

UK Disabilities Minister calls on Welsh sporting clubs to be more inclusive

On a two-day visit to North West Wales with Ynys Môn MP Virginia Crosbie, the minister urged local organisations to look at ways to make themselves more accessible to the disabled community, after seeing inclusive sports clubs in Anglesey.

During her time in Wales, the minister took part in a training session with the Anglesey Hawks Wheelchair Basketball Club in Holyhead and visited the Anglesey Group of Ynys Môn Riding For The Disabled, meeting one of their blind dressage riders.

The Minister made her visit as the figures show there are [1.3 million more disabled people in employment since 2017](#), with employers across the UK creating more inclusive and diverse workforces through government schemes like Access to Work and Disability Confident. The minister spoke to the organisations she met about how including people with disabilities in work and leisure benefits the wider community.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Chloe Smith MP said:

Disabled people deserve the same opportunities as everyone else and I urge all Welsh sporting organisations and clubs, big or small, to be more inclusive of everyone in their wider community.

Both the Anglesey Hawks and Anglesey Riding Centre are two wonderful examples of inclusive organisations and it was a delight to see how they are harnessing the power of sport and physical activity, excluding no one.

Exercise can have a transformative effect on both your physical and mental health and it is imperative there is equal access for everyone.

Virginia Crosbie MP said:

I am really pleased the minister was able to visit these two excellent Ynys Môn sports organisations.

It is vital our communities are active whatever their age, skill level or disability and that there is access for all.

Being active helps with general health, it prevents a host of illnesses as well as keeping people fit.

These two organisations are beacons on the island for inclusive sporting activities and I thank them for allowing myself and the minister to visit and meet staff and members.

The Anglesey Hawks Wheelchair Basketball Club was set up in 2014 and train weekly at Holyhead Leisure Centre. The club has players of all ages and both disabled and able bodied, playing equally together. The club also supports players who aspire to play at a national level, with some current members having represented Wales and multiple members playing for Wheelchair Basketball North Wales.

Anglesey Hawks Head Coach Charlie MacPherson said:

We were excited to welcome the Minister for Disabled People to our club, to meet some of our members and have a go at sport that really does change lives.

The Anglesey group of Ynys Môn Riding for the Disabled is celebrating its official 50th birthday in October. The charity provides therapeutic and learning opportunities for both children and adults with physical and learning challenges. It also supports many riders who have competitive aspirations, with one of their riders representing Wales at the British Dressage Para Home International.

Sara Jones-Williams, chair of Ynys Môn RDA (Anglesey) Group said:

As a lifelong volunteer with the Ynys Môn RDA (Anglesey) Group, I am inspired by the riders, volunteers and local people who assist the group to achieve the RDA UK strapline #itswhatyoucandothatcounts.

Providing physical, social and life skills to riders whilst engaging with the bigger community, has helped many of the riders we support in many aspects of their daily life as well as achieving some impressive results within their competitive aspirations. Every rider has a journey and that journey is equally important to them and the group.

As part of her two-day visit to Wales, the minister also visited Tyddyn Môn in Brynrefail.

The charity employs 60 local people and supports 50 adults with a learning disability on Anglesey. It provides 24-hour care and support for 24 of these people in seven supported living houses across Anglesey. Another group attend the day and work opportunities service based at Tyddyn Môn farm, where the charity provides work-based training and work experience through a number of social enterprises, in addition to wellbeing activities.

During her visit, the minister attended a practice of the charity's music group, as well as separate cooking and pottery sessions.

Dr Michelle Freeman, CEO of Tyddyn Môn said:

It was a pleasure to welcome the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Chloe Smith MP, to the charity farm.

The people supported by the charity enjoyed showcasing the good work they are doing in the social enterprises on the farm and in the local community.

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