

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL****Housing & Health Committee – 4 February 2009****MACMILLAN TAYSIDE BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP****Report by Executive Director (Housing & Community Care)****ABSTRACT**

A cancer diagnosis can be devastating, but the actual cost of having cancer can run into tens of thousands of pounds. Many people affected by cancer claim that money worries are second only to pain as a cause of stress; some even say financial concerns are greater. There is often a drop in income as jobs may be lost and any savings may be used to “top up” expenses of daily living. Often this may happen at a time when these expenses are possibly increased due to travel to and from hospital appointments, hospital parking costs, prescription costs, increased heating and new clothes due to weight loss/or gain resulting from the disease process and this can see people crippled with debt.

This paper provides the Housing & Health Committee with background and proposed recommendations of a Partnership Project between Macmillan Cancer Support, Perth & Kinross Welfare Rights Service and the Welfare Rights Services of Angus and Dundee City Councils.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Committee agrees that Perth & Kinross Council Welfare Rights Service works together with Angus and Dundee City Councils' Welfare Rights Services in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support to deliver specialist welfare benefits and money advice to people affected by cancer within the three Council areas.
- 1.2 That the Partnership is managed by a Management Group consisting of the current Welfare Rights Managers within the three Council areas.
- 1.3 That an Advisory Group is set up, including Macmillan Cancer Support, and partners from Health and Voluntary Organisations across the three Local Authority areas.
- 1.4 Committee should note that a similar report is also being submitted to the relevant Committees of both Dundee City and Angus Councils for approval.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 There are currently 24 National Strategic Macmillan Cancer Support Partnerships delivering welfare benefits advice for people affected by cancer across Scotland. These services have achieved significant financial outcomes for people affected by cancer.

- 2.2 In Scotland, the incidence of cancer is greater than the European national average. It is predicted that there will be over 168,000 cases of cancer diagnosed in adults in Scotland during 2016-20 (around 33,700 cases per annum) compared to around 26,400 cases per annum actually recorded during 1996-2000.
- 2.3 Overall, it is predicted that there will be a 28% increase in the number of people diagnosed with cancer over the next 20 years (approximately 1.4% per year).
- 2.4 Between 1998 and 2002, the annual average incidence of cancer registrations in Tayside stood at 2099.
- 2.5 64% of those diagnosed with terminal cancer in Scotland do not receive their rightful entitlement to Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance (the lowest claims in the UK).
- 2.6 Perth & Kinross Council area had the highest incidence of cancer throughout the whole of Tayside between 1998 and 2002 and in particular the highest incidence of breast cancer.
- 2.7 Perth & Kinross Council provides a highly successful Welfare Rights Service. Staff provide information, advice, advocacy and representation in the areas of welfare benefits, money advice, employment rights, energy advice and housing advice.
- 2.8 In terms of provision for people affected by cancer, there is an identified gap in our service provision in relation to targeted specialised benefits advice. Although good links have been established with other Social Work and Health Care staff generally, targeting people affected by cancer and tailoring a Welfare Benefits' Service to their particular needs has yet to be achieved.
- 2.9 People affected by cancer and their carers may be entitled to claim a range of benefits but a lack of knowledge, embarrassment or the sheer difficulties of claiming may stop them accessing these vital benefits.
- 2.10 Macmillan is committed to delivering training to all Perth & Kinross Council Welfare Rights Service staff regarding cancer and those affected by cancer.
- 2.11 Macmillan has worked in partnership with other Local Authorities in Scotland, including West Lothian and West Dunbartonshire Councils to develop similar schemes.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 A co-ordinated specialist Welfare Benefits and Money Advice Service for those affected by cancer within Perth & Kinross Council funded by MacMillan Cancer Relief, initially for a three year period, in partnership with Angus and Dundee City Councils.

The project will provide a 'gateway' into specialised Welfare Benefits Advice, Money Advice and Information Services provided by Perth & Kinross and the other Tayside Councils. It will operate within Health settings and existing Advice Centres.

- 3.2 It is proposed that Perth & Kinross Council, as well as the other two Councils, will make payment in kind with regard to general maintenance, administrative support, management support and upkeep of "office space."
- 3.3 Macmillan Cancer Support will fund the Project on Tayside for an initial 3-year period making a total investment of £750,000 across the three Local Authority areas.

This is to cover the following costs:-

- 3.3.1 One Senior Welfare Rights Officer (it is proposed that the successful candidate will be employed by Dundee City Council, given its central location).
- 3.3.2 Three Welfare Rights Officers, one to be employed by each Local Authority.
- 3.3.3 Three Welfare Rights Assistants, one to be employed by each Local Authority.
- 3.3.4 Recruitment, IT, staff travel, telephone, publicity, stationery, publications and postage.
- 3.4 The proposed Exit Strategy is that Perth & Kinross Council should commit to retaining one FTE Welfare Rights Assistant post as well as a commitment to maintaining an enhanced level of service to people affected by cancer through the means established by the project.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place with the Senior Macmillan Development Manager, the Welfare Rights Strategy Manager for MacMillan Cancer Support, the Principal Clinical Nurse Specialist and the Chief Social Work Officer.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Perth & Kinross Council's Welfare Rights Service would acquire two additional members of staff, one Welfare Rights Officer and one Welfare Rights Assistant, both of which would be funded by Macmillan Cancer Support for the initial 3-year period.
- 5.2 The co-ordination of the overall project would be by the existing Welfare Rights Manager across the three Councils. Any clerical duties would be carried out by existing clerical support, and accommodation would also be provided by Perth & Kinross Council. Management of the staff within Perth & Kinross will be carried out by the Council's Team Leader (Welfare Rights).

- 5.3 The Project will add to the capacity of the existing Welfare Rights Officers and Assistants.

## **6. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2006-2010**

The Council's Corporate Plan 2006-2010 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a Corporate and Service level and shape resources allocation. This Report relates to the following objectives:-

- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
- (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
- (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
- (v) Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

## **7 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT**

The Council's Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework requires an assessment of functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant equality categories. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new policies to ensure there is no adverse impact on any community group or employees.

The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework and the determination was made that the items summarised in this report do not require further assessment as they do not have an impact on people's wellbeing.

## **8 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

The plan, programme or strategy presented in this Report was considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the determination was made that the items summarised in this report do not require further action as they do not qualify as a plan, programme or strategy as defined by the Act.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

This paper proposes a Partnership between Perth & Kinross Council in conjunction with Angus and Dundee City Council together with Macmillan Cancer Support. The Partnership's aim is to deliver specialist Welfare Benefits and Money Advice to people affected by cancer within the three Council areas.

**DAVE ROBERTS**

Executive Director (Housing & Community Care)

**Note:** No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

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