

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 11 FEBRUARY 2008

REPORT ON: INDEPENDENT LIVING AND DIRECT PAYMENTS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (MANAGEMENT)

REPORT NO: 629 - 2007

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise of the local and national position with regards to the work of Independent Living Fund and Direct Payments.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 2.1 Agree to the promotion and development of Direct Payments and Independent Living Fund.
- 2.2 Note that the Director of Social Work will progress the establishment changes outlined in the report in consultation with the Chief Executive.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 In order to work pro-actively to increase the uptake of both schemes and to maximise the income which can be generated through the Independent Living Fund it is proposed to establish a post of Independent Living Worker, graded PO1-4 (£27,714 - £30,084) and a part-time post (18½ hours) of Clerical Assistant, graded GS1/2 (£11,211 - £14,940) to undertake the associated information monitoring duties.
- 3.2 The cost of this initiative will be £43,702 in a full financial year and will be met from Community Care staffing budget. However, it should be noted that it is likely to generate significant benefit in care cost and therefore the cost of the posts could be met by offsetting against savings in domiciliary care expenses.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The Independent Living Funds are financed by UK Central Government. They are a national resource dedicated to the financial support of disabled people to enable them to live in the community rather than in residential care. The funds award regular payments to individuals which are used for personal care in the community either through personal assistants or care agencies.

Application for the Independent Living Fund is open to individuals between the age of 16-65 who receive the highest rate care component of the Disability Living Allowance, have capital or savings of less than £18,500 and an income that is insufficient to cover the cost of the care needed. In addition they must receive at least £200 (£320 from 1 April 2008) of net provision of care funded by the local authority and be assessed as needing additional care. The Independent Living Fund can make awards of up to £375 per week net of personal contributions to meet the costs of care. There is a potential for this to increase to £455 per week in some circumstances, although the Independent Living Fund average award is £300.

There is therefore substantial potential to use the Independent Living Fund to meet the costs of care which might otherwise have to be met by the department.

Currently, Dundee has 52 users of the two Independent Living funds which is 3.5 per 10,000 population. This compares with the Scottish national average of 6.1 per 10,000. The total amount of income from the Independent Living Fund as in 2006-07 was £727,892. If Dundee was able to increase the use of the Independent Living Fund to the level of a national average then it is reasonable to suppose that we would generate an increase of funding for care costs.

Our knowledge of other local authorities suggests that it is those who have created development worker posts who have generated the largest base of users and the greatest amount of income from the fund.

With regard to Direct Payments this has grown since its inception four years ago to the stage where we now have 40 recipients across all client groups.

Professional guidance and support has been provided by one care manager who has taken on this role for one and a half days per week. This role has been crucial to the successful growth of direct payments. It has ensured that social workers and care managers have a source of reference to consider the appropriateness of Direct Payments, provide advice and training input with regard to Direct payments, to identify those issues which require policy development and to represent the department on the local authority Direct Payment network (this group now has a formal reporting mechanism to ADSW and has established a sub group looking at the links with ILF).

It should also be noted that the Scottish Executive expect the recent Direct Payment funding to achieve a designated lead officer within the local authority.

The funding of this work has been accommodated within Community Care and no specific budget currently exists to cover these costs.

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 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), the Head of Finance and the Trade Unions.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

DATE: 23 January 2008