

ILF Scotland Newsletter

June 2021



Contents

COVID-19 Update	3
Recipient story - Hayleigh Barclay	4
Return to Physical Reviews	6
Information for Award Managers	7
Policy Update	8
Charter for Involvement Action Plan	9
ILF Scotland Forum	10
Pension Credit	11
Scotland	
New Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care	12
2015 Fund	13
Policy 4 Available Income Contribution	14
Personal Contribution	15
£500 thank you payment to Personal Assistants	15
Information for Carers	16
Left Behind Contributors	18
Transition Fund	19
Northern Ireland	
ILF Fund	22
Story from Michaela	23

COVID-19 Update

These remain very challenging times and we want to reassure all of our recipients that your well-being during this time continues to be our first priority. We have been able to carry on our day-to-day work and make payments as usual. If you have a change in circumstances, we can still process this so please let us know.

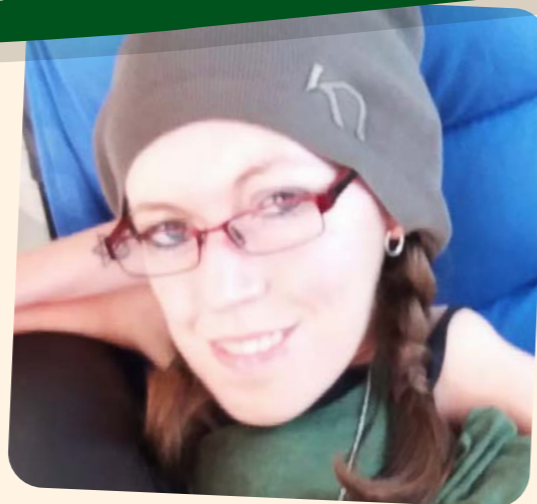
Flexible Policies

We have applied our policies flexibly during the pandemic and we have used additional funding from the Scottish Government to make additional, temporary, replacement care/support payments when this was necessary to enable our recipients to continue to live independently in their homes and communities. We can continue to agree temporary arrangements until the end of June 2021. As soon as our colleagues in Scottish Government advise us of any further extension to this date, we will post this on our website.

Social Care Workers – financial hardship

Social care workers should not experience financial hardship because of COVID-19. If your PA is/was sick or self-isolating and only receive(d) statutory sick pay or an amount less than their expected income, you can top this up to their normal income, providing their absence is/was because of COVID-19. You can use unspent ILF Scotland funds to meet this cost but if you don't have sufficient funds available, please contact us about additional funding to cover this cost until the end of June 2021. As soon as our colleagues in Scottish Government advise us of any further extension to this date, we will post this on our website.

Recipient story - Hayleigh Barclay



My name is Hayleigh Barclay. I'm 33 and live in Ayrshire. I have recently been signed up as a contributor for the BBC Social and I am currently working on my first article. In my spare time, I write short stories for the online magazine Disability Horizons and over the years I have campaigned for disability rights, including access to equal education, travel, and better media representation of disabled people. I have recently had a book published which I wrote as part of my Doctorate thesis.

Feedback Survey

We wanted to learn about the changes our recipients had to make to their support arrangements, and what support our organisation could offer during and after this difficult and turbulent time so we launched a survey on 17th December 2020, which ran until 28th February 2021.

The survey findings have helped to shape our own recovery from the impact of COVID-19 as we start to plan the road back to a level of normality. We are currently in the process of finalising the report and confirming the actions that we need to take forward. We will publish a summary of this on our [website](#) as soon as it is ready.

The Girl of the Ashes is a Gothic thriller full of kick-ass female vampires, dark humour, and magic. The story follows an 18-year-old assassin, Elise, who is caught in a war between her vampire family and the corrupt religious cult, the Inservium. Set in 19th century Scotland, the novel hosts a diverse range of characters including a disabled vampire (Natashka) who is proving to be very popular with readers. The friendship between Elise and Natashka plays a pivotal part of the story and it was important to me to include a disabled character at the centre of the action. The two characters are very different – Elise is serious and deadly and Natashka is eccentric and loyal – but together they are a force to be reckoned with, nothing can stand in their way of saving their coven. The book is aimed at older teens and adults and contains a lot of action scenes with strong

women at the heart of the story. It is available online from [Amazon](#), Waterstones, and other book retailers.

