



Annual Report 2024

PREPARED FOR: WNDIS (WEST NORFOLK DISABILITY INFORMATION SERVICE) TRUSTEES, FUNDERS AND THE CHARITY COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: VICKIE JOEL WNDIS COORDINATOR

OVERVIEW OF WORK AT WNDIS 2024

APPEAL PERCENTAGES

The percentage success rate for tribunals in 2023 is: **83.33%**

There have been 36 tribunals this year and even more pre-tribunal awards than in the preceding year. The pre-tribunal awards this year make up around 80% of the total tribunal awards, compared to around 60 % last year. This trend is good for clients as it saves them going to a tribunal and it resolves the appeal more quickly. In addition

to the 36 welfare benefit tribunals, there was one Special Educational Needs and Disability tribunal.

TRIBUNAL AWARDS

The total of the awards from the beginning of December 2023 to the end of November 2024 is : **£1,026,468.20**

The pre-tribunal decisions amount to awards of **£ 800,523**

NEW CLIENTS

There have been 340 new clients this year, up from 280 last year.

Existing clients are not counted in this calculation and once a client is recorded they have permanent access to WNDiS services. There are around 400 existing clients who are getting support e.g. with an appeal. We are aware that there are many more people who do not access our service, and we do publicity and campaigns to increase awareness of what is on offer.

VARIETY OF HELP OFFERED

WNDiS helps with a wide range of things from advice on heating, mobility aids, grants, Blue Badges, and activities as well as signposting to other helpful organisations such as debt advice

organisations. WNDiS has also continued to support parents who have children /young people who need extra help at school, representing one parent at a SEND tribunal, another at a mediation and attending school meetings at a school and college in King's Lynn.

CAMPAIGNS

WNDiS has been supporting clients with Blue Badge applications since it started in 1999. In the last few years it seems to have got more difficult for people to get this support and there are a number of specific changes which have been requested at a meeting with the Blue Badge Unit in September. One of these is to make the application form more user friendly e.g. making it clear how to get automatic qualification for a Blue Badge.

James Wild has been helping WNDiS with individual applications, when refusal or requests for more medical information has not seemed at all reasonable. He requested the meeting with the BB Unit and a social prescriber, a representative from James Wild's

office, and the Chair and Coordinator of WNDiS all attended as well as the head of the BB Unit and another senior member. We have since had agreement on one issue about medical evidence, but a request for an early policy review has been refused and the rest of the 6 points we have raised have not been dealt with. This is an issue on which WNDiS will continue to push for much needed changes.

COLLABORATIONS

This year WNDiS has met with :

Trussell Trust Food Bank - WNDiS can now issue food vouchers

Pandora Project - for better understanding of work each charity does and referral processes

Community Action Norfolk - talk given by WNDiS on meeting on support available locally for those experiencing hardship

The Borough Council - for a discussion on WNDiS funding.

Social Prescribers

The Adult Autism Service - WNDiS is doing 2 appeals requested by this service.

WNDiS also took part in research about PIP with an independent research company called Basis Social.

WNDiS was invited to a planning meeting for Southgates Development held by the architects called Planning for Design. This is a long term plan for the future of KL and WNDiS' input was on transport and access to the town for people with disabilities including electric scooter users.

WNDiS continues to provide support for MIND, The Benjamin Foundation and Purfleet Trust for PIP and other benefit applications and appeals.

25 YEAR CELEBRATION

This was a gathering of WNDiS supporters in the office and resulted in some good publicity for the charity:

<https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/vital-disability-support-service-celebrates-a-milestone-birt-9389343/>

TREASURER'S REPORT 24

WNDiS Accounts 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

Income

NHS Norfolk - 19870.50 *

Farthing Trust - 10,000

Borough Council - 2060.00 **

Donations - 821

Access Audit - 50.00

Total - 32801.50

* This year's funding plus 6 months from previous year

* * This year's funding plus funding from previous year.

Expenditure

Salary - 21368.43

Office Rent - 4472

Pension - 891.22

Insurance - 719.17

Phone - 653.20

Petty Cash - 100

Website - 72

Office Expenses - 67.71

Postage - 64.99

Other Expenses - 274.90

Total - 28683.62

Surplus - 4117.88

We are grateful to our funders for their continued support:

NHS Norfolk

Farthing Trust

King's Lynn and W Norfolk Borough Council

Without them WNDiS would not be able to continue providing a vital service. As Vickie mentions elsewhere, successful benefit appeals bring hundreds of thousands of pounds into the local economy, enabling people to avoid the poverty trap. We are very good value !

