

Note of Meeting

Scotland Advisory Group Meeting

Thursday 23 May 2024, via Zoom

Present

Andy Higgins - Chair
Martha Shortreed
Chloe McKee
Gordon McKee
Chris Mercer
Justina Oguguo – joined meeting at 13:35
Joan Turner – joined meeting at 14:00

In Attendance

ILF Scotland Staff

Harvey Tilley
Lee House
Linda Scott
Karen Burnett
Emma O'Neill
Deborah Kenneway
Danielle Dunlop
Lindsay Murdoch

Apologies

Jim Elder-Woodward
Peter Scott
Catherine Symington

1. Welcome and Introductions

Andy Higgins welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone agreed that Lee would record the meeting.

2. Minutes from Previous Meetings

Minutes agreed and signed off. Lee to pass to communications team to upload to ILF Scotland website.

Actions from previous meeting

- Linda and Peter will discuss and provide some clarity on the circumstances when contingency funds can be used. (It was agreed this would be picked up by Peter and Jim on the PA Programme Group)
- Lee to share the presentation from Finbarr Fitzpatrick to the Group. (Done)

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Re-Opening 2015 Update

Harvey advised the group that ILF Scotland re-opened the fund in April 2024. ILF Scotland Staff have been supporting local authority staff since then to enable them to submit applications. There have been 26 applications to the fund so far. The process is that the LA contact applies on behalf of the applicant then a home visit is conducted by an assessor. An agreement of the award is put in place between both parties then processed to payment. There has been a substantial amount of engagement work completed with local authorities to provide guidance

on what ILF Scotland funding might provide and to support local authority staff to make applications.

Linda added that the Co-Production Working Group will be looking at the possibility of alternatives to a fixed financial threshold sum (£800) as well as considering the potential to incorporate an appropriate contribution for unpaid care. The group will also consider differences in the available income contribution, capital limit, and upper age limit, between the existing and the re-opened fund. Linda advised that we are referring to both the original and the re-opened fund as the Independent Living Fund and that the working group will consider changes to the re-opened fund as outlined above but will also look at improvements to the independent living fund as a whole.

Linda will feedback any relevant developments to the Advisory group.

Chris Mercer agreed that it would be helpful if the whole fund is working with the same policy suite and guidelines.

Martha Shortreed added that she is concerned about when ILF Scotland waive its charge, the local authority will introduce a charge. Linda advised the group that ILF Scotland is aware of this and are monitoring the situation to ensure that applicants are not worse off as a result of ILF Scotland applying a waiver. COSLA guidance confirms that local authorities should not increase their charge in response to ILF Scotland reducing or waiving theirs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-care-charging-for-local-authorities-2023-to-2024>.

5. Available Income Contribution

Andy asked Linda if we keep a record of the number of waivers of available income from applicants and recipients. Linda advised that there are records kept and that waiver applications normally follow review visits. It is rare to receive a request directly from a recipient. Linda advised that the abolition of the available income contribution is not currently being considered in advance of the Scottish Government's plans to abolish social care charging more widely at the end of 2025 / 2026.

Gordon McKee advised the group that he feels that they have to keep pushing the Scottish Government for the removal of available income charges.

6. Policy Update

Linda advised that the policy framework for the re-opened fund remained largely the same although there was a slight a revision of eight policies, primarily around the revised Threshold Sum, Maximum Award, etc. Policy 38 Suspensions has now been approved by both sponsor teams and published on the website. The change is that if a recipient is in hospital for more than 28 days, ILF Scotland can continue to pay the award providing the recipient is being supported by their PA / provider for a period of up to six months. The other change is that someone moving to residential care will have their award suspended rather than closed so that if they return home at some point, the funding can be re-started.

ILF Scotland continues to discuss the maximum award policy with the Scotland Sponsor Team.

The new equalities mainstreaming report for 2024 to 2026 is now on ILF Scotland's website along with an update on achievements against the previous plan actions.

The new corporate parenting plan 2024 to 2027 is on the website along with an update against actions in the previous plan actions.

The Charter for Involvement progress against actions has also been published on the website. The Advisory and Stakeholder group members met jointly to discuss progressing the charter action priorities for 2024 to 2025. The minutes from that meeting will be circulated by Karen Burnett.

The groups will meet jointly again to discuss key priorities that came out of that discussion. Gordon asked about raising the profiles of the role of a PA and possibly a media campaign to give more insight into what this entails and how it supports people in their daily lives. Linda confirmed that was highlighted at the charter meeting and will be discussed further at the next joint meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Linda advised the group that the SROI findings and report have been presented to the Scottish Government. This document has now been signed off and will be published on the website.

8. Future Meeting Dates & Arrangements

Friday 30 August 11 am to 1 pm