

ILF Scotland Newsletter

December 2023

ILF is re-opening in
Scotland in 2024 –
details on page 6



Changes to the ILF Scotland Board of Directors

The Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Maree Todd MSP announced updates to the ILF Scotland Board of Directors.

We are pleased to welcome Anne-Marie Monaghan who has taken over the role of Chairperson, and new Board Directors, Alison Nicolson, Stephanie Hayle, and Kirsty Aird.

Anne-Marie said: "I'm delighted to be appointed to the Chair of the Board of ILF Scotland, especially at this exciting time when the fund is re-opening. Dynamic leadership in the coming months will be crucial as we listen to disabled people about how to use this new investment to support their full citizenship.

"I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new Board Directors. I look forward to continuing the work of the Board, alongside ILF Scotland staff, engaging with all our stakeholders and working in partnership with the Scottish Government as we seek to improve opportunities for disabled people."



The appointments follow the end of office terms of two previous Board directors: Susan Douglas-Scott CBE, who served as Chair of the ILF Scotland, and Alan Dickson, who was Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Both served on the Board since ILF Scotland was established in 2015

Read the full story: <https://ilf.scot/go/new-board>

Read more about the ILF Scotland Board at: <https://ilf.scot/about-us/our-board>

Sixth year as a Top 30 Employer with Working Families

The charity Working Families has named ILF Scotland as one of the top family-friendly employers in the UK – for a sixth year!

Working Families' mission is to remove the barriers that people with caring responsibilities face in the workplace.

ILF Scotland gained its place on the list by showcasing its flexible and family-friendly approach to work.

Read more at: <https://ilf.scot/go/top-30-employer>

Public Finance Award Finalists

ILF Scotland was the winner of the prestigious Public Finance Awards in the 'Aligning Local Services Category' and was a finalist in the 'Excellence in Governance and Risk Management' category. The ceremony was held in London on 28 November.



Paul Hayllor, Director of Digital and Information Services, said: "We are thrilled to have been recognised for our commitment to providing exemplary services designed for the disabled people that we serve."

Review Visits



ILF Scotland in-person review visits have resumed. We will contact you in advance to arrange a suitable time and date for a visit. We will also contact your Health and Social Care Partnership or Trust and invite them to the meeting to talk about any changes to your support arrangements. If someone manages the money we pay you (an Award Manager), they should attend the visit, too.

It is important to keep your records up to date as our assessors will ask for these as part of your review. Refer to Your Responsibilities Guide (<https://ilf.scot/go/your-responsibilities>) for more details.

COVID-19 Update

Facemasks

Advice in Scotland is that people should wear facemasks according to clinical need based on infection prevention and control advice.

The use of face coverings is still recommended in indoor settings accessible to the public across Northern Ireland.

Read more on our website at:

<https://ilf.scot/go/facemasks>

ILF Scotland staff will remain vigilant and continue to ask recipients and Award Managers their preference for wearing masks before meeting with them.

New Outbreaks of COVID-19

If your PA cannot support you because of a new outbreak of COVID-19, you can still pay them their full wage or top up what they get through Statutory Sick Pay and you can organise replacement support. If you do not have enough funding in your ILF account to cover this, or if you need additional finance for other COVID-19 related expenditure, please contact us on 0300 200 2022 or email us at enquiries@ilf.scot

Blue Sky Social Care Card

A new Blue Sky Social Care Card for social care workers and unpaid carers and volunteers is now available.

Cardholders can receive national discounts and perks and the card will act as an employee or carer ID card.

All profits go towards supporting the Disability Direct charity who work with retailers to help recognise the



vital role played by social care staff and unpaid carers in the community.

The card costs £5 per year. ILF Scotland can pay for a card for the PAs of ILF Scotland recipients.

Find out more and apply at: <https://blueskycard.uk>

Fifty Years of Family Fund

Events have taken place to mark the 50th anniversary of the Family Fund.

Since it was established in 1973, the Family Fund has been providing support to families raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person on a low income.

More than 1.5 million grants have been given to support families to make day-to-day life easier, or to give them the chance to make special memories through a family break.

To mark the anniversary, Northern Ireland's Parliament Buildings were lit purple, a reception was held in the

Scottish Parliament, and an event was held at the House of Commons.

At all events, representatives from the charity shared a new research project, 'Window to our world', which highlights personal stories from families raising disabled children. It showcases the importance of taking time to enjoy family life, and how support from the Family Fund has enabled families to do this.