For the past year or so I have been shielding. The most difficult part was not being able to meet with friends or travel. ILF Scotland has been a massive source of support to me during this challenging time. My Assessor, Marie, has been in regular contact throughout the year and it has been extremely reassuring to me and my family knowing that there has been this level of support, which has put my health and care needs first. I always had a point of contact if I had any questions or concerns and knew that ILF Scotland would do their best to resolve any issues.

Return to Physical Reviews

We normally visit our recipients, on average, once every two years but we have been unable to do this because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

We are delighted to tell you that we are hoping to resume visits to your home for review assessments as soon as it is safe to do so, and in line with other public bodies and care agencies restarting visits. We need to give priority to visiting those first where there is an urgent need to review support arrangements currently in place.

We will send out guidance about what you can expect before, during and after our visit. We will prioritise your health to ensure that our visits are as safe as possible and prioritise your welfare by helping your support

resume as fully as possible to meet your agreed outcomes. We will be producing a short video on our website with more information, which you will be able to view [here](#).

If you have social work support, we have advised your local social work department that we intend to resume visits with them and that we expect to see their support in place. Where you and all of us agree that a video review is appropriate, we can complete some reviews this way.

Information for Award Managers

We have updated the following documents to reflect current legislation/good practice and to align with our policies.

Your Responsibilities Guide

This guide provides a range of information about ILF Scotland funding. It is very important for people managing ILF Scotland awards to be aware of the information in this Guide as it sets out the responsibilities in undertaking this role. You can read this document on our website [Your Responsibilities Guide](#).

Employer Support Information Note

Employers must ensure that they comply with their legal obligations under employment law and any other relevant legislation. ILF Scotland cannot provide legal advice but we

have produced this information note to provide guidance, information and signposting to help ensure that ILF Scotland recipients, as employers, use their ILF Scotland funding to employ personal assistants as part of safe and effective recruitment processes, in line with relevant legislation and good practice. You can read this document on our website [here](#).

Award Manager Online Workshops

We plan to hold a few online workshops with award managers beginning around September / October this year to offer advice and support on how best to manage ILF Scotland funding in line with the above, Your Responsibilities and the Employer Support Information. We will provide you with more details soon.

Policy Update

We have recently completed a review of all of our policies and revised them, largely to reflect current legislation and good practice. We have simplified and streamlined them where we can, and this has allowed us to delete a few and incorporate a few more together. Please see the revised versions on our website.

We would like to draw your attention in particular to the following policy change.

Policy 41 Use of ILF Scotland Funding

ILF Scotland encourages recipients to use their funding flexibly to achieve their outcomes. We have reviewed this policy to offer increased flexibility, choice and control to our recipients, in line with the principles of Self-directed Support.

[41-Use-of-ILF-Scotland-Funding.pdf](#)

Charter for Involvement Action Plan



ILF Scotland has signed up to the Charter for Involvement, written by members of the National Involvement Network (NIN).

The Chair of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) Scotland's Board, Susan Douglas-Scott, signed up to the Charter on behalf of ILF Scotland. By doing this, ILF Scotland has confirmed that it:

- Agrees with the principles and Statements in the Charter
- Will put the Charter principles and Statements into practice
- Will work in partnership with people who use our services to check how the organisation is doing on a regular basis
- Will make sure that all the workers in our organisation know about the Charter

- Will draw up an action plan that will show how we will improve involvement in line with the Charter principles and Statements
- Will discuss progress against this action plan with the ILF Scotland Recipient Advisory Group and the Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group.

At ILF Scotland, we sincerely value the involvement of our recipients in our work and we listen to what they tell us and identify opportunities for improvement.

