

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 26TH JANUARY 2009

REPORT ON: MACMILLAN TAYSIDE WELFARE BENEFITS PROJECT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 60-2009

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present Social Work and Health Committee with the proposal for the Macmillan Tayside Welfare Benefits Project. This project provides an opportunity for the three Tayside Local Authorities in conjunction with Macmillan Cancer Support to undertake a joint working arrangement that aims to provide a specialist welfare benefits service for those living with a diagnosis of cancer.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the content of this report;
- 2.2 welcomes the joint working arrangement between Dundee City Council, Angus Council, Perth and Kinross Council and Macmillan Cancer Support.
- 2.3 instructs the Director of Social Work to progress the staffing implications contained within the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The staff and ancillary costs associated with these proposals will be met from the grant awarded from Macmillan Cancer Support. Dundee City Council will provide in-kind contribution of £10,100 per year by way of accommodation and administration services.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 Macmillan Cancer Support are a leading cancer support organisation. They are currently establishing a range of partnerships throughout Scotland to enable people diagnosed with cancer to mitigate, where possible, the worst effects of financial worries and hardship that can be the consequence of prolonged cancer treatment.
- 4.2 In Scotland the incidence of cancer is greater than the European national average. It is predicted that there will be over 168,000 cases of cancer diagnosed in adults in Scotland during 2016 – 2020 (around 33,700 cases per annum) compared to around 26,400 cases per annum actually recorded during 1996 – 2000.
- 4.3 Between 1998 and 2002 the annual average incidence of cancer registrations in Tayside stood at 2,099. 64% of those diagnosed with terminal cancer in Scotland do not receive Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance (the lowest claim rate in the UK).
- 4.4 A cancer diagnosis frequently results in a drop in income as jobs are lost and savings are eroded. This happens at a point where expenses of daily living are likely to increase due to, for instance, increased travel expenditure to and from hospital, the cost of prescriptions, increased heating costs and so on. For those affected by cancer, financial concerns are a significant cause of stress, second only to physical pain.

Source: The Missing Millions, Macmillan Cancer Support 2002.

- 4.5 Although Dundee, Angus and Perth and Kinross all have welfare rights services there is currently no specialist welfare benefits advice service specifically targeting service users with cancer.
- 4.6 **PROPOSAL**
- 4.6.1 Following discussion with Macmillan Cancer Support; Angus Council; and Perth and Kinross Council a joint working arrangement has been proposed to provide a specialist welfare benefits advice service for those affected by cancer and living within the three council areas. The focus of the service would be to offer specialist benefits advice and representation to people at the earliest possible time in their cancer journey.
- 4.6.2 The project partners will also make detailed information on the service, what it does and how it can be contacted, available to a wide range of partners in Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross as well as providing training and information face to face to relevant staff in key local agencies.
- 4.6.3 Home visiting and direct advice in clinical settings will be used to deliver an effective service to cancer patients and their families. The project will also provide a 'gateway' into established specialist welfare benefits advice, money advice and information services provided by Angus Council, Dundee City Council and Perth and Kinross Council.
- 4.6.4 Many people diagnosed with cancer are unlikely to have had any recent contact with the benefits system and it is expected that they will need advice about welfare benefits, and will require assistance in accessing the benefits to which they are entitled.
- 4.6.5 The fundamental objective of the project is to improve ease of access to welfare benefits and money advice for cancer patients in all 3 Council areas. The approach will also use the Macmillan brand to raise public awareness of the service.
- 4.6.6 In addition the model being adopted will complement existing advice services across Tayside, and provide an overarching Welfare Benefits and Money Advice Service that directly meets the needs of people affected by cancer.
- 4.6.7 The three authorities made a joint bid to Macmillan to obtain funding for the project. Macmillan has subsequently awarded £707,000 to fund the project for three years. The money is to be distributed between the three authorities with Dundee City Council receiving £311,186 of the total over the three years 2009 to 2012. In return for this funding and in common with similar partnerships in other areas, Macmillan would wish to see a "co-branding" of the initiative with the Council.
- 4.6.8 Within Dundee the funds will be used to employ 1 FTE Senior Welfare Rights Officer, 1 FTE Welfare Rights Officer and 1 FTE Welfare Rights Assistant. Accommodation and administrative support will be provide by the Welfare Rights Service and will amount to an in-kind contribution to the project of £ 10,100 per annum.
- 4.6.9 The three authorities and Macmillan will work closely together to ensure that those living with a cancer diagnosis are offered advice and assistance to claim all the welfare benefits to which they are entitled.
- 4.6.10 Following an evaluation of the project and subject to achieving satisfactory outcomes it is anticipated that the service would continue to be provided after the initial three year period with an emphasis on service users receiving palliative care. This would be provided for from within existing resources and from re-profiling the service.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance and Head of Personnel have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

Date: 8th January 2009