

Co-Production Event Discussion Summary

Stirling, 30 January 2024

First Group Discussion

Minimum Qualifying Amount (Threshold Sum)

The **Threshold Sum** means the amount of money that a disabled person must get from their local council to get Independent Living Fund money too.

Discussion Responses

- There needs to be a threshold although this should be based on the recipient's needs rather than the amount of money that is available.
- Some people may have problems getting support for the Local Authority and that means they would miss out on being able to access ILF.
- Not sure that the threshold sum should be linked to what average Local Authority budget is. What about people who don't have Social Work involvement?
- Local Authority budgets are being cut and that might make it difficult to meet any threshold sum.
- If someone has their funding reduced by the Local Authority will ILF be there fill in the gap in their support.

- People are afraid to have Social Work looking at what they have as they think they will try to take money back.
- A system is needed where people don't need to receive anything from Social Work to be able to apply for ILF.
- The first assessment should be done by ILF not the Local Authority. Threshold sum is not the best way.
- We need some kind of a marker. It is important. £340 or £600. Whatever it is we know that assessments are not done in the same way across the country so how would we decide who gets funding without a marker.

Maximum Award

The **Maximum Award** is the biggest amount of money the Independent Living Fund can give to someone each week.

Discussion Responses

- Difficult to decide. If ILF re-opens with the same Maximum Award (£475) we should look at this again in the future. Does not have to be set now and stay at that level.
- Focus should be on need rather than maximum amount that can be funded.
- Cost of living is more. Maximum Award should be more as well.

- If ILF has money for 1000 disabled people then there needs to be a Maximum Award to make sure everyone gets a fair share.
- ILF is outcome based rather than hours based so we need to make sure that hours of support do not stop disabled people from being able to live independently.
- There needs to be some sort of maximum award or else ILF won't work. It also needs to take into account level of needs for each person.
- There should be a review of the Maximum Awards over time and if it is needed it should be possible to raise the Maximum Award for people with the most complex needs.
- £600 seems more in line with the rising cost of care and support.
- ILF Maximum Award should not be any higher than the average SDS budget as ILF is about additional independent living outcomes.
- Focus should be on need rather than maximum award.
- It is enough to make a difference but may not meet everyone's needs. Would mean less family support required. One size doesn't fit all.
- Could there be two types of Maximum Award. One that people can access once for special equipment like a stair lift. And another that is paid weekly and helps with regular costs like PA support.

Age

In this document, **Age** means how old you need to be to get money from the Independent Living Fund.

When the fund was open to applications you needed to be between 16 years old and 64 years old.

Discussion Responses

- Lower age limit should stay at 16 for re-opening and then look at this again each year to see if it can become wider.
- Difficult question when thinking about complex needs as is very difficult to get funding until children are 3 years old and Local Authority budgets often less than the person requires.
- Thought the age range would be 26 years old and upwards as ILF have an existing transition fund for 16-25.
- There are many funds available to younger age ranges such as the family fund and the education that will fund younger people to improve their quality of life.
- Should re-open at 16 years old and above look to open the fund up to younger people in the future if this is possible.
- No upper limit. 14 years have passed where the fund has been closed, if you have a maximum limit on the age range that creates a barrier for people who have missed their chance because they are over 64 now.

- Transition Fund (TF) is for different reasons and people can apply for both TF and ILF award.
- Understand that there needs to be some cut off but would be nice if there was unlimited money to include children.
- No upper age limit as needs don't stop when people reach retirement.
- There should be no age limit.

Second Group Discussion

Award Management

Everyone who gets money from Independent Living Fund Scotland must have an **Award Manager**.

Award Managers can be:

- the person getting the funding
- someone who has some control to support the person – like a Financial Guardian, for example
- someone else – like a family member
- Social Work staff

Discussion Responses

- Carers who are Award Managers need support. Using an agency to do the payroll side of things is a good way to make things easier.
- ICMS can do Award Management and Payroll. GCIL provide a payroll service.

- Can be good to have an independent adviser. The way ILF do this it is great and there are other support organisations that can help with this.
- It is important to have someone managing the award that knows the person. The way it works now is good why change it.
- Centres for Inclusive Living can be a good place to get advice when people don't know where to start.
- Some Local Authority teams have development workers to support people to become employers but this is not it all areas.
- Would be helpful to have Award Manager supporting each other. Network for Award Managers.
- Important to remember that family members would always be the most suitable people to take on Award Manager role.
- Choice and control over individual life is the most important thing.

