

Note of Meeting

Independent Living Fund Scotland: Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group Meeting

Mencap Centre, 5 School Road, Newtownbreda, Belfast BT8 7BT

Thursday 12th January 2017: 11:00am - 2:00pm

Present

Niqi Rainey
Dennis Curie
Rachel Curie
Fiona Curie
Kieran McCarthy
Valerie McCarthy
Victor McCarthy
Colette Jones

Apologies

Anita Shannon
Elizabeth Gray
David Macdonald
Margaret Docherty
Robert Simpson
Marie Simpson
Richard Saale
Margaret Maloney
David Maloney
Christine Bartlett
Maria Treacy
Dolores Hannigan

In Attendance

Harvey Tilley
Holly Child
Liz McGarrity

1. Welcome and introductions

Following introductions, Harvey welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was explained to group members that Charles would no longer be able to be the Chair due to personal circumstances. Therefore, group members will look to identify a new Chair.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

It was agreed that the minutes from the last meeting were fine. It was also noted that some members of the Group (as part of a sub group) were going to be meeting with the NI Sponsor Team on the 26th January.

3. Nomination of new Chair

Group members felt that they wanted some more time to think about who should be the new Chair. Some group members asked if more information could be sent out detailing the time commitment and responsibilities of the role before making a final decision.

Action: Holly/Harvey to send out this information to group members.

4. Strategy (including new systems, Scottish Living Wage and New Fund in Scotland)

Harvey explained to the group that ILF Scotland has created and published its strategy, which details the organisation's key strategic priorities over the next three years.

Action: Holly to send a copy of the strategy to all group members.

New Systems

Harvey explained that the organisation is looking to streamline many of its internal processes and to make them less bureaucratic. He explained that we will be looking for input from both stakeholder groups over the next 6-7 months for their suggestions as to how they think any systems and processes could be improved.

Scottish Living Wage

Harvey provided an update to group members on the Scottish Living Wage and the process on how the organisation will be implementing this for ILF recipients in Scotland. It was noted that the Northern Ireland Government is not adopting this position and that their only commitment to ILF recipients in Northern Ireland is that an ILF hourly rate can match that of the Local Authority direct payment rate.

New Fund

Harvey provided group members with an update about the upcoming New Fund for ILF recipients in Scotland. He explained that, following a process of co-production, a report has now been submitted to the Minister who is considering the recommendations and will make a decision in due course. Following feedback from the Minister, the next phase will involve further co-production with all relevant stakeholders to develop the new ILF scheme, with a view to launching it later this year.

Action: When papers on the New Fund are available, Holly to send these to group members.

5. Changes to Agreement Form

Harvey explained to group members that we are in the process of getting a data sharing agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This will result in a different procedure with regards to the Agreement Form so that only one form will ever need to be signed

and thereafter if there are any other changes these will be communicated in a notification letter.

Action: Holly to send a copy of the updated Agreement Form and the draft of the notification letter to group members.

6. Update on Employment Policy Review and other policy matters

Self-Employed Personal Assistants

Harvey informed group members that policy guidance has been produced with regards to self-employed personal assistants. He advised that assessors will be discussing this guidance with recipients and award managers who use self-employed personal assistants to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities.

Niqi requested if group members could have the statistics on the numbers of self-employed personal assistants in Northern Ireland.

Action: Harvey to send Niqi the statistics on the numbers of self-employed personal assistants in Northern Ireland.

Action: Holly to send this document to group members.

Pension Auto-Enrolment

Harvey explained that, due to new statutory obligations surrounding pension auto-enrolment, policy 44 'Employer Support Policies' has been looked at and will be changed in order for ILF Scotland to now pay a contribution towards this cost, in line with other organisational policies. Margaret has now also produced specific guidance on this, which will be shared with group members.

Action: Holly to send draft policy guidance on pension auto-enrolment to group members.

Policy 13 – Decision Reviews

Harvey informed the Group that Policy 13 ‘Decision Review’ has now been updated following recommendations from the Ombudsman about ILF Scotland’s internal process for decision reviews.

Action: Holly to send out updated policy to group members.

Available Income Policy

Harvey informed group members that a paper outlining proposals to amend Policy 4 ‘Available Income’ has been sent to the Northern Ireland Sponsor Team for the Minister to consider. When a decision has been made by the Minister group members will be informed.

Action: Harvey/Holly to send the relevant documents around this to group members.

7. Any other business

Niqi asked about the current progress of the satisfaction surveys. Harvey explained that staff have adopted the comments from both stakeholder groups about the surveys and that the surveys have now also been produced in easy read. It was explained that the organisation would look to begin distributing the new surveys from 1st April 2017.

Action: Holly to send group members the updated satisfaction surveys.

Harvey also informed group members about a very interesting and upcoming forum site that has been created by one of the members of the Scotland Stakeholder Group. He explained that the long term intention of this forum (when it is fully developed) will be for all recipients and award managers to directly engage with ILF Scotland and each other to discuss specific topics.

8. Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 20th April 2017 from 11am until 2pm at Mencap Centre, 5 School Road, Newtownbreda, Belfast BT8 7BT.