Jonathan Toye



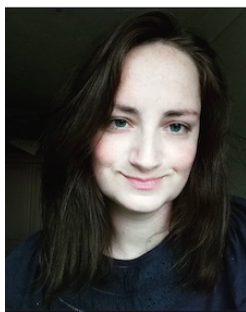
VICKIE JOEL
COORDINATOR

Vickie does appeal work and case work and keeps records of all the work which comes in, as well as the outcomes e.g. the awards. She is keen to extend the work WNDiS does for children and young people who need extra support in school and college.



NICKY MARTIN
VOLUNTEER

Nicky has been a volunteer for WNDiS for eight years, and provides very valuable support generally, particularly for tribunals. Her experience really counts, especially in successfully resolving the most difficult cases such as her work on the appeal for Kevin Bennison (see website) and many others.



DONNA NICE
VOLUNTEER

I'm Donna, I live with my daughter and dog chip. I'm really family oriented and love going on dog walks. I Was lately assessed for autism and Dyslexia at the age of 32. I left school in year 10 with no qualifications. This was one of the reasons I was so proud when I walked through the doors of Ely cathedral to graduate, having gained a degree in Social Sciences in 2015 with The Open University. Since then, I have cared for my daughter and navigated through some difficult situations that we have faced. I have appealed at 3 SEND tribunals, without representation. The year before last, we faced homelessness which is how I found WNDIS. I am very excited to be volunteering with WNDIS because I am interested in disability rights.



JONATHAN TOYE
TREASURER

Although Jonathan is now a trustee, not a front line worker for WNDiS, many clients remember him from his time in the office as 'the man with the stripy jumper' and he is largely responsible for WNDiS' great reputation locally.

JEFF LEWIS - LEGAL ADVISER TO WNDIS

Jeff Lewis qualified as a Solicitor in 1990 and has worked almost exclusively as a criminal defence lawyer since then. For about the first 20 years he was based in the North West of England working out of two legal aid firms in Manchester.



This century he has worked in the south east of England principally in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk with the odd excursion into practice in London.

Criminal Defence work has inevitably brought him into contact with a wide variety of people many of whom are extremely vulnerable. His clients are often dependent on the benefit system for financial survival and frequently they or members of their family suffer from some degree of disability. Many different aspects of fragile mental health often feature in his caseload.

Jeff has two grown up daughters living in London and Tokyo.

Jeff hopes that he can bring the benefit of his experience in this sector to the role of trustee of WNDiS, and in this way

contribute to the invaluable service that WNDiS provides to the local community.

MICHAEL DE WHALLEY - CHAIRMAN

I work as a self-employed IT consultant and have lived in West Norfolk for most of my life. I was educated in King's Lynn at St. James' Boys (now Greyfriars) and King Edward VII schools. In my early twenties, I travelled the Australian continent extensively, solo. Other travel experiences include New Zealand, America, Spain, Gibraltar, Russia and France. I worked initially in local food factories and moved into Information Technology in 1991, for a short period at the Borough Council and then (mostly) in various manufacturing companies.

Between 2001 and 2006, I was a member of the 2620 squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (i.e. territorials), which led to a six-month deployment to Kuwait and Iraq in 2003. In 2005, I became self-employed providing IT support and additionally took up OU studies, being awarded a Diploma in Computing in 2006 and a Bachelor

of Arts Open in 2009. I became actively involved in politics in 2008.

2010 was the first general election in which I stood. 2010 was also the year I started the successful KLWIN anti-incinerator campaign, which included a judicial review and a public inquiry, culminating in 2015. I have chaired the very successful Gaywood Valley Conservation Group since its inception in 2015; the group built up to attracting approximately 30 volunteers, every week, until the beginning of the pandemic. Grimston Fen and Allotment Trust invited me to become a trustee in 2016. Currently, I am a Grimston parish councillor and, in May 2019, I also became Borough Councillor for Gayton and Grimston Ward and a parish councillor for Congham.

LOUISE MARRS

My job at Shelter involves helping some very vulnerable adults who were street homeless and vulnerable to exploitation on several levels. Gaining the evidence needed to help them make their homeless application as well as the Home Choice application can be a challenging and frustratingly long winded process.

My passions, as well as equal rights in all its forms, are my horses and my Grandchildren. The horses (my boys) are my

escape in a sometimes very strange world, nothing matters when I am at the field, usually picking up after them.

The kids, Alex and Isla aged 7 and 5, are just perfect in every way ! As is my daughter, of course!

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