

New Forest Disability Information Service

**New
Forest
Disability**

**Annual Review
April 2020
to March 2021**

Mission Statement

'to empower people living with disabilities in the New Forest and its surrounding area, to enable them to lead active and fulfilling lives integrated in society'



Members of CPAG and Disability Rights UK



charity no:1104589

company no:05124781

Chairman's Report

The international emergency occasioned by the coronavirus pandemic dominated national news throughout the year. Many families have experienced tragedy and life has been difficult for everyone, particularly for those who live with disability.

New Forest Disability has been a 'light in the darkness' throughout the pandemic. Most support agencies closed their doors and were inaccessible to people needing to seek information and advice, but not NFDIS.

I am extremely proud to report that the NFDIS team adapted rapidly to working within covid-safety restrictions and we kept the doors open from day one of the epidemic. The service has not only been maintained, but our amazing team has received a larger number of enquiries from clients and assisted more people during this period than ever before.

NFDIS trustees have continued to meet regularly within the Covid regulations and forge ahead with new and progressive ideas.

The dedication of our chief executive, the staff, and NFDIS volunteers has been exemplary during this time of national suffering. Their collective specialist knowledge, enthusiasm and advice has always been freely available to anyone seeking help. NFDIS has continued to provide a life-line for the people of the New Forest at a time when other services closed their doors.

Reg Odbert - Chair of Trustees

Treasurer's Report

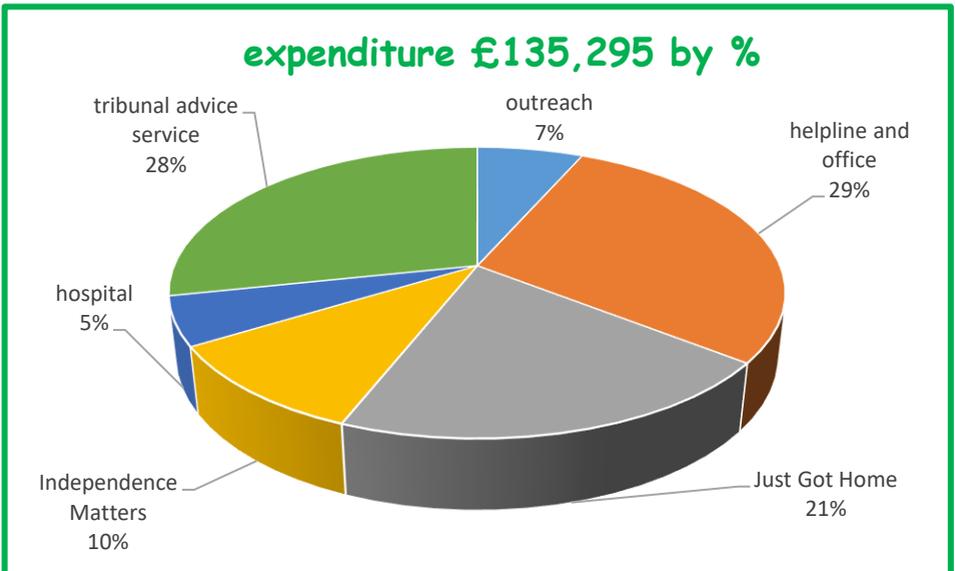
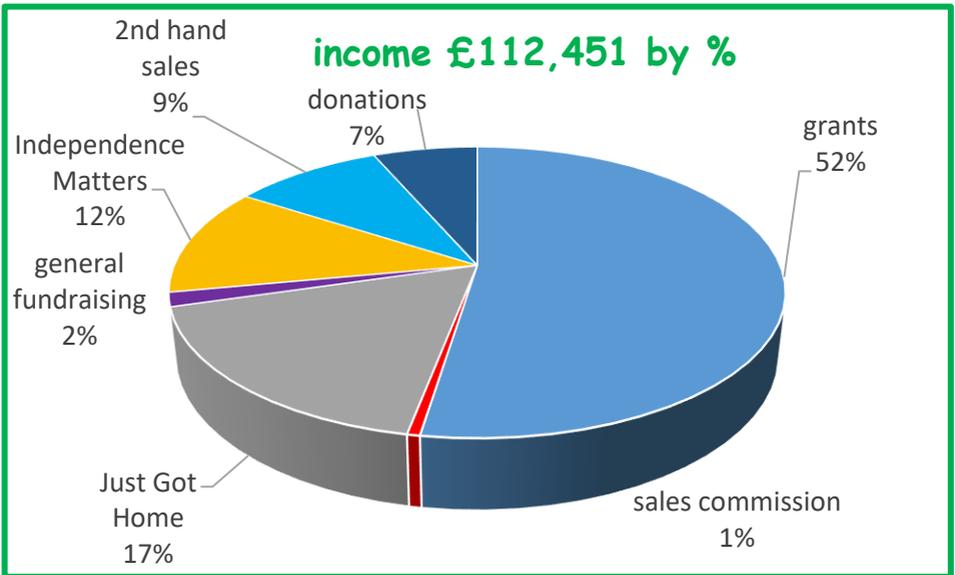
The last year has seen challenges felt on a global scale, with every aspect of life affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic. The resilience and resourcefulness of our staff and volunteers, with support from trustees, has ensured the disabled community continued to receive much needed advice and assistance through a rapidly evolving media.

