

The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Ltd



**The Independent Living Centre
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Annual Report 2017/2018

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Reg No. 2535179 Charity No. 1000659



The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Ltd

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Mrs Janey Hillier – appointed July 2017
Mr Ian Harrington – appointed January 2018

*Members of the Management Committee

Company Secretary: Mrs Julie Hervin



**The Wiltshire & Bath
Independent Living Trust Ltd**

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Chairman's Report 2017-18

This is my first report as acting Chair, since Brian Wade stepped down last year. He is a hard act to follow.

Once again it has been a busy year for the Centre. We are seeing increased numbers of equipment and benefits referrals. Alongside this, the team also runs open days and training events, and respond to enquiries from the public and statutory services. Looking at the figures I was surprised to see that we dealt with over 2,500 enquiries last year. The staff team really do a tremendous job in meeting this demand and in providing a high quality service.

Behind the scenes, the admin team and management committee ensure that the Centre is running effectively. We rely on income from our tenants, so it is important to ensure that the space within the centre is used effectively and the building maintained in a good state of repair. This would not be possible without oversight of Sandra Harding who keeps the team together. I am very pleased to say that we have recruited a number of new Trustees who bring valuable additional expertise and can help share the load. Thank you.

It is important that we keep up with changes in legislation and charity commission requirements. Over the past 12 months we have carried out a major piece of work to update our policies and procedures. This is important work and I am grateful for all those who have given their time to support this.

What of the future? I am sure that it will not have escaped your attention that the demand for health and social care is increasing and that there are insufficient statutory funds available to meet this. The contract for Community Equipment Services and with it, funding for the Centre, will be reviewed next year. The Trustees have taken time out to review some of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. We believe that the ILC, and our third sector partners, have an important role in helping to meet this demand so that those in our community are able to live as full and independent lives as possible.

Professor Nigel Harris
Acting Chair

Hon Treasurer's Report 2017-18

Copies of the accounts will be available for you to collect after the official part of the meeting. They have been prepared by our new Accountants, Haines Watts. To comply with the Charity Commission and Companies House Regulations, they are somewhat lengthy nowadays but you can get a good picture of what goes on here by looking at pages 15 and 16.

The spending policy as mentioned in the previous three reports has continued again this year. We have had work completed on the outside of the building to enable easy access from the rear in accordance with fire regulations. The total expenditure on the premises this year amounted to £27,967.37. As far as we know we should have finished all the work involved with the fire regulations but as you will appreciate a building of this age and size always requires maintenance.

The building work together with two large empty rooms to lease and a reduction in the uptake of daily room rental has amounted to a deficit of £32,045, which is covered by £30,000 reserves.

The contract with Medequip was extended by Wiltshire Council in early 2017 for a further 2 years expiring in January 2019. We work well together; the members of the Management Committee still meet with Senior Medequip Staff on a quarterly basis. We were pleased to see several of their senior staff attending our Open Day earlier in the year. The retail unit in the coffee lounge is staffed jointly and continues to be successful.

I would like to thank the Staff for the support they have given me and the other Trustees during this financial year.

Sandra Harding
Hon. Treasurer

Occupational Therapist's Annual Report 2017-18

I was wondering what I was going to write this year to impress on how hard the service and team has worked this year. I started talking to a friend who asked me a lot of questions. I hope this will provide a "fly on the wall" view point of this invaluable service that I am very proud to work in.

What is an Independent Living Centre?

The ILC at Semington provides opportunity and possibility to clients living in Wiltshire and BANES to continue living in their own home or to maximise their independence physically and mentally. The ILC provides an unpressurised environment where clients have an individual appointment and their needs assessed by an Occupational Therapist.

The ILC at Semington has an extensive range of equipment covering all aspects of daily living needs. To do it justice it really is a 'must see' experience. However, to cover in brief we have:

Mobility room: mobility aids, wheelchairs, scooters, stair lifts.

Kitchen with a wide range of adaptive eating and drinking aids, jar and tin openers, adjustable height work top, food preparation aids.

Bathroom with toilet equipment, level access shower, bath lifts and a range of seating and grab rails. Wash and dry toilets.

A chair room with Riser/Recliner chairs, high back chairs and posture support aids.

Bedroom with profiling and care beds, manual handling equipment, dressing aids, continence aids.

