

## ***Whom is this Guide written for?***

This guide has been provided for people with disabilities living in Hampshire and The Isle of Wight and is obviously focused for residents of that county.

However, this guide that may also be distributed to people outside of Hampshire. But, please note that for those people living outside of our county, there may be local variations for some sections.

The following is not meant to cover any therapies, as we all suffer a variety of symptoms and we are all different, with varying health levels and requirements. It is meant to solely cover access to life enabling resources.

For ease of referring back to this guide as a resource, all organisation names are in ***bold italic***.

As we are all of varying ages and technical capabilities, with our own different preferred methods or capabilities of communication, that may also be influenced by M.E., I have attempted to include as many details of leaflets and contacts as I can, at the end of each section

I hope, that as such, that you find any part of this guide helpful to you increasing your independent living and quality of life.

I must stress, that whilst I have tried my best in the provision of this guide, I do accept that I may have made mistakes or that there may be omissions (especially as my cognitive skills have been dramatically reduced with the onset of M.E.). I also do not claim to have any professional expertise in any of the areas discussed.

The following is merely knowledge gained by reading and collating all the various leaflets that are freely available from many organisations, reading websites of the respective

organisations, experience and by networking with other people with disabilities. In fact in producing this guide, the more that I have showed pre-publication versions to people for proof reading, the more additions and corrections were supplied back to me.

So please do not regard this guide as frozen and 100% accurate, but more as an ever growing and improving information source, especially as facilities and resources for us are always changing.

The chapters and sections are listed and expanded on in an approximate order that generally reflects their priority in order of undertaking, with the most important being first and the least important being last. I accept that any priority order is arbitrary, in that we all have different considerations.

However, it may be seen that in achieving one benefit or registration, there are a number of knock on benefits, that may be further taken advantage of, but which can not be achieved until a previous critical benefit or registration has been completed.

Therefore, it can be seen that health issues are considered of primary importance, and that being the patient of an empathetic GP is considered to be the most important, as their cooperation is pivotal in all further claims and registrations, their obstruction of which by a negative attitude can have disastrous results. The next issues to resolve are Finances and Benefits, which in turn are then followed in priority of resolving Transport concerns. In not being able to resolve Transport concerns, the acquisition of Food becomes especially important. Sundry items that are not yet categorised come in the Miscellaneous & Hot Tips chapters.

Whilst it may be considered by some to be slightly unprofessional, anecdotal and personal observations are included. This guide is written by a disabled person for disabled people and any concerned carer or helpful person. Therefore, it

is hoped that remoteness of help and advice is reduced, as well as the feeling of any sense of anxiety and isolation that may be felt.

This section last revised on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2008