

Additional information provided by the petitioner (Welsh / English)

Cymraeg:

Mae byw'n annibynnol yn ein galluogi ni fel pobl anabl i wireddu ein nodau ein hunain ac i fyw ein bywydau ein hunain yn ôl ein dewis. Mae Confensiwn y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar Hawliau Pobl ag Anableddau (UNCRPD) yn egluro ymrwymïadau a dyletswyddau cyfreithiol Taleithiau i barchu ac i sicrhau mwynhad cydradd o bob hawl ddynol gan bob person anabl. Mae Erthygl 19 yn nodi bod yn rhaid i bobl anabl allu byw'n annibynnol a chael eu cynnwys yn y gymuned. Mae amryw o bolisiau Cynulliad Cymru'n cefnogi egwyddorion cyffredinol Byw'n Annibynnol, e.e. Cymru'n Un, Bywydau Bodlon, Cymunedau Cefnogol, Cynllun Oes a Chreu'r Cysylltiadau. Fodd bynnag, nid oes yr un ohonynt yn darparu gweledigaeth gyffredinol o sut i wneud Byw'n Annibynnol yn realiti ar gyfer pobl anabl. Rydym yn galw ar Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru i fod yn rhagweithiol o ran cyflawni ei chyfrifoldebau o dan yr UNCRPD trwy gyflwyno Strategaeth Genedlaethol ar Fyw'n Annibynnol, wedi ei gwreiddio mewn hawl i Fyw'n Annibynnol ar gyfer pob person anabl.

English:

Independent Living enables us as disabled people to achieve our own goals and live our own lives in the way that we choose for ourselves. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) clarifies the obligations and legal duties of States to respect and ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights by all disabled people. Article 19 states that disabled people must be able to live independently and be included in the community. Several Welsh Assembly policies support the general principles of Independent Living, e.g. One Wales, Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities, Designed For Life and Making the Connections. However none provide an over-arching vision of how to make Independent Living a reality for disabled people. We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to be proactive in fulfilling its responsibilities under the UNCRPD by introducing a National Strategy on Independent Living, rooted in a right to Independent Living for all disabled people.

Gwenda Thomas AC/AM

Y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Wasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-288
Ein cyf/Our ref GT/00656/10

Christine Chapman AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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15th December 2010

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 22 November, regarding the petition from Disability Wales calling for a strategy on independent living.

A debate on Disability Wales' Independent Living campaign was held on 12 May 2010. During this debate, Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, confirmed that independent living cuts across Welsh Assembly Government portfolios and already features in many of the policies and strategies of the Assembly Government.

In order to allow disabled people to take control of their own lives, society needs to tackle the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating fully. This is why the Assembly Government adopted the Social Model of Disability in 2002 and action has already been taken to tackle these barriers. One example, from my own portfolio, is the Direct Payments Scheme which empowers individuals to make their own choices as to how and when the care arrangements to meet their assessed needs are delivered.

There is however, more that needs to be done to achieve our vision of a fair and just society. Carl Sargeant acknowledged this in the debate and stated that, although we did not believe that another strategy was needed, he would be keen to explore how the work being carried out across the Assembly Government to support all disabled people could be brought together and built upon. I also see value in this approach and will meet with him to explore how this might be taken forward.

Yours sincerely

Gwenda Thomas AC/AM

Gwenda Thomas AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Wasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-288
Ein cyf/Our ref GT/00085/11

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12th February 2011

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 26 January on behalf of the Petitions Committee about the National Strategy on Independent Living.

I will be meeting the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government on 16 February to discuss this and will write to you with an update after the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Gwenda Thomas AC/AM

Dear Naomi & Rhodri,

Please find attached Disability Wales' response to Christine Chapman's letter of 26 January 2011.

As I mentioned to Rhodri, we launched our Manifesto for Independent Living at Ty Hywel this afternoon. A pdf of the Manifesto is attached.

An important point was raised during the panel discussion which I'd like to take this opportunity to address.

Whilst, once again, there was broad cross-party support for the principles on which the Manifesto is based, there was some discussion about whether a National Strategy on Independent Living is the right mechanism to move things forward. Some concerns were raised about whether there is a need for "yet another national strategy", on the grounds that the bureaucracy accompanying such strategies can be onerous, and that very often no one is held to account.

DW fully agrees that to produce a National Strategy on Independent Living that merely gathers dust would serve no one's interests. Similarly, it would be unhelpful to produce a strategy that creates onerous bureaucracy and which lacks mechanisms to ensure accountability.

DW maintain that a National Strategy on Independent Living is vital to ensuring that this important agenda is taken forward dynamically and consistently across Wales. Without a national strategy, the postcode lottery that disabled people already face in terms of accessing appropriate services, can only worsen.

