

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

27th November 2017

Report of the Head of Financial Services-Dave Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Proposal to create two permanent Financial Assessments Officer posts

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to create two permanent Financial Assessment Officers posts (Grade 6) within the Financial Assessments team.

Executive Summary

2. The duties of the temporary 'Financial Assessments Officer' entail visiting customers and has proved invaluable both to managing the financial administration of those in receipt of care from the local authority's point of view and the customers viewpoint. The Visiting Officer post enables the customer to be stress free in relation to the funding of their care package. The post has been in existence for eighteen months and, prior to this report was due for review in March 2018.

The Independent Living Fund post is purely to deal with the transfer of these cases from Wales Government administration to the local authority and the funding has transferred with the responsibility for these claimants.

Background

3. The Welsh Independent Living Grant (WILG) was set up by the Welsh Government in July 2015, following a decision by the UK Government to close the Independent Living Fund (ILF). Recipients of the grant currently receive payments from local authorities to help meet the additional cost of living independently in the community. As part of the draft local government settlement for 2018-19, the total funding of £27 million p.a. for this purpose transferred from the UK Government will in future, be provided to authorities through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). As a result the WILG will cease on 31 March 2018. As part of the transition arrangements, local authorities must carry out reviews whereby local authorities agree with recipients, and put in place, a future package of support to enable them to live independently and thereby replace payments currently made under WILG. Such packages can include support directly provided by authorities, support commissioned by authorities for a recipient, or support included in direct payments for a recipient to enable them to obtain these themselves. Prior to the transfer of a recipient's support arrangements, local authorities will wish to establish whether the recipient holds any unspent monies from payments made under the WILG, and the reason for this retention. Where this money is not earmarked to meet the cost of support to the recipient, local authorities will wish to seek the return of this to use elsewhere in supporting recipients. The newly appointed 'Financial Assessments Officer' will need to carry out financial audits of WILG recipients' accounts, assess service user contributions and put in place arrangements for payment of service user's future support whether that is through a direct payment or another form of support. On-going financial monitoring will be required once local authority support is provided. Part of the WILG in 2017/18 is proposed to fund a 'Financial Assessments Officer' to carry out the necessary financial reviews. When the grant is provided through RSG it is proposed to transfer funding to Finance and Corporate Services to fund a post on a permanent basis.
4. The Visiting Officer post is of great benefit both to managing the financial administration of those in receipt of care and to the customers themselves. The Visiting Officer post has enabled the customer to be stress free in relation to the funding of their care package.
5. It has also released social workers from the finance orientated responsibility to concentrate on the caring part of their role. The post has been in existence for eighteen months and prior to this report was due for further extension from March 2018.

Proposal

6. To create two permanent 'Financial Assessments Officer' posts (Grade 6).

These posts will facilitate the transfer of the financial administration work related to the former Independent Living Fund. They will also allow those in receipt of care to be visited in their home so that the financial details of their care can be best managed.

Financial Impact

7. The cost of the two posts is detailed below:-

Full cost of two posts at grade six = £ 59,166

Existing Budget (in Social Services budget, to be transferred to Finance & Corporate Services) = £14,850

Transfer of funds from the Welsh Government = £29,583

There is an additional budget requirement of £ 14,733 associated with the recommendations contained within this report. However, this cost is currently being met within the existing budget for 2017/18.

A 'Financial Appraisal' is shown at Appendix 1.

Equality Impact Assessment

8. A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. Please see the Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form at Appendix 2.

Workforce Impacts

9. This will have a positive impact on the workforce by formalising existing temporary arrangements and enabling the additional workloads to be managed.

Legal Impacts

10. There are no legal impacts.

Risk Management

11. There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.

Consultation

12. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the creation of two permanent Grade 6 'Financial Assessments Officer posts.

FOR DECISION

Reasons for Proposed Decision

The recruitment of two 'Financial Assessments Officers' will enable the continuation of support for some of the more vulnerable members of society.

Implementation of Decision

This decision is for immediate implementation.

Appendices

Financial Appraisal – Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix 2

List of Background Papers

None

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