

5 March 2008

Ref:

Dear

Important Information about changes to Independent Living Funds (ILF) rules from 1 July 2008

Each year the ILF is given an amount of money and our Trustees are responsible for making sure that they do not spend more than this amount. Over the next three years from April 2008, we will be given a fixed amount of money and because of higher numbers of applications being made it means that some of our rules need to change.

Our Trustees want to make sure that we can continue to support you, whilst also continuing to enable new users who will benefit most to apply to us. The most important thing to tell you is that if you already get payments from us **we will continue to pay you**, as long as you continue to meet the rules in our User Guide leaflets.

Before 1 July 2008, our old rules will continue to apply to both new applications and if you ask us to pay you more money.

The three changes to our rules that will affect you from 1 July are:

- 1) For **all new applications** we receive from 1 July 2008, the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) will have to be paying for care costing at least £16,640 per year or £320 per week. This means that we will not be able to start making payments to anyone who applies to us if his or her HSCT is not making this contribution. **If you already receive payments from us** and the **cost of your care** goes up, due to an increase in the hourly rate you pay for example, we will be able to consider paying you more money as long as the HSCT continue to meet their agreed contribution. If the **amount of care** you need goes up, we will still consider paying you more money but **will only be able to do this when the amount you get from your HSCT is at least £320 per week**. The most we can pay you each week will still be £455 per week.

When your HSCT is paying for care costing £320 per week or £16,640 per year, we will be able consider any increase in funding

up to £455 per week without having to ask your HSCT to pay more. This means we won't have to operate a complicated policy which we called our £ for £ policy. You may want to contact your HSCT directly for more information about how much they pay towards your support.

- 2) If we have offered to pay you more money because you asked us to, you will need to complete an Agreement form. The following explains what we will do once we have received your Agreement form: -
- If the date you ask us to pay you more money from is less than four weeks before the date we receive your Agreement form we will ask you why. We will need to know why you did not send us the Agreement form before you had to start paying more money. If we are happy with the reason you give us we will pay from the date you asked us to.
 - If the date you ask us to pay you more money from is more than 4 weeks before the date we receive your Agreement form we will ask you why. We will need to know why you did not send us the Agreement form before you had to start paying more money. If we are happy with the reason you give us we will ask you to send us evidence. This means sending us copies of your Personal Assistants' timesheets or your agency invoices. Once you send us the evidence we will then be able to consider paying you from the date you asked us to.
 - If the date you ask us to pay you more money from is on or after the date we receive your Agreement form we will pay you from that date.

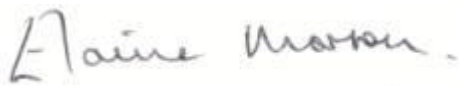
- 3) Sometimes our Users become beneficiaries of a Trust Fund or have their money and affairs dealt with by a Controller for the Office of Care and Protection (OCP). This could happen if they receive a large amount of money as compensation for a personal injury or if someone becomes unable to manage their own money and affairs, for example.

From 1 July 2008, if you become the beneficiary of a Trust Fund or start to receive payments from the OCP and the total value of the capital held is more than our capital limit (which at the moment is £18,500) we will not normally be able to make payments to you.

The changes explained in this letter make changes our User Guide leaflets. You will be sent new versions of our leaflets soon to replace the ones you already have.

If you need more information, or have any questions, please contact your caseworker in the usual way.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elaine Morton".

Mrs Elaine Morton
Chief Executive for the Independent Living Funds