

Centre for Independent Living
NEWSLETTER



JULY 2019

We offer free, impartial and confidential advice services to disabled and sensory impaired people, their carers and families. We will help with any enquiry regarding disability issues. If we cannot answer your questions we will know someone who can.

TheFDF, Old Town Hall, Earl Road, Mold CH7 1AB Telephone: 01352 756618

We have been supported by the

Steve Morgan
FOUNDATION

#ChangingLives
of the people in our region through funding and philanthropic activity.

stevemorganfoundation.org.uk
01829 782808

Great news for
TheFDF Centre for Independent Living!

The **Steve Morgan Foundation** will be continuing to support our work for the next year.

Thank you so much!



@FDFUpdate



Contact@thefdf.org.uk



www.@thefdf.org.uk



FDF Flintshire

Office Opening Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 10am-1pm Wednesday 10am-3pm

Disability News Service: Appeal to hundreds across to seek Independent Assessments of Support Needs #SAVEWILG

A disabled campaigner is encouraging hundreds of recipients of support through the Welsh Independent Living Grant (WILG) scheme to consider taking up the government's offer of an independent re-assessment of their care package.

The Welsh government announced in February that it was pausing the closure of the WILG scheme – and its replacement with a system of council-funded support – following a campaign by disabled activists and allies.

Julie Morgan, the Welsh government's deputy minister for health and social services, then wrote last month to all WILG recipients to tell them they could ask for a reassessment of their care package if they were unhappy with the outcome of their local authority's assessment of their post-WILG needs or if that assessment had not yet taken place.

And she assured them that the Welsh government would pay for the independent assessment and any extra care and support they might need as a result.

Morgan has now written to Nathan Lee Davies, the WILG recipient who led the campaign to halt the closure of the scheme, updating him on the government's progress.

She told him that only 26 WILG recipients had so far requested a re-assessment, across 10 local authorities.

Morgan said in her letter: "It is important that those people who wish to have an independent assessment are able to access it, but this is also in the context of the large number of people who we know are content with their new arrangements."

Davies believes about 1,300 disabled people are eligible for a re-assessment, and fears that many WILG recipients are being held back from requesting a re-assessment.

He is now calling on all those WILG recipients who are not happy with their care and support package to ask for an independent assessment.

Davies, who has himself requested an independent assessment, said: "I started this campaign four years ago, after a social worker warned me that without the WILG my hours of support would be reduced from 86.5 hours a week to just 31 hours per week.

"I would be unable to maintain any quality of life without a substantial increase in my support and any reduction would leave me struggling to exist rather than living the life that I choose.

"The use of an independent social worker allows me to be assessed purely on my physical and mental needs.

"I feel that social workers from local authorities are under pressure from their managers to reduce costs, whatever the consequences.

"Assessments are therefore skewed from the outset and I fear that a number of WILG recipients are not receiving the support they deserve.

"Let's not forget that all WILG recipients are disabled people with high support needs.

"This means that many need a strong network of people around them to give them the confidence to press for improvements.

"The fact that only 26 people have asked for a reassessment suggests that many WILG recipients are being held back by a combination of inertia, lack of support and advice and a sense of 'better the devil you know'.

"I feel that an independent service will provide people with disabilities with greater security for the future."

He added: "The government have listened to campaigners, reviewed the evidence and acted accordingly to ensure people get the support they deserve to live independently within their local communities.

"WILG recipients and their families need to investigate the opportunity that is in front of them to help ensure they have piece of mind for the long term future."

WILG was set up – with UK government funding – as an interim scheme following the UK government's decision to close the Independent Living Fund in June 2015.

The Welsh government is now closing WILG for good and transferring the funding to local councils, and by April the 22 local authorities were due to be solely responsible for meeting the support needs of all former ILF-recipients in Wales.

But Morgan announced the "change in direction" in February because a government review had shown a significant variation in how support packages were being cut by different councils.

Blue Badge Eligibility Changes

The Government has today announced that it is planning to make important changes to Blue Badge rules, which will mean that many autistic people will qualify.

This move follows years of campaigning from the National Autistic Society, our supporters, and other disabled people and families across the UK, including legal challenges against the Government and local authorities.

Existing rules are too focused on people's physical ability to walk, and changes to Government guidance in 2014 meant that autistic people found it too hard to get a Blue Badge. For many people, this meant they weren't able to go out and about and could become socially isolated. Earlier this year, the Government consulted on proposals that would widen access to Blue Badges for people with many non-physical disabilities, including autistic people. We asked you to show your support for this proposal, and the Government heard you!



What do the new rules mean?

Under the new rules, there will be two important new ways that autistic people may qualify for a Blue Badge:

- If you can't undertake a journey without being at risk of serious harm, it causing "very considerable psychological distress", or if you have very considerable difficulty when walking; or
- If you have scored 10 points for PIP Mobility Component for "planning and making a journey" because making a journey causes 'overwhelming psychological distress' (we are seeking clarification about the exact meaning of this with the Government.)

Children who get Higher Rate Mobility Disability Living Allowance (HRMDLA) will also continue to qualify, as before.

