



# INDEPENDENT LIVING ALTERNATIVES

---

Annual Report 2023-2024



Solar House, 915 High Road  
LONDON N12 8QJ  
[www.ILAnet.co.uk](http://www.ILAnet.co.uk)  
charity registration: 802198

**Independent Living Alternatives (ILA):** ILA is regulated by the Care Quality Commission as a domiciliary care provider, but it is far more than that. It empowers Disabled people to direct their own personal assistance. It provides the services that an individual disabled person wants and not simply the services the organisation wants to offer. It is responsive to difference, understanding of individual choice and services are designed to meet individual need.

Amongst the disability movement, there have been power struggles among disabled people themselves. It's not uncommon to observe rivalries, with some individuals using their social and professional status or their physical differences to stand out more than others. Whether it is through anecdotes, responses in social settings, or other forms of interaction, disabled people as all people can do as much harm to each other in their need to seek recognition and equality in society.

Within ILA we don't have to come together on a regular basis, we don't have to pretend to be friends, but we are all interdependent on one another - we can be there when needed and ignore each other the rest of the time.

It goes without saying that ILA would not be what it is without the support of first and foremost the Management

Committee, past and present, the staff team who hold up the fort and keep us moving, the PA Users who when required step up and support us and of course the PAs who without them we wouldn't be able to do any of what we do.

Finally, there has to be recognition of Dave Morris whose legacy ILA continues to support - the right of all Disabled people to simply control their own lives.



**Michelle Daley - Chair of Independent Living Alternatives:** This year, we celebrated ILA's legacy, our commitment to a radical alternative and Independent Living for all Disabled folks. For 35 years, ILA has been a necessary voice for driving Independent Living as a matter of social justice and human rights.

Yet, 35 years into ILA's journey and 17 years since the UK signed the UNCRPD, Independent Living remains a distant reality for too many Disabled folks. So-called professionals and



policymakers in health and social services remain fixated on how we eat, sleep and use the loo, as if these were the only measures of our humanity. Our lives continue to be defined by the medical model of disability, which emphasises 'care' and treats us Disabled folks as objects of pity, burden, or dependents. This perspective ignores our identities and experiences as citizens with rights, autonomy, and inherent value.

ILA's work remains liberating because it is rooted in the radical act of dreaming - this is what gave rise to ILA. Over these 35 years, we have shown society what Independent Living really means. We have been an anchor for Disabled folks looking for an alternative to restrictive, paternalistic models of traditional social care and healthcare services. We have pushed the conversation forward, influencing the language around Personal Assistance and for PA user, advocating for the rights of PAs and PA users, and challenging inspection bodies like the CQC to recognise our right to self-determination. We have shown that interdependency - rooted in mutual care, respect, and liberation - is at the essence of true Independent Living.

ILA is revolutionary because we are not afraid to disrupt the system and to demand for better. We challenge the outdated and patronising medical model

of disability that regards us as passive receivers of care rather than people with agency. Instead, we offer an alternative grounded in genuine autonomy



and interdependence. ILA builds confidence in Disabled folks, through peer support, resilience, and encouragement towards autonomy. We challenge negative perceptions, showing society, that PA users can be parents, travellers, lovers, professionals - whatever we choose to be.

And we counter the false narrative that Disabled folks are a homogenous group. We are diverse, with unique requirements, preferences, and dreams. For those of us who require assistance, control over our lives means - control over who provides that support and service, when, and how. This is not only

our entitlement and right; it is our demand.



I want to express immense gratitude to those who laid the foundation for ILA's existence. To ILA's founder, Dave Morris and all who believed in an alternative to the restrictive systems of social and health care systems - thank you. To Tracey, our dedicated Director, the ILA staff, the Committee, the PAs, the PA users, and everyone connected to ILA - we are the legacy. We carry this radical work forward: Independent Living as a social justice

issue, a matter of freedom, and a fundamental right.

Congratulations, ILA, on 35 powerful years! To many more years of disruption, progress, and unapologetically being the alternative to the traditional care and health services. You have enabled us to keep dreaming radically and to thrive.

