



Independent
Living Fund
Scotland

We also support
independent living in
Northern Ireland

ILF Scotland Newsletter

December 2024



www.ilf.scot

News Scotland



ILF Scotland Re-Opening Update

It is now well over six months since the Independent Living Fund re-opened its doors, so we thought we would provide a short update on progress so far.

A reminder that to apply to the re-opened ILF, the person must:

- live in Scotland
- be aged 16 years or over at the time of application
- receive Self-Directed Support (SDS)
- receive SDS of at least £800 per week

Currently, local authorities submit applications on behalf of people and ILF Scotland assess each application.

The maximum award that ILF Scotland can pay is £330 per week. Any funding awarded by ILF Scotland will be additional and complementary to the statutory funding provided by a person's local authority.

We have been working closely with Social Work teams across the

country to raise awareness of the fund and the application process. We held over 80 sessions with local teams and are delighted with the positive reception the re-opened fund has received. Application numbers are now growing steadily with around 350 received so far.

The main reasons for applications, in line with the fund's priorities, are:

- Additional support to access social and recreational opportunities
- People at risk of family breakdown due to unpaid carer stress
- People who require assistance to develop or maintain relationships
- People who are experiencing loneliness and isolation
- Risk of residential care or non-community-based living

The Co-Production Working Group and its sub-groups have now met 16 times in the last year. We are grateful to the members of the group for this incredible commitment, and for all their help in getting the fund opened on time. Their work is on-going, as we learn from the experience of re-opening and look to make improvements in the coming months. The three key areas the group are working on at present are:

- Recognising the value of unpaid care in relation to accessing the fund
- Looking at alternative routes to apply to the fund
- Reviewing the "Threshold Sum" – the key principle for accessing the fund.

You can keep up to date and learn more about re-opening, including our first case study highlighting the benefits of the fund, by visiting our website here:

<https://ilf.scot/independent-living-fund/re-opening-ilf/>

Case Study – Rhys



Accessing the re-opened Independent Living Fund has enabled Rhys to become more engaged with his local community. Across the week, Rhys goes swimming, plays wheelchair football, attends music festivals and is also a full-time college student studying Routes to Careers. You can read more about how Rhys plans to use the additional funding from ILF Scotland on our website.

<https://ilf.scot/case-study/rhys-story/>

National Care Service Update

At ILF Scotland, we are closely following the development of the proposed National Care Service (NCS) in Scotland, which holds significant importance for both our organisation and the disabled community in Scotland.



Professor Derek Feeley, whose review of adult social care recommended the creation of the NCS, highlighted the role of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) in the future of the service. He stated: "...we see the Independent Living Fund operating in future as part of the National Care Service. In effect, it will provide a national service of self-directed support to people with the most complex needs in the country."

The introduction of the NCS could have a profound impact on how we support disabled people in leading independent lives. The Feeley Report also recognised ILF Scotland as a key strength within the current Scottish

social care system, suggesting it could serve as a solid foundation for building a better system. We believe ILF Scotland has an important role to play in shaping the future NCS.

To read the Feeley Report visit <https://ilf.scot/go/feeley-report>

As our Scottish Advisory Group Chair, Jim Elder-Woodward put it: "We hope that the values of ILF Scotland can inspire the NCS to become a larger, purpose-driven organisation that provides essential resources for people to lead fulfilling lives. For this vision to come to life, ILF Scotland should have a place not only on the NCS's central board but also on its local boards."

In our previous newsletter published in July 2024, we shared that the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill was progressing into its second stage. However, recent developments have caused delays, and the stage two parliamentary debate scheduled for 26 November has been postponed. A new date

will be set soon. The Scottish Government remains committed to the NCS but has indicated that more time is needed to ensure the right approach and gather necessary support to move the Bill forward.

Social Care Minister Maree Todd has addressed this in a letter to stakeholders, which you can read in full here:

<https://ilf.scot/go/national-care-service-letter>

In response, Scotland's Disabled People's Organisations have expressed their concerns in an open letter, which you can read here:

<https://ilf.scot/go/dpo-open-letter>

At ILF Scotland, we will continue to monitor the situation and stay in close contact with the Scottish Government's Sponsor Team as the NCS progresses.