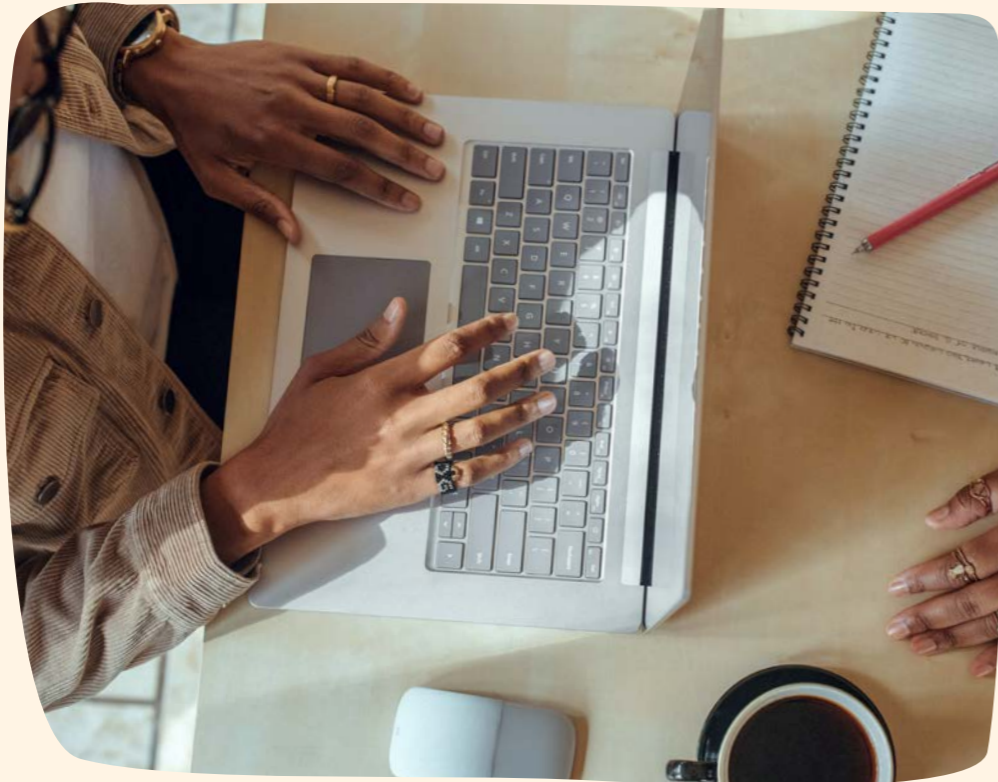
We believe that we currently demonstrate a high level of compliance with the Charter Statements but we are always keen to improve further so we have developed an Action Plan **Charter for Involvement – ILF**, which focuses on areas where we can build on our current good practice and make it even better.

We co-produced the Action Plan with disabled recipients and their representatives of the ILF Scotland 2015 Fund via our Advisory and Stakeholder groups.

ILF Scotland Forum

ILF Scotland has always encouraged recipients to be involved in the future of the Fund. As a way of bringing ILF Scotland closer to recipients, we have developed an

online forum where you and your support network can get involved in all of the things that matter to you. You can find out more on our [website](#).



Pension Credit

We encourage any recipient or family carer approaching, or over, state pension age to claim Pension Credit. If you get Pension Credit, you can also get other help, such as:

- Housing Benefit if you rent the property you live in
- Support for Mortgage Interest if you own the property you live in
- Council Tax Reduction
- A free TV licence if you're aged 75 or over
- Help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments
- Help with your heating costs.

If you are unsure whether you may be entitled to Pension Credit, you can phone the Pension Credit Claim line on **0800 99 1234** for help. When you make a claim over the phone,

pension staff will take all the details and fill in the application for you.

Alternatively, you could contact a local advice agency or a Citizens Advice Bureau.

There is also an online PC calculator on the [Gov.uk website](#).

Pension Credit is a complex area. Age UK has lots of good information on its website including a general benefit calculator and a very helpful factsheet with lots of examples. You can read more [here](#).

Benefits and Tax Credit Rates

Rightsnet have provided a comprehensive list of benefits and tax credit rates for 2021/22. Please follow this [link](#) for more information.

Scotland

New Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care



Following the recent Scottish Parliamentary election, and the subsequent announcement of a new Ministerial Team, we are pleased to inform you that the new Minister with responsibility for ILF Scotland is Kevin Stewart.

Image source: www.gov.scot

You can find further information about Mr Stewart on gov.scot and the [Scottish Parliament Website](http://www.parliament.scot).

