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Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-771
Ein cyf/Our ref JM/05014/18

David J Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 19 December to the Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething AM, in relation to Petition P-05-771 to reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant (WILG). I am replying as policy on social care in Wales is now within my Ministerial portfolio.

As you know from the former Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care's letter of 22 November last year, to be assured of the position on the transfer of support to local authorities for those who received payments from the WILG he asked all authorities to undertake a "deep dive" review. This was where he instructed all local authorities to review all cases where, following an assessment of someone's care needs, there was an intention to reduce the authority's direct support to the person in what would have been the WILG element of their overall support. This was to identify the reasons for these, the exact scale of any reductions and to receive from each authority a personal assurance that where this was to occur it was appropriate and did not impact on that person's ability to live independently in the community.

These deep dive reviews were undertaken at the end of 2018 and a summary of the outcome is attached. Of the 1,174 people who had completed at that time their future care review as part of this transfer, only in 157 cases (13%) was a reduction in the former WILG element of their support proposed as a result. In the majority of cases people's care reviews had identified them as requiring future care of a similar nature and level to that they currently received, while people were to receive a higher level and intensity of care following their review in a slightly higher number of cases to that where a reduction was proposed.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Where a reduction was proposed the level of this varied from individual to individual depending upon their particular circumstances and the reason for their reduction. Hence most people to receive a reduction in the former WILG element of their support were to receive a reduction of between 1-14 hours a week, with a wide range of reasons for this. Of particular note were instances where a change in social care support, either in the way this is provided or of a different type, has had a consequential effect on the level of formal care a person requires. There were also a number of cases where people had developed a need for healthcare since the ILF's last care reviews undertaken in 2015 and hence no longer have a requirement for social care. In addition, there were instances where changes were to be made to the commissioning arrangements or level of support for a person, due to the full value of their funding not being fully utilised previously. Often this was at the request of the person or their family.

To ensure authorities had undertaken these deep dive reviews correctly, the former Minister met at the end of last year local authorities' relevant social care Cabinet Members and all Directors of Social Services (or their representatives) on a regional basis. This was to question them on the outcome of their deep dive reviews to ensure the support they were putting in place for people was genuinely helping them to live independently and to give authorities the opportunity of raising any implementation issues they were encountering.

During these meetings local authority representatives provided their personal assurance that where reductions were to occur these were appropriate, did not impact on that person's ability to live independently in the community and, in the vast majority of cases, had been agreed with the person concerned. Where they had not been agreed with the person authorities were seeking to resolve this with them. In addition, no major implementation issues were raised by authorities as being of concern.

As you appreciate it is still relatively early in my Ministerial tenure and so I am currently getting myself appraised of the background to this issue, the action to date and the implications of the outcome of the deep dive review the former Minister undertook.

There is, of course, a critical need to ensure that the completion of this transfer of support for those people affected is undertaken correctly in a manner which does truly support their ability to continue to live independently. As a result, to ensure I have a full picture of the issues I have arranged to meet later this month the petitioner, Nathan Davies, to hear at first hand his concerns and to outline what the former Minister established with local authorities. Following this I will decide what further action may need to be taken to ensure the transfer is effective in supporting independent living and will update the Committee accordingly.

Yours sincerely,



Julie Morgan AC/AM

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