



We also support
independent living in
Northern Ireland

Annual Operational Report

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of achievements and activities against the business plan during 2022-2023.

2. Progress Update

a) Executive Summary

The last 12 months have without a doubt been one of the most challenging environments for disabled people in the last 30 years. The chronic shortage of social care staff coupled with cost-of-living crisis, packages of support getting squeezed by statutory organisations due to budget pressures in conjunction with provision for disabled people not being re-established after the pandemic, paints a very grim picture for independent living, limiting choice, control and dignity significantly. Alongside this we have seen a further degradation of what was already poor transition support for young disabled people taking their next steps in life. The outcome of this is ILF Scotland has had its busiest year to date stepping even further into this vacuum left by this reduction in support during Covid-19. Every part of the organisation has been stretched very thin with staff having to deal with considerable workloads. Indeed, without the extensive support, wellbeing initiatives, constant reprioritisation of tasks and strong positive leadership, we would have seen a much greater impact on the health of colleagues.

As will be expanded on below and further on in this report, it is very clear that the challenges faced by disabled people with the reductions in support and provision from statutory organisations through Covid-19, have been further eroded as they re-establish to what is the new normal post pandemic. A clear example of this is the record demand being driven through the Transition Fund (TF), with growth of over 40% year on year with very little additional capacity. This demand has been exacerbated by additional demands for ILF Scotland's expertise, an ageing IT infrastructure and the extremely tight fiscal landscape.

For all this, it should be noted that ILF Scotland has not only had its busiest year ever, but most successful one in terms of the number of disabled people supported with £55.6 million paid out to nearly 4,500 individuals not including nearly £3 million to over 7,000 PAs via the highly successful Thank You Payment Schemes on behalf of both the Scottish and Northern Ireland Governments which concluded this year. In addition to this, many thousands more have been supported with advice, guidance and assistance to the high levels of quality and customer service ILF Scotland has become known for. This is also evidenced by the progress against its strategy and business plan across many facets of the business. Staff have worked hard and have performed exceptionally against a very difficult professional and personal backdrop, for this they should be commended.

Over the year 2015 Fund recipient numbers have dropped to 2,325 (Scotland 1,970 & NI 355) from 2,435 (Scotland 2,056 & NI 379). This represents a slight decrease in the overall decline trend from around 5.4% (4.8% Scotland & 8% NI) in 2021-22 to 4.5% (4.2% Scotland & 7.3% NI) in 2022-23.

During the reporting period we have continued to expand the number physical reviews to catch up with a 2-year backlog. Due to the challenges already alluded to, this is proving very difficult and despite best efforts we have only been able to get back to about 65% of the pre-pandemic run rate. Reviews are taking much longer to resolve due to the aforementioned issues, meaning awards are taking longer to finalise with workloads and caseloads increasing in tune with this. During the past year we had approx. 17,700 calls to operations teams, almost identical to the previous year, despite the previous year including telephone reviews. However, an ongoing part care management type role whilst vital to recipients during the pandemic, means that a 2-year review cycle may be unsustainable, with discussions required to consider redefining how we ensure the positive impact of a review visit is maintained. To highlight this point, prior to the pandemic we completed 1,900 review visits and this this year we have completed 1,085.

By the end the year we received 3,205 TF applications, an increase of 40.8% on last year. Correspondingly the total number of individuals who received a TF grant (this is different from applications received and in payment) has increased by 43.9% from 1,442 to 2,076 by the year end. Application numbers have grown strongly throughout the year, with Q4

recording just under 1,000 applications alone. Challenges around processing applications remain significant due to the poor quality of submissions and the lack of necessary supporting documentation. Various efficiencies, innovations and process improvements have somewhat mitigated this, with the existing staff team continuing to make every effort including significant overtime to progress applications, but it is clear with the sheer volume of applications that we are receiving is simply overwhelming the current staffing complement and operating model. This is why we have been working to carry out an in depth review of the TF in an effort to find further efficiencies, consider whether additional resource is required, and revising the processing model as appropriate. We expect to report in Q1 of the next financial year and then agree next steps with the Board and Sponsor Team.

At the strategic level, we continue to engage with Governments, statutory organisations, various working groups and consultations to produce national guidance alongside inputting into the set-up of the National Care Service (NCS). We also carried out comprehensive reviews during 2022-23 on several policies to take account of legislative / operational environmental changes. This was further to our full review of all of our 2015 and TF policies in 21-22. We retained several elements of Covid-19 policy flexibility continued throughout the year with both the Scottish and Northern Ireland Government's extending this to the end of March 2023. We made good progress in implementing improvement initiatives in our published Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes and Corporate Parenting progress reports to the Board in April 2023 and will expand this work in 2023-24.

The financial year 2022-23 has been very busy for Finance team. Not only have we been dealing with the staple of the 2015 Fund and Transition Funds, we have as previously mentioned been instrumental in facilitating the payment to PA's (£500) to both Scotland and Northern Ireland. We received excellent feedback on our work in both countries. As part of our legislative requirements we completed the 2021-02 annual accounts and external audit, receiving a clean audit with no qualifications for the 6th year in a row.

From a communications and engagement perspective a new website was launched in the summer of 2022. We have received really positive feedback from our stakeholders, particularly around the accessibility of the new website. This is

evident in the engagement statistics for the website, which show a 143.5% increase in page views and a 702.8% increase in new users in 2022-23. We have produced multiple publications including the highly regarded newsletters to over 3,000 recipients and key stakeholders. At the end of November 2022 and in the run up to the UN's International Day of People with Disabilities, we held a very successful 5 Year celebration event for Transition Fund recipients. Nearly 200 young people, their parents, carers, families and external partners attended. The Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport also launched the Technology Grant providing an IT solution to enable young disabled people to be digitally connected. Following the event and subsequent PR about the grant, we reached over 25,000 people.

As articulated above, we have worked extremely hard to maintain our status as an employer of choice and support our excellent workforce through the busy operating environment. In conjunction with additional projects such as 35 Hour Working Week consultation and Employee Passport launch, we have focused our efforts at wellbeing and resilience of colleagues. To that end our staff turnover remains low, however we have seen several staff members retire and others leaving to promoted posts and other opportunities. Our absence rate has remained static as we worked our way through the pandemic exit with several long-term absences. We are immensely proud to have again been awarded a Top 10 Employer in the annual Working Families benchmark in September.

In the IT and Information Governance space, the new file plan is now in place on the G:Drive and staff are working well within the new structure. The team have submitted a full Progress Update Review to the National Records of Scotland which offers an update of our Records Management Plan. This year four new LA areas have been added to the LA portal: West Lothian, East Ayrshire, Fife and Perth & Kinross. Additional areas will be added in Q1 of the new financial year. The Scottish Living Wage uplift was processed automatically increasing PA hourly rates by 3.8%. We have made significant developments moving away from paper printouts with the use of notifications and emails for Caseworkers. The technology grant launched in November 2022 has shown to reduce the time processing applications by 90%, or at least 9 hours for each submission when compared with the full application process. This not only saves a huge amount of time for staff but also those applying for the TF.

In conjunction with this work a full business case for capital investment for delivery transformation has been produced after extensive work, but disappointingly funding has not been granted. Instead we have been given permission to spend some reserves on a cloud based replacement for our ageing core casework database called ICI. This will make a big difference but will only facilitate a part digital transformation for ILF Scotland. This project for the ICI replacement has moved from Discovery to Alpha phase, working with third party suppliers on potential software solutions.

The planned business resilience desktop exercise for Q4 had to be postponed until April 2023. Scenario planning is complete and teams are ready to practice our resilience processes and build on lessons learned from the last exercise in early 2022. Also in Q4, we completed our reaccreditation of Cyber Essentials Plus and took part in a month long simulated phishing campaign and staff reporting has been very good during the period.

In summary, as can be seen from the brief narrative set out above, it has been another exceptional year for ILF Scotland dealing with the profound impact of Covid-19 on us all alongside the ever more acute cost of living. We have had the busiest, yet in some ways the most rewarding reporting period by any benchmark since opening in July 2015. We continue to work towards re-establishing a new baseline for our operations, implementing our strategy, extending the Transition Fund, re-opening the 2015 Fund to new applications in Scotland and Northern Ireland (subject to Ministerial approval) and supporting both Scottish and Northern Ireland Governments to deliver their priorities for disabled people to live independently with choice, control and dignity.

b) Business Plan Progress

Progress towards all strategic objectives remains strong and on track to complete by the end of this current strategic cycle / business plan, which has been extended and enhanced after discussion with the Scottish Government Sponsor Team. The digital transformation project which has now become a focused replacement of the ageing ICI system has now started in Q4 with the appointment of Transformation Lead Alex Bunch.

Strategic Outcome 1: Facilitate the independent living needs of disabled people.

Strategic Objective 1: Development of the evidence base and proposals to re-open the 2015 Fund.

Target Outcome:

The evidence base is further developed to support the re-opening of the 2015 Fund.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Further research and evidence from the development work in Northern Ireland by end Mar 21 establishes the strategic and business rationale for re-opening in NI and informs baseline preparations for Scotland.
2. Full analysis of welfare check calls and new recovery calls provide sponsor team with up-to-date impact assessment of current support arrangements on the ground for disabled people.
3. By March 2021, feedback from disabled people on the impact of COVID on them is used to help shape business plan for 2021-23.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- The Ministerial submission for the reopening in Northern Ireland was completed and submitted to the previous Minister for Health for a decision on next steps. The political situation in Northern Ireland and the absence of an Executive has meant that no progress can be made. We are in regular contact with the Sponsor Team and an update on the situation is provided at each meeting of the NI Stakeholder Group.
- In Scotland, the previous Minister confirmed support for the reopening of the Fund but was unable to provide a timescale for this due to financial pressures and the need to ensure the ongoing affordability and long-term

sustainability of any reopening. We plan to discuss inviting the new Minister to a meeting of the Scotland Advisory Group with our SG Sponsor and Advisory Group members.

- We took onboard fully feedback from our recipients on the impact of Covid and incorporated this where required in working practice, policy and strategy.

Strategic Objective 2: Developing the relationships and protocols to be part of an integrated national model of Health and Social Care delivery.

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland is an integral part of a National Care Service (NCS) as proposed in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, making a significant contributor to the emerging "whole systems" approach to health and social care delivery. Note this outcome is subject to the implementation of the Feeley recommendation to create a National Care Service.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Further research and evidence from the development work in Northern Ireland by end Mar 21 establishes the strategic and business rationale for re-opening in NI and informs baseline preparations for Scotland.
2. Full analysis of welfare check calls and new recovery calls provide sponsor team with up-to-date impact assessment of current support arrangements on the ground for disabled people.