We will soon be writing to Mr Stewart to congratulate him on his appointment and to seek a meeting with him. At this meeting we will ask Mr Stewart about the Government's plans for the recommendations of the recent Independent Review of Adult Social Care, and in particular the recommendation regarding the re-opening of ILF in Scotland. We will keep you updated on this matter.

2015 Fund



Scottish Living Wage

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that employers can pay social care workers the Scottish Living Wage. The Scottish Living Wage has increased to £9.50 from 1st April 2021.

If you employ Personal Assistants

You should increase the hourly rate of pay to a minimum of £9.50 per hour from 1st April 2021.

We should already have written to you and increased your award to allow you to pay this new Scottish Living Wage for every hour of support you receive from your Personal Assistants, including overnight hours of support.

This increase, which is in line with current ILF Scotland policies, will not affect your care and support package. You must keep your financial records of payments as normal and must not use this increase for any other purpose.

If you use a payroll agency

If you have not already done so, you must contact the payroll agency you use to ask them to pay your Personal Assistant(s) £9.50 per hour, with effect from 1 April 2021.

If you use a care provider / agency to provide your care or support

If your provider intends to increase the hourly rate they charge you, to enable it to pay the Scottish Living Wage, it should advise you of this in writing and in advance of the increase. You should post/email a copy of the letter to us at the address on the reverse of this newsletter.

We will consider such increases on an individual basis, using local Health & Social Care Provider Framework rates as guidance. We can backdate payments to cover such increases for a maximum of four weeks.

If you have any questions regarding this information, or if your circumstances have changed, please contact your Specialist Caseworker on [0300 200 2022](tel:03002002022) or by emailing enquiries@ilf.scot. Currently, our office opening hours are 9am until 2pm.

Policy 4 Available Income Contribution

We are very pleased to tell you that from 1 June 2021, we will be able to reduce the amount of money that our recipients living in Scotland are expected to pay towards the cost of their ILF Scotland funded care and support. The previous Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Jeane Freeman, announced a reduction in the maximum ILF Scotland Available Income Contribution, from £83 to £43 per week, which means that the maximum amount anyone will contribute now will be £43.

[Policy-4-1-June-2021.pdf](#).

More than 900 of our recipients will benefit from this change. We wrote individually to those recipients and amended their ILF Scotland award. If your Available Income contribution was greater than £43 per week and you think you should have heard from us about this change and have not, please contact us on **0300 200 2022** or email enquiries@ilf.scot.



Jim Elder-Woodward

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the ILF Scotland Recipient Advisory Group, chaired by Jim Elder-Woodward, for all of their efforts in bringing about this change. Jim and the group have spoken to the Scottish Government directly and through ILF Scotland to request this change and we are pleased their efforts have been rewarded.

If you would like to know more about the work of the ILF Scotland Recipient Advisory Group, please contact Peter Scott or Linda Scott on **0300 200 2022** or email enquiries@ilf.scot.

