

Hope

&

ilf

Independent  
Living Fund  
Scotland

Ambition

External Stakeholder Consultation

September - November 2019



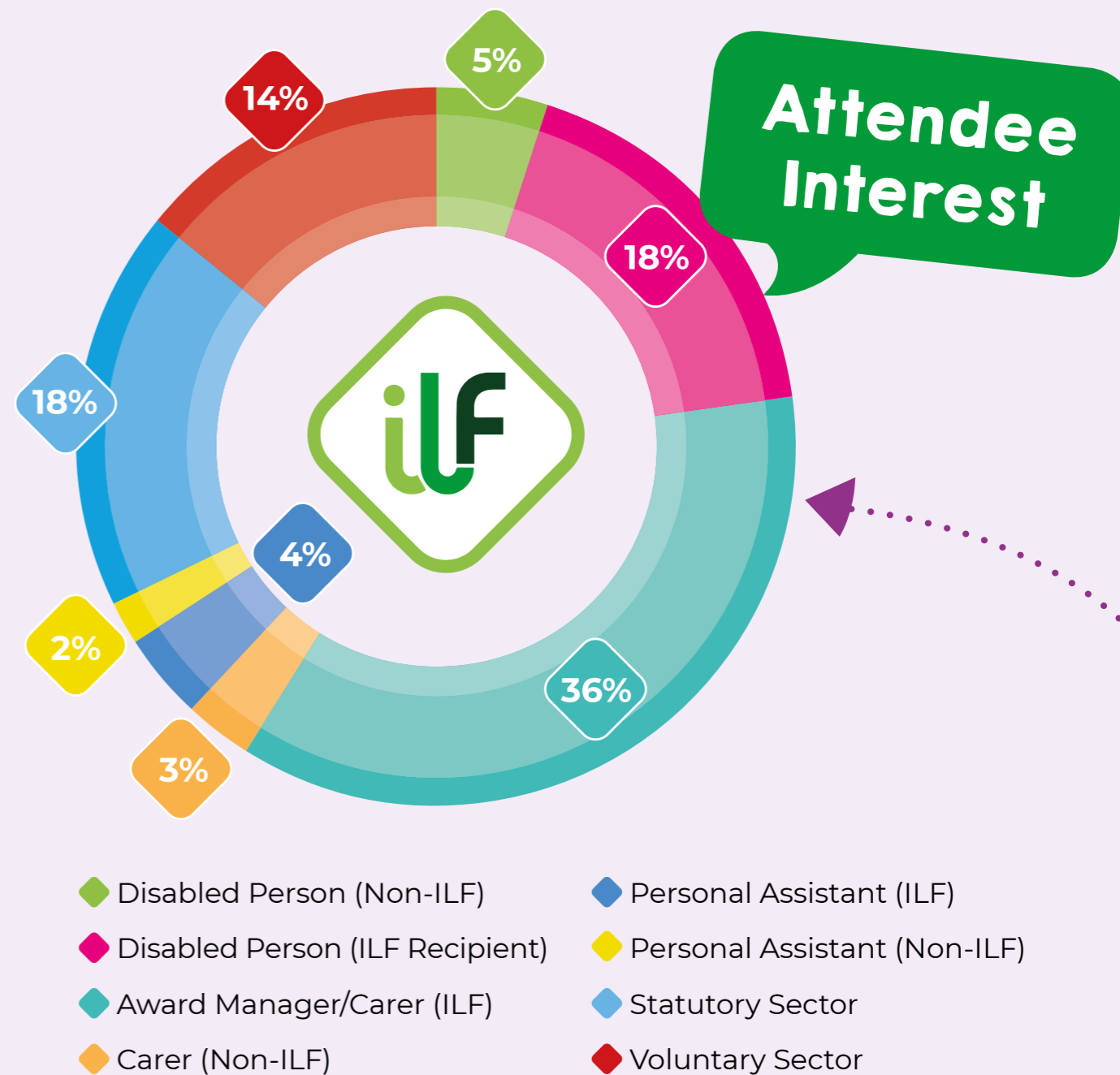
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## The Process