3. By March 2021, feedback from disabled people on the impact of COVID on them is used to help shape business plan for 2021-23.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

Please note overlap with Strategic Objective 6.

- Full analysis of welfare checks, feedback from disabled people on the impact of COVID coupled with extensive business rationale for reopening produced, resulting in the recommendation reference the Feeley Review.
- The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill has been published and is currently at Stage 1 of the Bill process. Perhaps unsurprisingly there are already growing calls from e.g. COSLA/Social Work Scotland for the Bill to be paused, an indeed SG have now announced a delay in the Stage 1 debate until after summer 2023 to allow for further engagement and co-design.
- As expected, there is no reference to ILF Scotland in the Bill. Although the Bill lacks detail, there is no reference in the Bill to any structure / national body sitting between the Care Boards and the Scottish Ministers, where we would have expected to see ILF Scotland sit in line with the Feeley recommendations. Our recent Bill consultation submission raised this issue, and we will discuss with Sponsor Team. We will continue to monitor Bill scrutiny and

contribute to co-design work for further developments in this area, and SDS Director will continue to raise at Target Operating Model Working Group.

Strategic Objective 3: Develop the Transition Fund

Target Outcome:

1. Sponsor team fully briefed on demand and financial pressures on TF.
2. Staffing levels to support continued levels of demand of TF understood and provisioned.
3. Based on demand and feedback, develop proposals for the TF to a broader based fund for multiple users and uses.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Revised maximum award cap implemented from 1 April 2021 at a level that matches demand and is financially sustainable.
2. One extra staff member recruited to support the TF.
3. Quarterly demand and usage report and feedback from ambassador group provides evidence base for developments.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- The Transition Fund performance is monitored, reported on and discussed on a regular basis with the Sponsor Team, who understand and appreciate the capacity pressures as a result of the ever-increasing volume of

applications and the continuing lack of quality of these applications resulting in the need for multiple interventions by staff, which impacts on the processing target timescales.

- We are completing a comprehensive review of the Transition Fund, which we will present to the Sponsor team in Q1 of 2023-24 following further consultation with a variety of stakeholder on our findings and recommendations, which will include a number of additional efficiency measures and options regarding the model we use with the implications of this developing proposals to deliver a form of funding to a broader base of user experiencing transitions at different life stages. Staff have been fully involved in the review and we will share the report with the Board and Sponsor Team.
- We sought feedback directly from current fund recipients, and we engaged regularly with the Young Ambassadors Group, Fund recipients and their representatives and wider education, health and social care representatives through our ongoing engagement and used feedback to make adjustments to operating procedures and practice.

Strategic Objective 4: increased awareness levels of our Funds and the numbers of people it can support.

Target Outcome:

Greater levels of public awareness and applications to the funds.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Delivery of a national communications strategy to increase awareness levels.
2. Application to the 2015 Fund start in NI and Scotland and grow steadily.
3. 10% increase in application to the TF

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- Strategy for 2023-24 is currently in draft and to be signed off by SMT and the Board.
- NA
- Applications to the Transition Fund have grown this year by nearly 40%. The website has had an increase in page views on the last quarter of 22% and an increase of 19.6% in new users in the same time period. In comparison to the previous financial year there has been a 143.5% increase in page views and a 702.8% increase in new users in 2022-23. 9 more events and engagement workshops were completed this quarter in comparison to the previous quarter with more than double the attendees. In 2022-23 there has been a 15.5% increase on the previous year in the number of events and engagement workshops being undertaken to increase awareness of the Transition Fund, which along with the activity happening on ILF Scotland's digital channels has contributed to an increase in applications to the Transition Fund this year.

Strategic Objective 5: Review and update our policies and practices to reflect current and emerging national HSC delivery plans.

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland has the policy suite and embedded practices which transparently demonstrate its commitment to enabling independent living for all those that may use it.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Published policy suites.
2. As above.
3. Availability of new policies as required to support a re-opened 2015 Fund.
4. Over two full years, implement and measure effectiveness against the Charter for Involvement Action Plan.
5. A published and operable Customer Charter.
6. A published Corporate Parenting Report, based on an implemented Action Plan.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- All policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, embrace and articulate our commitment to enabling Independent Living, take account of emerging changes to our legislative and operating environment, are improved for accessibility in line with good practice, and can be easily adapted for any reopening of the 2015 Fund. Draft policy consultation takes place as a matter of course with key stakeholders including our Scotland Advisory Group, NI Stakeholder Group and Young Ambassadors Group, our staff and our Sponsor Team. Equality Impact Assessments are conducted for all policy changes and the plans published on our website.
- We continue to make sound progress in implementing actions in the Charter for Involvement Plan. A separate update report will be prepared for the Board meeting in April 23 and for the Stakeholder and Advisory Group meetings in and May and June 23. We are establishing separate small working groups in Scotland and Northern Ireland to agree priorities for action during 2023-24. Appropriate staff e.g. Assessors, are fully involved in improvement actions and we discuss this as a standard agenda item at Group meetings.
- We had intended to develop a Customer Charter in 2022-23 but we have intentionally rescheduled this to the next financial year, primarily to allow us the opportunity to take full account of our customer feedback strategy and plans,

which we are currently comprehensively reviewing to implement an improved mechanism and practice outcomes. We are co-producing the revised plans with our Stakeholder, Advisory and Ambassador Groups.

Strategic Outcome 2: Be leaders in enabling independent living.

Strategic Objective 6: Be leaders and champions in sharing our knowledge of enabling independent living with others.

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland is recognised as the lead public body for enabling independent living.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Membership of national boards and committees.
2. Membership of integration working groups.
3. Participation in national social work practice events.
4. Inclusion in reviews of SDS.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- CEO continues with the Scottish Government PA Programme Board exploring implications of the Feeley review for this critical group of the social care and support workforce. CEO also continues to be involved with the Training Sub-group chaired by Anne-Marie Monaghan (ILF Scotland and Glasgow IJB Director). CEO also recently asked to

engage with SG / SWS in relation to potential joint work on PA well-being (following on from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care) with University of Birmingham with a view to becoming part of a Demonstrator Site for the national IMPACT programme (Improving Adult Care Together).

- CEO anticipating invitation to join SG working group on Human Rights and Independent Living.
- CEO was invited to be part of short-life Scottish Government Working Group looking at Fair Work in social care including PAs, However this work seems to have come to an end. Director of SDS participating in production of a 12th SDS service standard with Social Work Scotland.
- Director of SDS, Robert White, now part of SG working group looking at the current and future social care and support operating models as part of the development work for a National Care Service.
- PA thank you / special recognition payments under contract to Governments in both Scotland and Northern Ireland is now complete and was very successful.
- Director of SDS, Robert White, has been part of the Social Work Scotland led review of SDS guidance.
- ILF Scotland being considered as delivery organisation for Care Experienced Grant currently under development and included in the Scottish Programme for Government 2023-24. There have been considerable delays in the decision-making progress within SG, however we expect to hear in Q1 of 2023-24.
- We are currently exploring ILF Scotland representation in the NCS co-design work and are discussing with our Advisory Group.
- CEO continues to be involved in the NCS Key Stakeholder Reference Group.

Strategic Objective 7: Develop and shared understanding and best practice model of enabling sustainable independent living outcomes.

Target Outcome:

An agreed and integrated approach from health and social care providers in enabling best practice independent living with a clear role for ILF Scotland.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. ILF Scotland is seen as an exemplar body in enabling independent living.
2. ILF Scotland has a clearly defined role and remit in the delivery of an integrated social care model.
3. ILF Scotland becomes part of the governance or operations board of a new National Care service.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

See also Strategic Objective 6.

- Social work Scotland: Adult Social Care Committee Quarterly meeting, input to general policy and practice across Scotland, this quarter focussing on participation in the NCS developments, new Data Standards and the Safe Staffing Act being implemented in 2024. New National SDS Guidance for Scotland is now publicised with ILF

contributions in many parts of the new draft promoting the choice and control of users and adoption of the SDS standards.

- Scottish Government: The National SDS Collaboration group has met quarterly and has a wide membership with the voice of lived experience fairly represented.
- We meet twice yearly with SDS Leads in N Ireland Trusts and bi-monthly with the SDS leads in Scotland via Social Work Scotland dedicated meetings and hosted projects delivering new SDS standards in Scotland. This included supplying information and advice on ILF's model of Assessment to help influence the development of new National statutory guidance for SDS practitioners.
- Internally, we have individual team meetings and whole SDS service meetings which enable staff contributions and the implementation of the Charter for Involvement (54 Actions requested by recipients), a process of continuous learning and improvement.
- This year we have contributed to the ongoing implementation of the Principles of Transition in Scotland and implemented a new Technology Grant evidencing that ILF is seen as the body of choice to enable independent living outcomes for young people in transition.

Strategic Objective 8: Linking our data and reporting to the National Performance Framework

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland is able to evidence its contribution against the National Performance Indicators.

Key Performance Indicators:

We have identified where ILF Scotland aligns to the NPF and to have developed draft metrics on how its contribution to them can be measured.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

Work is ongoing in the area of linking data to the National Performance Framework and the organisation using information directly from recipients to evidence the impact that ILF Scotland makes. The first survey cycle is due to start in Q1 of 2023-24.

Strategic Objective 9: Share our knowledge and work with people with lived experience of disability to help improve the delivery of social care and support services.

Target Outcome:

A fully aligned and integrated cohesive social care delivery service for Scotland with the role and remit of ILF Scotland clearly defined and embedded.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. ILF Scotland has a clearly defined role and remit in the emerging National Care Service,

Status: Amber

Activity Update:

Please note overlap with Strategic Objective 9.

- In relation to the impact of COVID, we continue to talk to the Advisory Group in Scotland and the Stakeholder Group in Northern Ireland. Both groups report continued pandemic related challenges, particularly in relation to non-return to pre-pandemic statutory service levels. This is now being compounded by the cost-of-living crisis and impact of Brexit. These concerns are strongly echoed through welfare calls and Assessor visits. We successfully agreed a reduction in the Available Income cap in NI from £103 to £43 per week, which was very well received. We sought via a policy review submission, at the Stakeholder Group's request, to agree a temporary reduction or waiver of AI contributions in Scotland, however this was declined by the Minister.
- The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill has been published and is currently at Stage 1 of the Bill process. Perhaps unsurprisingly there are already growing calls from e.g. COSLA / Social Work Scotland for the Bill to be paused, and indeed SG have now announced a delay in the Stage 1 debate until after summer 2023 to allow for further engagement and co-design.
- As expected, there is no reference to ILF Scotland in the Bill. Although the Bill lacks detail, there is no reference in the Bill to the any structure / national body sitting between the Care Boards and the Scottish Ministers, where we would have expected to see ILF Scotland sit in line with the Feeley recommendations. Our recent Bill consultation submission raised this issue, and we have discussed with Sponsor Team who raised a query on our behalf. No decision on structure has yet been taken. We will continue to monitor Bill scrutiny for further developments in this area, and SDS Director will also raise at Target Operating Model Working Group.

