

The Independent Living Funds has published its Annual Report for the year 2002/3. This newsletter tells you about what is in the report. Limited numbers of copies of the full report are available (contact [Lee Howard](#) 0845 6018815).

Our Purpose

In our Annual Report we have set out our main business aim so that all the work we do and improvements we are making are directed to achieving this.

Our aim is “To provide financial assistance, under the terms of the Trust Deeds, in an efficient, cost effective way that respects a disabled person’s requirements for personal care and domestic assistance, which enables independent living.”

Change of Trustees



Sydney Shore CBE, who has been chairman of the Trustees of the Funds for over 10 years, retired from the board in July 2003. Margaret Cooper, who has been a Trustee since 1997, succeeds him. During the year Dr Adrian Stokes and William Morrison also retired from the Trustees. Ann Goodborn and Rachel Chiu were appointed during the year.

Review Programme

In November 2001 we started a programme to revisit all of our clients to ensure that they were receiving the appropriate level of funding. Of those visited 63% have received an increase in their award. The Fund is on target to complete the first round of this programme by November 2003.

New Premises



We identified, last year, that, to improve the services we provide, we needed more staff. Our offices were not big enough so, in January 2003, the Funds relocated to new offices close to Nottingham city centre. This has meant we have been able to increase staffing levels to 150. Details of our new address, phone numbers etc are at the end of this newsletter.

Revised Literature



We have recently looked at all the information leaflets we provide for users. Our Client User Group advised us on layout and content. The result is that we have produced 14 separate leaflets, which guide users through all they need to know about how the Fund operates, in a clear, concise and straightforward way. Issuing of the leaflets will start shortly. They will be sent to you after your next visit .

Finance



We used our Government funding for the year to pay over £97 million to 9576 clients of the 1993 Fund and over £68 million to 7389 clients of the Extension Fund. Total administration costs were under £5.5 million.

Consultation/User Group

Our user group, first established in September 2001, has flourished. The group meets regularly with staff from the Funds and has an opportunity to comment on the service we provide. The group has made important contributions to the redesign of our literature and application form and to ways in which we have made our information more accessible. They have advised on ways that we communicate with clients and their views on our review programme have contributed to improvements we have made to the process.

During the coming year we will be looking at ways to consult more widely with all our clients.

If you would like more information about the group or would be interested in taking part in our consultations contact [Kate Blenkinsop](#) on 0845 6018815.

More Newsletters

At the suggestion of our Client User Group we intend to issue newsletters to all our clients every 6 months to keep you up to date with things that are happening and changing at the ILF. We also hope to include advise on selected topics. The first of these newsletters will be published early in 2004. We hope to include details about how to contact your caseworker by e-mail and about our Freedom of Information Act publication scheme.

Statistics

By 31 March 2003 the 1993 Fund was assisting 9006 disabled people. During the year 3203 applications were received. The average award in payment was £242.30 per week, which is 6.7% more than in March 2002.

The Extension Fund was assisting 6877 disabled people. The average award was £204.31 per week, an increase of 14% since March 2002.

During the past 12 months the Funds' staff received over 91,000 items of post, over 178,000 telephone calls and faxes and over 6,500 e-mails.

During the year 193,188 individual payments were made to our clients.

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about the way the ILF has dealt with your case or the service we have provided you can do so in writing or on the telephone. Your complaint will be recorded and considered by our staff within 21 days. You should contact your caseworker if you wish to make a complaint or you can ask to speak to a manager or our customer services team. Any member of staff will record your complaint.

Last year we dealt with 44 registered complaints and answered 21 letters from MPs.

The Year Ahead



In our business plan we have set ourselves key performance targets to achieve. These focus on improving our service to our users and reducing the time it takes us to process new applications and review visits.

We will be developing our computer systems so that all staff will have access to e-mail and users will be able to contact caseworkers directly by this method. We have developed a [Race Equality scheme](#) and will put this into action during the year to ensure accessibility to an increasingly diverse community. Staff will receive training in diversity and disability related issues.

In line with the Freedom of Information Act we will produce a publication scheme that will enable members of the public to access information about how the organisation operates both internally and externally.

Contact the Funds



If you wish to speak to someone about your case ring

our switchboard on 0845 601 8815. Tell the operator

your name and whether you are an Extension Fund or

1993 Fund client (if you do not know this tell them your reference number). You will be put through to the person who deals with your case or, if they are not available, you will be put through to one of their colleagues.



You cannot e-mail your caseworker directly at the moment, but if you wish to send an e-mail you can send it to funds@ilf.org.uk and it will be passed to the appropriate member of staff.

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If you would like to tell us what you think of this newsletter, what you would like to see in future newsletters or if you want to comment on the service you receive from the Funds you can write to Kate Blenkinsop at the address above or e-mail to kate.blenkinsop@ilf.org.uk.

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