Independent Living Fund Scotland (ILF Scotland) is in the process of co-producing its next organisational strategy, which will run from 2020 to 2023. From July until November 2019, ILF Scotland worked with Bruce Tait's Associates (BTA) to consult with hundreds of people to inform the development of this strategy. They undertook interviews with key stakeholders, consultation events throughout Northern Ireland and Scotland and created an open online survey. Respondents ranged from civil servants to social care professionals, fund recipients, parents and carers of recipients, representatives from voluntary sector organisations, disabled people and those individuals with an interest in ILF Scotland. All responses were recorded and are available from ILF Scotland on request.



- ◆ Disabled Person (Non-ILF)
- ◆ Disabled Person (ILF Recipient)
- ◆ Award Manager/Carer (ILF)
- ◆ Carer (Non-ILF)
- ◆ Personal Assistant (ILF)
- ◆ Personal Assistant (Non-ILF)
- ◆ Statutory Sector
- ◆ Voluntary Sector

The **22 stakeholder interviews** were held with senior representatives of a range of organisations from the public and voluntary sectors.

The online survey received **66 responses** and was anonymous. The responses indicate that some of the respondents were fund recipients and that some were public sector employees.

There were a total of **272 attendees** at the 8 Consultation Events (78 in Northern Ireland and 194 in Scotland). Their interest in ILF can be broken down as seen below:

All the processes asked the same questions, which were:

- o What does ILF Scotland do really well in enabling independent living for disabled people in Scotland and Northern Ireland (and should do more of)?
- o What could ILF Scotland do even better in terms of making independent living a reality for disabled people in Scotland and Northern Ireland?
- o Is there anything ILF Scotland does that it shouldn't do going forward?
- o The Scottish and Northern Irish Governments are reforming adult social care; to that end what role do you think ILF Scotland could play in supporting independent living for disabled people in the coming years?
- o Scotland only - ILF Scotland and the Scottish Government are thinking about how more disabled people can access the Transition Fund. What do you think our priorities should be?
- o Any other comments not covered by previous questions that ILF Scotland should consider when putting together its strategy for the next 3 years?

## Key Responses

The answers to these questions were very similar regardless of whether they were asked face-to-face, online, or in interview. There were also three key responses that significantly featured in all three of the consultation exercises.

### A. ILF Scotland are held in very high regard

One of the most powerful messages that came out of this consultation is just how highly people regard the ILF and ILF Scotland.

Without exception, even where there might be policy divergence, people went out of their way to share their positive view. Typical comments were:

“ILF enables people with a disability to have opportunities that other people may take for granted without a long list of exclusions.”

“I think ILF is an example of Self Directed Support (SDS) in action – while SDS has made decent progress in Scotland we still have much further to go. ILF could significantly contribute to this and could widen out the scope to other marginalised groups.”



“The ILF should be congratulated for doing a very good job. We have been genuinely impressed with the ways they work. We spend all our time listening to tales of doom and gloom – never-ending stories of how bad things are. With ILF Scotland it has been about how good it is. It has been a pleasure to work with them. They should be congratulated.”

- Prof Nick Watson, Glasgow University.

### **B. The schemes are very well managed**

The funding schemes (2015 Fund and Transition Fund) were considered to be very well managed and “user-friendly”. This response from a Fund recipient at one of the consultation events was typical:

“It’s trusting. Not overly bureaucratic. Funds me to be independent via the assistance of PAs so I can socialise and be active in political and charitable matters.”

### **C. There was substantial support for re-opening the 2015 Fund**

There was almost universal support for re-opening the fund – however there was a range of views as to how this should be done. For example, some respondents wanted the fund re-opened, but also expressed concern that a new or re-opened fund might be swamped with applications and become either overwhelmed or unsustainable. A typical online response was:

“Open ILF to new people. This is vital – so many younger disabled people are missing out as they were too young to apply when ILF stopped new people applying in 2010.”