A clear vision and action plan from central government is vital if local authorities and other public bodies are to take Independent Living forward coherently and with purpose. Without this driver from central government, the likelihood is

that in many parts of Wales, little or nothing will be done to address disabled people's concerns.

As our accompanying submission points out, some national strategies have been very successful in achieving service improvements. The intention is to ensure that the learning gained from implementing previous national strategies helps inform and shape the structure of a National Strategy on Independent Living, so that it achieves what disabled people want: choice, voice, control, equality, independence and inclusion.

I hope this additional comment helps to clarify why we believe that a National Strategy on Independent Living is essential.

Many thanks for your continuing assistance.

Kind regards,

Paul

Paul Swann

Policy Officer (Independent Living)
Disability Wales / Anabledd Cymru

P-03-288 National Strategy on Independent Living

Disability Wales (DW) welcomes this opportunity to submit further information regarding our petition for a National Strategy on Independent Living.

We wish to make two key points which we believe the Assembly should take into full consideration when deciding whether to develop a National Strategy on Independent Living for disabled people in all impairment/age groups, to build on existing policy and legislation. The first concerns the cross-cutting nature of Independent Living, and the second its potential for achieving more effective use of resources.

Independent Living: a Cross Cutting Policy Issue

Independent Living is a cross-cutting policy issue. Whilst health and social services are key to Independent Living for many disabled people, education, employment, housing, transport, leisure, access to information, advice and advocacy, access to goods and services, access to aids and equipment, and access to the built and green environments are also vital to enabling Independent Living and social inclusion for disabled people.

This is highlighted in DW's *Manifesto for Independent Living*, launched in the Senedd on 2 March 2011. The Manifesto identifies six "calls for action", covering a broad range of issues, which disabled people have prioritised during DW's Independent Living NOW! campaign. These are:

1. Improved access to information, advice, independent advocacy and peer support services for all
2. Availability of accessible and supported housing to meet individual requirements

3. A comprehensive range of options and genuine choice and control in how personalised care and support is delivered
4. Improved access to Person Centred Technology (aids & equipment)
5. A barrier free transport system, including all modes of transport
6. Enabling access, involvement and social, economic and cultural inclusion for all disabled people.

The Deputy Minister's letter of 15 December 2010 refers to the opposition debate on 12 May 2010, which resulted in unanimous cross party support "for the principles of the Independent Living NOW! campaign, and recognised the positive contribution the campaign will make in advancing the Social Model of Disability which has been adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government."

The Deputy Minister also comments in her letter that in addition to adoption of the Social Model of Disability and implementation of the Direct Payments Scheme:

"There is more that needs to be done to achieve our vision of a fair and just society. Carl Sargeant acknowledged this in the debate and stated that, although we did not believe another strategy was needed, he would be keen to explore how the work being carried out across the Assembly Government to support all disabled people could be brought together and built upon."

Whilst valuing the Assembly Government's commitment to achieving a fair and just society, the wide ranging and complex barriers to equality, social inclusion and Independent Living that disabled people face on a daily basis must be addressed comprehensively, systemically and across all departments.

In DW's view, only a full cross-government strategy can achieve this goal. This has been acknowledged in England, where an *Independent Living Strategy* (2008) is in place, and in Scotland where *A Vision for Independent Living in Scotland* was agreed in 2009.

Currently there is no comparable strategic vision for Independent Living in Wales.

Recognising the complexity of providing care and support that enables Independent Living, DW is currently working with Participation Cymru to develop an “Independent Living in Practice” training for public services (and particularly social services) staff. The first training will be delivered in September 2011.

The recently published Assembly Government paper on *Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action* includes the following paragraph:

3.15 Social services can rightly feel proud of their track record of being citizen centred. Children and young people have clear rights, supported by well developed structures to make these a reality, by advocacy services and by a Children’s Commissioner. Our Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure will deepen that commitment. Wales has been a world leader in services for people with a learning disability and we will continue to build on this. We have an internationally acclaimed Strategy for Older People and the world’s first Commissioner for Older People.

The paper includes a detailed section on the issues that will be addressed in relation to social services for older people, and another on transition for young people. There is no comparable section relating to support for disabled people.

DW suggests that the priority given to older people’s and children’s services in the Government’s strategic thinking is due largely to the impact achieved by the *Strategy for Older People in Wales* (2003 and 2008) and *The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* (2005).

With regard to children’s services, the Welsh Assembly is rightly proud of its work based on the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC).

DW believe that development of services for disabled people will continue to be under-prioritised until the Assembly has a National Strategy on Independent Living in place, based on the rights established by the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD). Article 19 of the UNCRPD, on “Being included and living independently in the community”, recognises “the equal right of all disabled persons to live in the community, with choices equal to others”.

