

## Laura's still smiling after mystery illness

Laura Forbes led a perfectly normal existence for 23 years of her life.

She was then struck down by a mystery illness that has left her without full control of her legs and arms.

She now needs five visits each day from care home workers to wash, dress and feed her but you won't see her feeling sorry for herself.

As she tells on her own website: "I have still kept my sense of humour and I'm still smiling!"

It is just over four years since Laura became ill. She had suffered severe headaches over a number of weeks and progressively the condition seemed to be getting worse.

The diagnosis by doctors varied. A number seemed to think she had Labyrinthitis. One doctor arrived at her family home and declared that was not the condition and called an ambulance.

Laura spent almost eight months in hospital. At one point she had no eyesight, no speech and no ability to manipulate her arms and legs.

Again a variety of theories were put forward but after three months the conclusion was that Laura had



Laura Forbes at home with her sister Tina

Post Viral Cerebellar Syndrome.

She needs a wheelchair to get around and her speech is still affected.

When she initially left hospital, she went back to her parents home but felt she needed her own space. Laura now lives in a specially adapted home in Linwood, Renfrewshire.

She's been to London to see a specialist at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. Although they couldn't help, Laura is optimistic that with technology evolving there may be something to help her in the future.

Meantime, she is getting on with

life as it now is. She has done an Italian speaking course and earlier this year joined Loretto's Management Committee Board as a tenant representative, taking over from Robert Todd.

She and her mum go to a local gym three times a week. She has been abroad on holiday twice in two years and has posted lots of pictures on her website:

[www.mychangedlife.co.uk](http://www.mychangedlife.co.uk)

It tells Laura's remarkable story and is well worth a visit.

Laura says: "I'm not going to hide away. I have my own place. I have a good network of friends and family and I keep busy as I think this is very important to me. I have a good social life, go out for meals with friends a lot or invite them round for drinks.

"I like to go to the cinema, music concerts and last year saw Take That, Arctic Monkeys, Pink and The Kaiser Chiefs.

"Bad things happen in life and being resentful is pointless as is blame. It's how you cope with the challenges that makes you the person you are."

● Committee members are: Cllr. Tom McKeown, Maureen Dowden, Euan Ramsay, Janis McDonald, Laura Forbes, Jane Kelly, Hugh Rooney, Isabel McEwing, Neil Grue, Helen McGowan, Fred Twine, Kenny Mollins, Tom McFadyen, Valerie McCann, Michael Burns, Laura Edwards.

## Systems check

THE Association is currently reviewing the IT systems in use by the staff across the organisation.

As part of the process the housing management team will be contacting tenants to verify the details currently held about them, for example, date of birth, national insurance number, who lives in the house etc.

You will be called on the current telephone number the Association has listed for you in the first instance. Where contact cannot be made by telephone all tenants will receive a letter asking them to call the office with their details.

Your assistance in this process is appreciated.

## Performance check

THE Association monitors performance on the key areas of activity including rent arrears, re-letting empty houses, maintenance contractors, allocations and tenant participation work.

In most of our activities our performance is satisfactory but we are always looking to improve.

Extra work is being carried out on re-letting empty houses and on the recovery of rent arrears.

Full information on our performance for the whole year will be presented in the annual report and to a future meeting of the Residents' Forum.

## Complaints procedure

**LORETTO Housing Association aims to provide a first class service and if you are unhappy about something, you should let us know.**

Most problems can be resolved amicably but Loretto has established a Complaints Procedure to deal with issues that tenants remain unhappy about.

It could be about a repair, or about not receiving what you requested or that issues have not been handled the way you would want.

While attempts are made to

resolve matters informally, the complaints procedure provides for a more detailed analysis of the issue and sets deadlines for responses.

The system also provides for the provision of independent advice.

Full details of the complaints procedure are contained in a summary document. These are available from your housing officer with whom you should raise anything you are unhappy about in relation to the services provided by Loretto.