This unprecedented event created a barren environment for many of our income streams with fund raising, donations and equipment sales suffering immensely. However, our essential services have built on significant recognition within local, district and county authorities and wider institutions allowing us to secure increased grant funding which has more than compensated for this loss.

This increased income has enabled us to take advantage of our recent expansion and further enhance office capacity by increasing staff levels and restructure to maintain maximum efficiency and allow a more focused service. Our Chief Executive is now ably assisted by our Deputy Chief Executive who is also the Outreach and Projects Manager, with support from our Office Manager and Benefits Advisory Service Manager. Together with all our other staff and volunteers we are weathering this crisis and look forward into the next year, financially secure with the ability to continue to provide the highest level of advice and assistance to our disabled community.

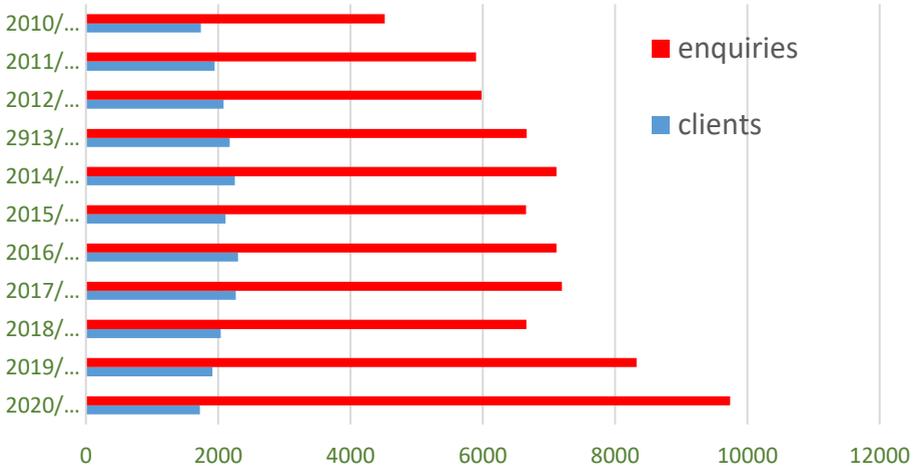
Simon Smith - Honorary Treasurer

finances



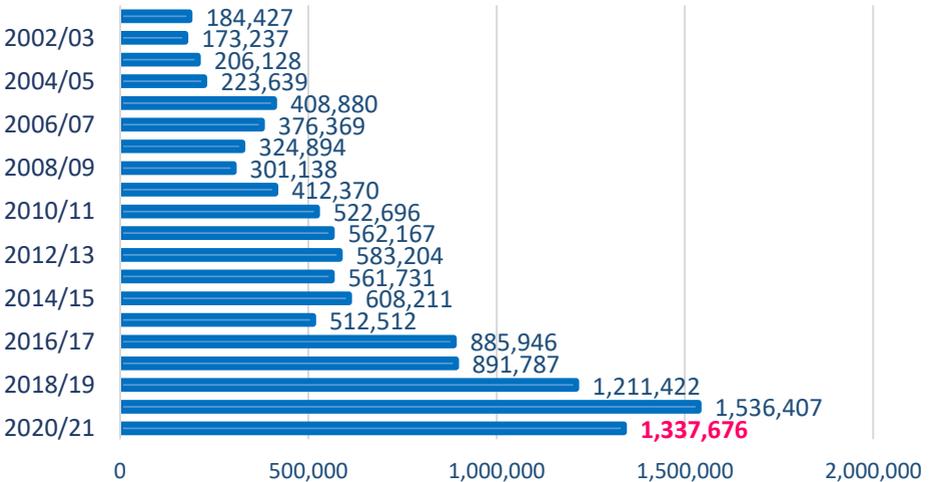
client enquiry statistics

chart A no: clients & enquiries per year



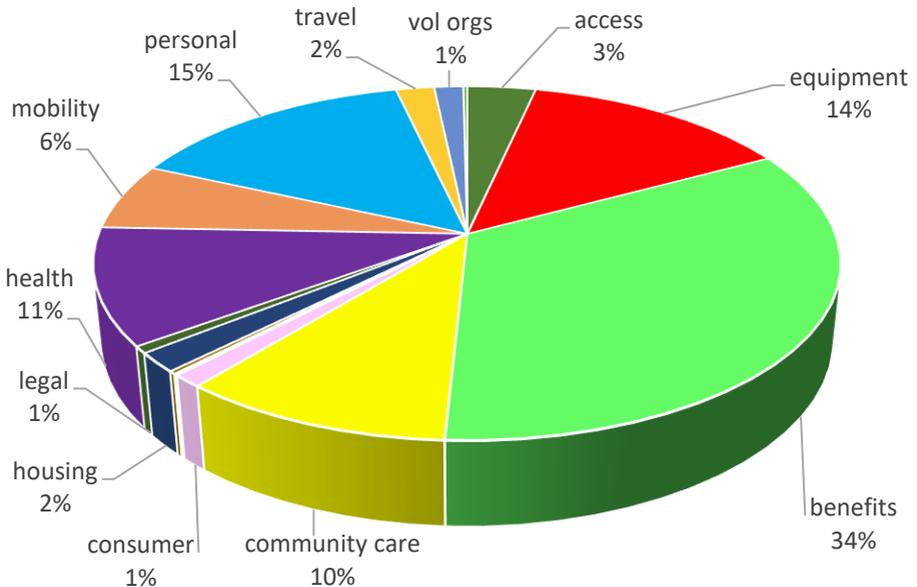
£12m secured in welfare benefits for clients in last 20 years

chart B:- amount of benefits secured



client enquiry statistics

chart C:- percentage of 9,740 enquiries by each topic



Once again, we report 100% of our clients, who responded to our client satisfaction survey, stated they were highly or very satisfied with our service and would recommend us to friends or family.

Our clients are representative of the diversity and demographic profile of the area served.

Chief Executive's report

As we moved seamlessly into our 22nd year of helping people in the New Forest, who would have thought that a year on we would still be delivering our service under such strict covid-19 protocols? Our Teams have been magnificent, and I cannot praise or thank each of them enough for their utter dedication and empathetic support of our clients.

