



Independent Living Fund Northern Ireland

Social Return on Investment (SROI) Evaluation

February 2024

1.0 Introduction

448 people in Northern Ireland (NI) received a combined total of £6.85 million from the Independent Living Fund (ILF) in the financial year 2018/19. A Social Return on Investment (SROI) study in 2019¹ found that for each £1 distributed in NI by ILF in 2018/19, £10.89 was generated in social value. The stakeholders benefitting were, Recipients, Personal Assistants (PAs) Health & Social Care Trusts, Families and informal carers and the Independent Living Movement.

Impact for recipients was derived through five outcomes:

- 1. Emotional well being**
- 2. Health maintenance**
- 3. Sustaining natural support**
- 4. Personal development**
- 5. Living Independently**

2.0 Aim

An update of the study to measure the extent the SROI sustained in the subsequent four years was commissioned by the NI Stakeholder Group in the summer of 2023.

3.0 Method

- Existing 2019 data was reviewed and determined to remain accurate for use in the current analysis.
- Six personal story interviews were undertaken with one new and three previous (2019) contributors, and two new Award Managers who are also members of the NI Stakeholder Group.
- The financial proxies used in the 2019 study were then reviewed based on relevance and accuracy in line with policy and inflationary changes in the subsequent four-year period

¹ Undertaken by the Centre for Independent Living Northern Ireland & Gauge Impact.

4.0 Findings

349 people in Northern Ireland received £6.85 million from the Independent Living Fund (ILF) in the financial year 2022-23. The consultations with recipients, carers, award managers, and the NI Stakeholder Group, evidence that outcomes accrued for stakeholders in the 2019 study have been sustained and in some cases have been enhanced in the subsequent period.



The combined influence of emotional wellbeing, health maintenance, sustaining natural support and 'getting on with life' continues to demonstrate a clear preventative effect as recipients are better positioned to manage and overcome challenges they encounter in daily life.

Recipients felt in control of their lives and could stay connected with family, friends, and their community. In cases where they were living with their parents, they used the fund to socialise, volunteer and pursue further education. This provided respite for parents and made the recipient feel independent and in no way a burden on their parents, family, and friends.

"Getting out and volunteering which the fund helps me with makes me feel less dependent on family and friends and this helps me maintain good relationships with my nearest and dearest".

All appreciated the flexibility of ILF and gained confidence and belief from being able to manage the fund. Recipients referenced the health and wellbeing benefits from using the fund.

"It improves my quality of life, mental health, makes me happy and independent. My PA accompanies me to go swimming, go on forest walks, go shopping, get my make-up and nails done, help me to choose outfits and attend hospital appointments".

One recipient in receipt of ILF since aged 18, reflected on how the fund had enabled him to live a fulfilling adult life. The fund facilitated a journey of learning to be independent and increased ambition about what could be achieved in life.

A recipient who recently completed a master's degree in international business felt that this would not have been possible without ILF as they were able to use it to assist with exam preparation, course work and assignments both at home and on-campus. With the qualification secured, the recipient is now using the fund to assist with job searching and interview preparation and attendance.

“ILF enabled me to think about what is possible...I did a master's degree which I couldn't have done it without ILF, It set me up to succeed”

One recipient is active in lobbying and campaigning for disabled people rights and supports for independent living and is a highly respected influencer in this area. Being able to attend meetings and events means he can teach others about independent living, act as a role model and use his experience and expertise to influence policy on disability.

Despite the challenges presented by Covid 19, interview feedback from the recipients and award managers indicated that access to the fund was a critical enabler particularly for



health maintenance and resilience throughout the pandemic. Those interviewed emphasised the competence, reliability, and loyalty of their PAs who worked effectively to ensure all public health guidelines were adhered to, referencing their contribution as *“truly lifesaving”*.

Additional funding was available to meet costs associated with the pandemic to ensure PAs who had to self-isolate could receive their full salary while on leave, employment of additional staff while PAs were self-isolating, and for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Furthermore those

interviewed referred to the empathy, understanding and flexibility experienced in their correspondence with ILF during this unprecedented period. One recipient was able to use the fund to mitigate boredom and remain mentally stimulated during lockdown

“ILF were great during Covid, they allowed me to use it for creative arts projects and pay a curator to give me ideas, it kept me stimulated and improved my wellbeing”

The inflexibility of statutory care packages and to some extent Direct Payments and how this compares with the impact of ILF was a recurring theme throughout the consultation.

