

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1

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

The ILF was a pre-cursor to the implementation of Direct Payments and latterly Self Directed Support. It provided recipients with the opportunity to use their ILF monies in a flexible manner offering them choice and control within their support package. It particularly worked well alongside those who were also in receipt of Direct Payments.

The areas of the ILF that did not work well centred around:

- the geographical disparity across Scotland
- the disparity amongst the different service user care groups considering that the concept of disability had moved on from views held in the 80s/early 90s.
- the high demand on a small pot of monetary resources which was restricted to those with the highest level of needs
- the disparity and financial inequity for those in receipt of ILF funds in relation to the charges. Those with similar funded packages (support and level of funding, particularly when the ILF closed to new referrals) were subject to a lower level Local Authority charging policy.

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?

This question is difficult to comment on when assuming, given the variables to be considered, that there will be insufficient monies for the Local Authority or any other organisation charged with administering the monies to continue to commit to the same levels of support to be offered to existing ILF recipients.

For example, the variables include the funding that will be required in relation to the differences in amount between Local Authority charging and ILF charging policies and the year on year attrition of the fund. Therefore assuming these variables are constant, it is difficult to ascertain where available monies will be identified with the loss of existing ILF recipients.

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?

It is imperative that the funds continue, at least in the short to medium term, to support those already in receipt of ILF monies. We would propose a phasing out of the ILF fund once it is managed within local authorities over

an agreed period - say 3-5 years. This would allow for current ILF recipients to be brought into the mainstream approach to care and support adopted by Local Authorities.

Given that the greatest numbers of ILF recipients in East Dunbartonshire are those aged between 20 and 29 years (and likely to be in receipt of support for decades to come) it requires a clear time-limited approach to a phasing out of ILF.

A phasing out of the ILF fund would also bring the policy into line with Self Directed Support with a future scheme not dependent upon a protected level of support from the Local Authority but based on equitable assessment and eligibility criteria.

The existing approach, prior to its closure to new referrals, could be viewed as discriminatory towards other service user groups (such as people with mental health problems) and viewed as a postcode lottery in relation to the efforts applied in supporting people to apply for ILF.

Question 4

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

In line with the principles behind the Self Directed Support legislation areas such as shared supports, collective approaches, individual and community assets, co-production, and working in partnership with other organisations could lead to the creation and development of support packages which will still meet the needs and outcomes of the service users but may prove to be better value and therefore creating ways of increasing the amount of money available to support individuals.

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?

Other than meeting basic care needs, the one to one support offered to individuals provided opportunities to participate in community activities. This area was also recognised as a priority by those service users and carers who attended our local consultation event. It is difficult to ascertain where the biggest impact would be for an individual because their support package would be determined by working with the individual in a personalised way, identifying individual outcomes, therefore one area of priority for one person will be different to another area of priority for someone else.

Question 6

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

Option 1 (Local Authorities) is our preferred option strategically. It will bring the ILF fund in line with wider local authority duties and criteria to support people living with disabilities and would sit alongside the duties and principles attached to the Self Directed Support legislation.

This would need to be predicated on clear national operational criteria for administering ILF monies (similar to that accompanying the Scottish Welfare Fund) in order that Local Authorities can be confident that they can match the requirements of the demands placed on these monies and there is consistency of practice across authorities..

This guidance would need to include

- how local authorities can meet the commitments to existing individuals when it is known that monies coming over from ILF will be multiple top-sliced leaving a funding shortfall even to just maintain existing payments
- whether ILF monies are to be used in another way other than the existing approach
- how a phasing out of the fund should be implemented in order to allow the Local Authority to work through issues with individuals i.e. legal powers versus benefits appointee, TUPE etc.

Whilst Option 1 is our favoured option there will be challenges which include

- additional demands on local authority resources i.e. social work reassessments, ongoing care management and increased workload for Finance and Administration
- the transfer of current recipients to the Council's Charging Policy resulting in a shortfall of revenue.

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 concepts of disability have culturally shifted over the years but the ILF prior to closure to new referrals, primarily focused on physical disability and was inaccessible by those suffering from what could be described as 'hidden' disabilities i.e. complex autism, mental health problems or those over 65 years of age. If the ILF monies continues to be utilised as per existing approach then this would gradually phase out (due to attrition, reducing funding, and people becoming ineligible) and no new applications would be sought. By phasing out the ILF fund we need to be sure that we are not removing support from individuals but exploring ways of ensuring

that all individuals regardless of type of disability and age are assessed within the same criteria.