



# **The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Limited**

(A company limited by guarantee)

Charity Name: The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Limited

Company registration number: 2535179

Charity registration number: 10000659

**Report and Financial Statements  
For the Year Ended 31 March 2021**

## Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present the directors' report and unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

### Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Limited  
Known As: The Independent Living Centre (ILC), Semington  
Company registration number: 2535179  
Charity registration number: 10000659  
Registered Office and operational address:  
The Independent Living Centre, St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire BA14 6JQ

### Trustees

Dr A K Clarke (President)  
Professor N Harris (Chair)  
Mr A Veasey (Treasurer) - Appointed 9 March 2021  
Mr J Hurn  
Dr J Bradbrooke  
Mrs L Jeggo  
Mrs J Hillier  
Mr E Clifford  
Mrs S Harding  
Mr B Wade  
Miss C Gregory - Resigned 22 July 2020  
Mrs C Leake - Resigned 31 August 2020  
Mrs T Njakayaka-Skews - Appointed 8 September 2020  
Mrs J Prior - Appointed 20 September 2020

### Chief Executive Officer

Mr Kevin Fairman

### Company Secretary

Mr E Clifford - Appointed 9 March 2021  
Mrs J Hervin - Resigned 9 March 2021

### Independent Examiners –

Haines Watts - Chartered Accountants. Enterprise House, Timbrell Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8PL

### Bankers -

Lloyds Bank, Trowbridge

## **Our Aims and Objectives**

### **Purposes and Aims**

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's Memorandum of Association are:

*To advance the care, treatment and education of people with disabilities, in particular by the provision of a permanent exhibition of a comprehensive range of aids and equipment.*

Our aim fully reflects the purposes that the charity was set up to assist older people (65+) and adults/children with disabilities to remain in their own homes and maintain independence by helping them and their carers by recommending practical solutions to the challenges of daily living, and the charity

- provides impartial information and assessments to members of the public and professionals,
- provides training opportunities for Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and other allied Health Professionals, and
- advises on disability benefits, help complete forms, and aid with appeals.

### **Ensuring our work delivers our aims**

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we are set up to help.

The review also helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aim and objectives and in planning our future activities.

In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set and consider our approach to risk management.

### **The focus of our work**

We have continued our work to provide information to people who require disability equipment, which empowers them in the purchasing process from suppliers, or provision through social services. We aim to provide a consistent high-quality service and have introduced systems to collect feedback on our performance from our clients.

The strategies we used to meet these objectives included:

- Upgrading the ILC website to make it more accessible and provide more information.
- Attending events and promoting the ILC on community websites, newspapers and contacting community organisation such as charities, doctor's surgeries, to ensure residents of Wiltshire and BANES know about our services.
- The provision of free assessments of our clients' needs, liaising with local suppliers to ensure up-to-date equipment is available for demonstration. The Occupational Therapy team is then able to provide an independent recommendation to our client.
- Continue to provide advice on disability benefits, assist with the completion of benefit claims forms, and with appeals.
- The appointment of a Chief Executive (part-time) to direct our work and seek opportunities to develop our services.

### **How our activities deliver public benefit**

All our charitable activities focus on the empowerment of people with disabilities and enabling them to live as full and active life as possible.

### **Who used and benefited from our services?**

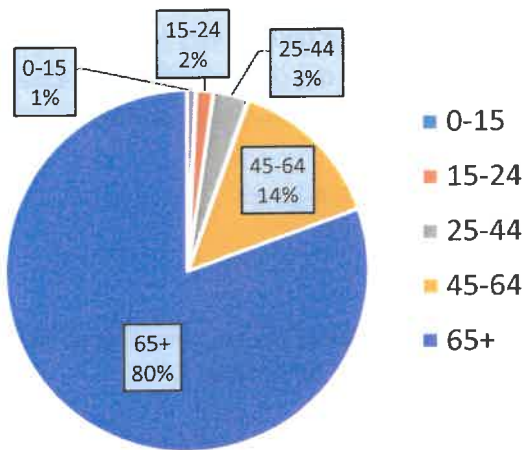
Funding provided by Wiltshire and Bath & North East Somerset (BANES) limits the services we provide to residents and professionals who work in these two geographical areas.

The Occupational Therapy team is employed part time and can only provide 12 full assessments a week. However, we increase the number of people we support by offering advice and information via email and phone. All our services are provided free of charge to our clients.

