

# Winter Newsletter 2017/18

**Game of Thrones actor Kit Harington has called on the government to fund six years' back pay for overnight carers. ©BBC News**



Harington fears people such as his cousin Laurent, who has Down's syndrome and autism, could suffer as a result.

© BBC News

Photo by Matt Holyoak

Reacting to the 1 November 2017 [announcement](#) by Government delaying the decision on funding of overnight sleep-in care back-pay liabilities for at least another 12 months, **Royal Mencap Society Chairman, Derek Lewis said:**

"Despite the Government's stated commitment 'to creating an economy that works for everyone' it appears ready to sacrifice the well-being of some of the most vulnerable members of society and place at risk the jobs of people who are among the lowest paid.

"Today's announcement may help HMRC understand the extent of the liabilities for back pay but it completely fails to give any reassurance to people with a learning disability that their homes and care are secure and to carers that their jobs are not under threat.

"Three months on from the Government's commitment to seek a solution to the devastating £4.00 million liability hanging over the sector, there is only the promise of further delay and no commitment, even in principle, to accept responsibility for a liability created by Government changing the rules.

"The Government has put in place a new 'voluntary' compliance regime to help HMRC assess the back-pay liability of individual providers, which will crystalize the debt. They will then have three months to pay. Details of the scheme have not yet been made available. Many providers, particularly smaller ones, may be reluctant to take part in the absence of any funding assurance, concerned that they will be writing their own suicide note.

"Meanwhile, although Government has belatedly issued guidance to local authority care commissioners that they should in future be funding the increased cost of sleep-ins, over half of local authorities are still refusing to do so. It is quite wrong that providers should be expected to subsidise the increased cost of on-going sleep-in care."

## New Forest Mencap Team

### Trustees

Liz Rolfs Chairman  
Valerie Bowyer  
Teresa Faris  
Angela El-Cargly  
Pauline Marchbanks

### Bookkeeper

Lisa Yeates

### Office Administrator

Ann Page

### Club Leaders

Pauline French  
**Brockenhurst Gateway**

Christine Eyles

**New Milton Gateway**

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## 2018 Important Dates

27 January ...

**Annual Quiz Night—ticket information**

## Chairman's Report adapted from that given at the AGM

This year has been a year for reviewing and restructuring. Severe cuts to government spending have resulted in changes to service provision for people with learning disabilities amongst others in receipt of services from Hampshire County Council and benefits from the Department of Works and Pensions.



In light of this, many agencies have been repositioning themselves, as we must do too. Funding is very stretched and everyone is chasing the same source and it has become very competitive. To be in a fundraising ready position we need to ensure that our structure, policies and procedures and our brand is appealing to funders and users alike.

We have also witnessed the ageing of our population, their parent carers and indeed our volunteers. We need therefore to address their needs whilst also appealing to a younger cohort.

This requires that we review our operation and consider if we need to be offering something more or something different. We have employed a consultant to take an independent view. She has been able to confirm that we have not moved forward sufficiently to take account of changes to society, changes to funding priorities, and changes to expectations. She has made recommendations which the Trustees and other interested parties are considering and which will help us to go forward. She feels confident that with some adjustments we can attract greater funding for future development.

A weakness we must admit to is failing to attract more Trustees of a high calibre to help us lead in this development. My view is that while we operate as a closed body, likely candidates do not see our need. The Board has decided to invite all those who are on our donor list and those who are on our mailing list as interested parties, to apply to become full members with voting rights. An invitation was made to attend the AGM in November, although the attendance was good, the take up for membership was disappointing.

Financially we maintain a good reserve both centrally and for the Gateway Clubs, which is explained in our Reserves Policy. We are fortunate not to have any debts or encumbrances and our accounts can cope with present expenditure levels. However we do want to be able to grow in order to provide more services and for this will need to attract larger funding.

**Would you consider joining as a voting member or as a Trustee?** As someone who is on our mailing for the Newsletter you are under no pressure to do so of course. We would welcome you into



membership for a nominal annual fee of £5.00 but of course you may wish to make a larger donation. As a member you would be invited to help us in our decision making activities as we work for and with those with learning disabilities and their parents/carers. As a **Trustee** you would be part of the team wanting to develop the Charity, in the ways Liz Rolfs has outlined above. We are in

particular need of a trustee with financial experience to become treasurer. As we have a bookkeeper for the day to day finances it would be an advisory role.

