



# Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition for Action NEWS LETTER

March 2021

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## Cautious Celebration

Following a successful AGM, we now have the necessary personnel for the Coalition to move forward and implement exciting, innovative policies and projects. If you have been considering giving up some of your time to volunteer then now is an excellent time to consider coming on board with the Coalition. We have some spectacular projects we want to launch, presenting volunteers with an opportunity to get involved with the initial stages and contribute to their initiation, development and flourishing.

Before I move on I would like to thank all who contributed and helped make the AGM happen, securing the future for the Coalition. Administration duties are not one of my strong points and for someone who only volunteered to help with the website and create a Facebook page, I now find myself occupying the roles of Chair, Secretary (temporarily) and Development Officer and no longer have the time for managing the website. This neatly brings me to the first volunteer role we need to fill.

**Wanted;** Volunteer with WordPress skills to manage our website. Initially probably no more than one or two hours a week. The Coalition has a new project in the pipeline to deliver information tailored to the wants and needs of disabled and elderly people in Carmarthenshire and provide a guide to services, places and events that are accessible with proper facilities. We have a title for the project, "Carmarthenshire Can Do ©" and yes we have copyrighted the name. This will take the form of a 'stand alone' website with its own name though still under the Disability Coalition 'umbrella'. *Ed. I'm not a big fan of all these trendy catchphrases. The Coalition doesn't have an umbrella. I just hate it when BJ comes on the news and starts talking about the 'road map' for Covid. I guess we all have to move with the times!*

We are considering the feasibility of producing a paper version for people who are not conversant with IT. There is some considerable way to go before we can actually say one way or another whether this idea will come into being as it goes against the general policy of reducing the use of paper.

## NHS Care Funding

### **Must I pay for my own Residential or In-Home Healthcare if I own Assets?**

A common myth is that if a person owns assets, including property, then they must pay for their own care. This is incorrect and incomplete information, as the value of your assets is irrelevant for HEALTH care and is only taken into account for SOCIAL care. In law, all UK citizens ordinarily resident in the UK are entitled to free HEALTH care under the National Health Service (NHS) whether in hospital, at home or in a residential nursing care facility.

Unfortunately, for a number of reasons the NHS often incorrectly denies funding because in practice the application process is flawed, overly complicated, confusing even to members of the NHS, and motivated by financial rather than medical objectives.

If a care need can be identified as SOCIAL (such as lack of mobility) rather than HEALTH (dementia, cancer, etc.) then the NHS will determine that care should not be funded by them, but rather by a local authority. This then means that the patient must pay for their own care if they own assets of £23,250 or greater, including property.

Thus, the vast majority of patients with long term health needs are refused NHS Care funding and understandably simply accept this.

However, once patients and their relatives are aware that the law protects their right to NHS funding for genuine healthcare needs, they simply need to adopt a proven process in order to obtain funding or appeal an incorrect refusal for NHS Care funding.

Professor Luke Clements delivers a lecture on NHS Continuing Health Care & Law (3rd revised edition) Click [HERE](#) This is the first in a series on NHS Care Funding.

## We support "Caru Cymru"

We 'love Wales and are supporting one of Wales' leading environmental charities has launched its biggest ever initiative to eradicate litter and waste across West Wales.

Caru Cymru, led by Keep Wales Tidy in partnership with all Local Authorities in Wales, aims to inspire everyone to take action and care for the environment. The charity is calling on people in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion to take responsibility for the litter and waste they produce in a drive to create a cleaner, safer Wales.

While Keep Wales Tidy is renowned for working with an army of volunteers to pick up litter, the charity's new movement will not just focus on cleaning up but stopping litter from happening in the first place.

The vision for Caru Cymru (a Welsh phrase meaning 'Love Wales') is that it will become second nature for people to do the right thing, from taking litter home and cleaning up after their dog, to recycling on the go, re-using and repairing.