DW will shortly be submitting evidence to an Inquiry into the Implementation of the Right of Disabled People to Independent Living. This is being conducted by the Joint Commission on Human Rights, chaired by Dr. Hywel Francis MP (Aberavon). DW suggest that one way for the Welsh Assembly Government to be proactive in fulfilling its responsibilities under the UNCRPD is by introducing a National Strategy on Independent Living.

Independent Living: an effective use of resources

In her forward to *Sustainable Social Services* the Deputy Minister states:

“Our priority is about getting it right first time. The days in which public services could act separately are past. Where appropriate we expect public services to work together to deliver integrated services.”

In deciding whether to develop a National Strategy on Independent Living, the Assembly should take into full consideration the potential resource efficiencies that can be achieved through “getting it right first time”.

This potential is acknowledged by the Efficiency and Innovation Programme and Board, under which the New Models of Service Delivery Work Stream has “promoting independent living and wellbeing” as one of its “big issues”.

The primary goal of a National Strategy on Independent Living is to enable services to “get it right first time”.

DW’s Manifesto for Independent Living highlights Office for Disability Issues research which states:

Published material to date indicates that the delivery of Independent Living support to disabled people is more cost effective, or at least no more expensive, than traditional care provision.

- The Costs and Benefits of Independent Living (2007)

The report concludes:

At an individual level there is substantial qualitative evidence suggesting that Independent Living provides significantly more benefits than conventional forms of service provision and that Independent Living can also be cost effective for the individual recipients.

At service delivery level several published evaluations highlighted the reduced costs involved in the delivery of Independent Support mechanisms. Consultations and case studies reinforced this view, highlighting the inherent inefficiencies involved in traditional care provision.

*At the macro-economic level the literature highlights that there are significant costs for the Exchequer in **not** addressing barriers faced by disabled people (and) shows that investment in Independent Living would result in sizeable Exchequer long- term cost savings, due to the increase in tax revenues, a reduced state benefits bill and less pressure on health and acute social care services.*

The report suggests the need to adopt an „invest to save“ approach to delivery of Independent Living.

Disabled people in Wales do not accept the status of second class citizens. Independent Living is specifically designed to provide disabled people with the same choice, control, opportunities and freedom as any other citizen – at home, at work, and as equal and fully included members of the community.

Independent Living cannot be realised without a deep understanding of what it means to disabled people, a clear vision of the practical outcomes it seeks to achieve and a concerted effort to implement it by all departments.

Looked at in this light, DW suggests that the case for a National Strategy on Independent Living in Wales is incontrovertible.

Direct Payment Scheme

The Committee sought DW's views on the Direct Payment Scheme and whether this helps support Independent Living.

DW has been instrumental in promoting the uptake of Direct Payments in Wales. In 2004 DW organised two WAG sponsored conferences on “Promoting Direct Payments: Myths & Models”. DW is a member of the WAG Direct Payments Overview group and more recently were represented on a Task and Finish Group charged with reviewing Direct Payments policy, regulation and practice guidance, and designing the Community Care Direct Payments Scheme consultation. DW also enjoys observer status on the Direct Payments Support Schemes Network.

In DW’s view, the relatively low uptake of Direct Payments in Wales is due largely to ambivalence towards the scheme in some local authorities. We are aware of cases in which social work teams appear to have wrongly made decisions based on service users’ *suitability* for a Direct Payment, rather than on their *eligibility*. This was a key finding in the WAG funded *Survey on the Implementation of the current Direct Payments Scheme in Wales* (Collis, A., 2007). The report states:

The Evidence from this survey is that Direct Payments are not routinely offered to everyone who is potentially eligible. There are also different interpretations of who may be potentially eligible.

Where local authorities have a Direct Payments Lead Officer in post, uptake rates have been significantly improved. However, the *Survey on the Implementation of the current Direct Payments Scheme in Wales* comments that:

Direct Payments can be driven for a limited time by enthusiasm and commitment from practitioners, team managers and /or Direct Payments lead workers. In the longer term strategic commitment is essential.

DW are currently discussing with other stakeholders the potential for a national conference later this year to encourage local authorities and their partners to take the necessary steps to ensure a significant increase in the take up of Direct Payments over the next three years. The conference proposal is dependent on adequate funding being identified.

DW welcomes the commitment made in *Sustainable Social Services* to “stronger citizen control” in service design, commissioning and delivery. The paper states:

3.17 For some people, control means managing their service themselves. Direct payments are an important tool for greater control for some people. Where people make the choice to have direct payments, we will expect them to have a right to receive them. We will work with all stakeholders, and in particular with service user interests, to develop a model of self-directed support that is consistent with our principles for social care - including a stronger infrastructure of support for those who choose these routes.