Strategic Objective 10: Design new services with disabled people at the heart of them

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland delivers innovative new services which disabled people want, in the manner in which they want to use them.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Working with the new satisfaction survey and stakeholder groups, identify opportunities and areas for new services or developments.
2. Data metrics identify and prioritise new developments based on greatest need and greatest impact.
3. Feedback is captured from stakeholder groups of new services and reported to the service improvements manager.
4. Where a new service requires a change in design or new functionality (as opposed to fixing a link or practice which is not working well), a co-production group should be created with their thoughts and ideas formally captured and fed into the service design model.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- We have made significant progress over the year in further developing our aspirations to deliver innovative services which disabled people want.
- Our Local Authority Portal has received excellent feedback from ILF assessors / caseworkers and the LA areas trialling this. Feedback sessions in Q4 have highlighted this.
- A 'My Account' function for applicants is on the agenda for the next stakeholder meeting to discuss development ideas.

- The ICI replacement project will be the main focus for 2023-2024 with user experience at the forefront.

Strategic Outcome 3: Operate a high-quality efficient service.

Strategic Objective 11: Re-establish recipient reviews as soon as possible.

Target Outcome:

1. Safe review visit model developed.
2. Recipients trained and supported to participate fully in review visits.
3. ILF Scotland seen as leading good practice.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. By Dec 2020, ILF Scotland has developed a viable and safe method by which exceptional (emergency) review visits can take place.
2. By end June 2021, ILF Scotland has worked in partnership with SWS and HSCP and HSCT colleagues to develop a sector agreed approach to social care review visits.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- This year has seen us continue physical visits in full with recipients and social work representatives still utilising our continuing protocols for safe visits. Although PPE is now not mandatory for social care staff, we have continued to advise staff that the wishes of our recipients are paramount, and that staff can themselves access and use PPE if they wish.

- Progress has been made in agreeing our policy, practice and processes going forward for the 2015 fund and the Transition Funds incorporating learning from the pandemic. The Transition Fund has received a record number of applications this year, many complex, prompting a review of all operations which will report next quarter. The 2015 Fund review cycle is now running at approximately three fifths of pre-pandemic pace; complex issues, carer support, LA non engagement, pandemic recovery slowed in building based services; all these factors are contributing to longer reviews with longer response times from other parties.
- There is a significantly heightened risk of non-engagement by LAs centred around two main areas. The Minimum Threshold Sum required to be provided by LAs and LA support as Award Managers being withdrawn (This has now happened in 5 HSCP/Ts). The action plan to address these issues was agreed this year. The threshold sum must be in place, it is the basis of all joint awards.
- ILF Scotland will accept, case by case, that an individual can transfer from LA award managership to a 3rd party if it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Strategic Objective 12: Prepare the full business case for a fully integrated, digitised, ILF Scotland as part of the wider whole systems approach to health and social care delivery.

Target Outcome:

1. Preliminary discovery of Use Cases to inform tender documentation.
2. Successful tender and development of target operating model and costings.
3. Business Case submitted to sponsor team for capital infrastructure investment during 2021.

Key Performance Indicators:

Business Case for capital investment to support service delivery transformation submitted to sponsor team and health finance by May 21

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- The business case for capital investment for delivery transformation has been produced but funding has not been granted. Instead we have been given permission to spend some reserves on a cloud based replacement for our ageing core casework database called ICI. This will make a big difference but will only facilitate a part digital transformation for ILF Scotland.
- Alex Bunch re-joined ILF Scotland in January from Scottish Government as lead for the digital transformation project. Alex helped launch ILF Scotland in 2015 so understands the ICI database and knows the ILF Scotland digital team and external developer Andy Giddins very well. Alex has already made significant progress on user research and working alongside third party vendors on the proof of concept.
- Work continues on in year developments with the launch of the Technology grant, Local Authority portal and ICI development.

Strategic Objective 13: Develop and implement the workforce operational model to support a re-opened ILF Scotland

Target Outcome:

A new service model to support the effective delivery of re-opened 2015 Fund and an increase in TF applications.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. A newly designed service delivery model.
2. A fully resourced workforce plan to support the delivery model.
3. The technology and supporting infrastructure to enable 30% digital delivery by end 2023.

Status: Green**Activity Update:**

See Strategic Objective 12

- Considerable workforce planning has been continuing slowly in the background as we move through the year. However we still await notification of re-opening for Scotland and Northern Ireland before finalising directorate plans and workforce requirement.
- The new service delivery model was completed during 2021 and assumed the development of a new cloud-based customer relationship management system offering self-service capability and full administration workflow and automation. The model remains valid but obtaining the capital funding to support the development as proved difficult. There are in year efficiency actions based around the current operating and staffing model but much remains based on our legacy system and processes.
- Progress is marked in Green, as we have completed as much work as possible without a decision on the scale and scope of re-opening work. Once this is gained, we have a good foundation to proceed at pace.

Strategic Objective 14: Progress organisational risk and resilience programme

Target Outcome:

1. An operationalised Resilience Hub.
2. Through test and exercise, a more robust and resilient ILF Scotland.
3. Revised and improved approach to risk governance.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Operationalised Resilience Hub and associated business impact assessments and resilience plans.
2. A test and exercise plan.
3. Test and exercises confirm appropriateness of resilience plans.
4. Quarterly resilience reports to SMT.
5. Introduction of risk management, governance and compliance software to improve management of risk.
6. Review and implement A&R recommendations for improvements to risk management structure (as required and based on outcomes from Resilience Hub operations).

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- During this year we have been working on reviewing our resilience plans and updating these where required. We had to delay the desktop exercise that we had planned to run in Q4 by about 6 weeks, it has been rescheduled for April 2023. Scenario planning for the exercise has been completed.
- All in all this year has been positive for risk and resilience and the teams that we have setup, Crisis Management Team (CMT) and Crisis Support Team (CST), have had an opportunity to practice working together during an incident. The information flows and processes are being embedded within the organisation and all teams have a

good understanding of what needs done and when. Moving forward training and practice will be a key focus to get staff comfortable with resilience processes.

Strategic Objective 15: Be a Top Employer for our staff.

Target Outcome:

Achieve Top Employer status during 2021-22

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Working Families Benchmarking undertaken.
2. Staff working group set up to action survey feedback.
3. Trickle feedback used to identify real time satisfaction and engagement levels using themed “Mood Sense” over the year.
4. New well-being initiatives introduced keeping ILF Scotland at the leading edge of support to staff post-COVID

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- ILF Scotland achieved UK Top 10 award and only Scottish organisation in UK Working Families Benchmarking Top 10. Work is well underway for the 2022-23 submission.
- Staff Working Group has been created towards the end of Q2 to consider 2021-22 Staff Survey feedback. Our COO is the SMT Sponsor. Staff Survey 2021-22 was completed on 31 May 2022. The Staff Survey Report was presented

to the Remuneration Committee during September 2022 meeting. A Working Group update was presented to the Remuneration Committee outlining the actions taken in response to the 2021-22 Staff Survey.

- Twice monthly TRICKLE 'mood senses' are circulated with approximately one third of staff responding. TRICKLE Champions work continues to increase TRICKLE traffic and engagement.
- New Well-being resources continue to be sourced and shared. Health Awareness Sessions have been introduced every 2 months:
 - 1st Session - Menopause, Endometriosis and Mental Health
 - 2nd Session - Financial Wellbeing in order to offer support to colleagues during the cost-of-living crisis
 - 3rd Session - Carers and Caring theme
 - 4th Session (November) - Men's Health with speaker from Andy's Mans Club. This session was very powerfully received.
 - All awareness sessions, to date, are supported by guest speakers with experience of the focussed theme.
- Employee Passports launched during July 2022 to all staff and heavily promoted through communications channels. This scheme is individually led by staff and is voluntary, aligning with the Scottish Government Employee Passport which was rolled out in January 2022. All new staff, during induction, are offered the opportunity to use the Employee Passport. The Employee Passport is regularly promoted in our monthly newsletter and All Staff Meetings.

Strategic Objective 16: Reducing our carbon footprint and introducing our sustainability model.

Target Outcome:

1. An integrated and proactive sustainability model linking continuous improvement activity to organisational efficiency and reduced environmental impact.
2. Organisational approach to quality links improvement actions to carbon, resource, energy reductions.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. An efficiency and sustainability model linked to quality and continuous improvement is developed by March 22.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- The report into the Transition Fund is currently under review by the internal working group. This review will inform the creation of the 2015 Fund survey with a view to further informing the Net Zero action plan and the sustainability model for the organisation. The initial work in framing our improvement strategy around the National Performance Framework has already taken place and the working group will use the Framework to structure the new suite of surveys.
- The organisation as a whole continues to work towards better understanding the wider responsibilities around sustainability and improvements. In May 2023 our Privacy and Improvement Manager will be applying for the newly created Leading for Improvement Programme offered by the Scottish Government in order to guide staff through self-assessment and Scottish Government endorsed improvement frameworks.

Strategic Objective 17: Develop and enhance communication channels with recipients to reduce reliance on paper-based channels.

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland is digitally enabled, where possible, to communicate rapidly and sustainably with the majority of its recipients.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Welfare checks, reviews and recovery calls attempt to obtain current email addresses for all award managers.
2. ICT team investigate pricing and security options for a 3rd party text messaging service (this is not available via SCOTS).
3. ICT Team investigate a VOIP replacement for the 0300 office number, recommending and implementing a solution.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- This objective in its current format is complete.
- ITECS trailed Teams and the move to office 365 on mobile for a handful of staff in Q4. This has been successful, and all staff will be migrated in Q1 of 2023-24. ITECS are also removing desk phones and introducing a Teams softphone for internal and external calls. This will make working from anywhere easier for staff.

Strategic Objective 18: Audit and compliance reporting cycle to continue.