Read more about the research at: <https://ilf.scot/go/window-to-our-world>

Scotland news

ILF is Re-Opening in Scotland!

First Minister Humza Yousaf MSP announced in his first Programme for Government in September that the Independent Living Fund will re-open in Scotland on a phased basis, with an initial £9 million in the financial year 2024-25.

This will enable up to 1,000 additional disabled people with the most complex needs to access the support they need and deserve to live independent lives.



Dr Jim Elder-Woodward OBE, Chair of the Scotland Advisory Group, said: "On

behalf of the ILF Scotland Advisory Group, I warmly welcome the

announcement by the First Minister that the Independent Living Fund is to be re-opened in 2024. This was recommended by the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in 2020. The re-opening has also been a long-standing commitment of the Scottish Government.

"This announcement would not have been possible without the continuous campaigning, over many years, of disabled people and their directly accountable organisations."

Peter Scott OBE, Chief Executive of ILF Scotland,

said: "The re-opening of the Fund will enable us to assist more of Scotland's

most disabled citizens overcome the barriers to independent living that they face on a daily basis.

"We feel privileged to have this opportunity, but do not underestimate the responsibility that accompanies it. We look forward to working with disabled people, their organisations, and other key stakeholders on the co-production of the re-opened Fund."



Re-opening Co-production Events

To prepare for re-opening, we have established a Co-Production Working Group to make recommendations to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, on the policies for the re-opened ILF. The Group comprises of members from a variety of organisations. You can read the minutes of the meetings on our website.

The Group is keen to ensure the involvement of disabled people and other key stakeholders in the co-production process and, to that end, we are arranging a series of **Co-Production Events** to gather views and help shape the re-opened ILF.

The first co-production event took place at Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh on Tuesday 12 December. We will publish information on our website about the event as soon as possible.

Join us at an event

To take part in a Co-Production Event, please visit our Eventbrite page at: <https://ilf.scot/go/re-opening-events>

You can also phone our general enquiry line to book a place by calling **0300 200 2022**, or you can email Geraldine Higgins at Geraldine.Higgins@ILF.scot

For the most up-to-date information on the re-opening of ILF, and the co-production events, please visit our website at <https://ilf.scot/re-opening-ILF>

The Re-Opening of the Independent Living Fund in Scotland – Co-Production Events



Online event via Zoom, Thursday 11th January 2024, 11am to 3pm

P&J Live, East Burn Road, Stonewood, Aberdeen, AB21 9FX,
Wednesday 17th January 2024, 11am to 3pm

Online event via Zoom, Thursday 25th January 2024, 11am to 3pm

Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA,
Tuesday 30th January 2024, 11am to 3pm

Glasgow Science Centre, 50 Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1EA,
Monday 19th February 2024, 11am to 3pm

National Care Service

The Government's vision of a National Care Service (NCS) is that everyone will have access to consistently high quality community health and social care support across Scotland, whenever they might need it.

As part of the process of co-designing the NCS, a series of regional forum events were held across Scotland and online between June and October.

Six reports from the National Care Service summer 2023 forums are now available to read at <https://ilf.scot/go/ncs>



Summit to Mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities

The first Summit to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPWD) took place at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on Saturday 25 November.

Disabled people from all over Scotland attended the event in the Debating Chamber in person and online.

The event focused on breaking down social barriers and the fight for equality and human rights.



Dr Jim Elder-Woodward OBE, a disabled activist and prominent campaigner who is also Chair of the

ILF Scotland Advisory Group was one of the speakers at the Summit. You can watch the full Summit, including Jim's speech, at:

<https://ilf.scot/go/idpwd-summit>



ILF Scotland's Senior HR Manager Heather Melville-Hume also attended the event. Read Heather's blog about her experience at:

<https://ilf.scot/go/heathers-blog>

The event preceded the UN's International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which is on 3rd December every year. This year's theme focuses on the UN's commitment to the fulfilment of all human rights for persons with disabilities by 2030.

Migration to Universal Credit (UC)

Managed migration is the process by which the DWP invites claimants to claim UC. The DWP is focusing on moving people who are only getting working tax credit and/or child tax credit over to UC in 2023/24.

If plans are progressing for a recipient to move from home to supported

accommodation, we recommend that Welfare Rights support and advice is sought at an early stage in order that a recipient can benefit from some Transitional Protection with a Universal Credit claim.

