

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 17 December 2001

REPORT ON: DIRECT PAYMENTS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 811 - 2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the agreement of the Social Work Committee to take forward the implementation of Direct Payments within Dundee City Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

2.1 instructs the Director of Social Work to set in place arrangements for the implementation of direct payments by April 2002.

2.2 approves the allocation of funding outlined in this report.

2.3 approves the funding of staffing as outlined in this report in order to take forward the implementation.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Partnership in Practice funds have been allocated to cover staffing costs from December 2001 and operational costs for 2001/2002 - £102,000

3.2 A further £50,000 from existing resources will be utilised in the financial year 2002/2003 to implement direct payments for other client groups.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The implementation of Direct Payments has the specific objective of increasing the empowerment of individuals through the control of their own care. This will enhance their ability to play a full part in society.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 Background

6.1.1 The Community Care (Direct Payments Act) 1996 empowered local authorities to make direct payments.

6.1.2 The Act gave Local Authorities the power to make Direct Payments, but at that time did not impose a duty on the Local Authority. Amendment to the Act in 2000 extended the provision to cover people over 65. The implementation of the National Strategy for Learning Disability Services included a duty to provide direct payments to people with a learning disability by April 2002. The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Bill includes provision for the introduction of a duty on local authorities to provide direct payments.

6.1.3 The Scottish Executive has also funded two voluntary organisations to promote the implementation of direct payments, firstly by developing a national framework of information and secondly by providing support to local development initiatives. This will initially be in the form of databases, information networks, implementation guidance and best practice reference points.

6.2 **What are Direct Payments?**

6.2.1 The Direct Payments legislation empowers the local authority Social Work Department to offer money to people instead of arranging Community Care services thus allowing the people themselves to arrange and purchase their own services directly.

6.2.2 The range of service include the employment directly of the person's own carers, the employment of agency staff, the provision of equipment, and the purchase directly from the local authority of services. The person therefore has the power to choose from a range of options what is most suitable to meet their needs.

6.3 **Related Services Currently in Place Locally**

6.3.1 There is experience locally of people managing their own care through the Personal Assistance Scheme which is an indirect payment scheme. The primary difference is that all payroll services and support services are managed by the Carer's Centre through a service level agreement. This scheme has shown that only a limited number of people are attracted to the notion of managing their own care.

6.3.2 Experience in other parts of the country suggests that it is those people who have higher levels of needs which are of long-term nature who are most likely to be interested. Given the additional responsibilities which go with direct payments, it is a burden which for many people is not worth the benefits to their care.

6.3.3 Research has shown low levels of uptake of Direct Payments particularly during initial stages. It is therefore possible to adopt the approach of using a small group of individuals who can be used to pilot direct payments during the development phase.
Direct Payments: The Impact on Choice and Control for Disabled People - Scottish Executive CRN 2000.

6.3.4 The operation of the Personal Assistance Scheme has shown that an extended introduction ensures that people are well informed and more able to undertake the job of employer.

6.4 **Implementation**

6.4.1 The intention is to provide Direct Payments to approximately 10 people in the first phase. Any extension would be subject to a formal review of the benefit, both of those receiving Direct Payments but of the impact on other services.

6.4.2 In order to operate, direct payments will require a number of support arrangements.

6.4.3 Staff would be expected to draw on national research and from experience in other authorities. They would also use the resources available from the organisations set up by the Scottish Executive to develop a model of practice best suited in Dundee.

- 6.4.4 A support advice service needs to be available to potential clients and current direct payment users. All direct and indirect payment schemes have some form of support service which co-ordinates the operation of the scheme, provides support and advice to employers, leads the development and is the main liaison/expertise for Care Managers and other professionals.
- 6.4.5 A payroll return/payments system will have to be set in place. This would have to produce guidance to direct payment users, payroll returns and recording systems. Auditing requirements will also need to be established given the various people who will be responsible for financial matters.
- 6.4.6 During the development phase, a substantial amount of work will be required to set in place the necessary administrative and professional systems for this extremely complex area of work. Issues such as assessment procedures, service costings, individual unit costs, payment systems, advise and support services, monitoring systems, auditing systems etc will all have to be set in place.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Director of Finance and the Director of Personnel and Management Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

9.0 SIGNATURE

Director of Social Work

Date

6 December 2001