

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING AT HOME



A very warm welcome to our first newsletter

Independent Living East Suffolk (ILES) is a new service with new ideas and approaches. We are working closely with our local authority colleagues across Suffolk to develop excellent services for those living with a disability.

Our overriding aim is to support independence at home through adaptations; or help to move; or other support, to maximise health and well-being outcomes for our residents.

As the new year begins, we again face the challenge of an ever present Covid 19 and the need to stay safe and keep those we work with safe.

As a team, however, we know that the residents we are supporting face risks that, if left unaddressed, could lead to falls or other injuries, resulting in hospitalisation and more pressure on our stretched health services.

So we will continue to work with the most vulnerable, with the support of our contractors, in these difficult times, to facilitate urgent adaptations and keep people safe.

As a Council we have established clear and stringent guidelines for working safely with Covid and we will review these as the advice changes.

So whilst this is not what I would chose to be writing as a welcome to 2021 message, we are here to support you and will do everything we can safely do, to make our clients lives safer and better.



*Teresa Howarth -
Principal
Environmental Health
Officer
(Housing)*

What's inside?

- What is a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)?
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What is a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)?

Disabled Facilities Grants help people with a disability to remain living independently at home. Most people prefer the idea of staying at home for as long as possible but to do so safely, often changes need to be made. Our most common adaptations are ramping to external doors; removing baths and creating level access (no step) showers and installing stairlifts.

Most people are eligible for a grant but the amount they receive will depend on their income and savings. As part of the application process, people will need to provide evidence of income and savings/capital. We have simplified the grant procedures for really urgent works and will be striving in all cases to deliver the adaptations as efficiently as possible.



How does someone apply for a DFG?

In brief, the basic steps are:

Step 1: An initial Occupational Therapy (OT) Assessment is needed. The client should contact the Independent Living Suffolk (ILS) team at Suffolk County Council via ILS@suffolk.gov.uk or 0800 121 7711.

Step 2: If major adaptations to the home are needed, ILS will contact us and we will then contact the client to explore things further.

Step 3: We may need to undertake a financial means

test with the client to determine whether the client needs to contribute towards the works.

Step 4: A visit to the client's home by a Case Officer and sometimes with an OT may be needed to gather more information and complete application forms. During the Covid lockdown we are all working remotely unless absolutely necessary.

Step 5: Once everything is in order the client's needs are turned in to a schedule of works by a Technical Officer and we

then arrange for contractors to price for the works.

Step 6: Upon finalisation, we then arrange a pre-start visit at the client's home with the contractor to go over the works; answer any questions and agree a start date.

Step 7: On completion a Technical Officer will visit to ensure the client is happy with the result.

For more details, please visit our web-page – details at the foot of this newsletter.

More about Occupational Therapy Assessments

Suffolk County Council's occupational therapy service for adaptations sits within the Independent Living Suffolk team. The service is made up of 2 occupational therapists (Nicole and Sally) and four Independence and Wellbeing Practitioners (Mark, Carla, Ian and Rebecca). They have been working as an adaption team

for over 4 years and have a wealth of health and social care experiences between them – from care homes to hospitals and community care. They are a proactive team and will think out of the box to find solutions to customer's needs, working closely with district and borough council colleagues to achieve the best outcomes.



Introducing the team



Samm Beacham

Samm Beacham

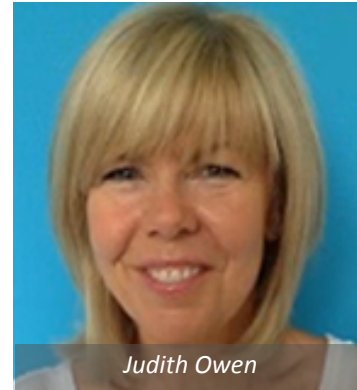
"Hello! I am Samm. I don't work directly for ILES but am employed by East Suffolk Council to ensure the grant budget is properly spent. I check the proposed works and payments to make sure we are keeping to the complex rules and policies and that the service is fair and open to all."

Meet our...Case Officers

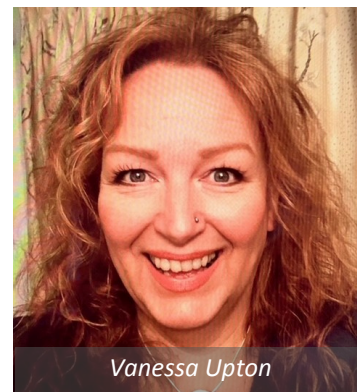
Sarah Mills (Mid), Judith Owen (South) and Vanessa Upton (North). They have their own geographical areas and are the single point of contact throughout the entire process, on hand for any queries, concerns and questions. They ensure necessary forms are completed; supporting evidence gained (including quotes for all recommended works); check the grant prior to approval and arrange for work to be carried out by the contractor.



Sarah Mills



Judith Owen



Vanessa Upton



Annelie Doick

Meet the...Administration team

Annelie Doick, Kevin Wegg and Eleanor Wilding are the first point of contact for new applications and initial enquiries from the public and professionals. Annelie leads the team and also undertakes all payments for Suppliers. Kevin administers the dynamic procurement system for suppliers and writes the newsletters whilst Eleanor, our apprentice, also provides support across the team and the 'Warm Homes Healthy People' team as well.



Kevin Wegg



Eleanor Wilding

Meet the...Technical Officers

Derren Linsdell and Polly Markopoulos. They make sure the adaptations that have been recommended can be done and specify exactly what is needed, ready for the contractors to price.



Derren Linsdell



Polly Markopoulos

Covid working

We will do everything we can to keep clients safe but also rely on their co-operation to wear a face covering if we visit and keep two metres apart at all times.

Clients may also be asked to stay in another part of the house whilst we survey or whilst contractors work. If they or you have ANY concerns about the

requests we have made, please talk to the Case Officer. Our staff will not remain in a client's home if they do not follow the Government Advice.



Whenever you are out of your home, remember **'Hands. Face. Space'**:
Hands – wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds
Face – wear a face covering over nose and mouth in indoor settings
Space – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible.

Covid Winter Grant – Financial support available NOW!

Do you know someone who may be struggling financially because of Covid 19? If so, we may be able to help! We have small grants available to help with heating costs, food bills and if people have been feeling cold we have winter warmth packs including portable oil filled radiators, blankets and chair

warmers. If people are worried about how cold their home is, we can offer a full warm homes healthy people survey to check levels of insulation, provide draughtproofing, low energy bulbs and other measures to improve the energy efficiency of their home.



Don't just take our word for it!

Mrs H of Kesgrave was struggling to get in/out of her bath. Following assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) the Disabled Facilities Grant funded replacing the bath with a Level Access Shower with associated grab rails and shower chair.

Mrs H said: "I was absolutely delighted - the adaptation has allowed me to preserve my independence, dignity and remain in my own home."

Mrs S of Leiston experienced several falls on the staircase. An OT recommendation for a stair

lift resulted in Disabled Facilities Grant funding for the installation of a bespoke lift made to fit her curved staircase.

Mr S commented: "It has given me and my wife peace of mind and made life much more comfortable and secure."

Got any questions?

We'd love to hear any comments you have on the newsletter; any suggestions and of course we'd be happy to answer any questions too! Please see our contact details below...thank you!

CONTACT US

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/adaptations-and-independent-living

☎ 0300 003 0231 | ✉ independent.living@eastsuffolk.gov.uk