

## STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

*We are issuing this 'flyer' to let you know about changes to several of the Schemes operated by the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund. But we have also slipped in one or two pieces of other news. A full edition of the Newsletter will issue before Christmas.*



Many readers will have noticed the recent announcement by Des Browne that he has allocated a further £1.3m to the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund. This donation comes at a time when the Board of Directors of the Fund are considering the Fund's priorities for the future and it is intended to help that process. Since it was set up in 1999 the Fund has helped very many people. But it knows there are very many more out there that it has not yet reached. It wants now to concentrate on reaching those people, especially those who were bereaved before 1 April 1991. As a result, the forthcoming changes to its schemes will take effect from 14 October 2002.

### **SMALL GRANTS:**

Will be limited to applications from new households; New applications from surviving spouses and partners of those who died in the Troubles before 1 April 1991 will now qualify for the maximum award of £500.

### **SHORT BREAKS:**

Will be limited to applications from new households; The upper age limit for dependant children entitled to be included in a short break will increase from 16 to 18.

### **CHRONIC PAIN:**

The current maximum payment of £1000 will be raised to £2000.

## Dennis Licence, Chairman of the Fund spoke recently to VLU about these changes.



*VLU: Many people will be disappointed that Small Grants and Short Breaks are being restricted to new applicants.*

**DL:** Well this is in line with our wish to reach out to the very many victims whom we have not yet helped. We estimate that so far we have reached only about 10% of victims. But we are very pleased that the profile of the Fund is increasing, partly as a result of our publicity campaign, partly as a result of the Information Days we've been holding.

*VLU: Some people might take this to mean the Fund is running out of money?*

**DL:** Not at all. Indeed, as you know we have recently received a further generous donation of £1.3m from the Victims Minister Des Browne. But like any charity we could easily spend our income many times over. The Government at Westminster and the Assembly

have been very generous but the Fund has to think strategically. When I explain that the Fund since 1999 has only managed to get in touch with about 10% of the bereaved and injured that shows the massive amount of work that remains for the Fund to do. Existing applicants will still be eligible to apply for other Fund programmes such as the Training and Education Scheme, which can make a real difference to people's lives.

*VLU: So what's the vision for the Fund now?*

**DL:** Well it's important that the Fund remains dynamic and flexible and responds to the needs of victims. We will keep all our schemes under review and I'm pleased to be able to announce that we will be doubling the limit of help available for pain treatment from £1,000 to £2,000. But on a more strategic level Directors are focusing now on how to reach the 90% of victims who haven't had any contact with the Fund, including those in Great Britain and the Republic.

*VLU: Does the Fund raise any money itself?*

**DL:** Yes we do and last year we managed to raise £104,000 at our Gala Dinner which was a new record for the amount of money raised in one evening by a Northern Ireland charity. Having said that, that amount would not cover the cost of Small Grant payments for any longer than 5 weeks. There is a need for us to introduce new fundraising schemes to increase the support we already get from Northern Ireland businesses.

*VLU: Who qualifies for the maximum small grant of £500 and why have the Directors decided to make a special case for those bereaved before 1 April 1991?*

**DL:** The Grants Office is now working to the following guidelines: £350 is the usual payment that is made. An award of £400 is made if the breadwinner was killed and a sole parent has been left to bring up 3 children aged 16 or under. An award of £450 is made where the sole parent has 4 children or more, or where the applicant has suffered serious injuries. £500 is awarded to the most severely injured.

The Directors have decided to award £500 to surviving spouses and partners of those who died before 1 April 1991 because the compensation arrangements up to that time were less generous. The payment is a recognition of that.

*VLU: What about those people in this category who have only received £350 in the past from the Fund?*

**DL:** We do recognise that this is an issue and so over the coming months the Grants Office will be identifying those particular cases with a view to making them an additional payment of £150.

*VLU: What should people do in these circumstances? Do they have to contact the Grants Office?*

**DL:** No. The Grants Office ought to be able to trace them and contact them. But if anyone in this category hasn't heard from the grants office by the end of November they may want to give them a call.

## GROUPS' CORE FUNDING SCHEME 2002-2004

We are now able to announce that the Intermediary Funding Body (IFB) for the new round of Core Funding will be the Community Relations Council.

We shall be meeting very soon with Council staff and will follow up with further news about the scheme as soon as possible.

## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Three concerts to mark the 6th Gala Celebration of Christmas Peace will be held again this year -

The Millennium Theatre Londonderry on Tuesday 17 December at 7.30pm and in The Waterfront Hall at 2.30pm and 7.30pm on Wednesday 18 December.

A number of complimentary tickets will be available for victims of the Troubles. Tele: Mrs Doreen Mitchell 00353 71 62337.