

**THE MACFARLANE TRUST**

**NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the National Support Services Committee  
held on 28 November 2011 at The New Cavendish Club, 44 Great  
Cumberland Place, London W1H 7BS at 10.00am

**1. Apologies**

None

**2. Application of the retained reserves – Restrictions on Disbursements.**

Mr Harvey reminded the Committee that the expenditure has to be based on financial need and the Trust may have to justify expenditure and should not splurge unnecessarily.

**3. The potential risk to the Trust if a policy to apply the reserves for charitable purposes is not agreed.**

It was stated that there could be a risk that the Department of Health could decide to put funding on hold or that they could cut funding from the beginning of the financial year.

**4. Oral Discussion to develop disbursement and other application opportunities.**

**4.1 Proposal by Mr Mishcon**

To concentrate on primary beneficiaries where there is need by doing a one-to-one assessment, which would be conducted on a voluntary basis. Although it was felt that the current income received by primary beneficiaries should now be adequate, it does not make up for the past inadequacies. The assessment can determine what areas of their lives need improving and the current reserves could provide approximately £8½k per primary beneficiary.

**4.2 Proposal by Mr GRO-A**

To reintroduce winter payments and Motability deposits as there are fewer cars in the "Nil" deposit range. Average cars are available but not bigger cars, which are required by primary beneficiaries due to their mobility problems. These should be paid on an annual basis whilst funds allow. Mr GRO-A was also very concerned about the proposed changes in the benefits system and the possibility of some primary beneficiaries losing a large proportion of their income as a result of this. He proposed that the Committee should look at what the Trust can do to alleviate the financial burden that these people will experience.

**4.3 Proposal by Mr Burgess**

To look at the areas highlighted in the Long Term Review and to allocate funds to ensure that these issues are being funded. Mr Burgess isolated the following issues that he felt that the Trust could assist with:

- Housing Costs

- Transport Costs
- Heating
- Respite Grants

#### **4.4 Proposal by Mr Spellman**

To ring fence a sizeable portion of the reserves in order to set up a proxy form of life insurance.

#### **4.5 Proposal by Mr Dolan**

To consider the issue of underwriting insurance for death, mortgages and travel. To also consider ring fencing some of the reserves to cover the possible loss of DLA to our primary beneficiaries due to the proposed changes in DLA to PIP (Personal Independent Payments).

An in-depth discussion took place and some Committee members were concerned about ring fencing the reserves for insurance purposes as this is not dependent on need. There were also concerns about re-introducing grants as per the proposal by Mr Burgess as the Trust no longer does blanket grants as these should be covered by the discretionary top-up payments.

The proposal by Mr Mishcon was agreed in principle and would be presented to the Department of Health. It was agreed that a Working Party should be implemented to work out the scope of the project.

### **5. Issues that had arisen through the office:**

#### **5.1 Bereavement payments to families who have lost a widow of the Trust or financial assistance towards schemes that they can pay into.**

The Committee discussed that bereavement grants for widows who have passed away should be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, it was noted that families of widows would not know that a grant may be available from the Trust and there were concerns that the process could take too long. It was agreed that the NSSC would consider this proposal in more depth and that the Committee would consider increasing the Bereavement grant paid when a primary beneficiary dies. The Committee requested that information relating to the cost of funerals should be made available to them.

#### **5.2 Increasing the benchmarks for PBs who have a decrease in their income due to loss of wages etc.**

The Committee agreed that additional financial assistance could be made available to those who can show exceptional circumstance i.e. unable to pay their mortgage during this time or are running up debts due to the drop in earnings. The Committee also agreed to consider increasing the discretionary top-up payments at the next NSSC meeting.

#### **5.3 Additional payments for households who experience a decrease in their income due to being on sick leave.**

The Committee agreed that additional financial assistance could be made available to those who can show exceptional circumstance i.e. unable to pay their mortgage during this time or are running up debts due to the drop in earnings.

**5.4 Additional discretionary top-up payments for those dual infected with HIV and Hep C as they suffer increased health problems and costs – if agreed, only to apply to those who have received Stage 1 payments from the Skipton Fund.**

The Committee were of the opinion that a primary beneficiary would need to make a case for additional assistance and can apply to the Trust in the same way as those apply to Caxton i.e. during the period of treatment.

**6. AOB**

There was no other business.