The Wales Alliance for Citizen Directed Support (WACDS), of which DW is a Council member, is developing a „made in Wales“ approach to the system of self-directed support that has been implemented in England. WACDS is an alliance of citizens, disabled people’s representatives, local authorities and service providers. The Alliance is committed to promoting and supporting the development of public services which give citizens genuine choice and control over services that enable Independent Living.

Direct Payments are one method by which Citizen Directed Support can be administered. As such, DW fully supports the Assembly’s continued commitment to promoting Direct Payments. Other methods of administering CDS are being piloted in some forward thinking local authorities in Wales with the aim of developing “a comprehensive range of options and genuine choice and control in how personalised care and support is delivered”, as called for in DW’s *Manifesto for Independent Living*.

In its response to the Community Care Direct Payments Scheme consultation, DW called for WAG to support research into recipients’ experience of Direct Payments, and also into the experience of those who decide not to take up a Direct Payment. A longitudinal study of the experience and expectations of people who receive Direct Payments would provide a sound evidence base for further policy development.

DW also recommends a review of progress made against the recommendations included in the *Survey on the Implementation of the current Direct Payments Scheme in Wales*.

DW would welcome an opportunity to respond to any further enquiries that the Petitions Committee may have in relation to this and previous submissions in support of the case for a National Strategy on Independent Living.

References

Disability Wales' Manifesto for Independent Living

<http://www.disabilitywales.org/2587.file.dld>

Welsh Conservatives Debate: The Independent Living NOW! Campaign for Wales, The Record of Proceedings, National Assembly for Wales, 12 May 2010

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=180970&ds=5/2010#dadldeids>

Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/guidance1/services/?lang=en>

Independent Living Strategy (2008):

<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/independent-living-strategy.php>

A Vision for Independent Living in Scotland (2009)

<http://www.ilis.co.uk/independent-living/a-vision-for-independent-living-in-scotland/>

Independent Living: Development of a cross- government five year strategy

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/33015>

The Costs and Benefits of Independent Living, Hurstfield J., Parashar U. and Schofield K., published by the Office for Disability Issues, Department for Work and Pensions (2007)

<http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/docs/res/il/costs-benefits-report.pdf>

Survey on the Implementation of the current Direct Payments Scheme in Wales (Collis, A., 2007).

Strategy for Older People in Wales (2003 and 2008)

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/olderpeople/publications/strategy2008-2013/?lang=en>

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2005).

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?OrgID=441>

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

Inquiry into the Implementation of the Right of Disabled People to Independent Living, Joint Human Rights Committee

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news/right-of-disabled-people-to-independent-living-call-for-evidence/>

Christine Chapman AM,
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

2 March 2011

Dear Christine

P-03-288 National Strategy on Independent Living

Thank you for your letter of 26 January 2011 regarding the above petition. You invited Disability Wales' views on the information gathered so far and asked whether we feel that the work being taken forward by the Welsh Assembly Government helps disabled people to live independently. You also invited our views on the Direct Payment Scheme, and whether this helps support Independent Living.

I am pleased to enclose DW's response to these questions. As you will see, we believe there are two key points for the Assembly to take into full consideration in deciding whether to develop a National Strategy: the cross-cutting nature of Independent Living, and its potential for achieving more effective use of resources.

I have also enclosed a copy of DW's Manifesto for Independent Living, which we presented in the Senedd today.

Thank you for considering our petition and please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Swann
Policy Officer (Independent Living)



Manifesto for Independent Living



Disability Wales (DW) is the national association of disabled people's organisations, striving to achieve equality, rights and independence for all disabled people, regardless of physical, sensory or neurological impairment, learning difficulty or mental health condition.

It was established in 1972 as an independent, not for profit membership organisation of disabled people, disability groups and allies from across Wales. All Board Members and most staff members identify themselves as disabled people.

DW's core role is to reflect the views of disabled people's organisations to government with the aim of informing and influencing policy.

DW's work on policy development is underpinned by the Social Model of Disability which recognises that people are disabled more by institutional, environmental and attitudinal barriers than by impairments or health conditions.

DW is widely recognised as the lead organisation in Wales in promoting the understanding, adoption and implementation of the Social Model.

In April 2010 DW launched a campaign for Independent Living NOW! The aims of the campaign include:

- raising awareness and understanding of what Independent Living means for disabled people in Wales
- calling for the introduction of a National Strategy on Independent Living
- developing a Manifesto on Independent Living.

Campaign briefings were held in Gwynedd, Wrexham, Powys, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. Discussions with disabled people at these and other meetings helped to develop the Manifesto priorities.

Manifesto

Why Disability Wales has developed a Manifesto for Independent Living



“Independent Living enables us as disabled people to achieve our own goals and live our own lives in the way that we choose for ourselves”

Disability Wales, 2010.

Independent Living is now a major policy issue.