## **Summary of Responses - Question by Question**

### **Question 1 – What does ILF Scotland do really well in enabling independent living for disabled people in Scotland and Northern Ireland (and should do more of)?**

- With reference to the old fund there was widespread agreement that ILF offers a level of flexibility that is not found in funding from local authorities, which is seen as becoming ever more tightly controlled.
- Contributors also highlighted the fund was aspirational and ‘life-giving’, offering opportunities to participate in activities that kept them healthy and engaged with wider society.
- The 2015 Fund is seen as the ‘gold standard’, however it was widely acknowledged that as the fund is now closed to new applicants and only available to a relatively small group of people it does raise issues of inequity.
- People also valued the way the fund was administered – seeing it as person centred, reliable and efficient.
- The Transition Fund was commended for offering young people the opportunity to try out activities that could assist independent living in a relatively low risk way.





## Question 2 – What could ILF Scotland do even better in terms of making independent living a reality for disabled people in Scotland and Northern Ireland?

- Contributors thought that the portability of the Fund was unique.
- They also see the Fund as offering a ‘form of hope’ in an aspirational type of way that Health and Social Care Partnerships and Trusts funding is not seen as doing.
- Contributors suggested a range of things the ILF Scotland could be doing more of including:
- Contributing to the policy agenda on areas, such as sustainable funding levels, unmet need and the need for national eligibility criteria.
- Capacity building.
- Increasing the amounts of funding, specifically the maximum award amounts.
- Increasing the digital offering.
- Amplifying the aspirations they hear from people.
- Telling stories about the impact of support in both funds.
- Using professional and family networks to promote the Transition Fund.
- Stakeholder groups are seen as very positive.
- Bring even more lived experience into the organisation, including at board level.

- Reviews – a number of comments around better partnership working between ILF Scotland Assessors and social workers and also far more clarity needed around boundaries between the two, as well as clarity on who is paying for what.
- Charging – although acknowledged that ILF Scotland has done what it can within current parameters.
- Improve further and reduce the bureaucracy, though it was noted that ILF Scotland was significantly less burdensome and intrusive than other support.
- Recipients only having one week’s contingency and this should be at least 4 weeks.

## Question 3 – Is there anything ILF Scotland does that it shouldn’t do going forward?

- No charging for support.
- No more QSS (Qualifying Support) and concentrate on outcomes in the 2015 Fund.
- Reclaiming unspent money – stop it under certain circumstances.
- Could the threshold be lowered since we have no government and care packages are not being increased to meet the needs of individuals?
- Too much paperwork – should be an online option.
- Unused monies kept in ILF pot.

**Question 4 – The Scottish and Northern Irish Governments are reforming adult social care; to that end what role do you think ILF Scotland could play in supporting independent living for disabled people in the coming years?**

- There was overwhelming support for re-opening the fund – however there was a range of views as to how this should be done.
- Many people were concerned that a new or re-opened fund might be swamped with applications and become either overwhelmed or unsustainable.
- There were a lot of calls for the Fund to be clear about “what is was there for”.
- One recurring theme was that if Health & Social Care funding is about ‘need’ then ILF funding is about ‘quality of lives’ and ‘realistic hopes and ambitions.’

