



worcestershire
countycouncil

**The future of the Independent Living fund
Consultation response from Worcestershire County
Council**

Overview:

After reading the consultation document Worcestershire, Adult social care directorate chose to get a task and finish group together to discuss the proposals and respond as a group to the consultation questions. The group included operational social work managers, our dedicated ILF worker, self directed support officer, and back office staff from brokerage and finance. All having first hand experience of ILF and the additional support it offers users. It is clear from Worcestershire's numbers that Staff have been very proactive in assisting users and families to utilise and maximise available funding streams. Our response has taken into account the numbers identified in the most recent ILF breakdown of user numbers by locality as advised by the DWP. Worcestershire identified at 218 ILF users.

Question 1

Do you agree with the Government's proposal that the care and support needs of current ILF users should be met within the mainstream care and support system, with funding devolved to local government in England and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales? This would mean the closure of ILF in 2015.

Response:

General response	Risks	Mitigation
We agree in principle that this would be the most sensible proposal	Worcestershire have a high proportion of ILF users if we didn't get the cash equivalent to support them through transition they would be disadvantaged	Ensure ILF devolve the funding as a cash equivalent relevant to the current value of support to users in the locality
Agree in principle we feel it would be advantageous if given the cash equivalent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguard individuals to have both ILF and ACS funding streams delivered under the same rules and contracts as single LA funding • Clarity and ease around applying client charging 	Being unaware of those group 1 clients that may not be eligible for Adult social care services	ILF need to ensure they are well informed as to where to seek support-possible dedicated phone advice line once final decision is made. Needs to be done sooner rather than later

Question 2

What are the key challenges that ILF users would face in moving from joint ILF/local authority funding of their care and support needs? How can any impacts be mitigated?

Response:

General response	Risks/impacts	Mitigation
<p>We could see obvious impacts for users when being reassessed under our new framework and applying the current criteria and offering a service through a personal budget and RAS</p>	<p>Reduced packages</p> <p>Older family carers could be particularly affected where ILF funding has given greater support to users wishing to remain at home or live independently – unnecessary residential/nursing placements may be sought</p> <p>Users may not be eligible for support</p> <p>Users may have to challenge the LA causing emotional stress</p> <p>Linked to other funding changes such as disability allowances and Adult social care changes it is a stressful worrying time – many users fear they may not be able to remain independent</p> <p>Special arrangements that may have been supported through ILF may be unsupported in Adult social care if we apply our criteria fairly and equitably</p>	<p>Planning reassessments as early as possible and making transition arrangements clear – a year to move to new arrangements</p> <p>The LA will need resources to carry out this specific piece of work in a timely way – see question 3</p> <p>Be clear about what will change and support individuals/ their families through change</p>

	If users are employers there will be implications around redundancy costs etc	
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Question 3

What impact would the closure of the ILF have on Local Authorities and the provision of care and support services more widely? How could any impacts be mitigated?

Response:

General response	Risks/impacts	Mitigation
<p>The main concern would be around the clarity of how the funding would be issued and for how long? Would it end up pooled into the general adult social care budget to be allocated in the way it is now – or ring fenced for a certain time giving the cash equivalent apportioned to each individual supported in Worcestershire?</p> <p>Users in general are unlikely to be positive about the money coming to local authorities to manage</p>	<p>If funding is less than the cash equivalent we will not be able to support with current arrangements through transition</p> <p>We would want to work with individuals and families at least a year prior to any closure to reassess their needs and support plan effectively – this will have a substantial affect on current social work resource</p> <p>We would need to be prepared for legal challenges</p> <p>We would expect more crisis work</p> <p>We would expect a strain on advocacy and support services</p> <p>Added costs to our base budget if we do not get cash equivalent and or money isn't ring fenced</p>	<p>We would be keen to have a dedicated team to deal with this much like our transitions team already in place; 2 transitional planning social workers and 1 ASWP for authorisation of the work. We already have an ILF specific worker assisting with reviews resourced through the LD budget, this resource will transfer to this team.</p> <p>Good support planning and transitional planning will be with complex cases and we would need to resource the above for smooth transition. We would expect the ILF to fund transitional monies for LA's</p> <p>We need to be clear and inform users as to our criteria and how we will assess them Resource this dedicated</p>

	<p>for future years</p> <p>There may also be resource impact on our back office teams that make the payments and complete financial assessments</p>	<p>team/helpline</p> <p>Plan with our services and raise awareness of proposals</p> <p>Again we will need to apply our current eligibility and reassess through our personal budget pathway</p>
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Question 4

What are the specific challenges in relation to Group 1 users? How can the Government ensure this group area able to access the full range of Local Authority care and support services for which they are eligible?

General response	Risks/challenges	Mitigation
<p>If users in group 1 are eligible for our services we would probably be already aware of who they are</p>	<p>Some of group 1 may not be known to us because they are not eligible for services.</p> <p>If we apply our criteria in line with our current position they may not be eligible for the level of funding they are in receipt of from the ILF The users unknown to us may not contact us within the timeframe required</p>	<p>ILF need to correspond with users about the final proposals as soon as a decision is made.</p> <p>Give clear instructions about contacting their local authorities and being clear that the local authority may not be able to support with the level of funding they are in receipt of from the ILF.</p> <p>A copy of any correspondence should be given to local authorities to assist in managing workload and queries – again a dedicated helpline at ILF could be provided</p> <p>Local authorities will need to be clear about their pathway and criteria for services</p>

Question 5

How can DWP, the ILF and Local Authorities best continue to work with ILF users between now and 2015? How can the ILF best work with individual Local Authorities if the decision to close the ILF is taken?

Response:

General response	Risks and challenges	Mitigation
<p>In Worcestershire we feel the key is to get information out to users as soon as any decision has been made. This will assist both the users/ families and LA's start transitional planning well in advance</p> <p>LA's will need to know the way in which they will be funded and for how long</p>	<p>Users/families are already under pressure re changes to funding and budgets this will be an additional stress</p>	<p>Working in a timely way, correspond well and clearly</p> <p>Allocating the correct resources to assist local authorities to undertake this piece of work in a timely way and support users</p> <p>Have a dedicated helpline at ILF to support users (on-line information too)</p>

Other general comments:

Users and families are already expressing concerns about other funding changes and possible impact onto their ability to remain at home, live independently. Where we may be keen to allocate the funding through mainstream services; it is unlikely users/families will see the local authority as the preferred option in managing the ILF money.

As a Local Authority we are keen to ensure users/families will be supported through any transition:

- With the appropriate level of funding being apportioned to us.
- Proper correspondence and support from ILF
- Clear timescales attached, working towards any end of funding date.
- Prepare for solutions to support the lower level needs where adult social care funds would not be applicable.

Task and finish group, Worcestershire response on 5th September 2012