Assistive Technology Room: Pendant alarms, care support systems, easy to use phones and a range of dementia support aids. Environmental control systems.

What is your role as an OT?

I first meet with the client and conduct an initial screening, getting to know them and their needs, what they are finding difficult and in what areas they would like more independence or ability.

I then decide on priority areas for assessment and agree this with the client. For example, a client who is struggling with mobility may need to first of all be assessed with walking aids before we can address safe bath transfers. A walking aid may not have been on their initial reason for referral so the matter

has to be addressed carefully and in agreement with my clinical reasoning provided to the client.

The main areas of need are then assessed. This tends to be only one or two main areas per appointment due to time. However, we cover everything in as much detail as possible. The equipment, for example a bath lift, will be first screened for appropriateness to the client. Unsuitable items will be ruled out based on my knowledge of their medical condition and current presentation. For example, an inflatable bath lift presents risks for clients who cannot maintain good core stability and posture. A full demonstration of the equipment is given followed by a full trial by the client with my eagle eye on how to support the 3 important ingredients in each equation: **Client, Equipment, and Process**. Each appointment is very different as each ingredient changes. I often say to clients that they could have the most expensive, top of the range equipment but unless it is suitable and used in the right way for them, it becomes useless.

Never a dull moment then?

No not at all!

Luckily, we have a great team. I'm the clinician but I would be completely lost without them. There is a lot of work being done in the office and also the OT assistant support to the assessments and information enquiries.

The ILC organises and provides professional learning opportunities through Equipment Forums and Study days. Over the past year we have held study sessions: Fatigue management and Assistive Technology for Dementia care. We have held equipment training on: Wash and dry toilets, and assistive technology. OT Forums on Slings and mobile hoists and ramping.

Members of the team and trustees have presented at a range of external talks including Mineral Hospital, Parkinson's Society and Alzheimer's Support.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

The thing that I enjoy and value most about the role is the opportunity and possibility that the service can provide to clients. It really does make a vast difference in maximising a person's ability. Independence means something different to each one of us, however, the ability to have your needs looked at in detail, regain self-esteem, and be more physically or mentally active as an outcome is a very rewarding for both the client and myself. This difference can be quantified that the person needs less care; they may feel more enabled to make themselves a hot drink, feed or wash themselves. They may be able to enjoy a day out with access to a suitable walking aid or wheelchair.

Client feedback

“Service very good and helpful. We feel better for our visit.”

“Excellent service. Very friendly and approachable OT. Extremely useful and informative session.”

“Absolutely what we needed. A vital facility.”

“Delighted by the care, patience and consideration given. Felt truly informed and given lots of information. Also most importantly didn't feel rushed.”

“Thank you for a first class service. You have been wonderful. Many thanks.”

Chris Bott
Senior Occupational Therapist

Benefits Advisor Report 2017-18

There continues to be a very high demand for our Benefits Advice services and it has been a very busy year. We have been able to employ Desna for one year which has provided additional hours of advice and enabled the Independent Living Centre to offer more appointments from June 2017 to May 2018. It has also reduced the waiting time that clients had to wait for an appointment and meant that Desna helped clients with application forms while I was able to concentrate more on appeals and submission writing as well as attending hearings with vulnerable clients.

Types of Benefits

The benefit system is very complex and is made up of a mixture of disability related, contributory and means tested benefits. Examples of disability related are Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance for children and Carers Allowance. Contributory benefits are mainly for sickness, unemployment and State Pension. All the means tested benefits, i.e. housing benefit, Income Support, tax credits, jobseekers and incapacity for work, are being amalgamated into Universal Credit. Council tax reduction, which is also means tested, is administered by Wiltshire Council.

The majority of people who contact us ask for help with Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance claim forms, followed by Incapacity for Work forms and Disability Living Allowance forms for children. We also get a lot of enquiries about benefit entitlement because many people find the system to be bewildering and they can struggle to obtain advice.

Universal Credit

This benefit was introduced in 2013 in pilot areas around the UK and the intention was to simplify the system which had become very complex. It came into full service in Wiltshire between May and July 2017 which means that anyone applying for certain benefits had to claim Universal Credit. The benefits are the means tested ones, i.e. to cover housing costs, unemployment, sickness, child care, low earnings and carers who have no other income. Universal Credit suits people who have a variable income because it eliminates the need to keep informing various departments of the change in income, e.g. zero hours contracts. However, it has been seen as controversial, partly because of problems with the IT system, causing some clients to experience delays in payments which affects their rent. Clients have to claim and maintain the benefit online which is very difficult for some. It also affects disabled clients who are financially worse off under Universal Credit than under the old system, referred to as "legacy benefits".