Target Outcome:

Audit and compliance cycle confirms quality and control of the operational management of the organisation and supports the continuous improvement of it.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. No red findings or gaps identified.
2. Corporate reporting tool simplifies reporting process and saves significant amount of senior management time to the equivalent of 100 hours per annum.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- The external audit was completed in Q1 and was another clean audit with no qualifications for the 6th year in a row.
- The audit cycle has continued (virtually) and overall has found ILF Scotland to be at a Good level of assurance with no red gaps or findings identified. Additionally, Internal Audits reported completed have all been rated good, which is

excellent and backs up the fact that ILF Scotland has excellent internal controls and checks in place to ensure operational efficiency and excellence.

- In this reporting period we have had three audits delayed due to a lack of resource with illness and end of year commitments. These were:
 - Procurement Audit - This has begun and will be finished by the 14 April.
 - Communications & Engagement Audit - This has been delayed into Q1 of the new financial year.
 - Digital Strategy - This has been delayed into Q1 of the new financial year.

- We have had 3 very successful audits this in 22-23, with all receiving a Good rating, these were:
 - Health & Safety
 - Transition Fund
 - Payroll

Strategic Objective 19: Develop and implement a new reporting model to evidence satisfaction with the delivery of our service.

Target Outcome:

1. A new satisfaction survey with clear links to the NPF enables ILF Scotland to identify areas of success and areas to improve policy and service delivery.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Development of the new survey.
2. Creation of the communications and survey delivery plan.
3. Creation of the reporting model.

4. Links from the reporting model to the organisational improvements and change activity (including policy where relevant).
5. Development of the approach and mechanism to inform recipients on how we are acting on their feedback.

Status: Amber

Activity Update:

- The short life working group set up to implement the Transition Fund review survey is now the internal working group who are tasked with further developing the method for translating this work into the longitudinal customer satisfaction survey for the 2015 fund.
- The working group will be tasked with co-producing the bi-annual 2015 Fund survey to go out in Q3 of 2023-24, aligning the question set to the National Performance Framework.

Strategic Objective 20: Improve the efficiency and ease of financial reporting for the organisation.

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland adopts a new financial accounting system.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Business case and proposed solution approved and authorised through appropriate governance channels.
2. Tender and procurement action.
3. Deployment and integration with existing services and the new SG Payments Platform.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- After a brief review, it has been agreed that on present work volumes / complexity our current accounting system is adequate, so no further work has been carried out.
- However, if the 2015 fund across both NI and Scotland are re-opened, then we will look into if a new accounting system is required as one of the workstreams. As we will if we take on other funds like we did for the £500 PA payment across NI and Scotland.
- We were not in a position to purchase a risk management solution, namely down to budgetary constraints. However, we have budget for this in 2023-24 and we will look to go out to tender with a view to acquiring a risk management solution.
- Again for similar reasons, we were not able to purchase a digital expenses solution, however we will look to acquire a solution for this new financial year.

This objective has been marked as Green, because as much progress as possible has been achieved.

Strategic Objective 21: Ensure the financial viability of ILF Scotland

Target Outcome:

1. Funding at the required levels to sustain current and provisional future activities.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Financial reports clearly state spend to date and future direction of travel.

2. Funding secured from Scottish Government to deliver current and future operations.
3. Regular meetings with sponsor teams and health finance to review and confirm required levels of funding.
4. Medium Term Financial Plans approved via Board and submitted to Sponsor Team.
5. Evidence base from: stakeholder groups; compliance requirements; infrastructure development plans; and satisfaction surveys are used to inform policy and practice changes and, where necessary, the financial implications of these are modelled and presented to Board and Sponsor Team for approval.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- Significantly increased levels of Unspent Monies have contributed to lessen the impact of a deficit across both funds. It is worth noting we do have other pressures as well, for example Scottish Living Wage and AI. AI reductions have been put on hold after discussions with Scottish Government Sponsor Team, we hope to pick these up in 2023-24.
- Management Accounts clearly state where we are in terms of spend on both the Programme and Administration side of things. This financial year has seen our tightest year in terms of admin spend, compared to budget. We are showing a small deficit of £609k across both funds on the Awards side. A factor in this is that we received £2m less for the 2015 Fund for Scotland. This deficit would have been much larger if it wasn't for the significant levels of Unspent Monies received, we received almost £4m in 22-23, the most we have received to date.
- We continue to meet regularly with the Sponsor Team and keep them abreast of the financial position at ILF Scotland. We also send the Medium-Term Financial Plans (MTFP) to the Sponsor Team, once these are approved by the board. We factor in liabilities such as AI reduction, SLW etc.

- Also our new External Auditors have scrutinised the MTFP and have commended ILF Scotland on it. The previous External Auditors have stated though, that ILF continuing to rely on its reserves is not financially sustainable in the long term.

Strategic Objective 22: Complete and implement the Equalities Duty Action Plan and Gaelic Language Act responsibilities.

Target Outcome:

1. Fully compliant with all aspects of the Equalities Duty (as relevant to a small public body).
2. Fully compliant with all aspects of the Gaelic Language Act (as relevant to a small public body).

Key Performance Indicators:

1. The creation and sign off of an Equalities Duty Action Plan.
2. Implementation of the Action Plan.
3. Development and measurement of the metrics to confirm the successful implementation of the Action Plan.
4. Successful audit in 2022-23. 5. As 1-4 for the Gaelic Language Act Action Plan.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- Equality Duty Action Plan 2021-22 has been reviewed and published in May 2022.
- The Equalities Mainstreaming Outcome Report 2022-24 has been published following approval from the Board in April 2022.

- We continue to work on a voluntary basis on the development of the Gaelic Language Action Plan following the Gaelic Language Awareness Session at the beginning of 2022.
- The Equality Committee meets quarterly and is chaired by our CEO and attended by our Remuneration Committee Chair Mark Adderley. All staff have been invited to attend with a regular cohort from each Directorate joining and inputting. Our next meeting is planned for week commencing 17 April 2023.

Strategic Objective 23: Complete and implement Equalities Mainstreaming Action Plan

Target Outcome:

ILF Scotland has embedded equality in all of its policies and practices and by its actions, reduces inequalities and promotes fairness, equality and inclusion at every opportunity and is seen as a leader in this area for the public sector.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Awareness of EQ Mainstreaming is raised across the organisation and is evidenced by the set up and workings of a standing Equality and Diversity Committee.
2. An action plan is created to address initial baseline assessment improvement issues and implemented during Q2-Q4.
3. Recipient, applicants and staffing diversity profiles are baselined so as to identify positive targeted action for under-represented groups as part of a strategic communications campaign. ILF Scotland engages with and becomes active members of groups and bodies across the public and third sector to learn from, inform and develop best shared practices for mainstreaming equality as evidenced by membership and contribution at events, meetings and conferences.

Status: Green

Activity Update:

- We are making good progress in actively implementing our duties as a public body under Equality legislation. We reviewed and published our Equality Duty Action Plan in 2022-23. Work to mainstream equalities across the organisation will be ongoing throughout 2023-24 including further benchmarking with various organisations. We began making contact with other NDPBs in this financial year and will work to strengthen this in 2023-24.
- We will continue our progress in targeting our services and improvement actions towards specific groups of people with protected characteristics. We are keen to make progress this year with those recipients and potential TF applicants affected by poverty. Our draft Communications Strategy, which we hope to have signed off by the end of Q1 in the new financial year, references our engagement plans with all groups.
- During 2023-23, we provided additional awareness sessions for all Managers. This activity will be ongoing during 2023-24 to continue to drive up the use of EQIAs across all major decision making, corporately and operationally.
- The established Equality and Diversity Committee continued to meet throughout 2022-23 and discussed a wide variety of equality issues and initiatives with lots of input from staff members and welcome support from our Remuneration Committee Chair, Mark Adderley.
- We will report our progress on our Action Plan, published as part of our Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report, to the Board in April 2023.
- Voluntary progress on our Gaelic Language Plan was put on hold part way through this financial year because of capacity issues and the need to focus on our legislative and service priorities. We intend to pick this up again in the course of the new financial year.

3. Self-Directed Support Summary

a) Social Work Update (2015 Fund)

Over the reporting period we have continued physical reviews whilst following best practice in PPE and protection of recipients and staff. To enable the completion of reviews, we temporarily waived a number of key policies and procedures around Local Authority engagement and reduced service input because Local Authorities advised they are still routinely dealing with emergency assessments. To support this, we allowed the continuation of our Covid-19 Policy flexibilities until 30 June 2022, after which we worked with Local Authority partners to shift back to pre-pandemic policy positions. We are keeping this flexibility under review in certain cases as intelligence from contact with Health and Social Care Partnerships and Trusts, shows that the lifting of restrictions has coincided with increased staff absence. It is hoped when this peak is passed, a widespread re-opening of services is anticipated in the next financial year and this in turn will facilitate ILF Scotland recipients to get all the support previously agreed via their SDS packages of support.

During the past year we had approx. 17,700 calls to operations teams a decrease of 1% from the previous year which is not representative of the reality of an increased contact role because 2021-22 included telephone reviews. Our role during the pandemic deepened and widened to provide a range of supports and this continued during 2022-23.

However, an ongoing part care management type role whilst vital to recipients during the pandemic means that a 2-year review cycle is unsustainable and discussions are required around how to maximise the positive impact of a review visit with more flexible review timescales. In 2019-20 we completed 1,900 review visits, a typical year. In 2020-21 during the height of the pandemic, we completed 172 visits. 2021-22 when pandemic restrictions were largely in place we completed 400 review visits. This year we have completed 1,050 2015 fund visits and 35 visits for the Transition Fund. However we made over 2,700 new award offers indicating substantial numbers of changes of circumstances and our responsiveness to recipients current needs: the impact on operational staff is increased workloads across the service. Analysis of the reviews illustrates some key issues from previous review cycles:

- Reviews are still taking longer, a combination of legacy issues from reviews being COVID delayed, complex issues including carer support due to lack of LA involvement and COVID safety protocols.
- People still welcome and value our visits. It is really positive that people want and trust us to visit safely, very few people have declined a visit and requested a video review.
- Group 1 recipients in particular have required intensive review assessments and increased supports as there was little to no support pre pandemic and we are now seen as an ongoing support to this group of recipients: we are examining the need for annual reviews e.g. where there is no social work involvement and older carers struggling to maintain support.

This year we continued to engage with N Ireland Trust Leads and Scottish HSCP Leads. In Scotland this has also meant working closely with Social Work Scotland on various SDS projects, new National SDS guidance and the new SDS National Collaboration and the cross-party group on Social Work hosted by the Scottish Government.

b) Summary

The operational environment remains challenging for staff supporting isolated recipients, and still stretched and stressed carers and anxious and isolated young people to apply to the Transition Fund. Many ordinary policies and procedures were suspended and are now more flexible for good reason, yet it adds layers of complexity to decision making and delays in processing reviews. We intent to assert our role and policies in the next financial year to bring better inputs from HSCP/Ts and revise our review cycle to maximise our impact.

