

Stakeholder response 1 – Torfaen County Borough Council, Social Care and Housing

- The Welsh Government's decision to transfer funding for the Welsh Independent Living Grant to local authorities. – This transfer may have been more prudent to have taken place in the initial year of ILF closing. The ILF effectively created a two tier system to people who required managed care and support. The initial purpose of ILF met the shortfall in the benefits system at the time but in more recent years it meant there was inequity. Therefore, transferring to Local Authority enables a more equitable approach as everyone is assessed in the same way under the SSWB Act. The transfer has been protracted and this has caused some uncertainty and confusion. The additional administrative impact has been quite arduous. The additional impact on the support services and also the employment responsibilities for individuals has been cause for concern.
- The potential benefits or problems which may arise from supporting WILG recipients through local authority social care provision in the future. – The biggest area of concern has been the staffing implications for vulnerable individuals and their carers to manage on top of a change management process that has had the potential to change the levels of independence people aspire to and hence the routines and familiarity of their daily lives. The main staffing issues being, pay, redundancy and other employment issues for those individuals who have employed staff. There are limited resources and understanding available from sources independent of the local authority in order for people to find the most appropriate support with employment matters. The assessment process has meant increased work but also has increased clarity and transparency around what services are in place, both for social care professionals, commissioners and the individuals and their families. The majority of those assessed and moving over from WILG are choosing to access Direct Payments particularly where they have staff employed. Most are also benefitting from the Welsh Assembly domiciliary care client contribution cap; and are now paying less contribution towards their care and support costs, however the flip side to this is that the Local Authority has had to increase their budgetary contribution to the care and support packages to meet any shortfall resulting in potential budget pressure. Many recipients of WILG were previously advised by ILF to return unspent monies, this has led to little or no reserve for many recipients to cover statutory costs such as redundancy for staff where working terms and conditions have changed reduced or employment has ended.
- The current transition process, including assessment by local authorities, and any feedback from WILG recipients. – The transition process has been very

long and social care professionals have taken time to complete assessments, agree new care and support plans with individuals and ensure that people are informed and clear on the process of transition. To date there has been no formal complaints or feedback from individuals.

- If you (or your organisation) was involved in the work of the ILF stakeholder advisory group, your experience of this process and the extent to which the group's deliberations and final recommendation reflected the views of members – N/A However, the organisation was not directly involved in the stakeholder group but was represented nationally. It is felt that information shared with the stakeholder group was not always acted upon or given appropriate consideration.
- Any alternative approaches that you believe should have been taken by the Welsh Government, or any changes which should be made at this stage. – WG should ensure that LA's continue to receive sufficient funding and resources through the funding allocated to the RSG to meet the increase to the new alternative social care packages agreed. The majority of individuals will receive the same or more equivalent funding to that which they received via ILF. The ILF and subsequently WILG did not keep pace with actual costs of care, on costs and statutory obligations of ILF recipients for some years. This effectively means that Local Authorities are having to increase the cost of all packages.

Any other views or comments that you have in relation to the petition.

Stakeholder response 2 – Conwy Social Care Services

Good afternoon,

In relation to the above; the attached comments are submitted on behalf of Conwy Social Care Services, in particular, from Manager and Practitioners from the Disabilities Services.