We will provide further information in our next newsletter.

Self Directed Support

The Scottish Government has published the Self-Directed Support (SDS) Improvement Plan 2023-2027, which sets out sector-wide priorities for improvement in Self-Directed Support over the next few years.

ILF Scotland is a member of the National SDS Collaboration, which brings together partners working in SDS across Scotland.

The Collaboration supported the creation of the Improvement Plan. You can access the published plan on the Scottish Government website at: <https://ilf.scot/go/sds-improvement-plan>

SDS Scotland is undertaking a new piece of research to look into the quality of Independent Support in Scotland.

Independent Support is provided by organisations that help people navigate SDS. The research is interested in finding out about the experiences of people who have used, or tried to use, Independent Support to help them access SDS.

SDS Scotland aims to produce recommendations to support an increased focus on the quality, impact and the future delivery of Independent Support.

Find out more at: <https://ilf.scot/go/sds-new-report>

Scotland Advisory Group

The Group is chaired by Dr Jim Elder-Woodward OBE and includes recipients and award managers. The purpose of the Group is to provide:

- feedback and advice on the operation of the Fund
- information about members experiences of using the Fund
- input into policy developments

The Group meets on a quarterly basis and you can view the minutes of the meetings on our website at: <https://ilf.scot/publications-and-documentation>

The Group is always keen to attract new ILF recipients to join. If you are interested, please contact Linda Scott at Linda.Scott@ilf.scot

Care Leaver Payment consultation

The Scottish Government has launched a public consultation to gather views on a proposed one-off Care Leaver Payment of £2,000 to young people leaving care.

Many care experienced young people do not have the same informal support network that other young people have during transition points in their lives. The intention is to help reduce some of the financial barriers faced while moving on from care into adulthood and more independent living.

The consultation will remain open for responses until 26 January 2024.

Read more at: <https://ilf.scot/go/care-leaver-consultation>

You can also take part in Engagement Sessions via Microsoft Teams, with an opportunity to ask questions of the Care Leaver Payment Team.

There are sessions on Thursday 18 January at 4pm, and Friday 19 January at 12:30pm. Book via Eventbrite at:



- <https://ilf.scot/go/care-leaver-payment-18/1>
- <https://ilf.scot/go/care-leaver-payment-19/1>

Carer Support Payment

Carers Allowance is being replaced in Scotland by the new Carer Support Payment.

The new Carer Support Payment is now being piloted in three areas of Scotland. You can apply if you live in:

- Dundee City
- Perth and Kinross
- the Western Isles

Carer Support Payment will be available in more areas from spring 2024 and across Scotland by autumn 2024. Carer Support Payment will replace Carer's Allowance, currently administered by the Department for Work and Pensions, and will be provided by Social Security Scotland.

You can find out more information at: <https://www.mygov.scot/carer-support-payment>

Social Security Scotland are hosting a series of Stakeholder Events on the Carer Support Payment Case Transfer. The free events will take place in January and February 2024. They are designed to inform people who advise and support clients living in Scotland who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance about the transfer process and the end-to-end client journey.

