

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED PEOPLE



Independent Living Fund announces cutbacks.

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) has announced that from the 1st May 2010 it will be making severe restrictions to the eligibility criteria for disabled people who wish to access their funds.

What is the independent living fund(ILF)?

The ILF is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body of the Department for Work and Pensions.

It is open to applications from severely disabled people who meet its eligibility criteria and are permanent residents in the United Kingdom.

It was set up to provide cash payments, controlled by the disabled people, as a flexible alternative to traditional services e.g. attending day centres, purchasing care from an agency or pay the wages of a privately employed Personal Assistant (PA) or enabling disabled people to choose whether they want to live in the community rather than in residential care.

In today's economic climate, in order to meet demand, local authorities often fund only a minimal level of support to meet people's basic needs. ILF has been a crucial top up to this. It supports disabled people to fully participate in society by paying for support over and above the critical level of support offered at a local level.

ilf

Independent
living fund

The current conditions that need to be met in order to receive payments from the ILF are that applicants must :

- be in receipt of at least £320 worth of support a week from social services. This is the support could be going to a day-centre or getting money from a direct payments scheme, for example
- get the higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- be at least 16 and under 65
- have less than £23,000 in savings/ capital
- be assessed as having support needs
- be living in the United Kingdom

The Changes

The amount the local authorities must contribute to support packages has been raised from £320-£340 per week.

Current Priority System (until 1st May 2010) to access this money is:

Priority 1:

- Those in work or self-employed for at least 16 hours per week.

Priority 2:

- Those in receipt of Income Support, Pension Guarantee Credit, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support

Allowance, or have an income similar to Income Support level. People with income no more than 25% above Income Support level.

If someone qualifies, the ILF can then offer up to £475 per week on top of the local authority contribution to a care package. It, therefore, acts as a top up for care packages that exceed £320 per week.

The current qualifying conditions for ILF, indicated by the priorities above, ensure that payments are targeted at those adults with the highest level of support needs.

New Priority System (from 1st May 2010)

Priority 1

➤ People already in receipt of ILF.

Priority 2

➤ Those in 16 hours or more of work per week.

In a letter to Yvette Cooper, UK Work and Pensions Secretary, Public Health Minister Shona Robison complained that Scottish ministers had been left out of consultation on the changes (as had any Disabled

People's Organisations).

Ms Robison wrote "These changes will exclude their applications of severely disabled individuals with newly-assessed needs. Supporting these individuals is supposed to be the main focus of the ILF. Excluding new applications in this way discriminates against the most vulnerable people in our society."

A spokesman for Ms Robison said the ILF income is worth £61 million in Scotland, 17% of the funds UK budget.

Ms Robison added "In Scotland, our best estimate is only four individuals will be eligible for ILF based on these criteria in the coming year."

People have been offered the chance to tell ILF about any other priority groups they feel should be there, or to talk about what the new priority system means to them, up until the 30th of May, there is no commitment to change the decision. This timescale happens after the priority system is in place.

Millionaire car dealer is exposed as disabled badge parking cheat!

A MILLIONAIRE who drives a £118,000 Ferrari is a disabled badge parking cheat.

The millionaire left his gleaming dream car on a single yellow line for FIVE HOURS outside the headquarters of Scotland's prosecution service.

There were paid spaces nearby. But Fortune, who has nothing physically wrong with him, chose to rely on a blue badge he's not entitled to use.

The Daily Record stated the 41-year-old car dealer arrived outside the Crown Office in Edinburgh in his luxurious Ferrari F430 supercar. The millionaire was alone in the car as he parked on the yellow line and sauntered away. A parking warden later walked past the car, and bemused passers-by pointed out the badge on display.

The millionaire was alone again five hours later when he arrived back at the car and

climbed in while talking on his mobile phone. The conversation ended before he drove away.