4. Policy, Improvements and Engagement Summary

a) Policy and Improvement

We carried out comprehensive reviews during 2022-23 on several policies to take account of legislative / operational environmental changes. This was further to our full review of all of our 2015 and TF policies in 21-22.

b) Covid-19 Flexibility

We retained several elements of Covid-19 policy flexibility continued throughout the year with both the Scottish and Northern Ireland Government's extending this to the end of March 2023. We used this flexibility sparingly but successfully for a small number of recipients. For example, we were able to award some emergency respite to avoid recipient admission to care homes and were able to extend the payment of award while some recipients were in hospital beyond the standard 28 days rather than suspend the award.

c) Reporting

We made good progress in implementing improvement initiatives in our published Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes and Corporate Parenting progress reports to the Board in April 2023 and will establish working groups from the Stakeholder and Advisory group members in Q1 of 2023-24 to progress priority actions for that financial year.

d) Transition Fund (TF)

By the end of Q4 we received 3,205 TF applications, an increase of 40.8% on last year. Application numbers have grown strongly throughout the year. While the launch of the Technology Grant caused a significant increase in applications from December to March, with 381 submitted and processed in period. The underlying trend in full Transition Fund applications shows strong growth also of just under 25%, which is line with the previous year.

The Q4 figures are complicated somewhat by the Technology Grant taking some applications which would have been originally full grant applications, so it is difficult to get a clear picture of the underlying trends. We have seen a

significant upturn over the year in general in application numbers. All quarters in the year have out-performed previous years with Q4 in particular setting a new record of 997 applications in a quarter, our highest level of applications ever since the inception of the fund.

Challenges around processing applications remain significant due to the poor quality of submissions and the lack of necessary supporting documentation. Changes made to the application screening process have assisted, but a general lack of support for young people in the community to submit good enough quality applications to allow them to be processed first time with no intervention appears to be more sparse than ever. The existing staff team continue to make every effort to progress applications, however it appears that the sheer volume of applications that we are receiving has overwhelmed the current staffing complement.

The current review of the Transition Fund is looking at all aspects of the fund in an effort to find further efficiencies, consider whether additional resource is required, and revising the processing model as appropriate. We would like to continue to be inclusive of all eligible young people, but this involves filling the space left by the lack of transition planning by statutory agencies and moving further towards a de facto Scotland wide transition planning service. An alternative is to become more resolute in applying policy and rejecting inadequate applications but the difficulty in doing that is that it is often those young people most in need who have the least support to submit an application. Our published service standard of 12 weeks to process submitted full applications to the fund has been under significant pressure for the majority of the year and this pressure has built significantly over Q3 and Q4.

e) Communications and engagement

The Communications team delivered external communication (direct and digital) to all our stakeholders on:

- Scottish Social Care Wage increase for Personal Assistants
- Northern Ireland award increase for Personal Assistants
- and bi-annual newsletters.

Digital communications - The new website was launched in the summer of 2022. We have received really positive feedback from our stakeholders, particularly around the accessibility of the new website. This is evident in the engagement statistics for the website, which show a 143.5% increase in page views and a 702.8% increase in new users in 2022-23. We are now in a phase of continual improvement and are looking at what further upgrades and technical efficiencies can be made to our website in 2023-24 to help advance our stakeholder communication and engagement.

Marketing and accessibility - This year the team launched a re-brand and accessibility project on all organisational marketing documents and publications in order to meet some of the aims and commitments set out in the Charter for Involvement Action Plan. This work will continue into 2023-24 and is a key objective within the organisational communications strategy for 2023-24.

Public relations and events - At the end of November 2022 and in the run up to the UN's International Day of People with Disabilities, we held a very successful 5 Year celebration event for Transition Fund recipients. Nearly 200 young people, their parents, carers, families and external partners attended. The Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport also launched the Technology Grant providing an IT solution to enable young disabled people to be digitally connected. Following the event and subsequent PR about the grant, we reached over 25,000 people. This led to over 200 Technology Grant applications being received in the first month following the launch and another 181 by the end of the financial year totalling 381.

Engagement - we completed an extensive programme of external engagement throughout the year with a number of partners and stakeholders with a 15.5% increase in engagement activity on the previous year. We continued to focus on attracting applications from geographical areas where applications were low and also focused on increasing applications from those who are care experienced and the deaf community. In 2023-24 we will focus on engagement activity that meets and is in line with the aims of our Corporate Parenting Plan and Equalities Mainstreaming Action

Plan. This will involve further work on increasing applications from those who are care experienced and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

f) Complaints

For the full 22-23 year we received 25 complaints compared to 34 in 21-22. The majority of these complaints related to the Transition Fund - 23, compared to two for the 2015 Fund. We capture each learning point from this valuable feedback about our service and act to address any issues raised through revised procedures, staff training, etc. in the spirit of continuous organisational improvement.

5. People Summary

a) Overview

2022-23 has been another extremely busy year since ILF Scotland was created in 2015. In conjunction with additional projects such as 35 Hour Working Week consultation; Employee Passport launch; records management migration; and volume of work we have again observed increasing year on year work pressures. Our continuing exciting innovative support to our workforce, introducing new measures has supported staff through the year. Our attrition remains low; however, we have seen several staff members retire and others leaving to promoted posts and other opportunities. Our absence rate has remained static as we worked our way through the pandemic exit with several long-term absences. We are immensely proud to have again been awarded a Top 10 Employer in the annual Working Families benchmark in September.

We are a positive, open and supportive employer which is welcomed across the workforce. The Health and Wellbeing programme has remained front and centre of our decision making as we made our way through the year offering several workshops including 'Mental Health & Resilience refreshers and 'Returning to the Workplace'. We continued through the year to meet all staff monthly through ZOOM and this will continue into 2023-24. As we work with new and improved flexible / hybrid principles we continue to 'Keep in Touch' with smaller staff groups as it remains important to reconnect. Our Trickle App has been successful allowing us to react swiftly to staff mood senses and pulse surveys making positive change as required. The Trickle App is now embedded as a great tool to connect, discuss with staff enabled to openly discuss issues wither anonymously or recognised.

As with Q1-3, Q4 has continued with continuing pressures on staff as a result of new projects and heavy workloads. We remain vigilant and not complacent that the impact of heavy workloads and the unintended consequences of COVID 19 continues to challenge us all. Current planning is underway to continue further Mental Health & Resilience workshops from the Strong Minded Resilience Team and promote our own Mental Health First Aiders to all staff.

b) Organisational Demography

By the end of Q4 2022-23 the organisational make up is 74: staff (67) and Directors (7): 73%:27% female: male, with 21.62% of staff self-identified as disabled, 2.70% BME and 2.70% LGBT.

c) Employment Status

During 2022-23 we have continued our commitment as a supportive life friendly employer offering a suite of life friendly policies. We have listened and reacted to feedback from colleagues through our Staff Survey and TRICKLE mood senses / pulse surveys which has informed positive change. All ILF Scotland staff have employed status; full time or part time with many different flexible working patterns to suit individual and organisational need. This continues to provide stability and continuity for both the organisation and individuals during this time of continued uncertainty. During 2022-23 all staff have worked 100% flexibly and we will continue to ensure staff can have a work life harmony which suits their individual circumstances. Planning work has started to for the 2023-26 Workforce plan which will consider our current staff and current and future workstreams.

d) Recruitment

In Q4, due to heavy workloads across the organisation and in part due to post Covid-19 unintended consequences of changing policies and staff leaving, we have continued to build and strengthen our workforce

During 2022-23 the following roles have been appointed:

Q1:

1 x Business Administrator (1.0 FTE) (6 months - Temp)

1 x Senior Communications Officer – (perm) - replacement post

Q2:

No recruitment

Q3:

No recruitment

Q4:

4 x Assessors (3.2 FTE) replacement posts

1 x Finance Officer (TF) replacement post

1 x Transformation Lead (18 months Fixed-Term)

e) Retention

During 2022-23 there has been a slight increase in staff retiring or moving on to other opportunities.

1 x SDS Manager (NI) - retirement (Q1)

1 x Finance Officer (TF) - resignation (Q2)

3 x Assessors (2 x retirement, 1 x resignation) (Q3)

1 x Self-employed Assessor - retirement (Q3)

1 x Assessor - seconded for 12 months to Network Learning West. (Q3)

1 x Senior Communications Officer (fixed contract ended)

1 x Business Administrator – retirement (seconded from SG)

f) Absence

Sickness Absence

2022-23

Long Term: 2.32%

Short Term: 2.40%

COVID-19 Sickness (Included in Short term): 0.60%

Total: 4.72%

2021-22

Long Term: 2.74%

Short Term: 2.28%

COVID-19 Sickness (Included in Short term): 0.47%

Total: 5.02%

Sickness Absence: Q4: 01 January 2023 - 31 March 2023

Long term: 1.35%

Short term: 3.05%

Total: 4.0%

Following all the wellbeing support and initiatives utilised by staff over the last year we have seen a slight decrease in absence rates.