Personal Contribution

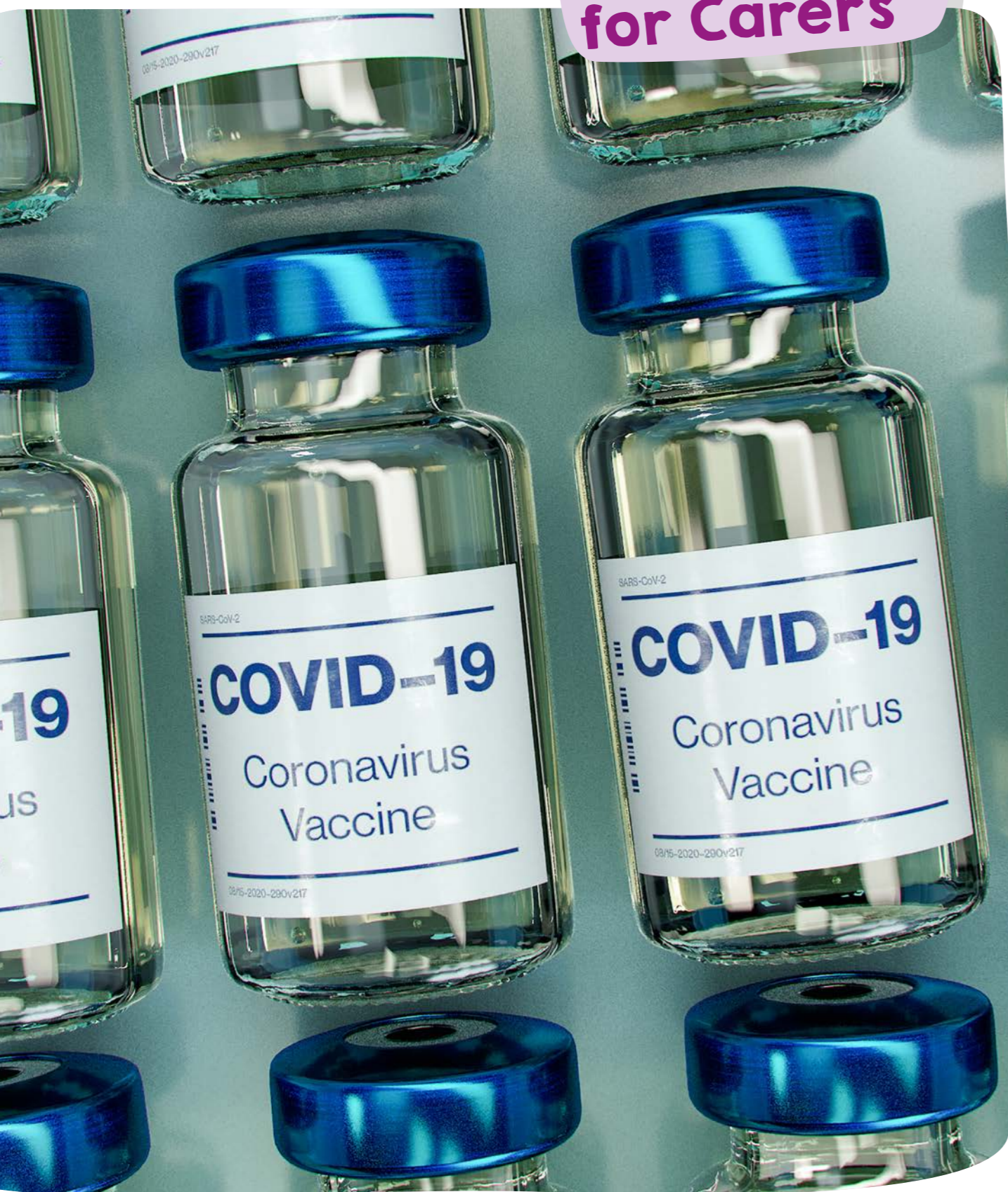
If the support you receive is reduced due to COVID-19, you may still wish to pay your personal contribution amount to retain services for future support. ILF Scotland can provide additional funds to cover the cost of this, if needed. Just get in touch.

£500 thank you payment to Personal Assistants

Do you employ a Personal Assistant (PA)? If so, they may be entitled to a thank you payment of up to £500 from the Scottish Government, in recognition of their tremendous work during the pandemic. Details of the process for eligible PAs to

receive their payments are still being finalised, however we will write to all ILF Scotland recipients who employ PAs shortly with the necessary details. Please look out for your letter, and let your PAs know what they need to do to make sure they do not miss out.

Information for Carers



Vaccines for Carers

People who provide vital unpaid face-to-face care and support for others were able to register for the COVID-19 vaccine online until 26th April 2021. If you missed this deadline, please contact the COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on **0800 030 8013** or [visit this page](#) for more information.

Carers Allowance Supplement

The Scottish Government has agreed a Carers Allowance Supplement payment.

Carers in Scotland who were getting Carer's Allowance on 12th April 2021 will automatically get a Carer's Allowance Supplement of £231.40 on 16th June 2021.

People will receive a letter notifying them that a payment has been made.

You can find more information [here](#).

Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub

Scotland's National Wellbeing Hub – Support in difficult times for unpaid carers and employers of Personal Assistants.

The Scottish Government has established a National Wellbeing Hub for everyone who has a responsibility to provide support to others, including unpaid carers, in recognition that people's wellbeing is now more important than ever. The Hub offers advice and support to help people adapt and cope with the day-to-day challenges of life such as isolation, anxiety, fatigue, poor sleep, feeling vulnerable and keeping up spirits, during this global pandemic. There is a designated page of information for unpaid carers to signpost them to help and support. In addition, there is information for people who employ Personal Assistants with links to organisations who can provide advice and guidance about Self-directed Support. You can access the Hub [here](#).