Charging for ILF (Available Income Contribution)

This means an amount of money that a disabled person pays towards their support – on top of the money the Independent Living Fund pays.

At the moment it is £43 per week.

Discussion Responses

- Local Authorities have different charges to ILF. Some people feel they are being charged twice.
- People have been waiting a long time for ILF to re-open. They should not face charges when it does.
- In some cases people can't afford the charge. ILF should be able to waive it in these cases.
- It would be great if there were no charges.
- Think about value for money. You pay £43 and you receive £300 you're getting a lot for the money. You're still getting a better deal.
- Disabled people already living with additional disability related costs so should not have to pay a charge.
- Any charging that is in place should be the same with every Local Authority. Some don't mind the idea of a charge as it is a way of valuing the support provided by ILF.
- As the fund grows and charge stops what would happen for the people who have paid the charge for years.

Capital Threshold

This means the amount of money someone has in things like:

- savings
- investments

- second houses
- land

At the moment the Independent Living Fund capital threshold is £32,750.

This means that if someone has or gets this amount of money, they cannot get Independent Living Fund money.

Discussion Responses

- Having a capital threshold is disability discrimination. As a non-disabled person if you get inheritance or have savings no-one takes that away from you.
- People may have some money in the bank but funds can be very quickly used up by a disabled person.
- If a person's parent left them a house or money that would be included in the capital sum but that money won't last forever. They should be allowed to have another assessment in the future.
- If ILF is about equality and fairness everyone should have access to support no matter what you have in the bank.
- Unfair for disabled people to be punished for having savings. A lot of disabled people have to save up money to purchase specialised equipment and this often brings you up to your capital.
- ILF are good at taking into account these costs and any disability related costs you're saving up for will be taken out of the capital sum and set aside.

- Agreed that there should be some level of capital limit. Not sure what it should be. Better to have a high limit.
- There could be different levels. The more capital you have less your ILF Award is. This could get complicated to manage and monitor.
- There needs to be something in place but it could be more flexible than a fixed amount.

Third Group Discussion

Relationships with Local Authorities

At the moment both local councils and the Independent Living Fund give money together to disabled people.

Independent Living Fund aims to visit each disabled person once every few years to check everything is going well.

A social work staff member from the local council should go along too. And the person themselves should be asked what they think.

Discussion Responses

- Joint reviews should be a benefit to recipient not the other way around.
- Worry about Local Authority looking for ways to cut funding.
- It is different with different Local Authorities. We can do more to help make sure ILF and Social Work are working together for the best interests of the recipient.

- Social Work often don't show up to review meetings. Not fair to the recipient.
- The more people involved to support and inform you the better choices can be made to support people to have choice and control.
- Would be better to have Local Authority taken out of the process and focus less on budget more in the person's needs.
- ILF are saying we have all of this money to spend, use it to have choice and control.
- Local Authority are saying we have all of this money to save, we need to take it back.
- Should have recipient permission to invite Social Work to reviews.
- Can be beneficial to hold joint reviews as this can be a way to access Social Work involvement and support.

ILF and Statutory Funding (Additionality)

Independent Living Fund money was not meant to be the main funding for disabled people.

It should be topping up the amount that each local council agree to pay.

Discussion Responses

- Makes sense to have it the way it is. Social Work cover care needs. ILF covers social and independent living outcomes.

- Local Authority assess care needs and then ILF consider additional needs. This is a good thing.
- Keeping ILF separate from Social Work means that ILF can challenge the Local Authority and make sure statutory needs are being met.
- Worry that personal care needs in the community will be removed if ILF is in place.

Use of ILF Funding

The extra money that Independent Living Fund gives helps people to choose things that are important to them to help them live more independently.

Discussion Responses

- More opportunities to be creative with ILF funding and think about independent living outcomes not just care needs.
- ILF will give you advice over the phone if you're not sure about using money in a certain way. If you have any problems phone them up.
- Never come across a scenario where the funding can't be used flexibly or supported to think about how to use funds to meet the recipient's needs.
- Must continue with the level of flexibility people have come to expect from ILF and be more creative with how we use funding.

- Holiday and respite as well as extra PA costs for travel can be a good use of funding.
- People with complex needs might buy specialist equipment or organise respite breaks.
- Pay for memberships of groups and clubs such as a football season ticket.
- Share examples of how recipients use money and introduce new recipient to people who already get ILF so they can learn from their experience.
- Should be possible to use the money for a one-time purchase like a power chair and also have weekly support for regular costs.