Appeals

Appeal work is very time consuming. The paperwork involved can range from 150 to 400 pages and it takes a long time to read through that much information and then write a submission. But it is also satisfying to help the client prepare their argument against the decision and the appeal is successful, especially when the Judge tells the client that my submission was very helpful. I have helped twenty-one clients this year who made appeals against a benefit decision. Fifteen were for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), including one overpayment of PIP, four were for Employment and Support Allowance and two for Disability Living Allowance for a child. Nine of these were successful, two were unsuccessful and the rest have not yet been heard.

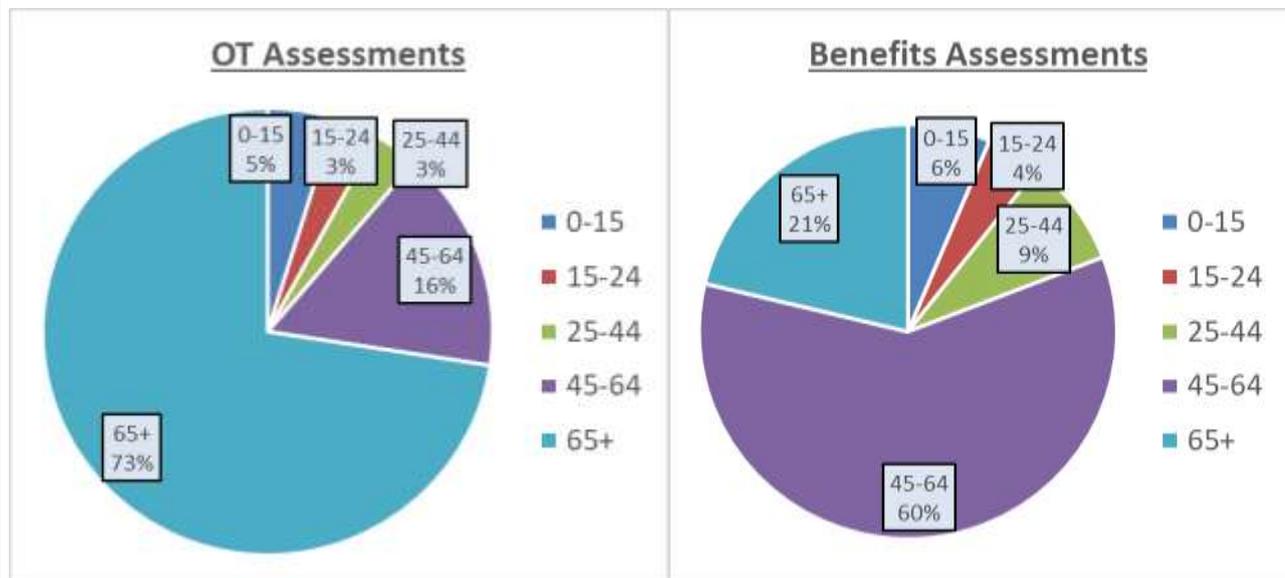
Value of Awards

So far this year, I have raised £451,405.55 for clients in claim and appeals. In addition, Desna raised £192,941.09 during the year she worked at the Independent Living Centre.

