
Report To:	Health & Social Care Committee	Date: 27 August 2009
Report By:	Robert Murphy Acting Corporate Director, Social Care	Report No: SW/34/09/AD/AM
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Subject:	MacMillan and Inverclyde Council Welfare Rights Service – 1 March 2008 – 1 March 2009 (Year 1)	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Health and Social Care Committee of 28 August 2007 agreed to approve to approve Report No: SW66/07/AD/AM to establish a partnership initiative with MacMillan Cancer Support to create two Welfare Rights Officer posts to ensure 'the fast tracking of income maximisation for individuals diagnosed with cancer, their families and households'.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 MacMillan Cancer Support is engaged in building a Scottish Network of partnerships delivering welfare benefits advice for people affected by cancer. The three year initial funding from MacMillan to Inverclyde Council allowed the creation of one of the twenty four national strategic partnerships operating across Scotland at present.
- 2.2 In Inverclyde approximately 520 new cancer cases are registered annually. At any one time there are approximately 1,500 people in Inverclyde living with a cancer diagnosis.
- 2.3 The second greatest cause of stress amongst cancer patients, after diagnosis, is loss of income and resultant poverty. MacMillan Cancer Support's research on cancer costs found that 91% of cancer patients households suffer a reduction in income/or increased costs as a result of illness.
- 2.4 The MacMillan and Inverclyde Council Welfare Rights Service has been created with the objectives of being:
- o Proactive in its dealings with patients and carers
 - o Delivered in medical settings with health professionals referring patients
 - o Provided locally encompassing home visits and face to face advice sessions
 - o Provided by cancer aware expert Welfare Rights Officers, and
 - o Delivered in a way that ensures equity of access.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Committee is asked to note and approve this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 People living in deprived areas are most likely to be diagnosed with cancer and have a higher death rate than those who live in more affluent areas. Significant patterns exist when examining incidence and mortality rates by deprivation. Considering all cancers combined, the most deprived areas report incidence rates almost 40% higher than in the least deprived areas. Mortality rates from all cancers combined are approximately 75% higher in the most deprived compared to the least deprived areas. In Inverclyde one resident in three lives in areas considered to be among the most deprived 15% of data zones in Scotland.
- 4.2 The weekly work schedule for the two Welfare Rights Officers includes advice sessions delivered at IRH timed to link with the scheduled lung cancer, haematology, breast cancer and colo-rectal clinics. In addition a weekly advice session is held at the Southern General Hospital neuro – oncology again timed to link with a head and neck cancer clinic attended by patients from Inverclyde. Direct referral routes have been established with: IRH oncology; Ardgowan Hospice; District Nurses; Health Visitors; Centre for Independent Living; Inverclyde Carers Centre; Money Matters and DWP.
- 4.3 Two examples, in particular, of positive inter agency working is the joint activity with SOLAS and Inverclyde Advice and Employment Rights Project. At a time of reduced income there is often an increase in the expense of daily living. One of the most significant is that of increased heating costs. Strong links have been forged with SOLAS and the Inverclyde LESS project to address the fuel poverty of those affected by cancer in Inverclyde. People of working age with a cancer diagnosis are six times more likely to report being unable to return to work compared with people with other illness. To address the barriers to work and support people with cancer to enter and sustain employment in environments that reflect their needs invaluable assistance has been given from the Inverclyde Advice and Employment Rights project.
- 4.4 The anticipated outcomes for the service given in the Committee Report of August 2007 was for:

“Some 400 claims for benefit will generate approximately £800k per year. In addition it is anticipated that there would be approximately 100 additional MacMillan Patient Grant applications annually”.

For the first 12 month period commencing on 1 March 2008 the MacMillan and Inverclyde Council Welfare Rights Service:

- Progressed claims for 451 clients and their families
- Initiated 134 MacMillan grant applications resulting in awards of £49,788.05
- Secured other one off payments of £15,861.88
- Obtained arrears of benefit of £76,891.38
- Generated additional annual benefit entitlement of £790,206.64
- Achieved a total monetary gain of £932,747.95

The MacMillan and Inverclyde Welfare Rights Service has made a significant contribution to the policy discussions and direct actions of the MacMillan strategic partnerships that have led to a total sum of £42 million in financial gains for 16,000 people affected by cancer throughout Scotland.

- 4.5 The value of the service to those affected by cancer goes beyond the monetary. As an integral part of improving service delivery a client satisfaction survey forms part of the standard protocols. Listed are four examples of anonymised client feedback:-

“I feel that the service is an invaluable part of the whole treatment for cancer. The advisor visited me at home twice to assist me with filling in forms. Knowing that the

service is there was a big weight off my mind when I had lots of other things to deal with”.

“It has been a very stressful year for me and (WRO) has made a great difference to my life, without the service people like me would not have the information and support that they need. I am so grateful to (WRO) for her time, patience and understanding at this horrible time in my life”.

“(WRO) was a great help to us both, and very patient and understanding with things we were not sure of, she was just great. We can put the heating on and not worry about the bill. Thank you a million once again”.

“(WRO) arrived at a time when I was at the bottom of my cage and had virtually given up of getting any help... it was wonderful for me to find someone had arrived who was genuinely interested in the problems of my situation, discussed what assistance was available and appropriate, then made it happen”.

4.6 The predicted 28% increase in the number of people diagnosed with cancer over the next 20 years referred to in the Committee Report of August 2007 remains on course. In Scotland and Inverclyde in particular, given the demographic trends, an increasingly aging population will see the incidence of cancer grow but with an improved picture associated mortality. In essence, whilst fewer people are dying of cancer more people are living with it. The challenge is to meet the pressing welfare benefits needs of the growing client group with a service which is effective and equitable.

4.7 The Scottish Government published in October 2008 the “Better Cancer Care” Action Plan. As part of the action plan the Scottish Government is committed to:

“Work towards referral to benefits and financial advice, incorporating a financial assessment, becoming a systematic part of the patient journey; and

Work with MacMillan Cancer Support to develop the work of benefits advisors throughout Scotland”.

The progress made by the MacMillan and Inverclyde Council Welfare Rights Service in the first year of operation suggests the aim of the Scottish Government in ensuring that all cancer patients who need it are referred to benefits advisors as part of their routine care is already well on the way to becoming a reality in Inverclyde.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 The purpose of this report is to apprise the Committee of the first year of the initiative.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Legal:

6.2 Finance:

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
02188	APT&C Staff Costs	2009/10	£62,960		Funded by grant from MacMillan Cancer Support

6.3 Personnel:

The MacMillan funded WRO posts have been filled by seconding two existing WRO's from the Council. These WRO posts have been back filled on a temporary basis and year three of the project will include any appropriate compensation payments required to be made to those temporary staff.

6.4 Equalities:

Equal Opportunities processes and procedures are embedded within the operational practices of MacMillan and Inverclyde Council Welfare Rights Service – 1 March 2008 – 1 March 2009 (Year 1). Processes to measure performance on the delivery of equal opportunities are currently being developed.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 MacMillan have engaged with COSLA, ADSW and the Scottish Executive with regard to the development of this approach in addition to which a systematic engagement with service users for feedback and evaluation of the service provided by the partnership is conducted on an ongoing basis.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The Scottish Government the "Better Cancer Care" Action Plan.