

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1

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

ILF (Group 2) has been very important in funding, in combination with DP, my daughter's support requirements while I work full time. DP alone would not have covered my working hours. ILF (with DP) has allowed her to develop over the years her own interests and increase her education and skills, and awareness of healthy living and her own choices. As a result she has travelled to many places and has for example taken part as a learning disabled dancer in the Unlimited cultural festival in London during the Paralympics and in Derry for the City of Culture events. The developing cultural capital in Scotland for some people with disabilities is becoming highly internationally regarded and I am proud that my daughter has managed over the years to develop a path in this area that is now being followed by more, and younger, individuals.

Technically ILF is rather inflexible but with a bit of juggling and in combination with DP we have managed with huge support from our ILF assessor. It has always been a huge relief that we do not have all our support "eggs in one basket", particularly with the post code, and other, lottery that is LA H & SC "assessment". LD is a lifelong condition and "support" should not be about negative things like personal care but about positive things such as developing interests and skills and giving back to communities. The care "industry" is a massive and growing part of the economy but requires much more recognition, training and, mostly, the imagination the flexible third sector can bring.

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?

Absolutely and if at all possible expanded. It's an investment in our people who often face discrimination and hardship. We are ignoring talent and skills and not giving many people a chance to use their individual assets in our communities and receive personal validation for their contributions to society. A rich life is not about what people earn, it's about what they contribute and teach others.

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?

People who already have ILF should have it continued while they need it but perhaps with some review of the many rules to make it more flexible and "personalised/self-directed". New access (? Group 3) should be according to rules that are transparent, are a "level playing field" across Scotland, and are not determined by local authority assessment. There should be some

proper consideration of the human rights of those with disabilities to have a life, but also in the context of their responsibilities, and more people should be able to access ILF with recognition that this is not just a drain on the public purse but feeds back into the economy. There needs to be an open and honest debate about how we should value people with disabilities, as all people, in our society, unless they are of course in some way deliberately acting against society eg by criminal behaviour. Help and encouragement are much more powerful than the current suspicion, blame and divide and rule from Westminster.

Question 4

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

Partnership working with the third sector might allow access to Trust funds? Monies removed from anti-social elements, for example convicted drug dealers could be put to such use.

A levy on Lottery funding.

But top of my list would be improving HMRC's ability to recover tax and using part of the tax take for ILF. Many people use their ILF to support their employment, and are of course taxed on their salaries. While many wealthy people escape taxation and contribute little to society I would think there are very few people with disabilities who do this.

Currently people receiving ILF contribute considerably towards it from their DLA. The change to PIP is of great concern to all people with disabilities but particularly to those with learning disabilities/mental health issues who are fully mobile but need 1:1 assistance at all times. This is yet another aspect of "Welfare Reform" that is ruining peoples' lives. It's difficult to predict the knock on effects to ILF other than that it will dramatically alter access under current rules. There needs to be ongoing research as the evidence base accrues for what the multiple changes hitting people with disabilities bring..and not just what the government think they are saving. The increased costs of poverty and destitution for LAs, the NHS, and other services require proper analysis. Supporting those less fortunate in society to have more able and fulfilling lives must be cheaper in the long run than desperate unmet need and filling our hospitals and jails.

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?

The identification of those likely to require help eg from birth or from traumatic injury or from other serious disability. We need to develop much more integrated and efficient services focussed on the individual and their likely needs over time. Then services should be offered before serious issues and crises occur. Currently systems are all generic and about gatekeeping, getting anything is a prolonged and exhausting fight.

Resources could be much more effectively managed if there was advanced planning and suggestions for intervention and support offered at appropriate times eg transitions (and not just from school to adult services). NHS, H & SC, education and housing for example should be able to share information (not duplicate and triplicate etc it) and jointly plan likely service needs around an individual for them or their key supports to make appropriate choices. Having control over your life brings enormous health benefits.

Question 6

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

Option 4 by far. I would favour a Trust comprising representatives from various expert disability organisations (Voluntary/Third Sector) who really understand the impact of different kinds of disability on peoples' lives and also how best to offer information, support and planning for the future across all the areas disability brings. I would expect clear statements from all individuals involved of current interests and potential conflicts. I would expect a transparent process, with an appeal process, and I would give them two years to prove competent decision making. I do not think it's a problem that that would require two assessments as that currently brings some relief in not having all ones eggs in one basket. I feel strongly we should be moving towards a much better, fairer and expert system of assessment and transparency in the process than currently happens in most LAs. I do feel that a valuable change in this was an opportunity missed by the current SDS legislation.

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.

Disabled people are already being discriminated against by support being a post code lottery. There should be a public, Scotland wide, review of how different LAs are assessing and responding to need.