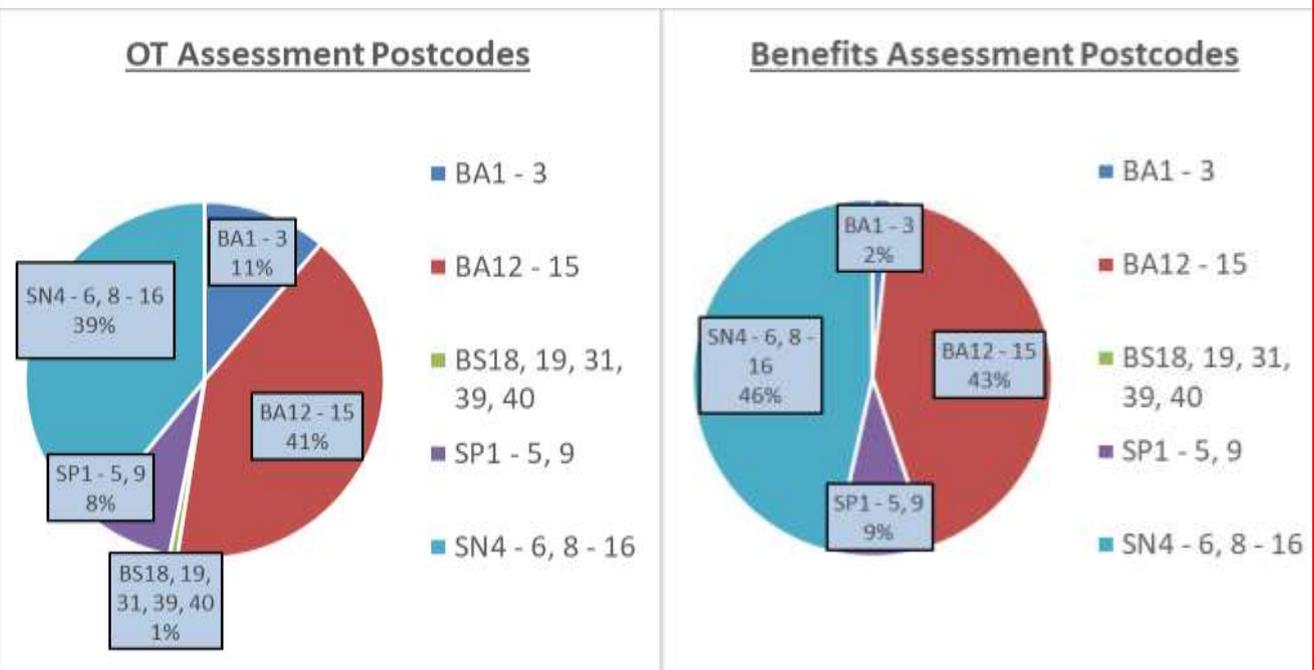
Sheila Bluer
Benefits Adviser

A Flavour of our Current Activities – 2018

Age range of clients visiting the centre July – Sept 2018

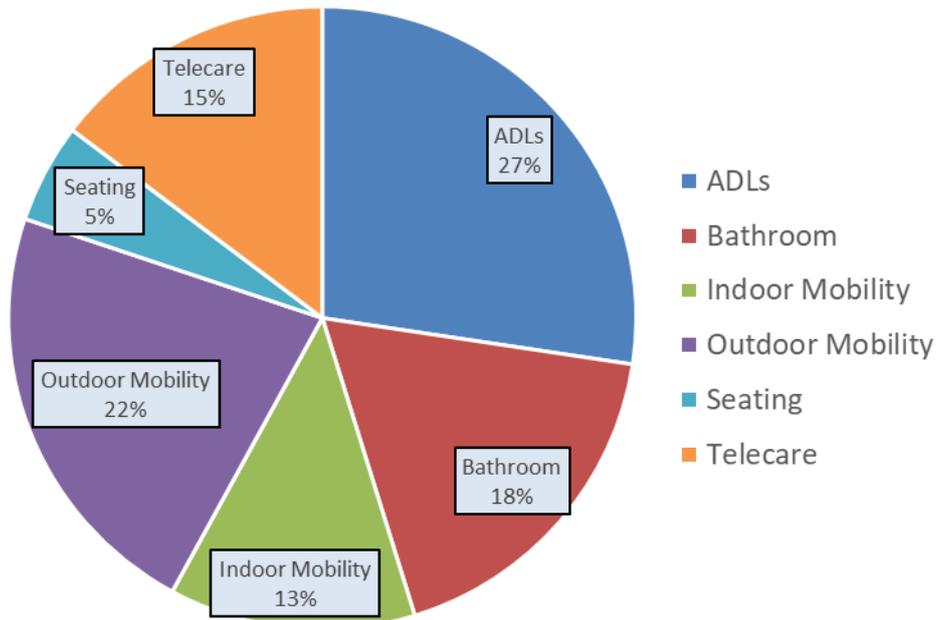


Postcode area of clients visiting the centre July – Sept 2018



Reason for visiting the centre July – Sept 2018

OT Assessments



Benefits Assessments