Over 20% of the Welsh population are disabled. In addition to the barriers to education, employment, access and social inclusion that disabled people face on a daily basis, many are now experiencing cuts to both benefit entitlements and public services.

The present economic uncertainties increase the likelihood that growing numbers of disabled people in Wales will be pushed into poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

At the same time, people now have higher expectations of public services. Many disabled people want more choice and control over their lives and a more personalised and participative approach to service provision.

A strategy is needed to address these challenges. This will build on existing policy and legislation, encourage more joined up partnership working and provide a vision for making the right to Independent Living a reality for disabled people in Wales.

The strategy will be underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 which provides protection and legal rights to disabled people and aims to prevent disability discrimination.

Delivering Independent Living for disabled people can also

“Published material to date indicates that the delivery of Independent Living support to disabled people is more cost effective, or at least no more expensive, than traditional care provision.”

(The Costs and Benefits of Independent Living, Office for Disability Issues, Department for Work and Pensions, 2007)

contribute to the efficiencies agenda. Meeting individual needs more fully by getting services right for people from the start avoids waste and makes the most effective use of public funding.

The Welsh Assembly, which adopted the Social Model of Disability in 2002, is already engaged in work that supports Independent Living, e.g. the commitment to Direct Payments, the development of community equipment stores and the priority given to making rail travel accessible.

A National Strategy for Independent Living will help link these and other policy initiatives together into a coherent and phased programme of work for local authorities, the NHS and other service providers to deliver. The Welsh Assembly’s role will be to set the agenda, facilitate partnership working and encourage good practice.

A debate in the National Assembly on 12 May 2010 established unanimous cross-party support for the principles of Disability Wales’ Independent Living NOW! campaign, which called for a National Strategy on Independent Living.

A Disability Wales petition to show support for a National Strategy on Independent Living was signed by 719 people across Wales.

This support for Independent Living is welcome but must now be translated into practical action.

The Manifesto identifies six priority areas to be addressed in a National Strategy on Independent Living. These priorities were agreed following a series of discussions with groups and individuals which took place during Disability Wales’ Independent Living NOW! Campaign.

The priorities are:

- 1.** Improved access to information, advice, independent advocacy and peer support services for all
- 2.** Availability of accessible and supported housing to meet individual requirements
- 3.** A comprehensive range of options and genuine choice and control in how personalised care and support is delivered
- 4.** Improved access to Person Centred Technology (aids & equipment)
- 5.** A barrier free transport system, including all modes of transport
- 6.** Enabling access, involvement and social, economic and cultural inclusion for all disabled people.

DW calls on politicians of all parties to ensure that both the Social Model of Disability and the Manifesto for Independent Living are taken fully into account when developing policy and legislation that directly affects disabled people.

DW calls upon the Welsh Assembly Government to lead on:

- investigating how these priorities can be addressed**
- bringing together relevant parties and stakeholders, including Disabled People's Organisations**
- setting out its expectations, and**
- calling parties to account on delivery.**

A Manifesto for Independent Living

Independent Living is an idea that helps with understanding the barriers that disabled people face in their everyday lives.

It shows what needs to be done to ensure that disabled people are valued and treated with the same respect as other citizens.

Independent Living does not mean that disabled people should have to live in isolation, do everything for themselves or be completely independent of services. It means:

- removing the barriers that prevent full social and economic participation in mainstream society, and
- ensuring that disabled people have the same freedom, choice, dignity, control and opportunities as any other citizen – at home, at work and in the community.

The right to Independent Living is set out in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which recognises “the equal right of all disabled persons to live in the community, with choices equal to others”.

Action on the following priorities will help make this a reality for disabled people in Wales.

Call to Action 1

Access to information, advice, independent advocacy and peer support services for all



“The Welsh Assembly Government, local government and independent partners should work together to ensure that people have access to better information, advocacy and support to make informed choices about their own care and support”

(From Vision to Action: The Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales, 2010)

Disabled people consistently identify the need for information, advice, advocacy and peer support as a high priority in enabling Independent Living.

Currently access to these services is a postcode lottery across Wales. Many disabled people are therefore failing to access their rights and the entitlements they need to support Independent Living.

The Disability Law Service, in its report *One Stop, Many Shops* (2010) calls for more user led information and advice services, modelled on Centres for Independent Living (CILs).

Advocacy Wales, the national umbrella organisation for Independent Advocacy providers, calls for “the expansion of Independent Advocacy for adults across Wales as a vital service which enables citizens to make their voice heard, secure their rights and access the support they need to live the life they choose.”

“There's no way they would have listened to me without an advocate because I just don't understand all the forms... I've been through poverty, I've been through people not understanding me, the system not taking you seriously... whereas with an advocate they do, and since having an advocate it's got my life in order and balanced.”

