

Note of Meeting

Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group Meeting

Tuesday 5 December 2023, 11.30am to 3.30pm

The Mount Conference Centre and via Zoom

Permanent Members Present

Caroline Wheeler

David McDonald, Chairperson

Niqi Rainey

Robert Dallas

Affiliate Members Present

Amanda Paul

Bryan Myles

ILF Scotland Representatives in Attendance

Linda Scott

Lee House

Harvey Tilley

Sandra Sweeney

Elizabeth McGarrity

Ross Browning

Department of Health Representatives in Attendance

Colin Dunlop

Other Attendees

Michael Lorimer

Permanent Members Apologies

Collette Jones

Kieran McCarthy (Vice Chairperson)

Michaela Hollywood

List of Actions:

1. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies and Housekeeping

David welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised those present of the guests scheduled to attend at various points during the meeting. Lee advised of the fire exits.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Group approved the previous meeting's minutes. ILF Scotland's Communications Team will upload to the website.

Actions points from previous meeting:

- Lee to use alternative to doodle poll to arrange future meetings.
(Done)

- Lee to re-send links from Michaela on training for PAs. (Done)
- Assessors from Northern Ireland to source Recipients for interview by Finbarr as part of the social return on investment evaluation work. (Done)
- Lee to send the presentation out on PA support and training from Mervyn Bothwell. (Done)

3. Matters Arising

David reported very positive feedback from his PAs who are taking part in the staff training his PAs have received after the email modules sent out from Michaela.

4. Re-Opening of the 2015 Fund in Northern Ireland

Harvey advised the Group that the re-opening of the Fund to new Recipients in Scotland will commence in April 2024. The co-production Group is looking at the policy framework. Based on engagement to date, the preference is that there should be no charges (available income contributions).

Colin added that until the Assembly is fully functioning again, and Ministers are back in post and a budget has been determined, there can be no further update on the re-opening of the Fund to new Recipients in Northern Ireland.

Harvey suggested we send an information pack along with the invite to MLAs for the Joint Stakeholder Event 28 March 2024 at the Scottish Parliament.

Finbarr Fitzpatrick joined the meeting at 12.23pm

5. Social Return on Investment Valuation

Finbarr explained his findings to the Group, advising that his approach this time was more light touch and involved a smaller sample than the previous report and explaining that he had involved stakeholders to understand any changes required and the values that are important. Finbarr emphasised it was important to be transparent in the whole report.

The stakeholders referred to in the report are current ILF Recipients, Health & Social Care Trusts, Family and Primary Carers, Personal Assistants, NI Economy, and NI Civic Society.

The report found that every £1 invested through ILF, resulted in a social return of £13.00 and that the Independent Living Fund had been a critical enabler for health maintenance and resilience during the pandemic with additional funding made available to support Recipients to continue to remain independently at home.

Interviewees spoke of the empathy, understanding and flexibility in their interactions with ILF Scotland. There was a clear preventative effect demonstrated as Recipients reported being better able to overcome the challenges of the pandemic.

Bryan Myles joined the meeting at 12.35pm

6. Policy Update – Suspension & National Minimum Wage Uplift for 2023 to 2024

Linda advised the Group that the suspension policy is in final draft, and she will send this to David for comments and then to the Sponsor Teams to seek approval.

Colin and Linda have met to discuss the Direct Payment increased rate.

7. DPO

Carried forward to next meeting.

8. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Michael discussed Article 19 and the commitments that the UK Government has signed up to. Micheal attended a conference in Geneva in August 2023 as part of a Group of 17 from the UK, who gave a strong collective voice to the issues around the three Articles, and specifically on Article 19. The message that came across is that from 2017 there has been further regression on how effectively disabled people across the UK can access to social care. The Group highlighted the good work ILF Scotland is undertaking, and David highlighted the close collaborative formation and development of the Regional disabled People's Health and Social Care Forum together with the Department of Health here in Northern Ireland. The recent uplifts in the rate of Direct Payments offer other examples of the close collaborative work happening here in Northern Ireland. Michael thanked David for his help in putting together the submission for the conference. There is a follow

up meeting in Geneva scheduled for March, after which the results are to be published.

9. Joint Stakeholder Meeting Update

Harvey advised that ILF Scotland has booked the Scottish Parliament building in Scotland for 28 March 2024 and advised the Group of the agenda and plans for the event.

Members should confirm as soon as possible their attendance at the event and any travel and other requirements. Lee will send a reminder email with the requirements form and expenses form.

10. Review Visit Update

Carried forward to next meeting.

11. PA Training Programme

Carried forward to next meeting.

12. Charter for Involvement

Carried forward to next meeting.

13. Terms of Reference

Carried forward to next meeting.

14. Membership

Carried forward to next meeting.

15. Any Other Business

None

16. Proposed Next Meetings & Arrangements

David asked ILF Scotland to arrange another in person meeting late February prior to the joint meeting in Scotland at the end of March.