

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item No. 5

TO: Social Care and Inclusion Panel

DATE: 18 June 2013

CESSATION OF INDEPENDENT LIVING FUND (ILF) IN APRIL 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform members of scrutiny the work being undertaken following the cessation of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) on the 1 April 2015

Background

The Independent Living Fund provides money to help disabled people live an independent life in the community rather than in residential care. People use ILF to employ a carer, personal assistant, or to pay an agency to provide personal care.

People who applied for ILF funding before 1993 received a maximum payment of £815 per week and people who applied after 1993 received a maximum payment of £475 per week. To be eligible for ILF people had to receive social care support of at least £340 per week and be eligible for the higher rate of Disability Living Allowance.

There are 62 service users in Walsall in receipt of ILF funding. 46 of these received funding approved Post 1993 and 16 received their ILF award pre 1993.

Numbers of service users receiving ILF in Walsall

The Council has recently received details of the 46 service users who received funding post 1993. These service users receive ILF funding ranging from £79.38 to £475.00 per week (an average of £293.88 per week)

ILF have also contacted the 16 people who received awards pre 1993 and asked them to share their details with the Council to enable them to plan for their care and support following the funding being transferred to the Council in April 2015

Cessation of the grant

ILF funding will formally cease to individuals on 31 March 2015, at which point the funding will transfer to the Council. The government will replace ILF by allocations of funding to Local Authorities and £330 million has been allocated nationally for this purpose.

It is uncertain what Walsall will be allocated in terms of funding from 2015/2016 although we anticipate a shortfall when compared to the current levels of ILF funding paid to individuals. When this funding transfers to the Council it will become part of the adult social care eligibility criteria of which is was never originally intended to be a part. This will present future challenges when the indications are that the Local Authority will be getting less funding in the future.

Work done to date

The Council originally wrote to all ILF recipients in July 2012 encouraging them and their advocates to input into the National consultation on the closure of ILF funding. We supported 2 individuals in inputting into the consultation.

Following engagement with local authorities in England and disabled people and their organisations, the Independent Living Fund, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), and the Local Government Association (LGA) a code of practice was produced to support the effective transfer of ILF users to sole local authority support from April 2015. The Council are ensuring that during the transition the code of practice is closely followed, in particular, the emphasis placed on communication is key to the successful transfer and the importance attached to ensuring all service users have explored the possibility of Direct Payments and Personal Budgets. Walsall is already well advanced in this area with 34 of the ILF clients already receiving a Direct Payment.

An initial review indicates that 4 to 5 service users may now be eligible for Continuing Health Care funding.

Of the 46 service users who received funding post 1993 14 have already had joint visits from a Social Worker and ILF assessor and the remaining 32 will receive joint visits between now and 31 December 2014. We do not envisage any major changes in levels of support at this stage but will commence a second stage review around October 2014 in preparation for the funding transferring to the Council.

In relation to the 16 service users who were awarded ILF funding prior to 1993, we would envisage joint visits commencing between now and December 2014 with a subsequent review if required commencing from December 2014 prior to ILF funding transferring to the Council on 1 April 2015.

As at 1 April 2015 service users will transfer to the Benefits Based Charging system. This will not however have a significant impact on service users as it is similar to the charging system already used by the Independent Living Fund where welfare benefits are used as a basis for the charge.

ILF funding was approved in addition to Council funding to enable people to enhance their quality of life and fund additional disability related expenditure to help them live as independently as possible. All 62 service users will in the future be part of the Adult social care eligibility criteria determined by FACS (Fairer Access to Care) which provides funding for people with critical and substantial care needs. The Council will endeavour to maintain this quality of life for the 62 individuals by working with them to optimise their support packages to meet these needs.

Recommendations

Scrutiny is asked to note the contents of this briefing.

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