- The Welsh Government's decision to transfer funding for the Welsh Independent Living Grant to local authorities. – **In terms of an equitable approach to the needs of all disabled people who require managed care and support we are in agreement with the transfer. The creation of a new body in Wales to administer the ILF would have been costly and presumably diverted funding from front line to the administration of the scheme. Whilst transferring to the LA has not been without additional cost, most of the recipients are known to and supported by the LA and therefore the additional administrative costs ongoing post transfer would be less.**
- The potential benefits or problems which may arise from supporting WILG recipients through local authority social care provision in the future. – **We do not foresee any issues for individuals once social care packages are agreed with service users and any issues in relation to staffing, pay and remuneration are resolved. If anything, care and support packages being fully commissioned via the LA has increased clarity and transparency around what services are in place, both for commissioners and the individuals and their families. Most that have been assessed and are going through the process of moving over from WILG are welcoming the fact that they will not have to manage the financial side of ILF anymore. From the cases financially assessed thus far, many individuals are benefitting from the Welsh Assembly domiciliary care client contribution cap; and are now paying less contribution towards their care and support costs. Of course this then means that the Local Authority needs to increase their contribution to meet the shortfall. There are further financial implications to the LA, as many recipients at the point to transfer were advised by ILF to return all unspent monies, this means that there is no or little reserve for many recipients to cover supplementary costs, such as redundancy for staff where they are choosing to no longer self-manage their support needs.**
- The current transition process, including assessment by local authorities, and any feedback from WILG recipients. – **Conwy have had no issues raised by former recipients in relation to the transfer.**
- If you (or your organisation) was involved in the work of the ILF stakeholder advisory group, your experience of this process and the extent to which the group's deliberations and final recommendation reflected the views of members – **N/A**
- Any alternative approaches that you believe should have been taken by the Welsh Government, or any changes which should be made at this stage. – **the WG should ensure that LA's have sufficient resources through the funding allocated to the RSG to meet the alternative social care packages agreed. The WILG did not keep pace with the true cost of care for some years, with recipients packages effectively frozen. As a result we are seeing an increase in the cost of all packages.**
- Any other views or comments that you have in relation to the petition.

With kind regards

Carol Walker



Stakeholder response 3 – Learning Disability Wales

To: Submission to: P-05-771 Reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant and support disabled people to live independently, National Assembly for Wales Petitions Committee

From: Learning Disability Wales

Date 13 September 2018

We are submitting a story and 25 picture slideshow that gives feedback from a WILG recipient in support of retaining the fund:

The story of Sonny and why we need to keep the Welsh Independent Living Grant

This story of Sonny, who has a learning disability, is being told to show how important the Independent Living Fund (now known as Welsh Independent Living Grant or WILG) is for him to lead a happy independent life.

Please watch the slideshow of Sonny enjoying his independent life.

https://1drv.ms/p/s!AugmwW_Vn_PKliNgSrREux1iowkf – also attached as a pdf

'A picture is worth a thousand words'.

Karen Warner from Learning Disability Wales met with Jacky, Sonny's mum to hear her story about how crucial the fund is to Sonny's life. She wants her story to be presented to the National Assembly petitions committee that is looking for wider views on a petition to 'reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant and support disabled people to live independently'.

Jacky from Llantwit Fardre is the mother of 29 year old Sonny who has a learning disability.

Jacky is no stranger to fighting for services and support for Sonny. As a child Sonny had a Special Educational Needs Statement, but Jacky had to fight to get the right provision for him such as speech and language therapy. Sonny went to college in Powys. Shortly after leaving college, Jacky helped Sonny make choices and plans about his life that included living in his own home with support. Jacky helped him create a pictorial plan. Jacky was used to managing direct payments for Sonny for the support he needed as a young person, so she was looking to have direct payments for him as an adult.

Jacky approached social services to talk about Sonny's plans. Sonny wanted to live in a home of his own, not a shared house. Jacky found a house for him 5 minutes from where they lived in Llantwit Fardre. At a local jobs fair she began recruiting people who could be lined up to be Sonny's support team. Social services told her that they did not have enough money for the support package he needed. In fact they could only offer her just over half of the funding Sonny needed.

Jacky wasn't giving up. She knew he would not be able to live in a shared house. He needed his own space. She was prepared to fight but was equally in despair as she didn't know what to do next. Her own mental health suffered as a result of the uncertainty of Sonny's future and other issues in her personal life at the time.

Jacky was in contact with Reach Supported Living during that time who told her about the Independent Living Fund. She applied to the fund and was successful in getting the higher hourly rate for the hours of support that Sonny needed. But it took her 2 years to fight for Sonny to have an ordinary life in an ordinary street. That was 10 years ago.

So Sonny's support package was put in place. He gets 90 hours a week support from social services as a direct payment and 25 hours a week from the Welsh Independent Living Grant. Sonny gets 1 to 1 support all the time, but sometimes he needs 2 to 1 support when he finds himself in stressful situations such as the dentist, doctor or hospital.