Nicola

Priority actions

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to develop a coherent and adequately resourced approach to the delivery of high quality information, advice, advocacy and peer support services across the country.

This approach could be developed as part of a wider National Strategy on Independent Living.

Many of these services could be provided by local Disabled People's Organisations which, with appropriate support, could develop into Centres for Independent Living (CILs).

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to support the development of:

- CILs in all local authority areas, and
- a national online information and advice hub for disabled people.

Call to Action 2

Availability of accessible and supported housing to meet individual requirements



“12% of adults with impairments experienced difficulty accessing rooms within their home or difficulty getting in or out of their home, compared with 1% of adults without impairments.”

(Life Opportunities Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2010)

“The current shortfall of accessible or readily adapted housing, coupled with patchy provision of support, severely limits the independence, geographical mobility and employment opportunities of many disabled people and their families. It increases pressure on costly social or residential care, or in the absence of public services, on unpaid carers.”

(Disability Agenda, Disability Rights Commission, 2007)

The extent of the housing problems faced by disabled people in Wales is unclear due to insufficient research and a lack of hard data. However, it is known that:

- housing services face increasing demand from people who require adapted/accessible housing
- disabled people report a lack of choice in available housing options
- there are unacceptably long waiting times for Disabled Facilities Grants in many areas of Wales, with some people reporting waiting lists of up to 18 months

- less than half of Welsh local authorities currently maintain Accessible Housing Registers (Looking for an accessible home: accessible housing registers in Wales, Disability Wales, 2009)

“Since leaving University I have applied to three different housing associations plus the local housing authority for single occupancy, accessible/adapted housing. I am adamant that I do not want to live in shared accommodation. Would you want to live with someone you didn’t know, or had no rapport with? No, I don’t think so!”

James

Priority actions

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to undertake benchmarking research to establish:

- the level of housing need in relation to disabled people across all age and impairment groups
- the shortfall in accessible housing
- whether the housing stock meets the standards of Building Regulations Part M and WAG Lifetime Homes requirements.

We also call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to:

- ensure that all local authorities establish and maintain AHRs by 2015 and share this information effectively
- improve the efficient use of existing and future accessible housing
- work with WLGA to introduce new upgraded accessibility standards for new build private and social housing
- ensure local authorities undertake proper assessment of existing and future housing and support requirements, and plan accordingly.

Call to Action 3

A comprehensive range of options and genuine choice and control in how personalised care and support is delivered



“Implementing personalised care and support through voice and control is made easier through direct payments and personal budgets but that is not essential. Control can be exercised in other ways. It does, however, require substantial rethinking and change on the part of commissioners, service providers, social workers/care managers and people seeking and using support and care. It requires commitment at political and senior management level to significant culture change.”

(From Vision to Action: The Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales, 2010)

The Commission’s report calls upon the Welsh Assembly Government “to give a stronger commitment to seeing the principles of self-directed support adopted throughout Wales. This aligns with its stated commitment to promoting independence, prevention and early intervention.”

The forthcoming White Paper on the future of social care in Wales must heed this recommendation and include an action plan to drive the personalisation agenda forward. This is essential if disabled people in Wales are to enjoy choice and control over the services they need to achieve Independent Living.

The Wales Alliance for Citizen Directed Support, of which DW is a Council member, has developed an innovative approach to the delivery of outcome focused personalised services based on the

core principles of Choice and Control, Community and Change. Some local authorities have adopted this approach and implemented Citizen Directed Support pilot projects, and others are working to transform their provision of social services in line with this model.

“Sonny was the first child in Wales to have a direct payment, and then when he embarked upon adult life what I really wanted was an individualised budget, but I guess the direct payment is in a sense that. Sonny does have Independent Living Funds alongside the direct payment, but I think I would feel safer long term for him if it was an individualised budget, and we were following the model that exists in England.” *Jacky (Sonny's mother)*

Priority actions

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to:

- provide strategic leadership to ensure dynamic progress and consistency in developing Citizen Directed Support across Wales
- ensure that all local authorities employ Direct Payment Lead Officers responsible for increasing the take up of Direct Payments
- ensure that local authorities involve disabled people at an early stage in local authority strategic commissioning and planning processes for personalisation.

We call upon the Care Council to:

- introduce a social work training module on personalised services and Direct Payments.

We call upon the Care Council and Local Authorities to:

- support the involvement of disabled people and their organisations in providing social work teams with training in outcome focused, person centered support planning.

Call to Action 4

Access to Person Centred Technology (aids & equipment)



“19% of adults with impairments identified having access to equipment to help with a health condition or impairment as an enabler of economic activity compared to 1% of adults without impairments.”

(Life Opportunities Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2010)

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) supports disabled people’s access to assistive technology under Article 9 on accessibility and Article 20 on personal mobility.

