

Note of Meeting

Independent Living Fund Scotland: Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group Meeting

Mencap Centre, 5 School Road, Newtownbreda, Belfast BT8 7BT

Tuesday 4th July 2017: 10:30am - 2:00pm

Present

Niqi Rainey
Kieran McCarthy
Colette Jones
David McDonald

Apologies

Richard Saale
Margaret Maloney
David Maloney
Christine Bartlett
Valerie McCarthy
Victor McCarthy

Sponsor Team

Colin Dunlop
Tracy Hodgen

In Attendance

Peter Scott
Elizabeth McGarrity

1. Welcome and introductions

Following introductions, Peter welcomed everyone to the meeting including Colin Dunlop and Tracey Hodgen from the N. I Sponsor team.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

It was agreed that the minutes from the last meeting were accurate and approved. David confirmed correct spelling of his surname for future records as McDonald.

3. Matters arising

The Sponsor team attended the first hour as was previously agreed. Colin and Tracey engaged in discussion with the group in respect of the situation in N. Ireland at present. There is an interest in the new fund in Scotland and how that progresses. Consideration will be given to the evaluation of the Scottish Fund and this will inform any planning re. a new fund here. However at present there is no Minister in post and no budget but this may change in the future allowing for further progress in respect of a new Fund in N. Ireland.

In the meantime, the Group agreed to place a submission/proposal to the appropriate MLA. in order to obtain a consultation and plan ahead based on the priorities identified.

It was recognised there was a need to obtain statistics on children in transition here as part of the process. There was a recognition of the increase in school numbers and the ad-hoc arrangements after education finishes placing informal carers under additional stress. There was collective recognition on the need for thinking and forward planning in this area by local government. At present half the budget is with the N. I Sponsor team and in the next financial year ILF monies are protected.

The N. Ireland group will submit a proposal paper prior to the end of the financial year and will make contact with the relevant MLA on the health committee and will seek to clarify the most appropriate contact.

Coin advised he had written to all Trusts in respect of pension costs, overnights and the fact the D.P. rate does not cover these additional costs at present. He will provide an update once he has received replies in relation to same.

4. Report on Meeting with Colin Dunlop

David fed back in relation to the meeting and discussion continued on the idea of a new fund and actions required in relation to this in N. Ireland. David suggested that it would be useful to prepare a proposal and communicate with other relevant partners to include Chest Heart and Stroke, Mencap, Carers Association, Muscular Dystrophy Society, Multiple Sclerosis Society and Disability Action.

N. Ireland may have specific needs separate to Scotland. Therefore, the process needs to take account of unmet need, obtain political commitment and then have consultation on how to spend the money. Statistics in relation to numbers receiving DLA. and PIP. would be required. There is a need to also look at the viability of existing Fund given the decrease in numbers.

Niqi will compose the initial letter seeking support with all relevant Agencies supporting People who are possible benefactors of a new Fund.

David will consider relevant contacts in the respective groups prior to the next meeting. There was agreement that correspondence will list all the groups involved so there is a shared awareness of each other's involvement.

5 Available Income Policy

Peter advised that following discussion occupational pension will no longer be taken into consideration as part of available income. The Scottish position currently is to cap available income at £104.00 per week so no one pays more than that. This is positive progress as it

impacted significantly on individuals. The hope is to relook at it again and decrease further on a phased basis so that half DLA care or equivalent is the maximum paid. Further work is required on this. Both administrations look on it positively and it fits in with the Antipoverty Strategy in Scotland.

There was mixed feedback from award recipients in both areas with Scotland showing a preference to pay half DLA care and N. Ireland predominantly felt no contribution should be made.

There was recognition that disability levels and income levels are inextricably linked and there is a need to redress this issue. The group support the on-going work on this issue.

6. Changes to Policy 31, 39, 40 and 44.

Policy 31; Group agreed policy be amended to state 'people live in the household will be seen as and treated as a relative'. This is to take into account same sex relationships. The important issue remains that the award recipient is happy with the arrangement and they have choice and control. Each situation should be assessed individually with the circumstances in each case taken into account.

7. Redundancy Policy

8. Any Other Business

Peter provided an update on the progress of the new fund in Scotland. It was noted that there had already been detailed discussion earlier in the meeting regarding the plans of the sub group and their agreed actions to seek funding for new recipients in NI.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on either Thursday 12th October or Monday 16th October from 11am until 2pm at Mencap Centre, 5 School Road, Newtownbreda, Belfast BT8 7BT. However, group members need to check which date they are happy with.