Sonny loves his life. He is independent. He knows and trusts his staff. He takes risks, staff know him well enough to assess what risks to take. He learns. He is helped to cook, clean and shops for himself. He loves being outdoors, cycling up the Taff Trail, walking in the woods, going to Ogmore-by-Sea on the beach. He also loves his computer and computer games.

Jacky is extremely worried about the possible transfer of the fund and the uncertainty of Sonny's support package in the future. She said "*His support and services need to be maintained otherwise they will be taking away his independence, his well-being, his support, his happiness. I won't let that happen*"

By:

Jacky Roe, parent to Sonny and

Karen Warner, Learning Disability Wales

11 September 2018

Stakeholder response 4 – Trevor Palmer

Attn. Petitions Committee. – Petition P-05-771 Reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant and support disabled people to live independently.

I am a Welsh citizen living in Newport and for many years received support from the Independent Living Fund (ILF) and later the Welsh Independent Living Grant (WILG). As a disabled person who requires support to get around and live independently I was able to pursue some voluntary activities and personal interests with the ILF & WILG support. Earlier this year my local Authority reviewed my support and it has now been cut by sixty percent. This has had a dramatic effect on not only my life but my family and others.

I appeal to the Petitions Committee to have a semblance of Social Justice and be aware of how by closing the WILG is, in my case, not only restricting my independence but my families. The connotations of which have created additional complications.

The ILF and WILF support which I received has enabled me to maintain direction in life and earlier this year in the Queens Birthday Honours I was awarded a British Empire Medal for Services to Disabled People in Wales. My voluntary activities have now been reduced denying me the opportunity to integrate and live as independently as before, which indecently is only a trace of how ninety nine percent of Welsh adults live.

Its is sad that in our society that matters of basic social justice have be handled in such a way that the lives of venerable people have been disrupted resulting in the exact opposite of what the ILF and WILG was all about. In logical terms this is regression.

In Wales we must not simply just tow the political line but act in a Socially responsible way. One of the principal themes of the 2014 Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) is to give people (yes, that is supposed to be me and other disabled people) a stronger voice and increased control of their lives. As Chair I respect that David J Rowlands AM and the Petitions Committee will recommend that the Welsh Independent Living Grant is reinstated.

Trevor Palmer

Stakeholder response 5 – Luke Clements and Ann James

16th August 2018

Mr. David Rowlands AM,
Chair of the Petitions Committee,
National Assembly for Wales,

Dear David Rowlands AM

Re: Petition P-05-771

**Reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant(WILG)
and support disabled people to live independently**

Many thanks for your letter of the 8 August 2018 in which you invite us to share our views on the closure of the WILG from March 2019.

Sadly, due to our commitments we are unable to submit detailed comments. We would, however, wish to stress our support for Nathan Lee Davies' petition and his vigorous campaign aimed at getting the Welsh Government to reconsider its decision to close the WILG.

The Independent Living Fund was established to compensate disabled people who suffered significant financial loss as a result of the abolition of supplementary benefits 'additional requirements' payments in 1988. It was a national scheme to ensure that people with profound impairments were protected from the vagaries of local authority funding priorities.

Wales has a high proportion of relatively small local authorities – and for many of these councils the budgetary impact of funding a disabled person with profound impairments can be substantial. Austerity measures over the last 8 years has left many Local Authorities in Wales (and in England) facing immense challenges in ensuring that they meet their statutory obligations to disabled people in need of care and support. It is in this context, that there is a high likelihood that the needs of disabled people with profound impairments may be severely compromised. It is for this reason (among many others) that there continues to be a need for a Wales wide ILF scheme.

We have written a paper which can be found in the **Rhydian: Social Welfare Law in Wales Journal** <http://www.lukeclements.co.uk/journal/journal-2018-volume-2/>

For ease of access a copy of the paper is attached to the email.

The paper provides an overview of the contentious decision to close the WILG and highlights some of the challenges that may accrue from this decision.

Your sincerely,

[Luke Clements and Ann James](#)

Ann James is a retired social worker, social work academic and more recently worked as a Manager in the Care Council for Wales. She was a carer for her son Rhydian;

Luke Clements is the Cerebra Professor of Law and Social Justice at the School of Law, Leeds University.