

Minister praises Newport radio station for Energize'ing people's lives

Energize Media Community Interest Company (CIC) was established in January 2015 as a social enterprise and is based at the Shaftesbury Community Centre in Newport.

A small group of volunteers came together in 2014 with the aim of offering community radio to a group of vulnerable adults, along with young people and those with other disabilities.

The project took off and established itself when Jeremy and Nigel – two adults with moderate learning disabilities – used their Direct Payments and with the support of the volunteers, pooled them together and gave the project the boost it would need to keep growing.

As a result of the project, one of the founders, Jeremy Kempton, after 50 years of living with his mother has now moved into supported living, having increased his self confidence. His mother believes “the project and work done has given him a new life.”

As a group, they have also established a hugely successful school project which has worked with a number of pupils both in the Centre and in the nearby Newport High School. The integration of everyone in the project and the success with turning the lives round of the young people has seen praise come from across South Wales.

One of the founders, volunteer Simon Harvey said:

“What has been achieved by everyone involved with Energize is unbelievable, with Jeremy and Nigel putting faith in the project and pooling their Direct Payments allowed the door to open to so many more people. Many vulnerable adults and their families have feared using Direct Payments and are not aware of the freedoms they can offer.

“We are now working with the Wales Co-operative Centre to strengthen and expand our work, while fully supporting their vision for more Community Enterprises to take the lead in Social Care provision in Wales.”

Minister for Children & Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“I was really pleased to visit the centre today to meet everyone involved, but it was a real pleasure to hear of the inspirational way in which Jeremy and Nigel came together to help establish it, and the wonderful way it has changed their own lives, and those of

so many others, for the better.

“It’s a great example of a successful social value organisation supporting people with learning disabilities and young people to develop skills, in keeping with the principles of our innovative Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

“This project has clearly made a real difference to many people’s lives. I wish them every success in the future and hope the Project continues to grow from strength to strength.”