The complexity of the casework we receive, including challenging welfare benefit decisions, and our tribunal success rate, have been extremely high, despite having to handle all our appointments over the telephone. This draws heavily upon Advisors' excellent interviewing skills and ability to calm and reassure anxious clients.

We have advised more clients with anxiety and exacerbated mental health issues than in previous years, which is not surprising considering the stringent restrictions lockdown has had upon their lives. It is noteworthy that we managed to staff every single shift throughout the whole pandemic and did not close for a single day!

Our Teams have received enhanced training in many subjects to best help them to support their clients. Training and support have also been at the forefront of supporting each other in Team NFDIS, in what has been the most challenging of years.

In November 2020 we also went through our Advice Quality Standard biennial audit and passed with flying colours; this may give our clients confidence that our service is running to a very high standard! Well done and thank you one and all!

Jacki Keable - Chief Executive

Our Services

FREE

Disability Information and Advice Service & helpline

Disability related welfare benefit & Blue Badge applications

Welfare Benefit Tribunal Service: challenging benefit outcomes all the way to Tribunal Hearings

Working in partnership with NFDC : Advice and advocacy for Lymington Hospital in-patients to support non-medical issues

Just Got Home Service: support service for patients returning home from hospital including home Visits after discharge

Independence Matters Project: Promoting and supporting applications for adaptations to your home

Befriending Service: during the Covid-19 lockdown we offered a new befriending and support service to anyone feeling lonely or needing practical support

Outreach: monthly information and advice drop-ins across the New Forest

Sales of new and lightly used (donated) mobility equipment and daily living aids

Outreach Services

You could be forgiven for thinking that not a lot had been happening with Outreach during a year of lockdowns and restrictions, but think again!

