

## Note of Meeting

# Scotland Advisory Group Meeting

Thursday 18 May 10am – 12noon

Zoom

### Present

Jim Elder-Woodward

Andy Higgins

Chloe McKee

Gordon McKee

Nic Reid (left meeting at 11.04am)

Christine Mercer

### In Attendance

Julia Smith

### ILF Scotland Staff

Peter Scott

Lee House

Linda Scott

Paul Hayllor (joined 10.54am, left meeting 11.22am)

Robert White (joined 11.14am, left meeting 11.48am)

Emma O'Neill

### Apologies

Joan Turner

## **List of Actions:**

1. Lee to discuss with Alan Clarkson re. activating the waiting room feature for our stakeholder meetings on Zoom
2. Linda to organise a separate meeting to discuss a proposal for Social Return on Investment exercise for the 2015 fund in Scotland
3. Advisory Group members to email any feedback about the Strategic Outcomes document to Linda Scott

## **Welcome, Introductions, Apologies and Housekeeping**

Jim Elder-Woodward welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone agreed to Lee recording the meeting.

### **1. Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes agreed and signed off. Lee to pass to communications team to be uploaded.

### **Actions points from previous meeting:**

1. Harvey/Peter to draft letter to Cabinet Secretary for Jim to sign regarding the re-opening of the 2015 fund. (Should contain detail on PA's and their hourly rates) (Ongoing)
2. Linda/Harvey to draft a proposal for the joint stakeholder event for Jim to view. (Draft proposal submitted)

### **2. Matters arising**

No matters arising.

### **3. Otto Artificial Intelligence Hacking Issue**

Linda advised the group about the hacking issue which accesses people's calendars. They can then tag on to the meeting invite and look to access the meeting and record the details and content of what is being discussed. They will appear in the participant list under different guises. The group agreed to turn the option back on for the waiting room to support the security of our stakeholder meeting.

### **4. Update on new First Minister & Cabinet Secretary**

Peter updated the group on the new First Minister, Humza Yousaf, and the Cabinet Secretary, Michael Matheson. Peter mentioned that they are aware of ILF Scotland and supportive of it and the re-opening of the fund.

Nic suggested that we let the Scottish Government know how many positives that the re-opening of the fund would have. The impact on the economy is of huge importance when discussing the fund re-opening.

Linda advised the group that ILF Scotland senior staff met with the Scottish Government Sponsor Team two weeks ago and discussed the possibility of organising an independent evaluation exercise on the Social Return on Investment in Scotland, like the one carried out previously in Northern Ireland. Note that there is an exercise underway in NI to update the financial proxies used in the original exercise.

Linda asked if the Advisory Group would be willing to act as Sponsor for this piece of work, which could be helpful in evidencing the impact of the fund and feed positively into the planned joint event and consideration around reopening. Ideally, the findings will be available to be presented at the joint event in September / October.

The Group agreed that ILF Scotland should commission this work, that the Group would sponsor it. Linda advised that now that we have agreement, we will set up a separate meeting to discuss further and, in the meantime, she will circulate the relevant NI proposal / remit and report. Emma gave the group an insight in to how this piece of work was managed in NI. Emma was involved in carrying out the evaluation part of the exercise in NI and she will be involved in the planning but not the delivery of this exercise in Scotland because she now works for ILF Scotland.

## **5. Scottish Government Disability Equality Strategy**

Jim asked Peter to update the group. Peter advised that the Scottish Government is developing a new Disability Equality Strategy to replace the Disability Action Plan. The Scottish Government has set up a working group to develop the strategy. The objective is to have the strategy determined later in 2023. The group is working on a list of short-term priorities specifically around the cost-of-living crisis and the impact of this on disabled people.

## **6. Joint Stakeholder Meeting Update**

Linda and Peter advised that the proposal has been submitted to the Scottish Government and we await a response. The event has been pencilled in for September/October in Edinburgh. Linda held an initial planning meeting with some members from the Scotland Advisory Group and the NI Stakeholder Group and ILF Comms and Engagement staff. She has already circulated a note of this. Please provide feedback / other ideas to Linda, who will organise another meeting once we have received agreement from the Scottish Government that the event will go ahead.