Person Centred Technology (PCT) enables disabled people to gain greater control in achieving independence and well-being. PCT includes Electronic Assistive Technologies, Environmental Controls, Telecare, Telehealth and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

PCT assists disabled people with daily living, facilitating independence within the home and access to education and employment. If PCT was readily and widely available to disabled people it would have long term health benefits, reducing demand on the NHS and Social Services.

The lack of a thriving low-cost market in equipment that meets the real requirements of disabled people is a major barrier to Independent Living.

With regard to the development of Community Equipment Stores, there is currently a lack of clarity on which agency is responsible for funding purchases.

“They don't take into consideration the saving of costs by grasping the metal in the first place and just going for it, putting the right stuff in place at the beginning.”

Henry

Priority actions

Whilst recognising that some of the below actions are outside the Welsh Assembly Government's scope for influence, DW calls upon WAG to lead on bringing together a partnership of designers, manufacturers and retailers with service providers and disabled people's organisations to address these issues.

The priorities are to:

- increase availability and range of Person Centred Technologies provided at no cost through local authorities
- encourage manufacturers of mobility aids and technologies to think about all aspects of mobility for disabled persons
- promote accessible information and access to Information and Communication Technology for disabled people
- promote inclusive design for new information and communication technologies so that these are designed from the start to be accessible and easy to use for disabled people
- improve regulation of equipment suppliers, preventing disproportionate profit-making, sales of inappropriate or defective equipment and banning high-pressure selling techniques
- deliver PCT information and training to health and social care professionals, enabling them to provide appropriate information and advice to disabled people
- clarify the funding arrangements for access to Community Equipment Stores.

Call to Action 5

A barrier free transport system, including all modes of transport



“74% of adults with impairments experienced restrictions in using transport compared with 58% of adults without impairments”

(Life Opportunities Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2010)

“Public transport by bus (there are very often no train services in a number of rural areas) is often inaccessible to certain passengers because they have no low level entry and the local authority is yet to complete the provision of raised bus stops. This means that the only mode of transport available to many people is their car or expensive taxis.”

(DW Member comment, January 2011)

Accessible transport is essential to Independent Living. Many disabled people use public transport to shop, attend hospital appointments, socialise and work. Without access to trains, buses and accessible parking many disabled people are excluded from their community.

Despite significant improvements to the public transport system many barriers still exist, e.g. limited travel options, lack of accessible and up-to-date information, physical, attitudinal and communication barriers, and charging for Blue Badge parking.

The Welsh Assembly Government’s commitment to prioritising rail accessibility is welcomed.

“It's training of bus drivers, you face attitude problems as if you are an inconvenience, it's what I call the huff factor, like tutting and huffing when they see a disabled person who needs a bit of assistance...The main barrier to getting out and doing things that people take for granted – going for a cup of coffee, going shopping, getting out and about – it's always transport, and that's what everybody constantly has difficulty with, using public transport is a huge obstacle.”

Julie

Priority actions

Whilst some of the below actions are outside the Welsh Assembly Government's scope for influence, DW calls upon WAG to lead on bringing organisations together to set out its expectations and develop partnership working. The priorities are to:

Bus

- provide low level access for all bus services across Wales
- position accessible bus stops to improve access
- clarify bus providers conditions of carriage relating to the transportation of wheelchair users and scooters users
- increase the number of wheelchair spaces on buses

Train

- improve the Assisted Passenger Reservation Service system to ensure better communication between APRS booking staff and train station staff
- ensure information provided by APRS is accurate and up to date
- increase provision of accessible toilets on trains and at train stations
- increase the number of staffed stations to improve the availability of assistance

Car

- eliminate charging for provision of Blue Badges
- provide free Blue Badge disabled bay parking

Taxi

- increase provision of accessible taxis throughout Wales
- introduce a scheme to ensure affordable fares for disabled people who cannot access public transport either due to location or bus/train inaccessibility

All modes of transport

- ensure that all local authorities have a Community Transport Strategy
- Disability Equality Training for all staff to be included in service contracts
- ensure information is provided in accessible formats.

Call to Action 6

Enabling access, involvement and social, economic and cultural inclusion for all disabled people



“29% of adults with impairments experienced difficulty accessing buildings outside their home compared with 7% of adults without impairments.”

(Life Opportunities Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2010)

"If you live in a society where you are not valued, where prejudice circumscribes in advance what you can offer and even throws up barriers to your inclusion - in work, at school, or in your community - your worth as a member of society diminishes as does your opportunity to make a valued contribution."

(Sir Bert Massie, "Disabled suffer worst exclusion", BBC News, 8 June 2005)

To counteract devaluing attitudes, prejudice, disablism and discrimination, disabled people must be actively involved and engaged in all planning, design and commissioning processes.