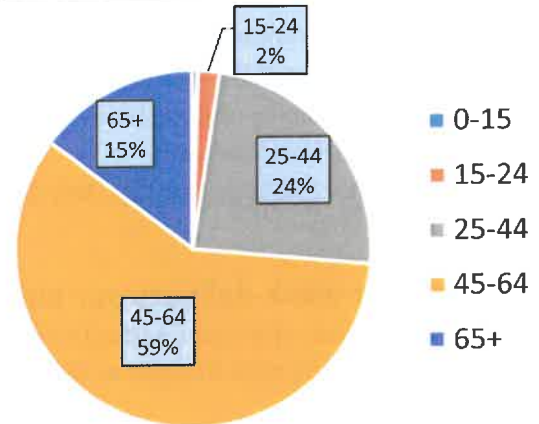
Equal access to our services is an important issue for us. We monitor access by age, gender, disability, and location, and seek to provide a high quality experience to all communities that use our services.

Key performance indicators of our work are shown in the charts below.

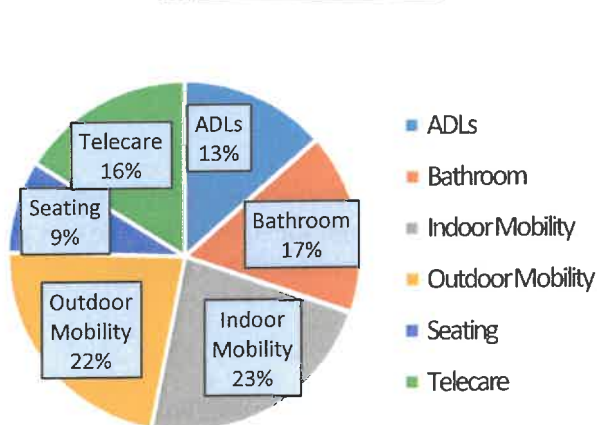
**Age of clients receiving OT advice**



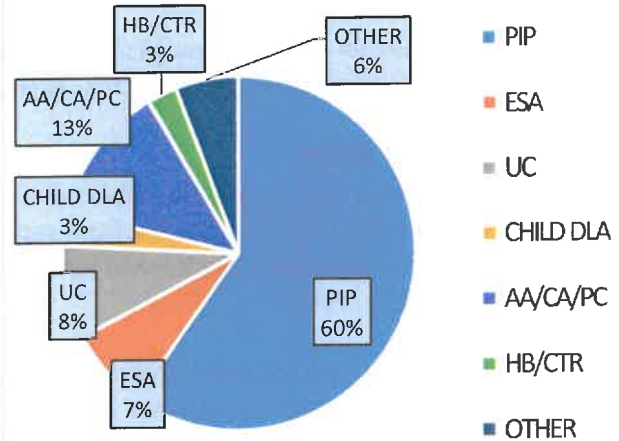
**Age of clients receiving benefits advice**



**Type of OT assessment**



**Type of benefits assessment**



**Guide to acronyms**

ADLs	Assisted Daily Living, e.g. dressing, bedroom, kitchen
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
ESA	Employment Support Allowance
UC	Universal Credit
CHILD DLA	Child Disability Living Allowance
AA	Attendance Allowance
CA	Carers Allowance
HB	Housing Benefit
CTR	Council Tax Reduction
PC	Pension Credits

## Chair of Trustees Report

Thanks to the remarkable success of the UK vaccination programme, we are emerging from lock down and the worst of Covid-19. Like everywhere else, Covid restrictions severely curtailed the work of the ILC and for many months we were only able to offer a basic telephone advice service and more recently, a limited number of face to face appointments. I would like to recognise the great work of Chantelle, our Office Manager, in maintaining essential services during this time.

This year has also been one of change. At the beginning of the year, the contract with Wiltshire Council for the provision of the independent advice service expired. This has now been renewed for an 18-month period with Medequip, the Community Equipment Service Provider. We have worked with Medequip for many years, and this has provided some temporary stability.

In May 2021, Chris Bott, our Occupational Therapist (OT), stepped down to take up a new role with Wiltshire Health and Care. Chris has done outstanding work in leading the independent living advice and assessment service. We will miss her expertise but wish her well in her new role. It may take some time to recruit a new OT, as their skills and expertise are very much in demand, so I do apologise for any delay in reopening our assessment service. I would also like to thank our Occupational Therapist Assistant, Lindsay who has been a valuable support in the absence of an OT and has helped us continue to keep things running smoothly in preparation for our full service to resume.

After many years as our Benefits Adviser, Sheila Bluer, has retired. The ILC established the service in 2009, to help those with long term disabilities to access the support they need and are entitled to. During this time, Sheila may have helped as many as 5,000 people access personal independence payments and other benefits. We know that these are a massive help and enable people to live independently. Although our finances are challenging and Sheila's expertise will be hard to replace, we are looking at options to continue running the service.

Kevin Freeman, our Chief Executive also retired in May 2021. Kevin has done great work in improving the finances of the Centre and he will be missed. We wish him well and are pleased to welcome Tracy Sullivan as our new CEO. Tracy brings a wealth of experience and local knowledge and we are all looking forward to working with her.