For more information about membership or becoming a trustee, contact us:

[office@newforestmencap.org](mailto:office@newforestmencap.org) or telephone: 01425 621893

## A Club by any other name.....

30 years ago New Forest Gateway Club was formed as the first social club for people with learning disabilities in the New Forest, meeting on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The work quickly expanded and Brockenhurst Gateway Club was opened. It has been felt for some time that with the creation of Brockenhurst Gateway the name 'New Forest' is confusing. The clubs will now be known as **New Milton Gateway** & Brockenhurst Gateway under the 'banner' of New Forest Gateway Clubs. The name change was unanimously agreed at the AGM.

### Stephen Rhodes Award

The AGM wasn't all business, our President, Chairman of New Forest District Council—Cllr. Mrs Christine Ward presented Amy from New Milton Gateway and Les from Brockenhurst Gateway the Stephen Rhodes award for 2017. Both Amy and Les were nominated as they both more than fulfil the criteria of "those who have given great service or made an outstanding achievement or given great joy to others"



Cllr. Ward, presenting Amy & Les their Award certificates and £50.00 cheques. You can see two of our trustees proudly applauding in the background.

### Only Au revoir

After several years as a trustee of New Forest Mencap Rod Rook (pictured seated behind Amy) retired from the Board at the AGM in November. Rod has gone above and beyond the 'normal' duties of a trustee from handyman to helping run the annual fundraising quiz. Thankfully, we will still benefit from his many skills as Rod has been elected Chairman of the Committee for Brockenhurst Gateway Club. Personally, he has been a great support for which I am very grateful *Ed*.

**A big thank you** to trustee Angela El-Cargly for organising the Calypso/Latino Charity Ball in October. Dining and 'Strictly' dancing with Enrique with some fabulous donated prizes provided a really enjoyable evening at The Manor in Sway. A generous response to the raffle made for a great success. We think Angela has just about recovered!

## Gateway Awards Presentations at the AGM



At a busy night Cllr. Ward presented the Gateway Awards . The **Silver Badge** was awarded to Amy. Amongst other things, Amy improved her lifestyle by going to college to study numeracy and literacy and achieved success in both.

Below Oliver receives the **Bronze Award**. Oliver enjoyed attending the Pennington Community Allotment Project , Gill Hickman, pictured on the right and her team mentored him and he improved his knowledge in gardening. The Project was featured in Grow Your Own magazine December edition as 'allotment of the month'. Well done Team! You can follow the project on Twitter.

The **Silver Award section certificates** were awarded to Rachel. (pictured below) Two certificates , one in the Hobbies section and one in Volunteering. Rachel is currently working on her hobby, which is acting and rehearsing with the New Forest Players for their forthcoming panto Beauty and the Beast.



### Other News

Do you 'need' your winter fuel allowance? Should you be fortunate enough not to need the allowance from the Government, would you consider donating it to New Forest Mencap? We would use the money to provide more training like the Gateway Awards , cookery and healthy eating courses, craft afternoons for our constituents and bringing in professionals to inform and advise parents. We are particularly concerned to keep our older constituents and their parents updated and informed on current legislation.

### Mencap Charity Shop

The Mencap shop is situated in Old Milton Road near the main crossroad in New Milton. The shop is staffed totally by volunteers including the manager Valerie, who has been running it for 23 years.

The shop sells bric-a-brac and trinkets and also a very good selection of books and greetings cards. If Valerie had her way it would be a book shop! Photocopying facilities are also available at a very good rate.

Volunteers do 3.5 hour stints 9.30am to 1.pm or 1pm to 4.30pm. We are always on the lookout for volunteers and currently a young lad doing his Duke of Edinburgh Award works alongside a regular.

We also have one vacancy for a person with a learning disability to do a 2.5 hour stint, so anyone with people skills is welcome to apply and they can learn how to use the photocopier and perfect money handling skills.



### Have you booked? You Don't need to be an 'Egghead'!

Places are filling up fast for the **Annual Quiz Night**. Get your friends together and bag a table for 10 and pit your quizzing knowledge in a fun night to banish the January blues. **Saturday 27 January 2018 at Bashley Village Hall** tickets available by email or post from the office. (address below). Tickets are £10.00 per person which includes a Ploughman's supper and there will be a paying bar.