We continued to operate both the Just Got Home and Independence Matters services at Lymington New Forest Hospital - receiving referrals and providing advice over the telephone. Outside of lockdowns, home visits continued with strict protocols such as pre-visit Covid-19 questionnaires and full PPE worn by Advisers. The continuation of this service provided a lifeline for many people who were more isolated than usual during this difficult time. We were delighted to be invited to return to the hospital in May and recently recommenced in-patient visits.

Our Information & Advice drop-in service continued to operate across the Forest led by our tenacious Adviser, Mel, who arrived with her own portable table and chair and sat out-of-doors, only giving up when the worst of the winter weather set in. She was out and about again by April and although some additional visits are still held outside, we are gradually moving back inside the libraries and other venues as restrictions ease.

In October we were joined by 2 new members of staff - Natalie and Tracey - who have become valued members of the team, running the Just Got Home and Independence Matters services.

A big thank you, from me, to the Outreach Team for their dedication and perseverance in what has been such a challenging year.

Geraldine Spencer - Outreach & Projects Manager and Deputy Chief Executive



Independence Matters

**Do you have difficulty using your bath,
or find stairs and steps difficult?**

New Forest District Council offer grants and loans for adaptations to your home that could help make your life easier.

Please contact our Private Sector Housing team
on 023 8028 5151 for further details.

New Forest District Council has linked up with local charity New Forest Disability, to promote adaptations to help people stay independent in their homes. New Forest Disability provides free, impartial, confidential information and advice to those of any age and any disability, throughout the New Forest area.

What we can help with

Funding is available to assist New Forest residents with a disability to live safely, independently and with dignity in their own homes. We can help with a wide range of adaptations, including:

- Installing a level access shower.
- Widening doors for wheelchair access.
- Fitting grab rails, ramps or stair lifts.

We can also assist with arranging a needs assessment, surveyor and builder to carry out the work.

Loans are also available to help with essential work such as roof and window repairs or a broken boiler. Loans are administered by the Parity Trust, a charitable organisation.

Who can apply

Council or housing association tenants, private tenants and home owners can apply. Applications for adults will be means tested and you may have to contribute to the cost. Applications for children are not means tested.

Please call New Forest District Council for more information - 023 8028 5151.



New Forest District Council
Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst,
Hampshire. SO43 7PN • **023 8028 5151**
newforest.gov.uk • [newforestdc](https://twitter.com/newforestdc) • [newforestgov](https://www.facebook.com/newforestgov)

New Forest Disability
NFDIS Head Office, 6 Osborne Road, New Milton,
Hampshire. BH25 6AD • **01425 628750**
newforestdis.org.uk • info@newforestdis.org.uk
 [NF_Disability](https://twitter.com/NF_Disability) • [New-Forest-Disability](https://www.facebook.com/New-Forest-Disability)

Lightly used equipment

We are always delighted to receive donations of lightly used mobility equipment and daily living aids. These items are cleaned, checked for safety and sold in good faith to anyone requiring aids to make life a bit easier. We regret we cannot accept fabric items, splints, furniture, or electrical goods. Items are sold to support our free advice service.

Our Team are trained to advise upon suitability of equipment items on offer and will ensure adjustments are made for height etc.



Lasting Power of Attorney

We are pleased to announce a new service supporting people to understand the intricacies of, and apply for, Lasting Power of Attorney.

It can be comforting to know you have a document in place in case you have an accident, illness or condition that prevents you from

handling your own affairs. You can choose who will look after your interests in the knowledge they will act in the way you would wish.

You might never use your LPA but it is good to have it 'just in case'.

We have a leaflet explaining just what you can expect from us and noting that we require a donation for this service.