We believe we are seeing the consequences of continued high tempo of work over the years, with colleagues reporting fatigue and increased stress and anxiety due to both external contributors and a continual heavy workload. We strongly believe our absence rates would have been higher had we not taken such positive action around wellbeing and supporting colleagues through the past year. Some staff have been working with our Occupational Health partners and we hope to see a reduction in our sickness absences as we move into 2023-24. We continue to offer Mental Health & Resilience training and promote our mental health support through our 4 Mental Health First Aiders. The Mental Health First Aiders are meeting quarterly to discuss any concerns and how to promote the organisations Mental Health First Aid work.

g) Disciplinary, Grievance and Performance

Nil to report.

h) Staff Survey

The 2022 staff survey took place for 6 weeks during April and May. Data analysis from the staff survey showed a workforce which, despite the challenges of post COVID-19 remained positive and upbeat. Staff acknowledged positively the supportive offerings from ILF. The report was presented to the Remuneration Committee in September 2022. Overall, the survey was positive despite exiting COVID-19 and the heavy workloads. A working group reviewed the report with 3 key themes identified for review; wellbeing; collaborative working and 35 Hour Working Week. The following were introduced as a result of the work completed by the working group:

- introducing champions on TRICKLE and YAMMER
- introduced regular Health Awareness Sessions focussing on Finance, Carers, Menopause & Endometriosis and Men's Health
- staff consultations and Board approval for the 35 Hour Working Week

The Staff Survey 2023 will be circulated again during April / May 2023.

i) Supporting Activity

To enable the organisation to successfully deliver the strategy and be an employer of choice, and as a small sample, the following activity has taken place:

- Monthly - all Staff Meetings
- 5 x 'Mental Health & Resilience Workshops- 'Return to the Workplace' and New Starts workshop
- Assessor / caseworker practice days – in-person, throughout May and June
- Records Management Training – mandatory for all staff – through May and June

- IMSO / DIMSO (records management) training
- Employee Passport Training and launched
- 35 Hour working week – planning meetings / consultation and board approval
- Teams workshops – provided free from Scottish Government
- Working Families Awards – 1 member of staff on judging panel and presenting award in London – June 2022
- Working Families Benchmarking submission
- Civil Service Pension workshops – provided free to all staff - May / June 2022
- Cyber Security Workshops – all staff
- Managers ‘youmanage’ workshops / training to all directorates throughout Q1
- Finance Pay Policy – 1 x staff member attended Practitioner session
- EQIA training for Managers – June 2022
- SMT Away Day – June 2022 / March 2023
- BEAMANS – Job Evaluation Training x 2
- CIPD conference attendance x 2 (September)
- Corporate Parenting Workshops (MANDATORY) Sept or Oct
- Transparency in Supply Chains - virtual consultation meeting – 2 attended
- Staff trained in Fire Safety / DSE and H&S to increase the staff
- Health Awareness Sessions x 2
- Disability Inclusion in the Workplace – Board Chair and 1 x HR attended
- World Mental Health Week – Awareness
- Pay award 2022-23 – implemented in November salaries
- COO – Podcast recorded and aired for Bruce Tait associates
- Payroll / Governance and Health & Safety – Internal Audit – all ‘good’

6. Information Governance and IT Summary

a) Records Management

The new file plan is now in place on the G:Drive and staff are working well within the new structure. The team have submitted a full Progress Update Review to the National Records of Scotland which offers an update of our Records Management Plan. A group has been set up internally to manage Information Governance. This has representation from across the organisation with Information Management Support Officers working in each functional area, managing and feeding back on their own area of the file plan. The internal audit process for the management of organisational records has been created and is currently being trialled by all teams. The trial period is due to be complete by July 2023 with staff feeding back on the process over the summer. The first full scale audit of organisational health in this area will take place in October 2023, in line with our reporting cycle for the National Records of Scotland Progress Update Review.

b) Digital and System Development

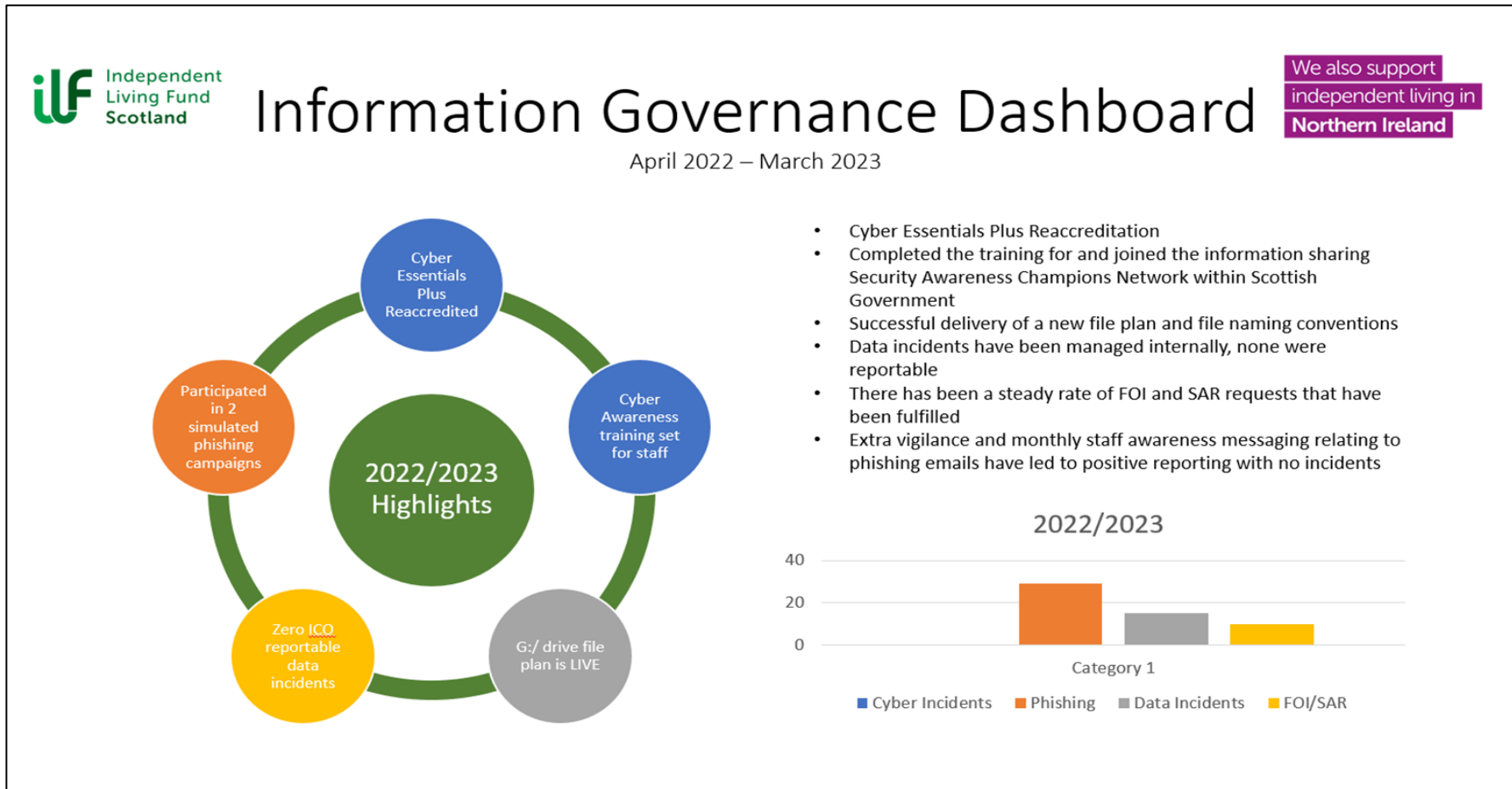
Four new LA areas have been added to the LA portal: West Lothian, East Ayrshire, Fife and Perth & Kinross. Additional areas will be added in Q1 of the new financial year. The Scottish Living Wage uplift was processed automatically increasing PA hourly rates by 3.8%. We have made significant developments moving away from paper printouts with the use of notifications and emails for Caseworkers. The ICI transformation project has moved from Discovery to Alpha, working with third party suppliers on potential software solutions.

c) Risk & Resilience

The planned desktop exercise for this quarter had to be postponed until April 2023. Scenario planning is complete and teams are ready to practice our resilience processes and build on lessons learned from the last exercise. The year has seen the resilience programme embed further into the organisation and we aim to build on this in 2023-24 with more coaching and training.

d) Cyber Security

This quarter saw us complete our reaccreditation of Cyber Essentials Plus. We took part in a month-long simulated phishing campaign and staff reporting has been very good during the period. Throughout the year we have remained vigilant and pro-active with infrastructure security and have kept staff up to date with the latest threats, all of which contribute to our stable security posture.



7. Finance Summary

The financial 2022-23 has been very busy for Finance. Not only have we been dealing with the staple of the 2015 Fund and Transition Funds. We have also been instrumental in facilitating the payment to PA's (£500) to both Scotland and Northern Ireland. We received excellent feedback on our work for both countries.

After identifying that our existing Travel & Subsistence policy needed updating, we also developed a new T&S policy, through co-producing this with key colleagues across the organisation. The result has been a policy which is now fit for purpose and one that reflects the cost pressures of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

We have carried out a programme of three internal audits, all receiving a good rating. We have also changed External Auditors from Deloitte to Audit Scotland. This change has meant we have had to invest considerable time with our new auditors, showing our processes, our business model and all our internal controls.

a) All financial reporting happens via the Audit and Risk Committee and Management Accounts, however some additional points for Finance are as follows:

i. External Audit

- We have new External Auditors; they are Audit Scotland.
- They have started their interim audit checks, and everything so far seems to be going smoothly, with no issues currently.
- The only change to our Accounting Policies during the year was the introduction of IRFS16 on leases.
- We have kept in continuous contact with Health Finance and also Audit Scotland on this and do not foresee any issues with our accounting of this new financial reporting standard.

ii. Internal Auditors

- The audit cycle has continued (virtually) and overall has found ILF Scotland to be at a Good level of assurance with no red gaps or findings identified. Additionally, Internal Audits reported completed have all been rated good, which is excellent and backs up the fact that ILF has excellent internal controls and checks in place to ensure operational efficiency and excellence.
- In this financial year we have had three audits delayed due to a lack of resource with illness and end of year commitments. These are:
 - Procurement Audit - This has begun and will be finished by the 14 April
 - Communications & Engagement Audit - This has been delayed into Q1 of the new financial year
 - Digital Strategy - This has been delayed into Q1 of the new financial year
- We have had 3 very successful audits this in 22-23, with all receiving a Good rating, these were:
 - Health & Safety
 - Transition Fund
 - Payroll

iii. Process Review

- Although work on our review of our processes has been ongoing, it has been slower than we would have liked for a number of reasons so other work items have taken priority. However, we aim to have a thorough review of our key financial processes in 23-24.
- The processes that we have reviewed have resulted in ensuring any best practice and any procedural efficiencies have been fully maximised. These updated processes have been incorporated into our Accounting Procedures & Policies Manual.