When the Daily Record confronted The millionaire he denied being a blue badge abuser. Before hanging up on our reporter, he said: "I don't use a disabled badge. I am not a disabled person, no. "Somebody is obviously at the wind-up with you. Don't pester me again." - Later, Fortune phoned back and left a message saying: "Before you make any allegations regarding blue badges, find out exactly who the blue badge is registered to." "Once you find that out, you will be fully aware that person has my authority to be driven in my car or drive the car. Fortune didn't realise he had been caught on camera. His attempted excuses make no difference under blue badge rules, which say they may only be used for the benefit of those they are issued to.

Mar 29 2010 By Lynn Davidson/ Daily Record

Are we there yet?

The Charity Guide Dogs is campaigning for a change to the regulations to make the provisions for visual and audio information for passengers mandatory on board all buses and coaches in the united Kingdom.

Clear audible and visual announcements about the next stop, route of travel and final destination will enable disabled people and elderly people to use public transport safely and with confidence by allowing them to know where the bus or the coach is. En-route on some public transport buses and coaches the drivers change and have to relay a lot of information and overlook to inform the new driver that a disabled or elderly person is getting off at a certain stop and take the disabled or elderly person a long distance passed their desired stop, this system would also benefit tourists who would listen out for the information and know where to alight public transport.



The new law requires new trains and trams to have a audio visual information service but not buses and coaches, it is time for buses and coaches to catch up,

some bus companies have already rolled out an audio visual information service and report that customer satisfaction levels have risen substantially.

So when trams come to Edinburgh and the Waverly train line is opened they will both have a audio visual information service informing all travellers where they are

Guide Dogs is encouraging supporters to contact their local MP asking them to sign EDM506 and to write to Sadiq Khan the minister responsible for public transport, supporters can do this through the Guide Dogs website at

www.guidedogs.org.uk/talkingbuses

Taxes or Services?

South Carolina Lawmakers are considering cutting all services for nearly 26,000 disabled people. This would mean that the state would provide support for only 4,800 disabled people in group homes or institutions, the only type of care the federal government requires the state to provide.

Theoretically, others who need support could move to those facilities, but there are only two open spaces in the entire system and those are reserved for those with the most critical needs.

The Lawmakers say they have little choice. They are trying to close a shortfall in next year's budget. Other states have raised taxes to deal with the same problems but South Carolina is a heavily Republican state where tax increases are not

considered a viable option.

The impact of disabled people in South Carolina will be devastating, especially with respect to independent living and basic health care.

Adaptations that allow people to stay in their homes will not be funded, day care centres will close and about 50% of the state's Medicaid recipients would lose prescription coverage.

South Carolina's population is 4.5 million only 500,000 lower than that of Scotland.

Like South Carolina, Scotland under SNP rule, does not consider tax increases as an option to help disabled people.

The cost of freezing Scotland's council tax for a third year is £310 million. The total sum raised in charges for adult care in Scotland for 2008/09 was £350 million.



EQUAL CITIZENSHIP – MAKING IT HAPPEN

WORKING TOGETHER TO ALLOW DISABLED PEOPLE TO HAVE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AT HOME AND WORK, IN EDUCATION AND IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

Equal Citizenship event happened on 30th April in the Croft Suite, 74 The Loan, Loanhead. Around 65 people were in attendance, an equal mix of disabled people and staff from Midlothian Council Social Work, NHS Lothian and the Voluntary Sector. The day began with introductory and welcoming speeches from Jeff Adamson, Chair of Forward Mid and Colin Anderson, Director of Communities and Wellbeing, Midlothian Social Work.

Jeff Adamson spoke about the importance of partnership working, coproduction and the very real influence and involvement that Forward Mid had achieved, both in planning the day and shaping the strategy for disabled people in Midlothian. In addition he also spoke about the new Directory for Disabled People in Midlothian, a new 72 page resource guide, CD Rom and Web based information resource that will hopefully assist disabled people, their families or carers to find practical, useful information which could improve their quality of life.