“Trust care packages helped me to survive, Direct Payments let me live; the Independent Living Fund gives me a life a worth living”

4.1 SROI Results

ILF through its £6.85 million allocation to recipients in 2022/23 generated a social value of £1: £13. This is based on a Total Present Value of £89,109,708 created against the input of £6,850,000. The social value generated by ILF for stakeholders demonstrates extended impact and value for money. The calculations applied financial proxies to twenty-one outcomes (See Appendix 1) for five material stakeholder groups evidenced through the primary and secondary research. Value accrued per stakeholder is segmented in Table 1.

Stakeholder	%
Recipients	80
HSCT's	16
Personal Assistants	2
Family/Carers	1
Northern Ireland Civic Society	1
Total	100%

*Table 1:
Social Value by Stakeholder*

It is necessary to discount the values generated by each of the financial proxies used to reduce the risk of over claiming. While there is a likelihood that through Self Directed Support some of the health and well-being outcomes may have been achieved, it is evident from current statutory funding levels and policy priorities that equivalent levels of funding to the ILF allocation to support independent living in the community would not have been made available. We have therefore attributed low levels of deadweight² (5-10%) to the calculations.

There is no robust evidence base emerging that ILF has displaced domiciliary or home-based services rather the contrary. It has strengthened existing assistance requirements based on independent living principles. Reduced isolation, improved relationships, and increased capacity to contribute to their local community and civic society were among recipient outcomes reported in 2019 & 2023.

In the absence of ILIF there would not have been sufficient community or voluntary services or inputs from family to achieve equivalent outcomes for recipients. The SROI ratio is calculated over five years to reflect the longer-term impacts for stakeholders if the fund was no longer available. Given the complex needs of many recipients the drop off in impact would be in the range of 20-50% in years 2-5.

² *Deadweight is an estimation of the value that would have been created if ILF was not available to recipients.*

4.2 Sensitivity Analysis

As the SROI analysis contains estimations and assumptions, it is prudent to review where these decisions have had a significant effect on the overall SROI calculation and to consider, therefore, the assurance that can be placed on such figures. As an evaluative analysis, the study contains confirmed data regarding ILF funded outputs. The research makes extrapolated assumptions on the numbers impacted based on the data collated in 2019 and 2023 through the desk top review process and the mixed method consultations with participants, employers, and stakeholders.

The sensitivity analysis explores the impact on the SROI ratio of changing some of the study's key assumptions. Discount rates thought to be significant were amended to clarify the impact of changing attribution, deadweight, or displacement. Outcome values were also adjusted. This sensitivity analysis did not significantly alter the final calculations which are considered assured.

5.0 Summary

The numbers in receipt of ILF in NI have decreased by 99 from 448 in 2019 to 349 in 2023 due to natural causes. Despite this, the social value accrued from ILF has increased from £1:10.89 to £1:13 which means that the fund's overall impact for stakeholders has increased by 20%. Recipients were the main benefactors with their overall share of the social value accrued increasing from 77% in 2019 to 80% in 2023. This has been achieved against the backdrop of an ageing ILF cohort, increasing operational and inflationary pressures on public services, and the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic.



Appendix 1

Financial Proxies and sources used for the SROI calculations:

- Relief from depression/anxiety (£40,442) HACT Social Value Bank
- Sustaining full time employment (£14,433) HACT Social Value Bank
- Belonging to a social group (£1,850) HACT Social Value Bank
- Increased frequency of interaction with friends, relatives & neighbours- £7,750
- Value of lives saved (£1,553,653) Microsoft Word - pl2-eco (health-ni.gov.uk)
- Feeling in control of life (£15,894) HACT Social Value Bank
- The average cost of nursing care in Northern Ireland (£34,788)
<https://www.caresourcer.com/caresupport/paying-for-care/cost-of-care/care-home-costs/care-homes-northern-ireland-fees/>
- Regular volunteering (£3,274) HACT Social Value Bank
- Cost of building confidence and self-esteem (£272)
<https://www.revolutionlearning.co.uk/>
- Cost of family mediation (£1,500)
<https://www.nfm.org.uk/about-family-mediation-services/costs/>
- Cost of stress relief (£350)
<https://www.happy.co.uk/leadership-and-personal-development/personal-development-programmes/stress-management-for-staff/>
- Positive relationships with family (£6,784) HACT Social Value Bank
- Feeling connected to community (£3,753) HACT Social Value Bank
- Lifetime value of having at least a Level 2 Qualification (£10,000)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7de15ced915d2ac884e1ac/RR398A_-_Economic_Value_of_Key_Qualifications.pdf
- Cost of a hospital stay - £340 per day
<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/delayed-hospital-discharges-costs-health-service-15m-each-month-35553371.html>



Contact Us

e-mail f.fitzpatrick@bisimprovement.com