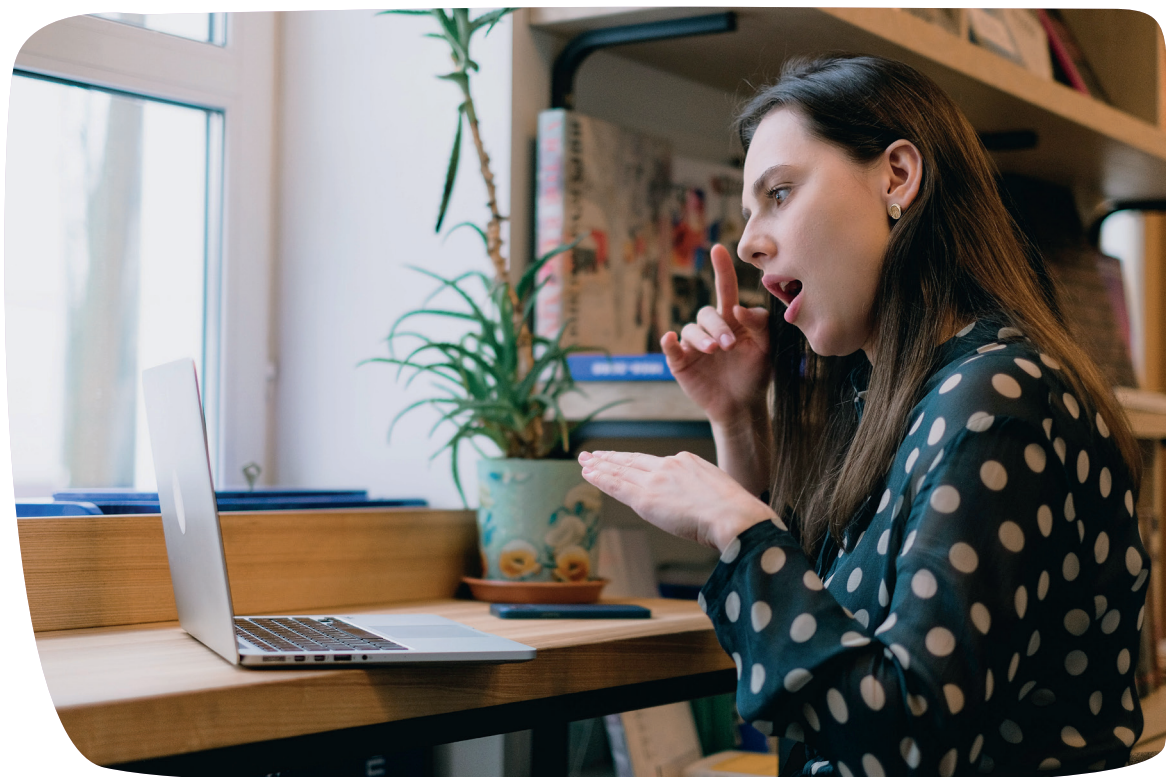
You can register to attend an event at: <https://ilf.scot/go/sss-events>

British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2023-2029

The Scottish Government has published its second BSL National Plan. It identifies ten priority areas to address the systemic issues that have been identified as key barriers to making Scotland the

best place in the world for a BSL user to live, work, learn and visit.

You can read more about the plan at <https://ilf.scot/go/bsl-plan>



imPact newsletter

The latest edition of imPact, the newsletter for Personal Assistants across Scotland, is now available.

There are articles on the trial of the Blue Sky Social Care Card in Scotland, the support provided by the Personal Assistants Network Scotland, and a case study of a PA.

You can also sign up to receive the newsletter directly.

Read the newsletter at: <https://ilf.scot/go/impact-newsletter>



The EVOC Red Book

The Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC) has created an online directory of community and voluntary sector organisations across Edinburgh.

The EVOC Red Book includes listings of registered charities and voluntary groups, as well as a description of the services that they provide.

Categories featured include 'community and involvement', 'disabilities', 'health and care', 'equalities and inclusion', and 'information and advice'.

Read the EVOC Red Book directory at: <https://evocredbook.org.uk>

Northern Ireland news



Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group



Join Us and Share Your Views

Like the Advisory Group in Scotland, Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group members provide:

- feedback and advice on the operation of the Fund
- information about their experiences of using the Fund
- input into policy developments

The Stakeholder Group held its last quarterly meeting in Belfast's Mount Conference Centre on Tuesday 5 December. Members joined in person and online via Zoom, and those present enjoyed an informal lunch at the Centre.

Chair of the Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group David McDonald said: "My heartfelt congratulations to everyone involved in the reopening of the Fund in Scotland. What an amazing achievement! I am looking forward to the appointment of a Minister of Health in Northern Ireland who hopefully will consider giving us the same good news here.

"In the meantime, your Stakeholder Group is keen to recruit current Recipients and Award Managers as new Members. We Influence, directly, how the Fund works, for all of us. We speak out. We are heard.

We make a profound and positive difference, in approach, in funding, in policy, in our futures and in our lives. Are you a current Recipient?

"Then, so can you! Come on along. Meet us in person or on Zoom. Hear what we have to say. Hear what we do, Join us and join in, today!"

If you are interested, please contact Linda Scott at Linda.Scott@ILF.scot



Michaela receives her MBE

Disability rights activist Michaela Hollywood, and a member of ILF Scotland's Stakeholder Group, received an MBE from Her Royal Highness Princess Anne in an investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle.

Michaela travelled to London with her family to accept the award, which recognises her services to disabled people.

Michaela said: "I was delighted that I received my insignia from Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, who I also met right at the beginning of my activism.

