

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1

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

Supporting people to have the opportunity to arrange and manage their own support has worked very well. It upholds and supports the key elements of “Choice and Control”, the driving principles of the Scottish Governments “Self Directed Support” agenda.

Since its inception over 122 people in West Dunbartonshire have benefited from the Independent Living Fund. This fund has been administered by a team of staff in Nottingham; this has included field staff who review packages on an individual basis. Thereby relieving any resource and financial burdens on local authorities.

The L.A. is concerned about the additional resource and financial implications of the transfer of the fund.

Through a partnership with L.A.'s and joint funding, many ILF recipients have enjoyed levels of support which have been tailored to their individual needs. This has enabled recipients to be maintained at home with a significant quality of life. Without the transfer of funds to L.A.'s we are concerned about the sustainability of these packages.

While ILF has proven to be of great advantage to those in receipt of funds, it is no longer fit for purpose and is in need of streamlining to bring it in line with legislative changes particularly Self Directed Support & Welfare Reforms.

ILF qualifying criteria is benefits, not needs, driven and this has created a significant inequity between those people who receive ILF, and those people who don't. Changes implemented by ILF Board of Trustees, since 1988 have resulted in 4 different sets of eligibility criteria within the fund.

Other aspects that do not work well include the fact that a fund has become cumbersome to manage. Mis – alignment between SW & ILF criteria has resulted in separate:

- Eligibility criteria
- assessments (i.e. Benefits v Needs Led)
- administration
- reviews
- acceptable evidence
- financial monitoring

Q1 Cont'd:

Finally, the Scottish Governments stated their intent that -

“Current recipients should not have their existing funding taken away unless their personal circumstances change and they become ineligible.”

We welcome the Governments statement and would support the aim that current recipients will continue to receive their award. However, we believe there is a lack of about how this statement will be supported in practical terms. We believe there is an urgent requirement to confirm the transfer of funding to L.A.'s to enable them to confirm their future spending plans.

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?

As ILF monies have effectively been ring-fenced under their current criteria it is unlikely that significant amounts will become available to allow them to be used for others. As the current recipients become older there is a greater likelihood that they will need to increase their support, consideration needs to be given to any price rises, minimum wage increases etc. that would affect current “protected” awards.

Lack of clarity from Scottish Government on how they will administer these protected awards, makes it difficult to plan for the future.

If the assumption is that after taking these factors into account there will be available funds they would be best placed transferred to the local authority to advance the “Self Directed Support Act “. This would afford an opportunity to use additional funding more flexibly for e.g. “one off” payments, short –term interventions or direct payments.

As previously stated, we do not believe that the current fund is fit for purpose. We believe that any funds available should be transferred to L.A.'s who can use these within the auspices of S.D.S. This would relieve some of the inequalities in the current fund and ensure that future funds are needs led and transparent.

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?

The Scottish Governments statement of intent that existing users will have their funding ring-fenced is restrictive and would not allow L.A.'s the flexibility required to support current recipients within an S.D.S. framework.

West Dunbartonshire Council believe the only way forward is to uphold the principles and practices, set out in the: "Self Directed Support Act" and transfer the funds to local authorities. We believe that transferring funds to West Dunbartonshire Council, without the current ILF restrictions would further augment our ability to administer services in line with the principles of the "Self Directed Support Act." In real terms this would mean a "needs led" service that focuses on agreeing support measures that meet tangible outcomes.

In relation to the transfer of funds, it is important that consideration is given to the additional demands placed on L.A.'s and the need for further monies to meet this need.

Question 4

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

We believe there are limited opportunities to increase the amount of money in the pot per se. In the face of budgetary restrictions in Health and Social Care committing additional funds would not be an option at this time.

Transferring of funds to Local Authorities would however allow greater access to a wider range of core skills, experience and knowledge to source added value to any available monies.

As a fully integrated CHCP, West Dunbartonshire Council has an established internal and external infrastructure to work effectively with our partners across the area to access match funding through co-production, leading to interventions that are more outcome focussed and timely. We are confident that being able to offer this comprehensive approach, and having the autonomy to deliver it, would augment our ability to administer and uphold the vision and principles of Self Directed Support.

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?

Resources should be targeted on existing identified needs. We will use our existing care management processes and our emerging S.D.S. structures to ensure a flexible approach to those currently in receipt of I.L.F. In addition, we will work closely with the third sector to ensure choice and to create independent support networks for recipients.

As previously stated as a fully integrated CHCP West Dunbartonshire has the experience to offer this quality of service. The success and quality of our integrated services saw West Dunbartonshire winning the **Social Partnership Forum Award** for Partnership Working from **the Healthcare People Management Association (HPMA)**. A national organisation, which recognises outstanding work in healthcare and human resources.

Transferring funds to WDC ensures we can offer a comprehensive level of support across many client groups in the advent of SDS. We are committed to maintaining independent living by working in partnership with our most vulnerable families ensuring their needs are assessed by qualified CHCP Staff. Supporting their choice and control to maintain independent living through plans that are flexible, community based and take into account family and living circumstances.

The additional administration of this transfer will significantly impact on resources. We would also ask for financial consideration to be given to these additional demands.

Question 6

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

West Dunbartonshire Council believes that transfer to Local authorities is the only option that should be considered. We believe that Local Authorities are best placed to incorporate the existing fund within an S.D.S. approach. This would provide best value by drawing on existing resources and maximising the involvement of both the private and voluntary services. We are also mindful of the need to have a clearly identifiable responsible body for the administration of funds. We believe L.A.'s are best placed to evidence this. In addition, we consider that L.A.'s are well placed to maximise the available funding in the event that some current recipients leave the fund. This would provide the L.A. with the opportunity to redistribute resources based on assessed need.

We believe that these funds should not be subject to a distribution formula, as demand and use of funds has been built-up by each local authority over the years based on demand in each local authority area. Funds should therefore be transferred on a fixed value basis, subject to appropriate inflationary uplift each year and distributed through Revenue Support Grant.

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.

We believe that the current fund is discriminatory on the basis of age in that it restricts participants to those over 18 years and under 64 years. In addition, the current fund discriminates against those who are not in receipt of qualifying benefits. Further discussion needs to take place in light of the changes to the benefits system.