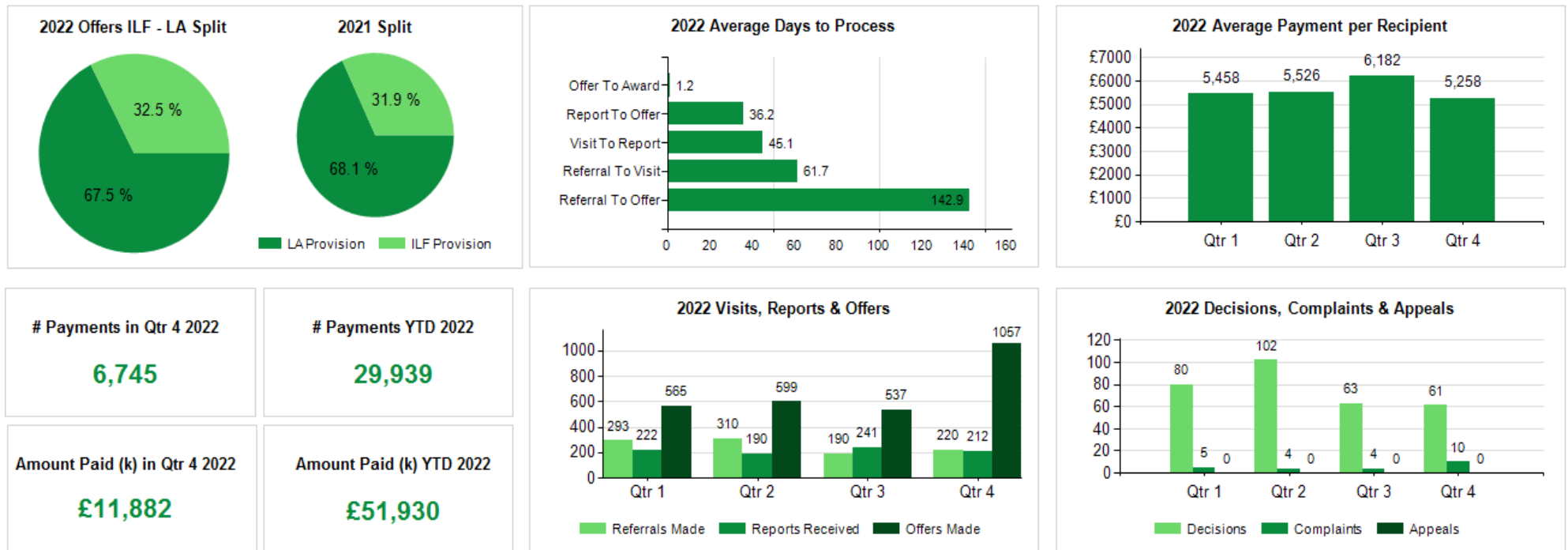
- Finance have also been working with the Risk & Resilience Project, helping implement the Resilience Hub and looking at possible risk management digital solutions, although no solutions have been implemented yet, this is down to cost pressures and nothing else.

Annex A – Operational Dashboards

As part of the corporate reporting project, the following dashboards show our performance in both the 2015 and Transition Funds:

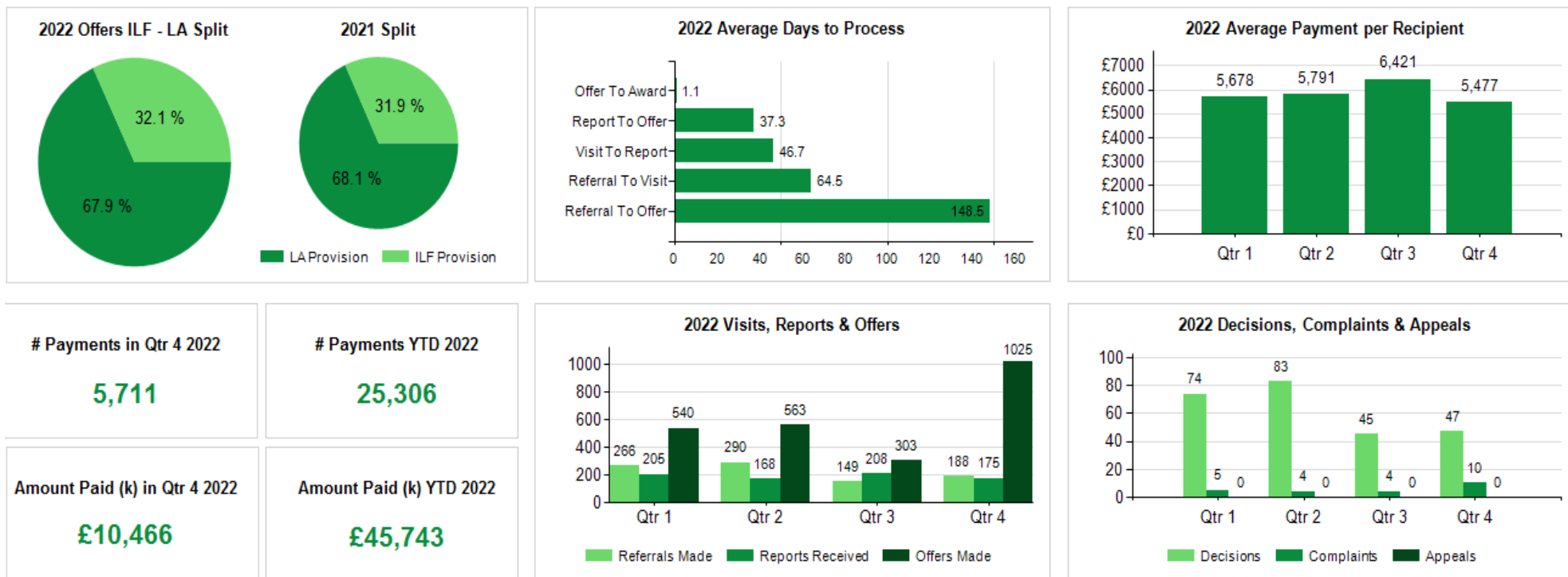
a) The dashboard below provides an overview for both Scotland and Northern Ireland in relation to the 2015 Fund:

Operations Dashboard - 2015 Fund to 31-03-2023



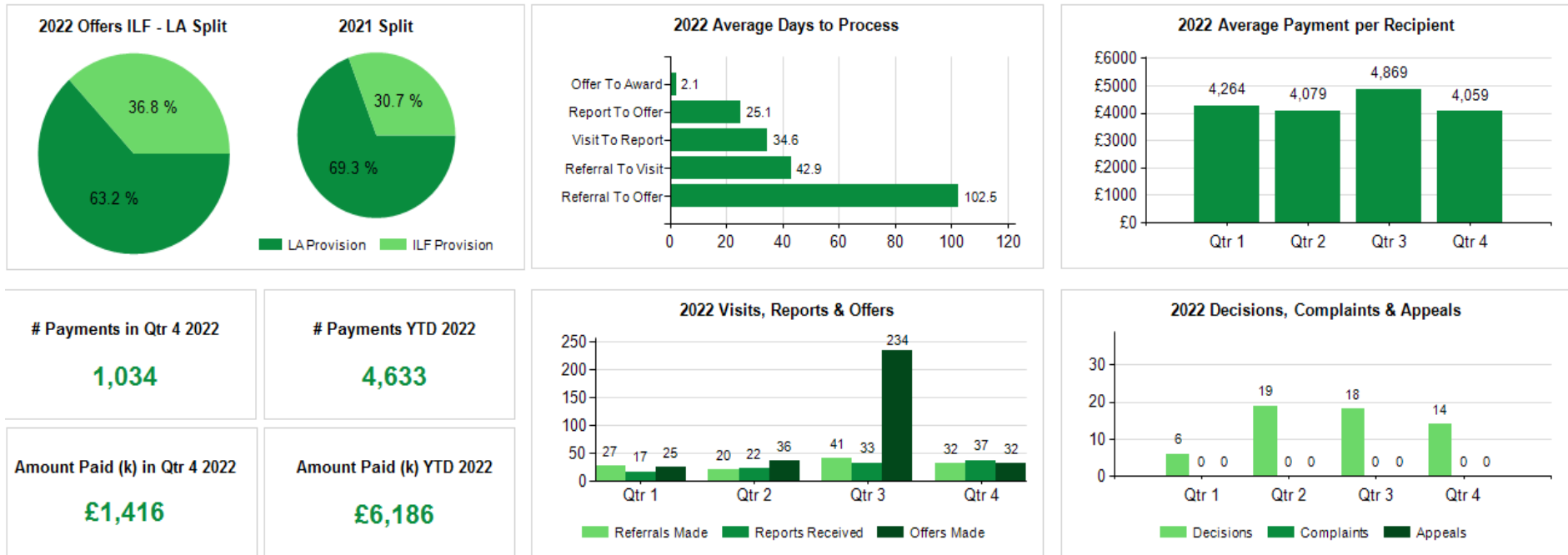
b) The following dashboard provides an overview of operational activity in relation to the 2015 Fund specific to Scotland:

Operations Dashboard - 2015 Fund to 31-03-2023 Scotland



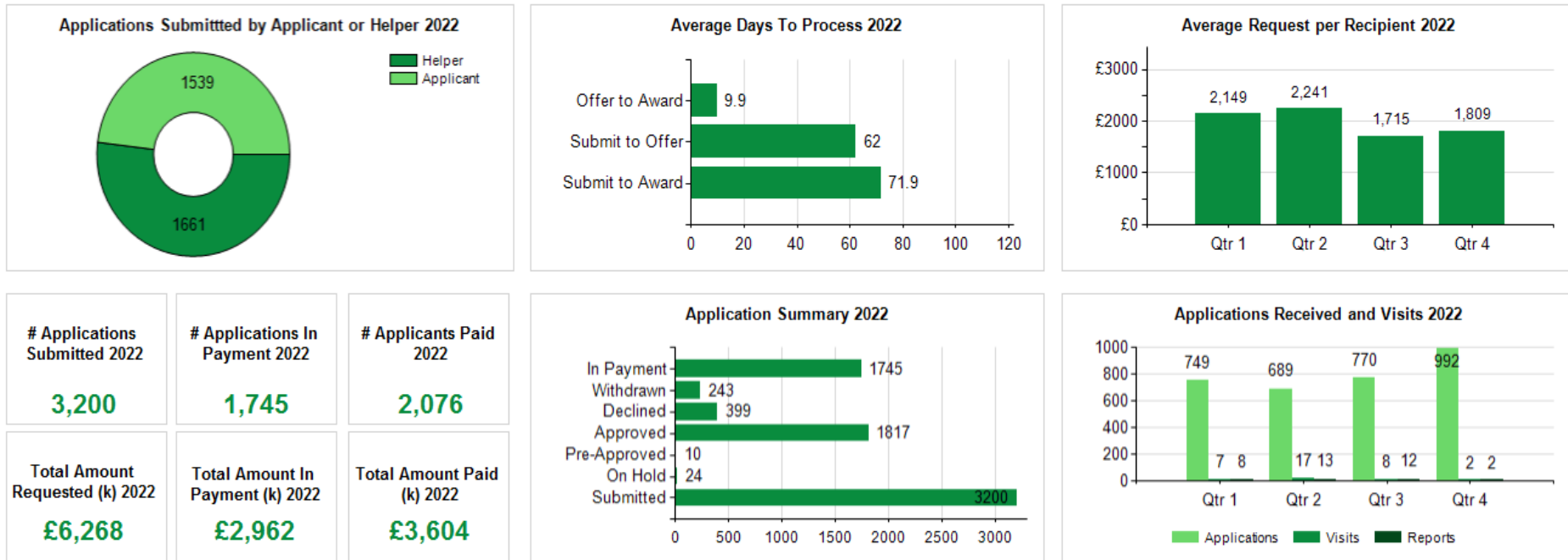
c) The following dashboard provides an overview of operational activity in relation to the 2015 Fund specific to Northern Ireland:

