

# Self-sufficiency case study: Communities coming together through walking and talking in Carmarthenshire.



Dewch i  
**Gerdded**  
Let's  
**Walk**

cerdded am oes  
**walk4life**

*sportwales*  
*chwaraeoncymsu*

Noddir gan  
Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
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# Introduction

The programme started in March 2010 as Am Dro am Glonc Sir Gâr (Walk & Talk Carmarthenshire) and covers the whole of the county. The programme replaced and is distinct from a previous programme, Camu Bach, which was funded by the Countryside Council for Wales under their Walking the Way to Health Initiative (WHI).

The purpose of the Am Dro am Glonc programme is to get people together to 'walk and talk' – for the physical, but also the social, emotional and mental health benefits.

The programme does not lead its own walks, but rather takes a three-pronged approach. Firstly, it works with individuals or teams within other organisations within the county to train walk leaders and support them in developing their own walking groups and programmes – organisations such as MIND and Communities First. Secondly, it targets individuals not affiliated to local organisations who might be able to become walk leaders and develop their own walking groups. Finally, the programme encourages the promotion of independent walking in communities throughout the county.

The programme is steered by an implementation plan which moves the programme onto a new set of target groups every two to three months.

Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr is hosted by Public Health Wales NHS Trust and is staffed by two officers. One is a Health Promotion Practitioner and works on the programme for two and a half days a week. Her role is co-ordinating the programme and liaising with the target group organisations, facilitating the training of walk leaders and supporting them to get groups or projects up and running. Her role also includes development of promotional programme material, including information pack, leaflets, posters and advertorials in the local press. The other officer is

a Senior Health Promotion Specialist and works on the programme for a few hours per week on a needs basis. Her role is more strategic, deals with the wider physical activity agenda and links into the Local Authority Partnership Agreement (LAPA), as well as forging links with other steering groups to provide evidence-based support and guidance. Her main input to the programme is having an overview of community opportunities for walking, developing funding bids for the programme and completing funding application forms, and managing monitoring and evaluation of the programme for Let's Walk Cymru in conjunction with the programme co-ordinator.

The programme focuses on a number of target groups as defined by the Carmarthenshire Health, Social Care & Well-being Strategy, and does this by working with organisations who already work with these groups.

#### The target groups include:

- Health inequalities and deprivation.
- Older people.
- Mental health.
- Long term conditions.
- Children and young people.
- Those at risk of chronic conditions.
- People with physical difficulties and sensory impairments.
- People with learning disabilities.
- Substance misuse.

Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr has already trained 39 individuals within organisations as health walk leaders during 2010 and is aiming to train a further 60 health walk leaders per year. Through this training, they hope that 20 new walking groups will be established each year within Carmarthenshire. The programme co-ordinator will then support the organisations trained to develop and promote their programme and recruit participants.

# Benefits and achievements in relation to self sufficiency



Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr staff designed the programme from the beginning with self sufficiency in mind. They note that they would usually work this way and that trying to work with and through existing organisations is ‘not new’ to them. They point to the key elements of this approach being:

- Once trained, the individuals within the target group organisations can set up their walking groups and walk programme as they wish, “the how is up to them”.
- Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr will have established a wide ranging group of trained walk leaders throughout the county with the relevant skills to establish and run the walking programmes into the future, without long term reliance on Am Dro Am Dronc Sir Gâr.
- The individuals within organisations are responsive people, at a certain level within their organisations, and know their clients better than the team at Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr do – the staff believe that these individuals are best placed to develop the walking programme on their clients behalf.

The staff feel that the most important factor for achieving self sufficiency is to start by building it into your programme from the very beginning. The aspiration for Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr is to get to a point where walks are being run on a regular, ongoing daily or weekly basis throughout Carmarthenshire for members of the public, and that many people are benefitting.

The benefit to **Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr** and for **target group organisations themselves** of taking this approach to self-sufficiency has been that individuals within the organisations have gained more skills. Programme staff think that organisations like to take the initiative in developing the programmes themselves, “it’s a bonus for them” and this approach will be more sustainable in the long term. Programme staff believe that the organisations themselves can be more responsive to need. They point to the fact that community programmes often have short term funding, things are developed for them not by them, funding then stops and the benefits stop. Where community-based organisations are able to develop schemes themselves, they will be more sustainable.

For independent **volunteer walk leaders** not affiliated to organisations, the benefits have been about gaining new skills, being empowered and achieving something.

For **Public Health Wales**, the host organisation, the main benefit of this approach to self-sufficiency has been that the programme staff have had more time to spread the training for health walk leaders throughout the county, rather than focusing on delivery of walking programmes. The programme will also help in delivering on strategic objectives for physical activity outlined in documents such as Climbing Higher and Our Healthy Future.

# Success Factors

- ✔ The programme staff point out that walking is low cost and doesn't need expensive facilities, anyone can do it – “anyone, anytime, anywhere”.



# Challenges



- ✔ The programme staff suggest that only minor challenges have been encountered in moving towards self-sufficiency because of the way that the programme has been designed – with sustainability in mind from the start.
- ✔ Anecdotal evidence from previous schemes suggests that some trained individuals have since moved on to other organisations where perhaps walking is not part of their remit/role and so their expertise has been lost.
- ✔ Recruiting individuals within target group organisations to be trained has been relatively easy as the programme staff already have good contacts with many of these organisations. They anticipate that recruiting individuals from outside known organisations will be more difficult and that these people will need much more support to get a programme up and running.

# Self-sufficiency and looking forwards

- ✔ The Let's Walk Cymru funding has enabled Am Dro Am Glonc Sir Gâr to cascade the health walk leader training down through the target group organisations and, therefore, to benefit many more people.



# The most significant difference this scheme has made

We asked the co-ordinator to complete the following sentence

*"In my view, the most significant difference that this scheme makes for the people who take part is.....the opportunity to improve their physical, mental and social health".*

For the health walk leaders within target group organisations, the most significant difference is *"...developing capacity within their role to be able to run a sustainable programme".*

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