Training courses

We can offer training at your premises or another venue on

Disability Awareness

Disability Discrimination Act

Confidentiality

Introduction to disability welfare benefits

Disability welfare benefits in more depth

Please visit our website or contact for details and prices

Client Feedback

family

• 'we contacted numerous agencies for support, but NFDIS were the only one to follow through. It's a real lifeline for those with little family support'

tribunal

• 'I want to tell you the wonderful news, my PIP appeal was accepted and I have received back payment from the DWP - I would have given up without your support'

professional

• 'I have often recommended your service to members of the community but this is the first time I have needed it myself! Your help was invaluable, thank you so much'

grateful

• 'because of your advice my mother had her bathroom converted to a wet room and is now so much more independent - we would never have believed this was possible and she is delighted'

patient

• 'you are so knowledgeable and kind, you put me at ease and helped me all the way. Without your input I would not be living safely at home or receiving my benefits'

The NFDIS Team

Chief Executive	Jacki Keable
Deputy Chief Executive	Geraldine Spencer
Office Manager	Melissa Oliver
Welfare Benefits Advisory Service Manager	Mel Johnson
Outreach & Projects Manager	Geraldine Spencer
Admin Assistant	Margaret
Senior Tribunal Advisor	Jayne Charles
Outreach Workers	Natalie Brown & Tracey Gutteridge
Advisors	Barbara, Heather, Nora
Information Officers	Jenny, Sheila, Annie, Roger, Nick, Callum, Lynette, Steve
Data Entry Clerks	John, Roger, Matt

Board of Trustees

Reg Odbert - Chairman	Penny Clark - Trustee
Anne Corbridge - Vice Chairman	Philip Latham - Trustee
Simon Smith - Hon Treasurer	David Wansbrough- Trustee
Pam Lacey - Minutes Secretary - Trustee	
Company Secretary - Melissa Oliver	

Volunteering

Our volunteers are the backbone of our charity and we could not operate without them.

Jointly the team offer over 5,000 voluntary hours a year to help us to help others and their dedication and enthusiasm is inspirational.

From weekly sessions providing back office roles, to equipment preparation, to reception information and shop support to Advisor appointments completing benefit forms, there are many tasks that might suit you.

Or if you prefer a less regular role, we seek support for our Fundraising Team, help at events and fetes, promotion for our monthly lottery, or maybe you would like to consider becoming a Trustee....

If you, or someone you know, would like to find out more about volunteering please contact us for an initial informal chat.



Celebrating our Volunteers with long service certificates.

Fundraising Group

Beryl Odbert - Chairman, Chris Halling - Minutes Secretary

Penny Clark, Kathy Osland-Moore, Lourdes Ball

We thank supporters:

Balmer Lawn Garage
Henry Smith Charitable Trust
Access to Justice Fund
National Emergency Trust
Heppenstalls Solicitors
Lymington Hospital
Cllr A Glass Chairman NFDC
Mrs Sparkes plants sales
Solent Model Yacht Club
South Lawn Hotel
Sway Butcher
Sway Carnival Committee
Becton Rotary
Tesco, New Milton
Waitrose, Lymington

Collection buckets:

Dave Jones & Son
The Lord Nelson
The Heath, Dibden Purlieu

Collection buckets:

One2Go Brockenhurst
The Silver Hind, Sway
The Walker Arms
Redcliffe Garden Centre
The Rising Sun
The White Hart
The Musketeer
The Royal Oak, Downton
The Royal Oak, Beaulieu
Foresters Arms, Brockenhurst
The Filly
The Oak, Lyndhurst

We thank our supporters

Bransgore Parish Council
Brockenhurst PC
Beaulieu Parish Council
Copythorne PC
Denny Lodge PC
East Boldre Parish Council
Ellingham, Harbridge
& Ibsley Parish Council
Fawley Parish Council
Fordingbridge TC
Godshill Parish Council
Hordle Parish Council
Hale Parish Council
Hythe & Dibden PC

Lymington & Pennington
Town Council
Marchwood Parish Council
Martin Parish Council
Milford-on-Sea PC
New Forest District
Council
New Milton Town Council
Ringwood Town Council
Sandleheath PC
Sway Parish Council
Totton & Eling Town
Council
Woodgreen Parish Council

Working in partnership with:



Lymington New Forest Hospital and The Grove in
Hythe and Hythe, Totton, Ringwood, Lyndhurst,
Fordingbridge and Lymington Libraries providing
outreach services.

Providing free, confidential, impartial
disability related information, advice and
guidance throughout the New Forest and
surrounding areas.

anyone - any age - any disability

New
Forest
Disability

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BH25 6AD

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