer and Paid Reps	Gill Edmunds
Accounts Administrator	Kim Robbins
Social Night Co-ordinator and M&G support	Jamila Thomas
Sessional worker	Fiona Williams
Support Worker	Lydia Conner
Support Worker	Sheila Hill

## Professional Advisors

Solicitors	Wace Morgan, Shrewsbury
Independent Examiners	Phillips Accountants, Telford





## Social Media



Website visits;-10171

You can find us at

[www.takingpart.co.uk](http://www.takingpart.co.uk)



Facebook

572 followers

If you are on Facebook, visit our page and give us a like!

[www.facebook.com/takingpart](http://www.facebook.com/takingpart)



Twitter

On Twitter we have 663 followers.

Find us at

[www.twitter.com/takingpart](http://www.twitter.com/takingpart)



# Accounts

## Taking Part

Statement of Financial Activities for the period 1st April 2018 to 31 March 2019

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2019 £	2018 £
<b>Incoming resources from charitable activities</b>					
Grants and contracts	2	235,956	306	236,262	222,812
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<u>235,956</u>	<u>306</u>	<u>236,262</u>	<u>222,812</u>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Charitable activities		236,219	-	236,219	206,859
<b>Total resources expended</b>	3	<u>236,219</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>236,219</u>	<u>206,859</u>
<b>Net incoming resources</b>		<u>(263)</u>	<u>306</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>15,953</u>



Original figure artwork by







Changing Times, Changing Lives

## Reserves Policy

### Use of Taking Part Reserves/Carry Forward money

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for the use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by Trustees for particular purposes.

Reserves will be used to continue with the running of the service until other funds are obtained in the case of future lost income from statutory sources.

Funds in reserves will have to take into consideration payments required for staff redundancies and expenditure associated with the closure of the service if further funding is not forthcoming in the future. This expenditure will all be overseen by the board of Trustees.

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited.

# Our Charity Manager—Julie Mellor

Message from CEO – Julie Mellor

## A year of Contracts, Change and Caring



As we entered our reporting year of 2019/2020, we were very busy in putting together information for our contract retendering processes – trying to secure the future of Taking Part, a mission close to all our hearts. The spring and summer of 2019 meant many, many meetings to get our information, facts and figures together to put into the tender documents for our contracts in Telford, My Choice and Shropshire, CAAN. Thankfully, Taking Part along with our partners were successful in securing funds for future years. These contracts did come through change though.

In Shropshire, our partnership for delivering Advice, Advocacy and Welfare Benefits (AAWB) changed as did the clients we support. Taking Part now supports all clients from 18 to 65 in Shropshire who have health and social care needs who have any disability and diagnosis for general advocacy. We now also provide Care Act Advocacy to all clients who need this service. This is an exciting change for Taking Part as we will be able to support more people in our communities with advocacy.



In Telford, our service is now called Wellbeing Independence Partnership (WIP) and we provide information, advice and guidance to all clients from 18 to 65 with any health and social care needs. This is very much a preventative service and we work with partners from AgeUK and Carers. The exciting change of this contract is that the team work together at Glebe Centre with our colleagues from other organisations. This will help our communities in Telford to receive more timely support from a range of expert organisations.

Our staff team, volunteers, Experts by Experience and Trustees quickly adapted to these changes and embraced the challenge with gusto and enthusiasm.

The amount of people Taking Part continue to support each year gives us such a sense of achievement and gratitude; knowing that our help and support continues to help so many people in our local communities of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin fills us with great pride.

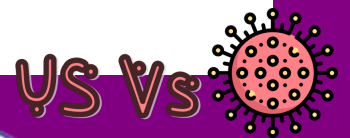


A highlight of 2019-2020 was Taking Part being presented with the Carer Friendly Employer award by Carers Partnership Board in association with Telford and Wrekin Council and TWCVS Wellington. This was a very welcome award as it recognises that Taking Part not only supports clients with caring roles but our staff team and volunteers who have caring roles.

As we entered March we all wondered what COVID would mean for us all over the world – little did we know at that point in time. At our AGM last year, Taking Part said that 2020 would be a year of change and we were right. We have survived, adapted and delivered.

More of how we achieved that in our next Annual Report .....

Stay safe, strong and smiling .....Julie







Changing Times, Changing Lives

Independent Service for people with  
Health and Social Care needs in Shropshire  
including Telford & Wrekin

**Taking Part:** [www.takingpart.co.uk](http://www.takingpart.co.uk)



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Registered Charity Number: 1092033

Company Registration Number: 04362949