

Canolfan Byw'n Annibynnol De Gwynedd
Centre for Independent Living

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To: The Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee,
National Assembly for Wales.

From: Centre for Independent Living (CIL), South Gwynedd.

30.11.09.

Subject: Wheelchair Services in Wales.

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this study.

The purpose of CIL is to support and facilitate disabled people in Gwynedd as they move towards independence and increased confidence, so that they can make suitable decisions about their own lives. CIL South Gwynedd has three departments:

- Training, Education, and Sport
- Service and Information
- Facilities, Transport, and Access (for disabled people)

Our members live and work in Gwynedd, so these comments express their opinions of services in Gwynedd and north Wales.

1. Many of the members believe that there is too much of a delay between applying for a wheelchair and the day that the chair reaches the client. Recently, one client had to wait over two years before receiving a chair. If such a wait is necessary, it would be useful if a simple temporary wheelchair was provided for those who are waiting.
2. The process of requesting, waiting for and receiving wheelchairs is too complex and opaque. Even though care must be taken to allocate the right chair, wheelchairs are not as complicated as officials claim. There is a tendency to over-complicate the process, thus making it opaque.

3. Finally, the feeling amongst disabled people in this area is that the authority that supplies wheelchairs is not sufficiently accessible and approachable. It should be more approachable, and more open to the ideas of disabled people. In many cases officials have not paid enough attention to the ideas and needs of the client. Officials are, in a way, ignoring the opinions and rights of disabled people. Disabled people are capable, mature and intelligent, like everyone else, and they do not want to be treated like people without a voice and without rights. In one case, the client has been using the same chair for years, despite requesting another, and the official has not listened to him carefully when he has described the shape of his house and his needs.

Despite this, we are grateful for the service that is available, and hope that our comments are useful.

Yours sincerely,

Hedd Thomas
Development Officer, CIL South Gwynedd