

Bulletin



07747 460727
www.familycarers.org.uk

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Welcome to this week's Bulletin from the National Family Carer Network. You are receiving this because you are members of our organisation. If you no longer wish to subscribe please contact info@familycarers.org.uk.

Contents:

1. Oi Mei Li continues as Director
2. Funding for Social Care
3. Save Legal Aid

1. Oi Mei Li continues as Director

The NFCN are pleased to announce that following a 6 month term as Interim Director, Oi Mei Li will be staying on as Director to bring continuation and development of the NFCN.

Further to the Membership Survey in 2011, some changes have been made and we will continue to offer the membership benefits that you told us were important to you.

We will be updating the 'When something goes wrong' factsheet available on the National Family Carer website www.familycarers.org.uk and in partnership with other organisations we are currently awaiting confirmation of funding to produce a series of resources for family carers on safeguarding.

We will continue to provide an independent voice (as a non-provider organisation), collate and summarise key consultations and provide policy briefings.

In the current economic climate, there are many proposed cuts and reforms to services. Our newsletter this week concentrates on 2 current issues which will affect families of adults with a learning disability and lets you know what you can do to ensure that you can have a say on these too.

2. Funding for Social Care

The government is making changes to the way that social care is being provided to people with disabilities and older people.

Adult social care means the care and support provided by local authority social services to meet their responsibilities towards adults who need extra support. It can include the provision of:

Traditional services such as:

- day centres
- equipment and adaptations
- meals and home care.

Non-traditional services such as:

- art therapy
- personal assistants
- emotional support, and classes or courses.

Services that are provided to carers such as:

- help with travel expenses,
- respite care
- career advice.

The mechanisms for delivering services, such as:

- assessment
- personal budgets
- direct payments.

The Government has promised a white paper in the spring to make recommendations on reforming the Social Care system. It will take into account the recommendations put forward from the [Dilnot report](#) which made recommendations on the wide scale reform of Social Care including some specific figures on capping for older care. The [Law Commission](#) also made recommendations about social care law being reformed so that people can get the support they need when they need it.

The National Family Carer Network really wants to make sure that the Government makes a commitment to reform social care by ensuring that it considers the needs of people with learning disabilities and their family carers, many who provide life long care. We want to make sure that there is enough funding in the system to ensure that Local Authorities can provide quality services throughout the lives of people with learning disabilities.

To ensure that the voices of people with learning disabilities and their families are heard, the National Family Carer Network is working with

other organisations on the Care and Support Alliance and the Learning Disability Coalition.

There will be a care lobby on TUESDAY 6th MARCH in London to tell MP's that reforming Social Care must be a big priority. If you want to attend, please [complete this online form](#) to register your attendance at the event and help make an appointment with your MP on the day. If you are unsure about going on your own or would like to meet up with other families which include an adult learning disabilities, please do not hesitate to contact Oi Mei by email: oimei@familycarers.org.uk or t: 07747 460727 and I will try to link you up with other families.

3. Save Legal Aid

Access to Free legal advice to ensure that everyone is treated fairly under the law is important to many family carers and people with learning disabilities who can't afford to pay for legal advice.

If legal aid advice is removed, people with the highest level of need will be left to navigate their way through a system that requires nearly 9,000 pages of official guidance to get the support they rely on to lead their daily lives.

The welfare benefits system is undergoing fundamental reform at the same time as Part 1 of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Bill will remove all legal help with welfare benefit issues from the scope of legal aid. This denies support to at least 135,000 cases each year for an upfront saving of £25m. A disproportionate 78,000 of those affected – 58% - are disabled.

The National Family Carer Network is supporting Justice for All and Save Legal Aid. We have been asked to pull together a very short briefing on the impact of the legal aid cuts on carers. If you have been helped by Legal Aid, we would like to know how this has helped you. Please contact Oi Mei: oimei@familycarers.org.uk or tel: 07747 460727

There is also a useful page for actions here: <http://www.justice-for-all.org.uk/Take-part>. An easy one is the 38degrees petition, but if people want to be more involved, Justice for All runs a scheme called pair up with a peer, where an individual with specific concerns about the bill emails a peer who may have related interests to encourage them to speak and vote at debates.

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NFCN is an umbrella organisation that aims to promote the voice and rights of family carers supporting a person with a LD. Its membership comprises both organisations and individuals but we cannot be responsible at any time for the views expressed by our members unless explicitly promoted by us.