Left Behind Contributors

There is a call for contributors, who are living in Scotland, for a new project regarding the 'left behind', which will include a book of the project findings. Everyone involved will be interviewed about their experiences with the benefit system,

especially the disabled community and the unemployed. All commentary will be anonymised.

If you are living in Scotland and looking to be involved in this, please contact [Mo Stewart](#).



Transition Fund

Over £3m in life-changing funds awarded to young disabled people

We are delighted to have awarded over £3m in funding to approximately 2,000 people through our [Transition Fund](#) in the past year. COVID-19 restrictions have heightened the potential for social isolation amongst young disabled people and prevented many from pursuing typical activities, such as learning to drive or joining a sports club. However, some young people made inventive, successful, applications to the Transition Fund

and this helped them to thrive throughout the changing restrictions.

"For the first time in my life I don't feel a sense of dread and wake up excited to go to work. I'm so happy to now have a legitimate career after many difficult years at school where I felt held back due to my ADHD and dyslexia. I wish I'd heard about ILF Scotland back then!" – Transition Fund recipient, Joe.

Check out more stories on our website [here](#).

New grant limit

From December to March, due to an exceptionally high level of demand, our Transition Fund had to operate to a £1,500 maximum grant limit. We have now reviewed this with the Scottish Government and from 1st April 2021, we were able to increase this to £4,000.

Find out how to apply [here](#).

End of grant period information

If we have awarded you a Transition Fund grant for activities that are suspended because of Coronavirus restrictions (e.g. gym memberships, driving lessons, etc.), we are happy to extend the grant period to enable you to complete these. All you have to do is get in touch and let us know.

Once you have completed your activity and have sent us proof of spending i.e. receipts for the items / activities purchased using the grant, you can apply again to the Transition Fund provided you continue to fit the eligibility criteria.

“For the first time in my life I don’t feel a sense of dread and wake up excited to go to work. I’m so happy to now have a legitimate career after many difficult years at school where I felt held back due to my ADHD and dyslexia. I wish I’d heard about ILF Scotland back then!”



Joe Eaglesham

Northern Ireland

ILF Fund

Following on from the extensive work, research and development carried out by the Working Group, a set of options were presented to officials prior to Christmas 2020. They have taken this with other information and have been developing advice for the Minister of Health on the feasibility, affordability and sustainability of reopening the Independent Living Fund to new applicants in Northern Ireland. Though the current financial position is extremely challenging, officials are working hard to look at how best to address the ongoing funding required for a potential reopening of the fund in Northern Ireland.

Advance Care Planning Policy for Adults in Northern Ireland

The Department of Health in Northern Ireland is developing an Advance Care Planning policy. A key aim of the policy will be to encourage people to think about what matters to them and if they became unwell, to consider their wishes, feelings, beliefs and

values to help them to plan for their future. You can read more about this at [Advance Care Planning Policy for Adults in Northern Ireland](#).

Stakeholder Group

The purpose of this group is to support the improvement and development of ILF Scotland, for recipients living in Northern Ireland, by advising on all matters relating to the operation of the fund, including experiences of using the existing fund, communicating and interacting with ILF Scotland and providing insight and advice into potential policy developments relating to the existing fund.

The group is currently looking for more members. If you are interested in being involved in the group please contact Linda Scott (Director for Policy, Engagement and Improvement) by emailing Linda.Scott@ILF.scot or phoning **0300 200 2022**.

Story from Michaela

The COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions put in place have been incredibly hard for disabled people and have had a devastating impact. Our Northern Ireland recipient, Michaela Hollywood, highlighted this in a piece shared on BBC Ouch. Read it [here](#).



If you require this document in any alternative format please contact us on 0300 200 2022.

Follow us



@IndependentLivingFundScotland



@ILFScotland



@ILFScotland



Independent
Living Fund
Scotland

Ground Floor,
Denholm House,
Almondvale Way,
Livingston EH54 6GA.

T: 0300 200 2022

E: enquiries@ILF.scot