

Julie Morgan AC/AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Your ref: P-05-771

Janet Finch-Saunders AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

4 March 2020

Dear Janet,

I wrote to you on 24 July last year to provide the Committee with an update on the independent care assessments I have introduced for recipients of payments from the former Welsh Independent Living Grant (WILG). This was in connection with Petition P-05-771 from Nathan Davies, which I understand the Committee is still considering.

These independent care assessments are to provide the opportunity of a second opinion for those former recipients of WILG payments who were dissatisfied with the outcome of their local authority care assessment. Those local authority assessments were undertaken as part of the transition of WILG recipients' care to their local authority to support their ability to live independently at home and in the community. I am now writing to provide a further update on progress on the independent care assessments.

I attach a copy of a Written Statement I have recently issued on this subject. This sets out the progress to date and the early indications from those independent assessments completed thus far. From this you will see that all of the independent assessments requested have now been completed, quality assured and passed to the respective local authority to consider. In over half of the cases a discussion of the outcome has taken place between a social worker from ICS Assessment Services (the organisation appointed to undertake these) and the relevant local authority's social worker, with the remaining discussions taking place over the next few weeks. Following these discussions, meetings with former recipients have begun, with outcomes for those people being agreed and starting to be put in place.

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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.

While it is too soon to comment on the overall outcomes from these independent assessments you will see that in a number of cases individuals are receiving larger care packages than expected, potentially because some individuals are at the transition point for NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC). Having reflected on this I have instructed my officials to undertake a review of the direct payments for social care and CHC interface. This is with a view to determining whether there are other mechanisms, for example independent users' trusts, that could be used to ensure people that need more support from the NHS are not put in a position of losing the team of personal assistants they have funded through direct payments, with relationships built up over a number of years. If a better more equitable way can be found, this would remove the apparent fear that some people feel about the prospect of CHC.

As the outcomes across the span of independent assessments are confirmed I would reiterate my earlier commitment that the cost of these assessments, and any additional social care that might be identified from them, will be met by the Welsh Government. This is so that there can be no question of changes being made to people's care and support as a cost cutting measure. The under-pinning principle of my approach is to ensure that outcomes reached are fair and consistent with supporting people's agreed wellbeing outcomes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Julie', written in black ink.

**Julie Morgan AC/AM**

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Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services