Colin Anderson echoed much of Jeff's message around disabled people and Social Work and Health professionals working together and shaping better services that meet people's needs as we move forward into potentially difficult financial climate.

The heart of the event was when attendees moved into four groupings each group reflecting a particular focus on the disabled people's strategy for Midlothian.

- Independent Living and Transport
- Day/Evening opportunities and employment
- Housing and Accessible Buildings
- Rehabilitation/respite and short breaks

There was vibrant discussion and exchanges of views in the working groups as people explored how the strategy may impact positively in their lives, and importantly what else may need to be in place to ensure equality of opportunity for disabled people in Midlothian. A healthy sign of how engaged people were in the working groups was how difficult it was to get them to stop talking and take some lunch. Over lunch they had an opportunity to visit a range of stalls including Local Area Coordination; Remploy; Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living; Midlothian Access Panel; Midlothian Community Physical Rehabilitation Team. Lothian Regional Transport had also provided a new double decked bus on site and wheelchair users in particular were able to "try out" the accessibility of the vehicle as well as speak to LRT staff about any issues regarding their experience of bus travel in Midlothian.

The day was brought to a close with summaries from each working group describing the key issues for participants. These comments will form the body of a report from the day which will be available by the end of May 2010.

Jeff Adamson and Colin Anderson then closed the day thanking people for their participation and acknowledging once again the equal status of the event both in its planning participation and execution. The Directory for Disabled People was distributed to each participant as they left the event.

Thanks to all who contributed to the success of the Equal Citizenship Event. If you would like to know more or be involved in what happens next you can contact Eric Johnstone on 0131 663 9471 or Anthea Christie on 0131 271 3670.

Pictures from the meeting in loanhead





The Mobility Roadshow®

the future of mobility

The annual mobility and lifestyle event, showcasing a huge variety of products and services to aid an independent lifestyle. The Mobility Roadshow aims to give anyone with a mobility problem - drivers, passengers, adults or children - the chance to assess what is available to help solve that problem and most importantly to try out and evaluate the options in a 'no pressure' environment.

Mobility choice, the charity that organises the annual UK Mobility Roadshow, has announced plans for the fourth Mobility Roadshow Scotland. It returns to the Royal Highland Centre near Edinburgh over two days, Friday 17th and Saturday 18th September 2010.

This national event brings together on one site the widest choice of mobility, healthcare and rehabilitation products, services and information for disabled and older people throughout Scotland and the North of England, for whom help with mobility ensures a more active and independent lifestyle.

A free event, this is a rare opportunity to test drive adapted vehicles plus drive-from-wheelchair and wheelchair passenger models from a range of motor marques and conversion specialists, as well as motoring accessories such as hand controls, steering wheel knobs, adapted mirrors and rotating seats.

Visitors can also compare and try hundreds of wheelchairs, scooters, mobility cycles, exercise equipment, helpful products for use at home, accessible holidays, advice and information, plus take part in disability sports.

Did you know?

- There are around 9.8 million disabled people in the UK, that's over 15% of the population.
- There are 2.3 million blue badge holders in the UK, indicating that they have a significant mobility problem.
- Mobility vehicles represent around 20% of the UK car market.
- Over 5.5 million disabled people are of working age, which represents 16% of the working population. However only 50% of disabled people of working age are in employment compared to 87% of non-disabled people of working age.
- By the year 2010, 40% of the UK population will be over 45 - the age at which the incidence of disability begins to increase significantly.
- The estimated annual purchasing power of people with disabilities is £40-£50 billion
- Over half the population over 75 has some kind of disability – 70% have difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
- 85% of disabled people in the UK were not born disabled, but became so in later life through accident or illness.
- 66% of disabled people are older people. In the next 50 years the number of over 60s will double and the number of over 80s will treble.

For more information please visit the Motability website www.mobilityroadshow.co.uk/

Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at www.forwardmid.org.uk
For alternative publication please E-mail to eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471 or write to him at MVA 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.