Involving disabled people from the start and through to implementation and evaluation ensures that they are included and increases the likelihood of getting things right.

All too often the opposite happens and disabled people are consulted only as an afterthought, resulting in poor design and costly remediation.

Professionals must learn to recognise that disabled people are the experts in what is required to achieve Independent Living, and engage with individuals on an equal basis and in a meaningful way.

“Because I had the confidence, I got my own home, I got a full time job, plus I do a lot of volunteering work with People First groups. People First has given me the confidence to speak up about the issues of people with disabilities, representing groups and travelling more independently on my own on public transport and getting to meetings in different parts of Wales”

Sophie

Priority actions

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to lead on ensuring that all public bodies:

- provide information in accessible formats, including British Sign Language (BSL)
- distribute accessible information effectively through a variety of communication channels within the community
- provide Disability Equality Training to all public service staff who interact with disabled people in any way.

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to lead on ensuring that all local authorities:

- employ Access Officers.

DW would like to thank everyone who contributed to the discussions which lead to development of the Manifesto for Independent Living, including participants at the following events in 2010:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 28 April | Independent Living NOW! campaign launch, Cardiff Bay - attended by 70 organisations and individuals |
| 26 May | Independent Living NOW! campaign briefing, Gwynedd - partner organisations: CIL de Gwynedd, Arfon Access Group |
| 28 June | Independent Living seminar, Wrexham
- partner organisations: Centre for Disability Studies, Glyndwr University, AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham) |
| 7 July | Independent Living NOW! campaign briefing, Powys
- partner organisations: Disability Powys, Dewis Centre for Independent Living |
| 23 July | Independent Living Round Table, Caerphilly
- attended by: Age Cymru, All Wales People First, Carers Wales, Guide Dogs, Learning Disability Wales, MS Society Cymru, RNID, Wales Council for the Blind, Wales Council for Deaf People |
| 10 August | Independent Living NOW! campaign briefing, Swansea - partner organisation: Swansea Association for Independent Living (SAIL) |
| 18 September | Independent Living NOW! campaign briefing, Havorfordwest - partner organisations: Young Voices for Choices, Pembrokeshire Access Group. |

Response from the British Association of Social Workers

07-03-2011 British Association of Social Workers

Dear Naomi,

Further to Rhodri's email on the 3rd March, I have consulted with the BASW Cymru committee on the petition and they believe that as social workers they believe it is important that BASW support any measures that enhance the independence of people with a disability, and would therefore like to add their support to the petition.

My Deputy Chair, Carol Davies, also made the following comment which you may like to consider:

'I know this decision to stop ILF is worrying many people in receipt of the benefit as the care that they receive will inevitably change. I'm afraid that benefits are not my forte but my limited knowledge is such that I will argue the need for a replacement benefit to continue the purchase of care to enable choice of provision and continued independence. My concern (shared with many colleagues) with ILF is that the majority of carers providing this care to vulnerable adults, paid by ILF, are not CRB checked, supervised or trained.'

Unfortunately I wasn't able to get the views of very many members at such short notice. If you can forward any further requests direct to me in future I will ensure we get a wider audience.

Kind regards,

Sarah Starbuck
Administrator
British Association of Social Workers, Cymru

Dear Rhodri & Naomi,

There has been a further development relevant to Disability Wales' petition that I would like to bring to the Petitions Committee's attention if it is still possible to do so.

Andrew Goodall, Chair of the New Models of Service Delivery Workstream, circulated a letter on 1 March 2011 (attached) which provides a link to the Workstream's website:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/challenge/workstreams/newmodels/?lang=en>

DW's main submission to the Petitions Committee noted that one of the Workstream's "big issues" is "promoting independent living and wellbeing". The Workstream's first product is a "study into integrated approaches to service delivery that promote independence and wellbeing." This is supported by a paper outlining the "key findings and high potential characteristics".

The documents can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/fJtSbC>

DW welcomes publication of the research and the spotlight it places on good practice in developing integrated services which promote Independent Living and wellbeing. It is encouraging that public services are introducing more effective joint working to improve service delivery.

However, disabled people are the experts in what kind of services are needed to promote Independent Living and it is vital that their voice is heard as new approaches to service provision are developed and implemented.

A National Strategy on Independent Living will articulate disabled people's vision for service design and delivery, together with the underlying principles upon which citizen centered services that support Independent Living must be based. It will also identify how professional practice and relationships – as well as systems – must change in order to facilitate Independent Living for disabled people.

In this way the strategy will contribute to "more effective dialogue between different parts of the system."

I trust that this final comment will be helpful to the Committee's discussion, although I do appreciate that it may be too late for it to be taken into consideration.

Kind regards,
Paul

Paul Swann
Policy Officer (Independent Living)
Disability Wales / Anabledd Cymru