

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1

What aspects of the current ILF worked well and what elements did not work so well?

ILF has been a very successful means of contributing to the independence, choice and giving control to a range of vulnerable people supported by our organisation. In some instances, it has contributed as much as 80% of the funding package for the individual. In others, it has contributed towards a few hours of their support, and has been a very positive resource for the individual to access. At some points, ILF has been difficult for individuals to access, due to the process underpinning it.

Question 2

Should the money that becomes available after existing ILF recipients no longer need it be used in the same way for others in the future? If so, why? If not, how else might the money be used?

There is no indication that the ILF budget is not helping to meet the needs of recipients, in terms of increasing their independence.

It is of concern that this fund is now closed to new applicants, and that even with the reassurances of government, it may be lost to the existing beneficiaries of ILF, depending on the method chosen to administer the reallocated resource in the future, and the conditions to govern this. If it is simply guidance that is given, it may not be strong enough to ensure that current recipients continue to receive it.

There is no research available which shows that there is a decrease in demand for top up funding to ensure people achieve independence, and a fuller life in the community. It follows then that any alternative use of the ILF budget should continue to address these needs. The criteria for new projects should be around enhancing independence, and greater social inclusion. It should also aim to increase empowerment for people with a disability, allowing a greater degree of participation in decision making, which will assist them to achieve the outcomes they desire in living fulfilled and independent lives.

Question 3

If the available resource is simply that which is transferred from the Treasury, how would you like to see it used if it was not to be a continuation of the existing approach?

If this resource is to be used in a different way than it is at the moment, then decisions on how it is used should be most heavily influenced by those who need it i.e. those with a disability and their carers. Self Directed Support is seen as the way ahead; the resources which make this possible, including ILF, should therefore be directed as far as possible by the user group.

Participative Funding is a concept which is beginning to be recognised as a very positive means of encouraging citizens to be involved in decision making, and is starting to make a real difference in many communities. It is an area worth exploring. The caveat to this is that it should not be used as a mechanism for passing the problems of allocation of inadequate funding to vulnerable people.

Participatory funding builds on the Participatory Budgeting movement, whereby funding is directed at a local level to eligible people, who develop their ideas and then bid for funds for their project. Voting takes place between a range of competing projects. Individuals or groups are not allowed to vote for their own project, they must choose one of the competing bids they feel is most worthwhile.

TRFS has experience of successfully using participative funding with the people we support. The success of this is only partly down to groups enjoying being part of a winning bid and receiving the funding for their project. The benefits are far greater than this. We have found that it really raises their sense of self esteem; they have developed talents and skills that were previously undiscovered; the process itself has resulted in an extremely positive experience for everyone involved, and it has led to a greater sense of achievement, ownership of decision making, and increased presence within their local communities. In some cases, the local community has then asked to become involved in successful projects. We would be happy to provide more information on our experience of this innovative means of allocating funding and of building peoples' skills, confidence and contribution.

Question 4

What innovative ways might there be for increasing the overall amount of money in the pot?

Innovative ways of increasing the amount of money available in the pot may be to look at what is in other government budgets and reallocating them accordingly to where they would be more efficiently used. Cutting back on the amount spent on gathering data might also provide some additional resource to the pot.

Perhaps some of the money could be allocated to employment opportunities for people with a disability. This would increase their independence and self esteem, allowing them to develop and contribute their skills and experience to the wider community. This would have the added benefit of allowing them to contribute to society in other ways; by having more disposable income to put into the economy as consumers, and by contributing as tax payers. Many people with a disability would love to be able to work, and small adjustments and support can make this possible. Another option for maximising the pot would be to explore matched funding from the Big Lottery.

Question 5

With any available resource, where is the most effective area to target resources which can have the biggest impact on an individual's ability to live more independently?

We believe that it is important that the criteria for any projects would be that they must enhance greater independence for individuals, and achieve a greater degree of social inclusion. Participative funding would help to achieve this.

Another potentially beneficial way of increasing independence is to explore the role of technology, which can help minimise the need for 'hands on' support from agencies outwith the home. Used creatively, this can positively enhance independence, whilst allowing the individual to continue to live safely.

Question 6

Once funding has been devolved to the Scottish Government, which option do you think will be most appropriate for Scotland?

There are difficulties with several of the options for administering it, as outlined in the consultation document. One of the major concerns is that if the resource is transferred to local authorities, and it is not robustly ring fenced, it will not reach all of those who need it. The minimum should be spent on administration, and any criteria for accessing funding should be the same across the country, and not be a post code lottery.

The likelihood is that it will have to be rationed, or it may be used in ways which will not directly contribute to the independence and choice of those who need it. Option 4, which would allow disabled people, working in partnership with the providers' movement, would provide more security for ensuring that ring fencing actually happens. If this is tied to the work currently being done on promoting self directed support, it would actually contribute to mainstreaming social care. One of the reasons that ILF was introduced in the first place was that the resources allocated from local authorities was not enough to ensure that individuals could live as independently as possible. We do not want to take a backward step on this.

It would also make sense to take the current ILF infrastructure and remodel it to suit the requirements of the new administration of the funding.

Question 7

To assist with our partial Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the future development of a sustainable Fund to support disabled people in Scotland to live independently, please describe any equality issues (in relation to age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and

maternity and marriage and civil partnership) that you feel may arise and suggest ways in which these could be addressed.

The development of a sustainable fund to support disabled people has to ensure equality is at the forefront, along with need. To this end, clear criteria and equal opportunity to access the fund have to be built in. Communicating with the most disadvantaged groups on a rights approach has to be integral to the new fund arrangements. Monitoring of access to the fund will be important to ensure different groups are seen to be accessing it, and mitigate against institutionalised favouritism.