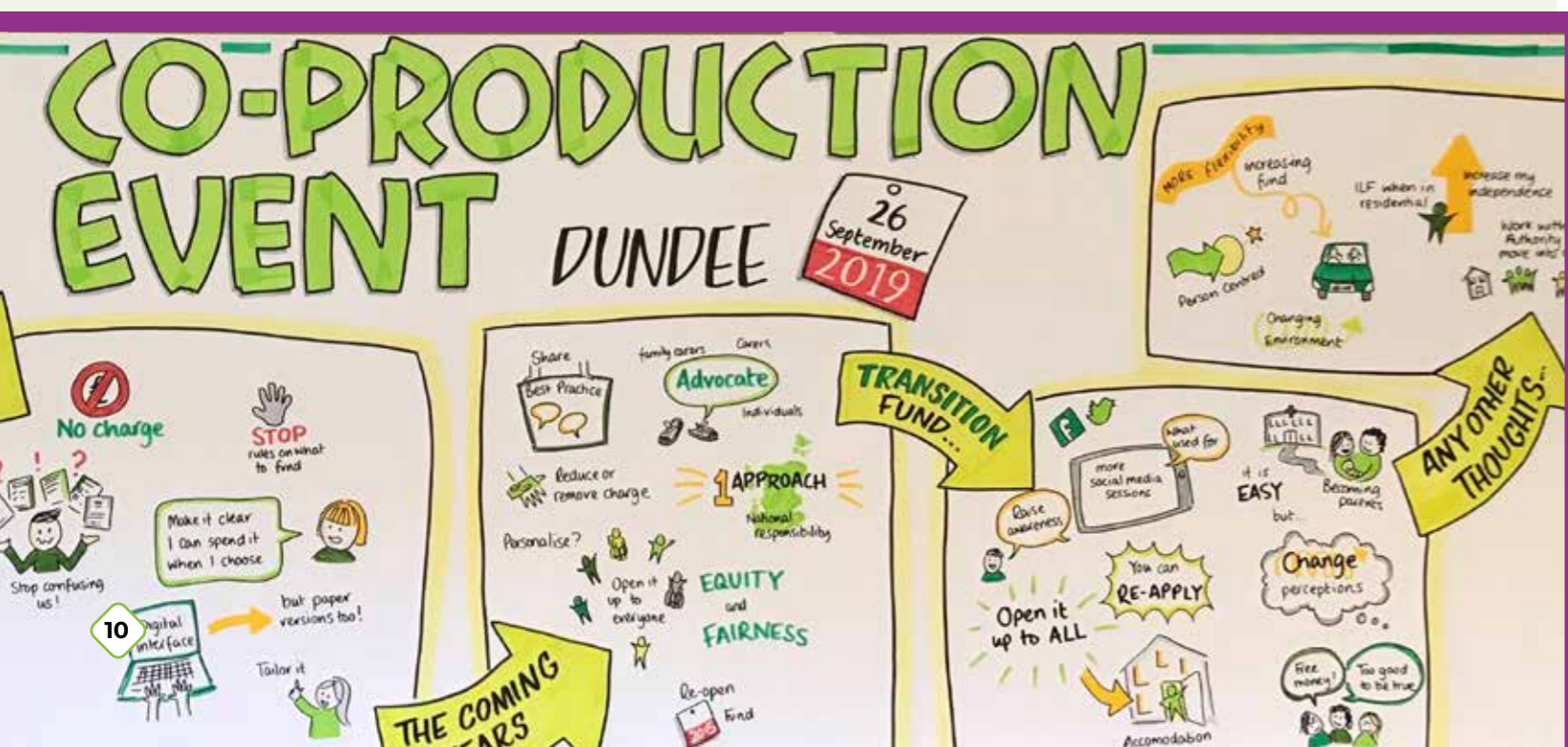
**The external context. What do you see as the main opportunities and threats for the fund over the forthcoming years?**

Opportunities include:

- Contributors identified that there is a current opportunity in the form of a ‘live debate’ within the political zeitgeist. This has cast a spotlight on disability issues that ILF Scotland should contribute to.
- Greater access for new recipients to get support from ILF Scotland, especially in reopening the current 2015 scheme alongside expansion of the Transition Fund.
- Coming Home Report. A number of contributors suggested that ILF Scotland could be an appropriate body to help take forward the recommendations of the Coming Home report.
- Greater partnership working with COSLA to develop national level policies around (e.g.) National Living Wage and help smooth implementation of these policies.

