

Note of Meeting

Independent Living Fund Scotland: Stakeholder Group Meeting

Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, Glasgow

Thursday 26th January 2017: 11:00am - 3:00pm

Present

Fiona McColl
Chloe McKee
Gordon McKee
Jim Elder-Woodward
Andy Higgins
Linda Burke
Cathie Heaney

Apologies

Peter Brawley
Rosemary Moffat
Laura Forbes

In Attendance

Peter Scott
Holly Child

1. Welcome and Introductions

As Peter Brawley was unable to attend the meeting, as Vice-Chair, Jim Elder – Woodward chaired the meeting.

Following introductions, Jim formally welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the Stakeholder Group.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Group went through the previous minutes, which were fine, with the exception of a wording change in item 4. ½ DLA needed to be changed to ¼ DLA care component.

3. Matters Arising

Available Income Policy

Peter provided an update to group members on this policy. Following the previous meeting, Margaret resubmitted the proposal for changes to this policy to the Scottish Government ILF Sponsor Team for the Minister to look at.

However, as a consequence of the implementation of the Scottish Living Wage and the financial impact this has on the Fund, any potential changes to this policy have currently been put on hold.

Group members expressed concerns about this and Peter confirmed that the organisation is also concerned, particularly on the continued impact that this policy has on those ILF recipients who pay a substantially large weekly contribution due to an occupational pension being taken into account. He is currently in discussions with the Scottish Government ILF Sponsor Team to see if any alternative short term solution can be found.

New Fund Update

Since the last meeting, the Working Group have now submitted their report and recommendations to the Minister. ILF Scotland expects her to support and approve the recommendations in due course. Although, we cannot provide an exact date yet as to when the new ILF scheme will open, it will be in 2017.

4. Update Employment Policy Review

Andy provided an update to group members on the work that has been done to date on this policy. The following points were discussed and noted by the group:

Pensions

It was explained to group members that ILF recipients will be given a contribution towards the set up and maintenance of a pension (in line with ILF Scotland policies).

Group members also asked if the text could include information about the option to opt out.

Sleepovers

Some group members questioned the terminology 'sleepover' and wondered if it should be changed to 'night shift'.

Many group members felt unease over the terminology 'unspecified work' and believed that this needed further clarification.

Some group members thought that, although it was only stated as a recommendation, it would be difficult for some ILF recipients to stipulate that Personal Assistants (PAs) could not work any more than two overnight periods a week. They believed that this recommendation should be looked at and should be more flexible.

5. Scottish Living Wage

Peter updated group members on the progress of the implementation of the Scottish Living Wage. He informed group members that ILF recipients and award managers would shortly receive a letter notifying them about the implementation of the Scottish Living Wage and that they had the option to opt out of this. If they do want to opt out they just need to notify us.

Group members noted concern about this, relating in particular to the maximum ILF award being breached, noting that Colin Smyth MSP had recently submitted two parliamentary questions regarding ILF Scotland and the implementation of the Scottish Living Wage. After a short discussion amongst the group, it was agreed that Fiona McColl (FM) would speak to Colin Smyth MSP and have a further conversation with him regarding this.

6. Andy's Forum

Andy has created a forum where ILF recipients can have the opportunity to express views and to interact directly with ILF Scotland staff and one another.

Andy showed a video presentation that he had created showing group members how the forum site worked and operated.

Group members were really positive and thought that this would be a fantastic tool to use going forward as a way to express their views. They were keen to know when it would be fully up and running for them to use.

Andy confirmed that some further testing needed to be done on the site, but when this was complete he would send the link to the site to everyone so that they could register and begin using it.

7. Policy Circular

Peter explained that, following on from the joint COSLA/ILF Scotland statement, a Joint Support Policy and Practice Circular has been distributed, stating, in detail, our relationship and practice going forward with Local Authorities regarding jointly funded ILF packages of support.

It was explained that, over the last few years, there have been some instances where the Local Authority has been using an 'asset based approach' and reduced their level of funding in a joint care package for an ILF recipient (sometimes without even notifying ILF and ILF Scotland). This has resulted in ILF funding the majority of a joint care package for an individual. ILF Scotland is committed to working closely with local authorities to ensure the value of ILF recipients' packages are not eroded and for them to be rebalanced fairly.

It was noted that, at present, the majority of local authorities are supportive of this policy circular, but Peter and Robert (Head of Social Work) are working closely with those local authorities who have concerns to confirm their agreement.

8. CS Letter to Petitions Committee (item from Jim)

Jim highlighted that, at present, war pensions and those who have a life limiting condition are excluded from any care charging from the Local Authority. He wanted to know if this was the same for ILF recipients.

Action: Peter/Margaret to check this and let group members know.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

At the most recent Board meeting, the Board felt that it would be appropriate for ILF Scotland to undertake an Equality Impact

Assessment with regards to both the Available Income policy and the Scottish Living Wage and to do a comparison of the two.

However, Peter felt that we needed further information and clarification from the Board as to exactly what they required. Nevertheless, group members expressed that this was perhaps not the right tool to be using.

10. Any other business

Group members were interested to know if there were any specific reports or further information on the impact of the closure of ILF in England.

Action: Holly to send these reports to group members.

11. Next meeting

The group decided that they wanted to agree the date for the next meeting amongst themselves by email. However, it was acknowledged that, due to the geographical location of members, Hamilton may be the best place to hold the next meeting.

Action: Holly to look at venues in Hamilton where the next meeting could potentially be held and to feed this back to group members.