**H1 Information Sheet Principles of Independent Living**

There are seven action points devised by disabled people, which identify the barriers to independent living, and how they can be removed. These were drawn up by the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People.

**Information**

Disabled people require information on what is available to assist with independent living.

**Peer Support**

Disabled people need the support of other disabled people to discuss how to make best use of the information obtained and for ongoing support.

**Housing**

Disabled People need accessible housing. This may be in terms of wheelchair access or in terms of support and advice in relation to having one's own accommodation.

**Equipment**

Many disabled people need particular types of practical equipment to assist them in living independently.

**Personal Assistants**

This is the one to one support that some disabled people need to live in their own home and be part of the community.

**Transport**

This may mean improved public transport in terms of physical access, information about the routes, more assistance for passengers who are unsure about using public transport; improved routes to take into account the issues for disabled people. It may mean access to personal transport such as the use of cars or support to use other forms of transport..

**Access**

The most obvious examples concern physical access, such as dropped kerbs, level entrances to buildings, provision of accessible public toilets. However, access goes much further than this. There are barriers created by systems, practices and attitudes which prevent disabled people from participating. For example: excluding people with mental health needs from public meetings.

**European Network for Independent Living (ENIL) Principles**

1. Independent living is a process of consciousness raising, empowerment and emancipation. This process enables all disabled people to achieve equal opportunities, rights and full participation in all aspects of society.

2. Disabled people must be able to control this process individually and collectively. To achieve this goal we provide peer support and use democratic principles in our work.

3. As equal citizens we must have the same access to the basics of life including: food, clothing, shelter, health care, assistive devices, personal support services, education, employment, information, communication, transportation and access to the physical and cultural environment, the right to sexuality and the right to marry, to have children, and peace.

4. The Independent Living Movement must be a cross disability movement addressing the needs of all disabled persons. In order for this to occur we must rid ourselves of any prejudice we have towards disabled people other than our own and encourage the involvement of disabled women and other under-represented groups. Disabled children should be enabled by their families and society in general to become independent adults.

5. Disabled people must obtain all the requirements for equalisation of opportunities and full participation by defining their own needs, choices and degree of user control.

6. The Independent Living Movement is opposed to the development and maintenance of systems which promote dependency through institutional responses.

7. Disabled people must involve themselves in research and development, planning and decision making, at all levels, in matters concerning their lives.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 19 - Living independently and being included in the community**

 States Parties to the present Convention recognize the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that:

a) Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;

b) Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;

c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

**The Disability Rights Commission**, which has adopted an entitlement to independent living as one of its policy aims, sets out a general definition of independent living:

The term ‘independent living’ refers to all disabled people having the same choice, control and freedom as any other citizen - at home, at work, and as members of the community. This does not necessarily mean disabled people 'doing everything for themselves', but it does mean that any practical assistance people need should be based on their own choices and aspirations.

(Disability Rights Commission, 2002)

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| **UK Disabled People’s Manifesto:** | **Reclaiming Our Futures 2013** |

**A Legal Right to Independent Living and Self Determination:**

There must be extensive and sustainable funding for *genuine* independent living and user self-directed support, that is free at the point of need, paid from general taxation with ring-fenced funding. Funding must be at levels that enable disabled people to achieve self-determined independent living, in its widest sense as defined under the UNCRPD, with the realistic option to employ personal assistants, at an adequate wage, through the provision of Direct Payments. The level of support should be one that enables disabled and non-disabled people to enjoy the same degree of control over their lives that does not involve being forced into residential, group or nursing home provision.

**Priority Demand**

The creation and implementation of specific independent living law: a legal right that fully enacts and enforces, as domestic law, the UNCRPD, incorporates the 12 pillars of independent living as its key goals and principles and ensures provision of independent living support is free at the point of need and paid from general taxation.

* A full cumulative impact assessment is carried out on the impacts of current policies on disabled people’s right to independent living.
* Stop the closure of the cost effective Independent Living Fund (ILF) and set up an Independent living task force, co-produced with ILF users, to review independent living and specifically the Independent Living Fund in order to identify how best to improve, develop and extend independent living support, building on the successful model of ILF provision.
* To ensure the legal right and implementation of independent living is enshrined within all social ‘care’ and health legislation, principles and practice.
* Urgently review systems where residential institution charities/providers leave disabled people with limited amounts of their own money for the costs of essentials needs; ensure those disabled people are offered alternative access to independent living in the community -as per article 19 of the UNCRPD-and are freed from institutions.
* Ensure that there is true portability of support and not just portability of assessment, enabling disabled people to move home without fear of losing their previously assessed support package.
* Enact adequate and long term funding of user-led disabled people’s organisations, to guarantee they are able to continue to deliver peer led independent living support services and continue to provide advocacy and representation on independent living and disability equality issues.
* Ensure that gathering disabled people’s feedback is a contractual requirement of health and social care service providers and is always used to improve the provision of these services, (to prevent the type of abuse that took place at Winterbourne view hospital). An additional safeguard must be extended to increase protection for whistle blowers in the health and ‘care’ sectors.

**The 12 Pillars of Independent Living**

* Appropriate and accessible information
* An adequate income
* Appropriate and accessible health and social care provision
* A fully accessible transport system
* Full access to the environment
* Adequate provision of technical aids and equipment
* Availability of accessible and adapted housing
* Adequate provision of personal assistance
* Availability of inclusive education and training
* Equal opportunities for employment
* Availability of independent advocacy and self-advocacy
* Availability of peer counselling