A Blue Badge can be a lifeline for some autistic people and their families. It can be the difference between going to the shops and getting around, or being stuck at home unable to be a part of their community.

When will the changes happen?

The changes will need to go through Parliament before they come into force, which will take some time. We should receive an update when Parliament returns in the autumn. We expect that the changes will come into force in 2019.



Wrexham Dementia Community Friends Befriending and Advice Services

The FDF are happy to announce that we will now be providing a Dementia Befriending service within the Wrexham area. Our goal is to support the individual, but in particular the family and/or care giver, especially through those early stages following diagnosis.

The Wrexham Dementia Community Friends will provide a support system for those who are at a loss of where to turn for support and information. Family members and caregivers can often be left to feel alone and struggle to cope with the news that their loved one has a diagnosis of Dementia. The beginning can be confusing and lonely, with many people having unanswered questions.

Our goal is to be that listening ear and friend. We will provide telephone befriending and home visits, alongside practical advice and support. We will also hold a fortnightly drop-in session at locations across Wrexham, providing advice and information. The FDF has staff, volunteers and trustees who have personal knowledge of the impact that a diagnosis of Dementia can have on both the individual and the family/caregiver, and our aim is to provide support through this difficult time.



Wrexham Dementia Community Friends



Supporting Disabled People to Live Independently

~ *Monthly Drop In Sessions* ~

Do you live in the Wrexham area?
Do you or someone you know have a disability?
Do you need help and advice to complete forms?
Are you lonely?

If so we can help!

**Come along to one of our drop in sessions
for a confidential chat:**

Rhos Library, Princes Road, Rhos, Wrexham, LL14 1AB
On the **1st Tuesday each month** between **1pm and 5pm**

Chirk Library, Chapel Lane, Chirk, Wrexham, LL14 5NF
On the **2nd Tuesday of each month** between **2pm and 5pm**

Gwersyllt Library, Gwersyllt Community Resource Centre, 2nd Avenue,
Gwersyllt, LL11 4ED

On the **3rd Tuesday of each month** between **2pm and 5pm**

Idwal Family Centre, 27-29 Idwal, Acrefair, Wrexham, LL14 3EY
On the **last Tuesday of each month** between **10am and 2pm**

If you would like further information please contact The FDF at
befriender@thefdf.org.uk or call **01352 756618**.

Services provided by TheFDF Centre for Independent Living.

TheFDF has been providing disability services in Flintshire for more than 20 years, as an independent charity and the only CIL operating in the north of Wales we cover Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire.

Based in Mold Town Hall we have a drop in service Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm and Wednesday to 3pm **there is no need for an appointment.**

We provide advice, information and advocacy, we will guide benefit applicants right through the process from form filling to tribunals, we help disabled people with blue badge applications, ESA and Universal Credit we have a befriending service through home visits or by telephone call and equipment hire (small charge) and advice. We have social groups operating throughout Flintshire and we campaign alongside our colleagues at Disability Wales to improve the lives of disabled people in Wales.

We take referrals direct from family, health professionals, local authority and DWP staff and of course self referrals. **We guarantee to respond to all referrals within 72 hours.**

Whilst we may signpost some referrals, if we feel another organisation is more appropriate to provide a service, we are not a signposting service.

Weekly Advice & Information Session

Do you or somebody you know have a disability?

Are you having problems completing your benefit forms?

Confused as to what evidence to submit with your forms?

We can help you.

with initial advice prior to the forms being completed.

Old Town Hall, Earl Road, Mold, CH7 1AB

Telephone Befriending

at The FDF!



The FDF now offers a confidential telephone befriending service to support disabled members living alone or away from family and friends. Our experienced telephone befriending volunteers will make a weekly telephone call normally lasting approximately 20 mins. The conversations are member led with support from the volunteer telephone befriender. Phone calls create an opportunity to have a chat in a safe environment and relieve feelings of loneliness. Members are individually assessed for the service and reviewed regularly to check it is meeting their needs.

If you would like any further information on the telephone befriending service or to volunteer as a potential telephone befriender then please ring on **01352 756618** or alternatively email befriender@thefdf.org.uk

Steve Morgan
FOUNDATION

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Enable

We fund Specialist equipment for:

Mobility aids, wheelchairs, buggies, hoists, trikes, etc.

Specialist beds and sleep systems, postural chairs, seating and car seats

Sensory equipment

Communication aids, specialist software, specialist alarms

Medical equipment, support wear

Wrexham Dementia Community Friends

Have you recently been diagnosed with Dementia?

Do you care for or support someone who has?

We Know that this is a difficult time and we are here to help.

Whether you want a friendly ear to listen, help with finding information, advice or support from people in a similar situation, Wrexham dementia Community Friends can support you through regular phone calls and home visits.

Contact us through their [Facebook](#) page, email befriender@thefdf.org.uk or call **01352 756618**

Wanted

Volunteers to help us support physically disabled and sensory impaired adults.

Social Group Volunteers

Thursday Afternoons in Mold

Office Based Volunteers

Monday to Friday

For more information

Email: befriender@thefdf.org.uk

Telephone: **01352 756618**