Threats include:

- That ILF money gets “co-opted” to Local Authorities.
- Demand.
- That the fund shrinks to a size where it is no longer administratively efficient to administrate.
- Public attitudes to disability.
- Brexit uncertainty.



**Question 5 – Scotland only – ILF Scotland and the Scottish Government are thinking about how more disabled people can access the Transition Fund. What do you think our priorities should be?**

- There was universal agreement the Transition Fund should be both widened and extended.
- In terms of the existing focus on 16-21 year olds, contributors wanted to see the age range extended to somewhere between 25 and 30 – as most disabled people leave their family home much later than 21.
- Some respondents mentioned that the original proposition had been to extend the Fund out to other transitions, such as loss of a primary carer, or from hospital discharge back home. They were to consider widening the fund to include other transitions.
- Contributors from Northern Ireland (where the fund is not operational) want to see a similar fund opened there. This was unprompted, as they were not asked this question as part of the consultation. However, reopening the 2015 fund in NI was seen as more of a priority.



**Question 6 – Any other comments not covered by previous questions that ILF should consider when putting together its strategy for the next 3 years?**

- Re-open ILF properly. Stop charging people.
- Firstly ILF Scotland are doing a lot of fantastic things and so the principle of 'if it ain't broke why fix it' is the starting point.
- Thanks ILF Scotland. Don't know how I'd get by without you! You are a shining light in a world of social care darkness.
- I love the team at ILF Scotland, they are amazing and help me rather than always take money away like the Health and Social Care Partnerships and Trusts do.
- Without ILF lots of people would not receive the significantly beneficial support they do to maximise all aspects of their life, not just the day-to-day functioning!
- I'd just like to say thanks – although you charge me too much and won't/can't give me more funding, which I need, the ILF Scotland staff are always really nice and warm.
- By using the grant my son is now making friends and being part of his community. This has had a massive impact on his confidence and also, it has helped him have a whole new set of friends. Talking to one of these, meeting my son has changed his own opinion and view of disability.
- More engagement to increase visibility and access.
- More flexibility with funding.



## Significant Other Responses

There were some responses that, while not significant in terms of level of response, are significant in terms of content. In particular:

- A.** Contributors identified that there is a current opportunity, 'live debate' within the political zeitgeist with a spotlight on disability issues that ILF can contribute to. A number of contributors suggested ILF Scotland could be the appropriate body to help take forward the recommendations of the Coming Home report.
- B.** There was a call for greater partnership working with COSLA to development national level policies, e.g. around the National Living Wage and help smooth implementation of these policies. Social Work Scotland confirmed funding for the Living Wage commences on the 1st May each year and that is when uprating will commence for local authorities, it was recommended ILF Scotland do the same.
- C.** Respondents felt ILF Scotland's unique selling point is that it treats people with dignity and respect. Some felt this to be in contrast to their experiences of Health and Social Care Partnerships and Trusts provision, as they perceived that local authorities were seeking to control funding. There was however an acknowledgement though that both parties had to work within different parameters and that for most ILF recipients their award adds to their ability to live independently once their statutory needs have been met by the Health and Social Care Partnerships and Trusts.

## Conclusion

This was an extensive consultation exercise that invited a great many people to contribute to a robust evaluation of ILF Scotland – its purposes and processes. It also invited comment, suggestion and critique of the organisation's future direction and purpose.

That a broad range of people, using a diverse and varied evaluation process, came to very similar views on the key issues raised is the key finding. It is clearly felt that ILF Scotland is doing a very good job and that both Funds are needed and should be expanded. This was very much the unprompted response of all of the audiences engaged.





# Additional Information

**ilf** Independent Living Fund Scotland

All feedback and venue specific comment summaries available on request via email to:  
**enquiries@ilf.scot**

## ILF Scotland

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

Telephone: **0300 200 2022**

Email: **enquiries@ILF.scot**

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