## A Timeline of ILA

1989 - Independent Living Alternatives is incorporated as a limited company and becomes a registered charity to provide residential volunteers to Disabled people to live independently

1990 - funding from the London Borough's grants unit to research A Strategy for Independent Living in London mapping the different provisions in the 33 London boroughs and to further support the need for a personal assistance service

1991 - Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and City Parochial Foundation funded a three-year Volunteer Co-ordinator with the aim of creating a self-funding post

1993 - The Ethnic Project to promote personal assistance in the Black and Global Majority community

1995 - Independent Living through Personal Assistance - A practical guide to the alternatives

1996 - FLOYD P! promoting personal assistance to 18-25-year-olds and providing advocacy to younger disabled people

1996 - The Community Care Act and personal assistance is a public sector duty and funding streams cease almost overnight leaving ILA without core funding

2002 - PA Tools a resource CD-ROM of how to manage personal assistants

2003 - The Strategic Review leading to the launch of PA Services

2005 - Advance directives for PA Users losing mental capacity

2007 - Determining the training needs of Personal Assistants working with Personal Assistance Users

2008 - Challenge the Language, Change the stereotype - reflecting how disempowering language is for PA Users

2009 - PA Train an online training course for both PAs and PA Users

2011 - ILA provided oral evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into the rights of Disabled people to independent living

2013 - PA Café an online blog relating to all issues personal assistance

2017 - Personal Assistance Relationships: Power, Ethics and Emotions UEA

2021 - the final residential volunteers left ILA, and the organisation solely focuses on being a domiciliary care provider

2024 - London School of Health and Tropical Medicine researching Sexual Health in Older Disabled Adults

### Management Committee

**Office Bearers: Michelle Daley (Co-Chair); Matthew Smith (Co-Chair); Simon Ford (Secretary); Simon Walls (Treasurer)**

**Trustees: Sue Elsegood; Ali Kashmiri; Anna Landre; Gabriel Pepper; Sandip Sodha**

#### Director

Tracey Jannaway

#### PA Services Co-ordinator

Stepanka Bulirova

#### Recruitment Officer

Raahila Shaikh

#### PAs Officer

Syed Shah

#### Out of Hours

Melissa Turner

#### Personal Assistants

#### Personal Assistance Users

#### Finzo

Accounting

#### Macalvins

Payroll

#### Peninsula

Human Resource

#### Bright HR

Employee Assistance Programme

## Income and Expenditure 2023-2024

Income	£1,477,556
Expenditure	£1,413,654
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 63,902</b>

## Roboid versus Human



There is much talk of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and what it can do for us, particularly as Disabled people. So, much technology that was once only used within the disability world is now mainstream: text to speech software; voice activated lights; dooropeners: all are now standard with mobile phones and smart speakers.

But are we ready for a world of AI watching over us at night, providing our social interactions; driving us from A to B; providing our personal care.

At the ILA 35th Anniversary Celebration we decided to take a tiny look inside what people thought; here is some of their comments:

At the ILA 35th Anniversary Celebration we decided to take a tiny look inside what people thought; here is some of their comments:

- Scary that human touch may cease to exist as we have fewer human connections and social life may be diminished
- AI is a supplementary for simple tasks like opening curtains and heating controls
- It can be really good if you can't read written word



- It is really useful if it is well programmed, but it is not yet reliable and can fail at any time
- Human support will still be required but if it cuts down the time a person needs to be present, the care hours might be reduced by social
- PA Users get tired of telling people every day what to do and how to do it; AI could be a once only command
- AI has no self-judgement, so it wouldn't know when to stop its self



- Voice detection/operation doesn't always work if you have an accent or no verbal communication
- AI is reliable and never late or tired
- AI needs an energy source to operate and the climate will collapse before AI can be implemented to this level
- Would disabled people just be offered the budget end of AI through social services

- Problems to fix if it breaks down
- Not currently a real thing it's just a toy at the moment
- You'd have to trust them to work - currently there are many misunderstandings

**The consensus at the event was that whilst there may be a place for AI in the future: we aren't there yet!**

