

Appendix 7 – Application Management

This document explains the arrangements for strategic financial management introduced by Trustees, and supported by Trust Deed amendments, effective from 1 April 2008 for Users in Great Britain and from 1 July 2008 for Users in Northern Ireland.

Policies

Policies for strategic financial management were agreed by Trustees with DWP during the 2007-08 business year in response to the Grant-in-Aid settlement under DEL for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11. The level of funding was not sufficient to support the anticipated user demand and policies were agreed to manage demand within the funding available. These policies were set without a formal consultation due to the over-riding financial need; future stakeholder engagement may result in policy changes in due course.

The main thrust of the policies is to give first priority to existing Users, then to new applicants in work (as defined), then to applicants with the lowest income and highest financial need for support and services. The applicable date for Northern Ireland is later than that for Great Britain because there was a later decision by the Department for Social Development, and appropriate notice was required for Health and Social Care Trusts.

Senior Management Panel

Operations Caseworkers make initial decisions on applications in accordance with the priorities agreed by Trustees and incorporated into Schedule 3 of the Trust Deed. Trustees decided at a meeting on 9 April 2008 that requests for exceptions and appeals against decisions not to accept an application should be considered in the first instance by a Senior Management Panel, comprising Directors agreed by Trustees.

The terms of reference for the Panel were agreed by Trustees, and a table of “tiers of decision making” was provided to summarise the powers of the Panel. Trustees may agree changes to the terms of reference and the summary table from time to time, and these decisions will be recorded in Trustees Minutes.

The Senior Management Panel is able to draw on legal advice (including ILF solicitors and Counsel), and general advice from the User Personal Cases Committee (a sub-committee of the Trustees Board).

Reports and Reviews

The Senior Management Panel will meet on a regular basis, as required by the volume of cases to consider, and will report quarterly to the Trustees Board.

The User Personal Cases Committee will consider in the first instance any appeal against the decision of the Senior Management Panel.

No external reviews are planned at present, but decisions may fall for review under the National Audit Office external audit strategy for 2008-09. Internal audit assignments are agreed as part of the annual internal audit plan which is proposed by the Finance and Corporate Services Director jointly to the Chief Executive and the Audit Committee; this may include audits of the Senior Management Panel decision-making process if deemed appropriate.