Operations Dashboard - 2015 Fund to 31-03-2023 Northern Ireland



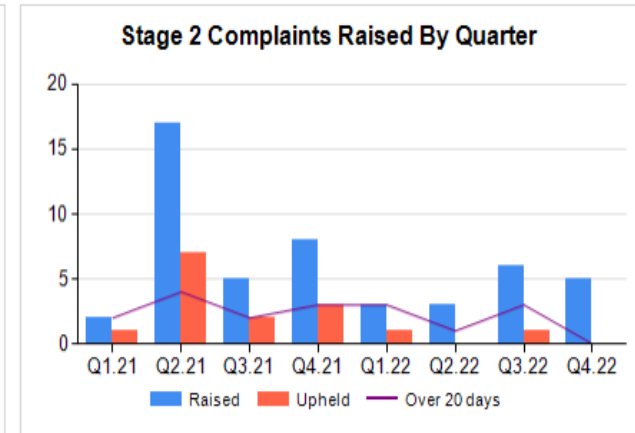
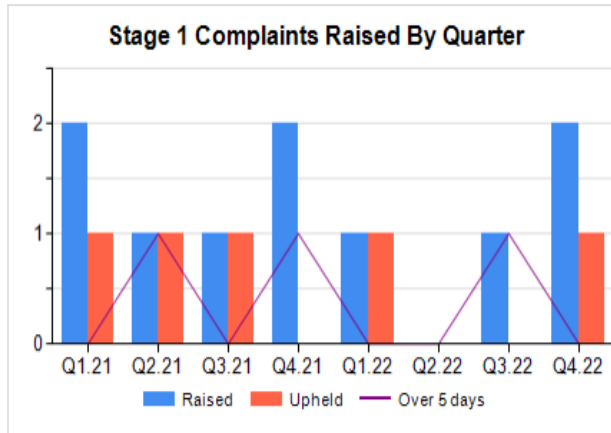
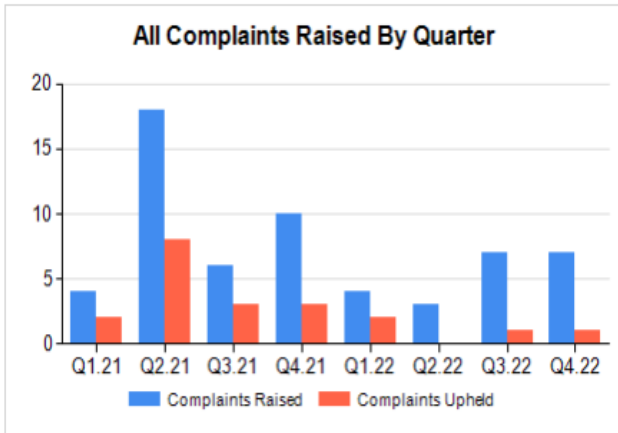
d) The following dashboard provides an overview of operational activity in relation to the Transition Fund:

Operations Dashboard - Transition Fund to 31-03-2023



e) The following dashboard provides an overview of operational activity in relation to Complaints:

Dashboard - Complaints Raised to FY Starting 2022



All Complaints: Raised vs Upheld	
Complaints raised in period:	59
Complaints upheld in period:	20
Percentage of Complaints Upheld	
	33.9%

Stage 1 Complaints: Raised vs Overdue	
Complaints raised in period:	10
Complaints overdue in period:	3
Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints Overdue	
	30.0%

Stage 2 Complaints: Raised vs Overdue	
Complaints raised in period:	49
Complaints overdue in period:	18
Percentage of Stage 2 Complaints Overdue	
	36.7%

Annex B - Statistics

The following table shows the key statistics for the period 1 January 2023 - 31 March 2023 and are aligned to standard annual financial reporting cycles as ILF Scotland is now in steady state operations. It does include Transition Fund which is articulated as Group 3.

LA HSCT	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3			Total			2011 Census	% ILF Country	% ILF Total	Recipients / 10,000
	Current Recipients	Average Payment	Total Payment	Current Recipients	Average Payment	Total Payment	Current Recipients	Average Payment	Total Payment	Current Recipients	Average Payment	Total Payment				
Northern Ireland	91		£387,055	258		£1,029,401				349		£1,416,456	1,810,863		12.16%	
Belfast HSCT	11	£410	£54,149	64	£352	£259,319				75	£361	£313,468	348,204	21.49%	2.61%	2.2
Northern HSCT	17	£286	£56,088	38	£273	£125,609				55	£277	£181,697	463,297	15.76%	1.92%	1.2
South Eastern HSCT	7	£367	£30,796	44	£336	£177,430				51	£340	£208,225	346,911	14.61%	1.78%	1.5
Southern HSCT	19	£350	£79,694	59	£336	£238,923				78	£339	£318,617	358,034	22.35%	2.72%	2.2
Western HSCT	37	£375	£166,327	53	£370	£228,122				90	£372	£394,449	294,417	25.79%	3.13%	3.1
Scotland	257		£1,728,461	1,654		£8,737,421	611		£944,259	2,522		£11,410,141	5,295,403		87.84%	
Aberdeen	1	£1,262	£15,142	21	£353	£88,977	8	£423	£13,543	30	£398	£117,662	222,793	1.19%	1.04%	1.3
Aberdeenshire	6	£608	£43,807	59	£457	£319,871	16	£325	£20,786	81	£460	£384,465	252,973	3.21%	2.82%	3.2
Angus	1	£932	£11,189	32	£428	£164,440	8	£323	£11,625	41	£433	£187,254	115,978	1.63%	1.43%	3.5
Argyll & Bute	3	£756	£27,210	50	£502	£301,014	5	£418	£8,358	58	£513	£336,582	88,166	2.30%	2.02%	6.6
Clackmannanshire	2	£660	£15,849	3	£316	£11,367	5	£253	£5,060	10	£403	£32,275	51,442	0.40%	0.35%	1.9
Dumfries & Galloway	3	£708	£25,504	21	£422	£106,427	16	£211	£13,510	40	£413	£145,441	151,324	1.59%	1.39%	2.6
Dundee	1	£290	£3,486	42	£402	£200,965	11	£270	£14,064	54	£387	£218,515	147,268	2.14%	1.88%	3.7
East Ayrshire	10	£486	£58,329	41	£420	£204,743	14	£407	£22,810	65	£431	£285,882	122,767	2.58%	2.26%	5.3
East Dunbartonshire	4	£466	£22,345	30	£395	£140,452	14	£327	£18,333	48	£394	£181,130	105,026	1.90%	1.67%	4.6
East Lothian	6	£635	£45,725	28	£410	£137,916	14	£293	£17,568	48	£430	£201,208	99,717	1.90%	1.67%	4.8
East Renfrewshire	2	£611	£14,673	60	£487	£352,747	18	£340	£24,493	80	£478	£391,912	90,574	3.17%	2.79%	8.8
Edinburgh	15	£487	£87,583	146	£403	£708,521	52	£286	£62,902	213	£398	£859,006	476,626	8.45%	7.42%	4.5
Falkirk	1	£629	£7,546	11	£414	£52,962	23	£394	£37,861	35	£417	£98,370	155,990	1.39%	1.22%	2.2
Fife	10	£563	£67,617	85	£463	£472,412	33	£473	£64,342	128	£474	£604,371	365,198	5.08%	4.46%	3.5
Glasgow	64	£552	£414,810	333	£466	£1,855,502	59	£419	£110,733	456	£476	£2,381,045	593,245	18.08%	15.88%	7.7
Highland	2	£473	£11,344	35	£391	£164,364	29	£380	£48,634	66	£392	£224,342	232,132	2.62%	2.30%	2.8
Inverclyde	4	£507	£24,346	28	£561	£186,268	23	£331	£37,073	55	£503	£247,687	81,485	2.18%	1.92%	6.7
Midlothian	4	£633	£30,380	23	£426	£117,522	17	£498	£33,860	44	£464	£181,761	83,187	1.74%	1.53%	5.3
Moray	3	£196	£7,059	4	£304	£15,789	15	£172	£10,324	22	£224	£33,172	93,295	0.87%	0.77%	2.4
North Ayrshire	4	£569	£27,336	54	£451	£292,337	11	£251	£11,031	69	£447	£330,703	138,146	2.74%	2.40%	5.0
North Lanarkshire	42	£526	£265,198	143	£410	£697,499	57	£448	£102,032	242	£438	£1,064,730	337,727	9.60%	8.43%	7.2
Orkney Islands	1	£380	£4,561	1	£327	£3,922				2	£353	£8,483	21,349	0.08%	0.07%	0.9
Perthshire & Kinross	2	£717	£17,212	25	£505	£151,449	15	£394	£23,657	42	£501	£192,318	146,652	1.67%	1.46%	2.9
Renfrewshire	9	£633	£68,352	76	£494	£450,357	20	£451	£36,115	105	£504	£554,824	174,908	4.16%	3.66%	6.0
Scottish Borders	1	£368	£4,410	46	£466	£257,040	17	£573	£43,542	64	£477	£304,992	113,870	2.54%	2.23%	5.6
Shetlands Islands				1	£524	£6,285	6	£313	£7,522	7	£384	£13,807	23,167	0.28%	0.24%	3.0
South Ayrshire	3	£641	£23,088	40	£522	£250,656	17	£200	£13,616	60	£492	£287,359	112,799	2.38%	2.09%	5.3
South Lanarkshire	37	£599	£258,924	119	£402	£571,766	30	£437	£54,165	186	£447	£884,856	313,830	7.38%	6.48%	5.9
Stirling	4	£709	£34,040	10	£404	£48,536	3	£295	£3,535	17	£478	£86,111	90,247	0.67%	0.59%	1.9
West Dunbartonshire	6	£941	£67,780	68	£398	£319,877	9	£378	£13,624	83	£440	£401,281	90,720	3.29%	2.89%	9.1
West Lothian	5	£373	£22,356	18	£375	£81,015	41	£261	£43,774	64	£331	£147,146	175,118	2.54%	2.23%	3.7
Western Isles	1	£105	£1,260	1	£369	£4,425	5	£788	£15,767	7	£488	£21,452	27,684	0.28%	0.24%	2.5
Total	348		£2,115,516	1,912		£9,766,822	611		£944,259	2,871		£12,826,596	7,106,266			