"We had a lovely chat about the progress that has been made, and the work still to do for equality and inclusion of disabled people."

You can read more about Michaela's story at: <https://ilf.scot/case-study/michaelas-story>

Michaela lives with the genetic condition spinal muscular atrophy. She is Deputy Chief Executive Officer of **Pathfinders Neuromuscular Alliance** who are providing a



series of free training sessions for Personal Assistants and Carers for people with muscle-weakening (neuromuscular) conditions, and other people with high support needs.

You can find out more, or register, at: <https://ilf.scot/go/pathfinder-events>

You can find out more information about Pathfinders Neuromuscular Alliance at: www.pathfindersalliance.org.uk

Independent Living NI Event 2023

The Centre for Independent Living NI (CILNI) held their annual conference and exhibition at the Stormont Hotel in Belfast in November.

The conference was attended by many disabled people who use CILNI's services, along with partners, professionals and politicians who joined a series of workshops and discussions.

ILF Scotland's Director of Self-Directed Support, Robert White, joined one of the panel discussions and said: "The CILNI conference was a first-class networking event. I was delighted to speak, and give a view as a social work manager from a public body who offered a different viewpoint on key SDS issues. This type of discussion can only help better decision making all round."

CILNI supports the right of disabled people to have choice and control in their lives, and to take an active part in the community in which they live. It provides a range of services for disabled people. Visit the CILNI website at: <https://cilni.org>

Charity spotlight: Spinal Injury Northern Ireland (Sp.I.N.I.)



Peter Steele, an ILF recipient, tells us that "The Independent Living Fund has helped support me since my accident in 2009. The funding I receive from ILF enables me to attend functions and other social events."

Peter is the founder of the charity **Spinal Injury NI (Sp.I.N.I.)**. He tells us why he set this up and how he raised £70,000 to help make life easier for disabled people.

Peter said: "Following an accident I had in 2009, I had the use of a machine called a 'MOTOmed' as part of my rehabilitation in the physiotherapy department of Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast.

"A MOTOmed is a powered exercise bike designed for people with restricted mobility. Once back in the community, I discovered an extreme shortage of MOTOmeds. This piece of equipment is very expensive.

"Spinal Injury Northern Ireland was created to supply MOTOmeds on a loan basis to those unable to purchase them.

"Another item supplied by the charity is called 'Active Hands'. Active Hands make gripping aids that gently, yet firmly, hold your hand into a gripping shape enabling you to hold everyday items.

"At present there are more than 40 people using equipment supplied by the charity. We supply province-wide for a small delivery fee.

"Our greatest satisfaction comes from helping people and making life a little easier for the disabled.

"The Charity relies solely on donations from the community, who have graciously raised approximately £70,000 through

doing things like sponsored walks of Kilimanjaro, skydives, and cycles, to having a simple 'charity change jar' at a shop in town.

"We at Sp.I.N.I. are overwhelmed with the help and support we

have received not just from the Spinal Injury family, but also from the general public, too."

You can find out more about Sp.I.N.I. at: <https://spini.online>

NIE Networks and NI Water Care Registers

NIE Networks offers a medical customer care information service to people who are dependent on life-supporting electrical equipment. You can register at: <https://ilf.scot/go/nie-networks>

Older people, disabled people and those with a medical condition should consider joining the **NI Water** and **Northern Ireland**

Electricity (NIE) Networks care registers. The registers help to identify people who need extra help or support if there is an interruption to supply and you can access a range of free additional services.

You can register at: <https://www.niwater.com/customer-care-register> or call Waterline on 03457 440 088.

The Move to Universal Credit: Get Ready

Independent advice network Advice NI has published a report highlighting views, concerns and ideas relating to the 'Move to Universal Credit'.

You can read the report in full at: <https://ilf.scot/go/move-to-uc>

Transition Fund

ILF Scotland's Transition Fund aims to help young disabled people in Scotland, aged 16 to 25, with the transition after leaving school or children's services. It helps young disabled people to:

- become more independent
- be more active and engaged in their community
- to build and maintain relationships with other people

It provides money for up to one year to support young people with a disability or impairment as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The Transition Fund is more popular than ever

Demand for the Transition Fund continues to grow. We have received a record number of applications so far this year – a 60% increase compared to last year.

