

**West Dunbartonshire CVS**  
**Subject: Christmas Payouts to Older People**  
**January 2010**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on the recent Christmas payments to older people in the Clydebank area.

**2. Background**

- 2.1** In 2008/9, Corporate and Efficient Government Committee considered a review of the way it makes annual payments to elderly people's organisations in West Dunbartonshire. Currently, individual payments of £15 are made to older people resident in Clydebank and parts of Old Kilpatrick via the Clydebank Older Peoples Welfare Association.
- 2.2** In the Dumbarton and Vale of Leven areas, payments are made to applying voluntary organisations to meet the costs of activities. Older people focussed Clydebank organisations are also eligible to apply for such funding.
- 2.3** After an initial review at both the Corporate and Efficient Governance and Community Participation Committees, it was agreed to continue the process with a further review on particular aspects of the payout process to be considered. The Council requested input from West Dunbartonshire CVS in this regard.
- 2.4** In November/December 2009, CVS staff assisted with the Clydebank payout as a first step in the ongoing review process.

**3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** The Clydebank Older People's Welfare Payout took place over 5 days in the week commencing 30 November 2009. The process is highly labour intensive, on this occasion involving 4-6 staff from WDC, 4 staff from WDCVS and 2-4 representatives of the Older People's Welfare Committee taking part daily, with a reduced staff presence on the latter 2 days. It is estimated that this represented an in-kind staff cost of around £4,500. Additionally, given the quantity of cash being held on the premises, two members of Strathclyde Police were in attendance throughout the week.
- 3.2** During the payment week, eligible residents are asked to present either an official COPW white card or eligible identification to allow payment to be made. This gives rise to some concerns regarding the robustness of the process. The 'white card' is a very simply printed card which could easily be produced and on most occasions, cards presented for payment contained no personal details of the holder.

- 3.3** A larger quantity of claimants attended with eligible identification. Although advance publicity had taken place, there was a clear issue regarding identification for men given that an eligible age of 65 years has traditionally been set. Whilst the use of identification was easier to authenticate, it was not possible to ensure that duplicate claims were not taking place either on the day or during the course of the week.
- 3.4** Should the process continue into 2010/11 and beyond, it may be beneficial to have a first step to the process, where eligible addresses are checked and highlighted when a claimant attends.
- 3.5** Two area specific issues also arose involving the Duntocher and Old Kilpatrick areas. Separate arrangements have traditionally been in place for distribution in the Duntocher area, leaving Duntocher addresses ineligible to access the COPW payout. However, a significant number of potential claimants highlighted an anomaly exists where areas of Hardgate have been designated as Duntocher and vice-versa leaving people unable to claim in either payout. This appears to have arisen due to growth in local housing developments since the inception of the COPW payout regulations.
- 3.6** COPW payout regulations specify that only Old Kilpatrick addresses which feature the name of an island are eligible. However, again housing developments have made that stipulation difficult to enforce and caused some issues regarding eligibility.
- 3.7** Arrangements have traditionally been made for local home helps/care assistants to collect COPW payments on behalf of their clients. Whilst acknowledging the need for swift handling of these, there was some disquiet amongst those attending in person to Home Helps being seen separately from the general line. There were also a significant number of instances where home helps did not have the appropriate identification/information for the clients on whose behalf they were claiming such as no birth date information.
- 3.8** A significant number of those attending highlighted that mention had previously been made of making direct payments to bank accounts or similar. With the support of the COPW representatives present, a random sample of 80 people attending were asked their views. All respondents believed that the Christmas payout should continue, with only 7 respondents expressing a preference to continue to collect payments personally in future years. Remaining respondents were equally split between direct payments to bank accounts and payments being posted directly to eligible home addresses.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

**4.1** It is recommended that discussions take place with Clydebank Older People's Welfare Committee to consider the following aspects:

- Re-consideration of the current age criteria (60 for women and 65 for men)
- Re-consideration of eligible areas
- Consideration of a move to a direct payment process.

**4.2** It is also recommended that discussions take place with Duntocher Older People's Welfare Committee to ensure that the criteria used throughout the Clydebank area is consistently publicised.

**4.3** It is recommended that a survey process is undertaken with Dumbarton and Vale of Leven organisations regarding possible options for future delivery.

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