## **7. ILF Scotland draft strategy (Paul Hayllor)**

Linda introduced Paul Hayllor to deliver a presentation on the ILF Scotland Strategy 2023-2025. Paul indicated he would like feedback from the group after the document had been re-shared by Lee as a word document. Group members are asked if they could have a look and consider whether there are any specific activities, they think ILF Scotland should include as they work towards achieving their stated outcomes.

## **8. SDS Guidance Update (Robert White)**

Robert updated the group on the Transition Fund and the significant number of applications received, indicating a growing demand for this funding. There is an ongoing internal review aimed at identifying service delivery and efficiency improvements to help streamline the service and manage the workload of the casework team.

Robert advised the group that some social work departments have indicated that they can no longer be award managers for recipients of the 2015 fund. ILF Scotland working with Local Authorities and SG on finding workable solutions, primarily on a case-by-case basis.

Robert advised that review visits are taking longer than usual, partly due to difficulty and delays in receiving completed forms and information from the Local Authority.

Robert advised the group that there has been flexibility given from the Sponsor Team to fund continue to fund PAs to provide support to recipients in hospital beyond 28 days – previously awards would have been suspended. Linda spoke about the policy submissions planned to embed this beyond covid flexibility as part of the wider review of the

Suspensions Policy, which is aimed at suspending rather than closing ILF awards for those recipients who spend longer term periods in hospital or residential settings. She will circulate the draft revised policy again to Group members for feedback.

### **9. Preferred Terminology i.e., ‘disabled people’ v ‘people with disabilities’**

Carried forward to the next meeting.

### **10. Adult Social Care Wage Increase**

Linda advised that ILF Scotland implemented an automatic uplift to PA hourly rates from £10.50 to £10.90 effective from 1 April 2023. There is no automatic uplift to the rates charged by Social Care Providers as this is actioned on a case-by-case basis. The Group discussed the ongoing issue of some providers who increase hourly rates mid-year and then send recipients bills for arrears. Linda advised that ILF team trying to address this on an ongoing basis – both she and Peter have written to providers on different occasions making it clear that providers should inform award managers of increases in a timely manner and they in turn should inform ILF Scotland, who can normally backdate for a period of four weeks. Senior staff have spoken to individual providers and met with payroll and financial management providers. Some improvement but some issues remain. Linda and Peter to discuss further letter.

### **11. Planned Registration & Regulation of PAs**

The training and registration of PAs is currently being developed and is under discussion but the terms and conditions of PA employment will not be regulated.

## **12. Policy Update**

Linda advised that Policy 38 has been reviewed, primarily to keep awards in suspension rather than closing so that we have the option to restart awards if a recipient comes back into the community from hospital or residential care.

ILF Scotland will prepare a submission to amend Policy 20 Payments, to propose increasing the maximum sums for Group 1 recipients from £815 to £1,000 and for Group 2 recipients from £475 to £600. Linda will circulate the revised draft policy for to Group members for consideration prior to this.

Social work staff have indicated that they no longer have the capacity to manage recipient awards. This has been discussed with the sponsor team. The social work departments have agreed to look at these situations on a case-by-case basis with our assessors. Linda advised that Policy 26 Managing an ILF Scotland Award remains largely fit for purpose, however, she and ILF Scotland senior staff will review this and circulate any revisions.

## **13. Re-opening of the 2015 Fund**

Discussed in Agenda point 4.

## **14. Charter for Involvement**

Linda confirmed that ILF Scotland staff had made good progress against the actions to achieve the Charter Statements. She submitted a report to ILF Scotland's Board, will provide an update to the website shortly and will share this with the Group in advance of setting up a meeting to agree priorities for 2023/24. It is likely that Emma, Nic and Catherine

Symington, Assessor, will progress this along with other interested members of the Advisory Group.

**15. Any Other Business**

None.

**16. Future Meeting Dates and Arrangements**

Lee to send out Doodle Poll.