Due to the pressure of this demand on the Fund, we have had to make the difficult decision to restrict all new grants to first time applicants for the foreseeable future. This



is to ensure that limited financial resources are made available to as many young people as possible. This means that if you have already received a Transition Fund grant from us, we will not be able to consider a further application at this time.

Peter Scott, ILF Scotland's Chief Executive, said: "We understand that many young people across Scotland will be disappointed to hear this news. Please be reassured that this is not a decision that we have taken lightly and this is the fairest and best way to ensure that the Transition Fund continues to benefit young disabled people so that they can be active citizens and participate in their communities."

We will keep this situation under review and will post any updates on our website.

We will introduce this change from 1 January 2024.

If you have already submitted an application, we will evaluate and process this in the normal way. However, we will give priority to first time applicants, which may result in waiting for longer than normal to hear from us.

For all applications, the unprecedented increase in demand means that currently we are taking around 16 weeks to process the majority of grants. Please be patient with us and try not to call us for updates as we are unable to predict how long individual applications will take. We will get to your application as soon as we can.

If you are about to make an application, please bear these timescales in mind and apply well in advance if you need the funding for a specific time.

If you are looking for a basic piece of IT equipment, you can still apply for a Technology Grant even if you have received Transition Funding before. For more details, visit: <https://ilf.scot/transition-fund/technology-grant>

You can also apply for a Person Centred Planning Grant.

Not sure what to apply for?

If you would like some help to decide how the Transition Fund might assist you to achieve your goals, you can access support for this.

You can apply for our Young Person Centred Planning Grant (<https://ilf.scot/go/pcp>) before applying for the full Transition Fund grant.

We will direct you to a professional planner to help you to plan for your future, work out what will help you most in your transition, and how the Transition Fund might play a part in helping you to achieve this.

You can also consider using ARC Scotland's Compass app (<https://ilf.scot/go/compass>), designed to assist young people in identifying how to get the most out of their transition and to help them move on in the right direction. Using the Compass tool can also help you plan and identify how an application to the Transition Fund could help you.

For further information on the Transition Fund visit our website at: www.ilf.scot/Transition-Fund

Transition Fund recipient Eireann on Care Experienced Week

One of our Transition Fund recipients Eireann recently shared her reflections on Care Experienced Week 2023 and the difference that the Transition Fund has made to her life.

As the youngest trustee of Who Cares? Scotland, Eireann is a passionate advocate for care experienced people, disabled people, and young people's rights, as well as working full-time for a trade union in Glasgow. Who Cares? Scotland is a national membership organisation for care experienced people.

Eireann said: "I think the Transition Fund in Scotland is amazing, and I am grateful that I was able to apply and benefit from the fund. I felt that the process and fund was so accessible and that the whole process was dignifying and that I was well supported."

Read Eireann's blog in full at: <https://ilf.scot/go/care-week>



Transition Fund recipient Andrew's Dundee Culture recognised in Parliament



Congratulations to Transition Fund recipient Andrew Batchelor, who is also a member of our Transition Fund Young Ambassadors' Group. Andrew's social media brand Dundee Culture has been recognised in the Scottish Parliament.

Andrew successfully used a Transition Fund grant to expand his business, Dundee Culture. You can find out more about the work Andrew does at: <https://www.dundeeculture.com>

Transition Fund Young Ambassador's Group

If you have received a Transition Fund grant, you can join our Young Ambassadors' Group.

As a member, you would:

- be invited to quarterly meetings with other Young Ambassadors
- attend events in person and online to raise awareness of the Fund
- be involved in discussions about changes or development of the Fund

- work with ILF Scotland on podcasts, vlogs and blogs sharing your experiences of the Fund

If you would like to join the Young Ambassadors, please get in touch with Lee House, our Engagement Officer, by emailing Lee.House@ilf.scot



Tell us your story

We think the best way to tell other disabled people about the positive difference our funding makes to you is through telling your stories.'

We would love to hear from our 2015 Fund and Transition Fund

recipients about how ILF Scotland support has helped you achieve your independent living outcomes.

Email: communications@ilf.scot
or call our main number on **0300 200 2022**.

Have your say!

If you have any ideas or would like to make any suggestions about what you would like to read in the next newsletter in June 2024, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We are keen to ensure that all recipients and award managers receive communication in a way

that suits their needs. If you want to receive updates in a different way, please let us know.

Thanks for reading this newsletter. We hope you found it interesting.

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