Finally, I would like to welcome several new Trustees, to the ILC. The Trustees give up their time voluntarily and provide vital expertise and oversight to the running of the charity. We are keen that our Trustees reflect the diversity and range of people in our local community, so please do get in touch with us if you feel that you have relevant skills or experience and would like to support our work in this way.

Nigel Harris  
Chair of Trustees

## Chief Executive Report

As the ILC's newly appointed CEO I have been in a really privileged position to see the ILC and its work through fresh eyes. What I have discovered is a team of passionate staff and volunteers who really care about the people they support, an organisation that meets a vital need and makes a huge difference to people's lives, physical independence and mental health as well as being custodians of an amazing building that plays a key part in supporting other charities to do their essential work.

The ILC has challenges to face, as so many small charities do, but I see many opportunities for us to grow in sustainability and make an even greater difference.

Key aims for the coming year are to:

1. Review our business plan and carry out an options appraisal to identify the most sustainable and effective future for the ILC
2. To recruit an Occupational Therapist to join our team and help us to grow our assessment offer.
3. To fund raise to be able to re offer a benefits support service and train staff and volunteers to ensure we can offer this to more people in the future
4. To support our current tenants to carry out their work and to offer accessible space to other organisations that may be needing space to bring their staff together.

I am confident with the skills and commitment we have in our staff and Trustees we will be able to celebrate a really positive year that will stand us in good stead for the future.

Tracy Sullivan  
Chief Executive

## Office Manager Report

In April 2020 we all very quickly had to get used to a new way of working, initially closing the building apart from a daily check of answer machine messages and post collection, while offering telephone and email advice and signposting rather than face-to-face appointments. It became normal to catch up with colleagues virtually over Zoom rather than in the office. As lockdown eased we were able to offer a limited number of in-person assessments again, with careful procedures in place such as a reduced staff rota, and temperature checks at the door upon entry. We were also able to begin offering room hire again for essential health and care agencies and other key workers to complete people handling training, which was more important than ever during that time.

Although at the time of writing we are unfortunately unable to offer appointments while we recruit a new Occupational Therapist, we are pleased that Wiltshire Council OTs have been using the centre and our wide range of equipment to do their own assessments with their clients, ensuring that people are still getting the support they need. Our Occupational Therapy Assistant Lindsay has been continuing to answer information requests from clients and professionals, while keeping the equipment and information packs on site maintained and up to date ready for when we start appointments again. During this process, we were happy to be able to support local charity Belief in Action by donating some discontinued mobility equipment to be sent to disadvantaged communities in Romania.

### Statistics

Our Occupational Therapist was able to complete 300 telephone assessments during lockdown, and nearly 100 face-to-face appointments during the times restrictions were lifted. There were also over 450 information requests from clients, family members and professionals, and nearly 1000 general enquiries.

### Client Feedback

Here are a few of the comments left on our online feedback form. These were all from appointments which took place with Covid-19 safety precautions in place.

*"We find Christine Bott OT always very understanding and appreciates our needs. She is very patient and well informed and explained a number of options to consider to make our home more accessible, especially the kitchen. We would highly recommend your service."*

*"Very informative, sympathetic, knowledgeable in no way patronising, given plenty of time and lots of ideas suitable for my needs. A very good experience."*

*"Helpful, clear advice given in a friendly manner."*

*"Very helpful staff. Look forward to visiting again in the future."*

Chantelle Mead  
Office Manager

## Benefits Adviser Report

This year of the pandemic has meant a different approach to Benefits advice, but it has been a vital service and much needed, if not more so than usual. At the beginning of the date of this report, there was full lockdown but the service was able to continue by telephone. When the first lockdown ended, face to face appointments were offered, then the second lockdown saw a return to phone appointments only. Face to face appointments then resumed towards the end of this year.

At first it was difficult to foresee how telephone appointments would work, but for the majority of clients, they were fine - if help with form filling was required, the client would fill in the information during the phone call after being advised what to write. In some cases where a client was unable to write, notes were taken over the phone, typed up and posted to the client who then attached the notes with the form and posted to the relevant Department. In all these cases, the benefit outcome was successful.

Appeal Tribunal hearings have also been conducted over the phone, with up to five people on the call - made up of three Tribunal panel members, the client and representative.

Take up of the Benefits service were initially a little slow at the start of the first lockdown for various reasons. It appears that some people thought that they were not able to apply for benefits because everything had shut down. In addition the Government decided not to send out renewal forms, instead they extended awards that were due to come to an end. During the lockdown period, I compiled several Benefits Newsletters which were uploaded on the ILC website with the aim of keeping people up to date of changes to the benefit system that were happening.