## Technology enabled care

Towards the end of last year, the Association of Directors of Adult



Social Services and the TEC Services Association launched a Commission to explore the role of technology-enabled care in contributing to a reformed social care system. They have now published the results and recommendations.

The conclusion: care providers and councils could do much better in using available technology to keep people safe and well at home. (Nothing new there!) Read more [HERE](#).

## Latest - CASCAIDr, Living Wage

I am delighted to report that CASCAIDr has reached their initial £6000 target to pay for legal advice that disabled people can use to claim back money wrongly taken by their local council to fund social care. But the fundraising campaign continues - the extra money pledged gets them back to the day job, which is chewing through all the OTHER Care Act breaches that happen daily - and not just because of the pandemic.

**CASCAIDr's roadmap for change;** They would like to work with organisations such as In Control, Social Care Future, and DPAC, to get the word out there that it makes sense for individual people to ask councils for their position on their current policies. It is the first step to identifying which councils are in the weakest position regarding 'doing a Norfolk'.

To that end, anyone can use any bits they like out of this letter here, [CASCAIDr's Monitoring Officer referral Jan 2021](#) to flag up their own individual case. The more clearly you can explain why the charge is a contravention of the law, the more likely the Monitoring Officer is to sort the matter out efficiently behind the scenes. Along with about 300,000 people nationwide, CASCAIDr wants councils to review their charging policies for social care and make changes to how much money they expect disabled people to live on when charged for the services that they're getting under the Care Act.

The campaign is also about getting money BACK from councils, for anyone who's been unlawfully charged, according to an important judicial review decision, in a recent High Court judgment. Just in case councils don't all fall in with that radical idea, CASCAIDr is raising money to make reputable legal advice public, and get people started in their quest for repayment of those unlawful charges, going back 3 or 4 years. That could be £3000 for some people, they think, and a minimum of £300 for anyone affected. The impact of that effort could have a huge effect for good, across the country.

**Raising awareness of the Care Act;** The charity is raising money not just for this charges-focused campaign, but also for raising individuals' awareness of just how much the Care Act matters for them, and what using it can DO for their lives. The charity's own impact in social care legal developments, over its first 3 years of work, and its determination to spread the word, can be seen here.

CASCAIDr needs your donations and support because the task is massive. Belinda Schwehr, its CEO, asks you to donate and share the message, to be a part of this movement.

### **Here are three ways you can help right now with CASCAIDr's initial target:**

1. Please pledge any amount you can.
2. Tick the Gift Aid box if you're a UK taxpayer. CASCAIDr has pledged half of any spare Gift Aid received, after paying the barristers, to funding the basic legality checks for people who can't afford them, saving £35 per person.
3. Share the campaign on your social media networks and email

two personal friends asking them to pledge and share:  
[Reversing the Charges: Disabled and Done Over?](#)  
(external link will open in a new browser window)

## Latest - CASCAIDr, Living Wage

Many people living with someone with dementia are missing out on a 25% council tax discount worth an average of £400 a year. To highlight this issue we've been working with Money Saving Expert on [their campaign](#) to raise awareness of the discount, which they could be eligible to if they or their partner has dementia.

People are either unaware of the existence of the discount or are losing out thanks to poor and confusing information being provided by their local authority. In some cases, where people may be able to claim retrospectively - though this isn't universal - they could be missing out on £1,000s. If you or your partner have dementia you may find that you are struggling to pay your Council Tax, but there's financial support available, so it's important to find out what you're entitled to.

In England, Scotland and Wales someone who has been medically certified as having a permanent severe mental impairment such as dementia, and who is entitled to a disability benefit e.g. Attendance allowance, personal independence payment or disability living allowance, could be entitled to a Council Tax reduction or exemption. This could result in a reduction of 25% where two people are living in a property and one person diagnosed with dementia meets the disregard criteria or an exemption if the person with dementia is living alone.

CDCfA  
Coleshill Centre  
Coleshill Terrace  
Llanelli. SA15 3BT  
07585 626905  
[office@cdcfa.org.uk](mailto:office@cdcfa.org.uk)



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