### Types of Benefit Enquiries

The majority of the advice required was for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and help with completing the paper claim form as well as appeals against a decision not to award PIP. There were 134 new clients, with some clients needing advice on more than one type of benefit, hence the difference in the number of clients versus the number of benefit types. The categories of advice given can be seen in the pie chart on page 4.

In addition, there was one query for each of the following: Discretionary Housing Payment, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Local Welfare Assistance, Social Care, advice about taking a case to Upper Tribunal, Covid Employment Support Payment, and the legality of being asked to wear a face covering.

### Appeals

This year there were ten appeals that were supported. One subsequently withdrew their appeal following advice, five were successful before the hearing and four were successful after the hearing. Two more that had been taken on last year were heard this year and were also successful.

### Amount of Awards

Clients were awarded a total of £465,218 although the actual amount is probably higher, as there were several who could not be contacted or had not had their award decided.

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As I am retiring I am giving the total amount of awards gained for clients since 2012. This includes £64,433 gained for clients in April and May 2021. The total amount of known awards is £4,120,380.

Sheila Bluer  
Benefits Advisor

## **Financial Review**

The net deficit for the year amounted to £13,069 which has been met from unrestricted reserves.

The reduction in the net deficit from £32,127 in 2020 to £13,069 in 2021 is largely due to a reduction in our maintenance expenditure following investment in roof repairs in 2019, in addition to a small increase in our grant income. This has helped us to limit the impact of the reduced income and increased expenditure we have experienced due to Covid-19 and stands us in good stead for the coming year.

## **Principal Funding Sources**

Our advice and assessment service is funded by Wiltshire County Council, through a contract with Medequip, and directly from BANES Council.

At the beginning of the year, the contract with Wiltshire Council for the provision of the independent advice service expired. This has now been renewed for an 18-month period with Medequip, the Community Equipment Service Provider. We have worked with Medequip for many years, and this has provided some temporary stability. Our contract with BANES is secured until March 2022.

The Centre has a retail area, with a range of small goods, such as walking sticks, cups, cutlery, medication aids; this provides a small income, via sales commission.

The benefits service is supported entirely by grants and donations, income from hiring out meeting and training rooms, and the rental of office space in our building to other charities.

As a result of decreased rental revenue, the charity is seeking to increase funding from other sources so that we can extend our services and help more people.

We welcome donations from visitors to the centre, and via the website.

## **Investment Policy**

The Charity does not have any significant capital investments.

## **Reserves Policy**

The Charity's reserves policy is to hold at a minimum of £20,000 of the unrestricted funds as cash on deposit or in the bank to cover the redundancy costs of ILC staff should redundancies occur.

Free reserves at the year-end (unrestricted reserves not represented by fixed assets and investments) amounted to £30,563.

## **Plans for the future**

The charity plans to continue the activities outlined above in the forthcoming years, subject to available funding.

We have continued to operate at a deficit, which has reduced our reserves and is not sustainable in the long term. The Trustees and Chief Executive will work together to secure additional income from charitable funds, grants and commercial activities to reduce the current deficit.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

### **Governing Document**

The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 29 August 1990 and registered as a charity on 25 October 1990. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

### **Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law. The Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting, with any casual vacancies arising during the year being filled by the co-option of additional Trustees. The Trustees are chosen for their breadth of experience in disability issues and business skills, although persons with additional and wide ranging skills are encouraged to become Trustees to add to the overall skill levels available to be called upon. In an effort to maintain this broad skill mix, Trustees provide a list of their skills (and update it each year) and in the event of particular skills being lost due to resignation, these are highlighted in recruitment advertisements.



All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 7 to the accounts. The Honorary Treasurer receives an Honorarium, documented in the accounts.

## **Trustee Induction and Training**

We have a Trustee induction programme, which includes familiarisation with the work of the ILC, by attending sessions with the Occupational Therapist team and Benefits Advisor.

We are a member of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and provide access to their on-line training materials.

## **Risk Management**

The Trustees have conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to the centre. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

## **Organisational Structure**

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met, and has responsibility alongside the Office Manager for the day to day operational management of the Centre, individual supervision of the ILC staff team and also ensuring that the team continue to develop their skills and working practices.

Dr AK Clarke is the President of the Charity. The board of Trustees appoints a Chair and Honorary Treasurer at the Annual Meeting.

## **Related Parties**

The ILC independent advice service is delivered in partnership with Medequip, who provide the Community Equipment Service for Wiltshire Council.

## **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is not appropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis.

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees, who are directors for the purpose of company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on Page 2.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware; and
- as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

## **Independent Examiners**

Haines Watts were re-appointed as the charitable company's Independent Examiners during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (issued in March 2005) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small entities.

Approved by the board of Trustees on 14th September 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nigel Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Professor N D Harris, Chair of Trustees, Director**