Transition Fund

Through the Transition Fund, ILF Scotland provides one-off discretionary grants of up to £4,000 to young disabled people in Scotland aged between 16 and 25 years. These grants help young disabled people to:

- try new things
- become more engaged and active in their community
- enhance their independence and confidence
- help them to spend more time with other people

fund has awarded over £20 million pounds, helping countless young people navigate the critical transition from childhood to adulthood.

Since its inception in December 2017, the Transition Fund has been a key resource in fostering independence and encouraging community engagement among young disabled people. Whether it's pursuing new hobbies, enhancing social skills, or building confidence to enter the workforce, the fund has opened doors to experiences that might otherwise have been out of reach for many young people.

Transition Fund Hits 20million Milestone

Over the last seven years, ILF Scotland's Transition Fund has become a lifeline for young disabled people in Scotland. Designed to support individuals aged 16 to 25, the

Disclosure Scotland PVG Changes



Important Information for ILF Scotland Recipients who employ Personal Assistants (PAs). The PVG Scheme is changing and will affect your PAs.

From 1 April 2025, Personal Assistants in Scotland will be required to join the PVG membership scheme. They are being encouraged to apply now.

PVG stands for Protecting Vulnerable Groups and aims to help make

sure that people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and protected adults cannot do so.

The PVG Scheme will become mandatory for those in regulated roles as of 1 April 2025, therefore, it will be a legal requirement for Personal Assistants to join the PVG scheme.

Find out more here at <https://ilf.scot/blog-post/disclosure-scotland-pvg-changes>.

Pension Age Disability Payment Replacing Attendance Allowance

New guidelines have been established for a Scottish Government benefit called Pension Age Disability Payment, designed for individuals of pension age with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

This benefit, which replaces the Department for Work and Pensions' Attendance Allowance in Scotland, can provide extra financial support based on care needs related to a disability or ongoing health issue.

It is available to those who have reached State Pension age and is

paid at two different rates - lower and higher - depending on the level of care required. If you are already receiving Attendance Allowance, you do not need to take any action. Read more: <https://www.mygov.scot/pension-age-disability-payment>.

Changes to Adult Disability Payment

The interim report of the Adult Disability Payment Independent Review has been published.

The report marks a significant milestone in ongoing efforts to assess and enhance the effectiveness of Adult Disability Payment in meeting the needs of disabled adults across Scotland.

Phase Two of the review will look at reviewing and improving eligibility criteria of the payment. The final report will be published in July 2025.

To read more visit: <https://ilf.scot/go/adult-disability-payment>.

Report on Unpaid Carers

New research commissioned by Carers UK has found that 28% of unpaid carers in Scotland are living in poverty with 8% classed as being in "deep poverty".



One of the main drivers of poverty highlighted in the report is the difficulty unpaid carers have combining paid work with their caring role.

Read more about the report on the Carers UK website at <https://ilf.scot/go/unpaid-carers>

Carer Support Payments Scotland

If you look after someone who is disabled or has a long-term health condition you might be entitled to Carer Support Payment.

In Scotland, Carer Support Payment has replaced Carer's Allowance from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

To be eligible, you must provide 35 or more hours of care a week to someone who gets certain disability benefits.

There are many ways people can provide care including:

- helping someone with washing and dressing
- managing household bills

- taking the cared for person to appointments
- providing emotional support

Who can apply?

To be eligible, you need to:

- be 16 or over
- provide 35 hours or more of care a week to someone of any age who is getting certain disability benefits
- earn £151 per week or less on average after some deductions
- live in an area where the benefit is available

Carer Support Payment

Resources



Read more at <https://www.mygov.scot/carers-support-payment>.

Family Fund Grant



Family Fund
Helping disabled children

The Family Fund provides a wide range of grants to families living in Scotland and Northern Ireland with a disabled or seriously ill child or young adult on a low income.



The fund provides funding for items to meet a child's additional support needs and to make life easier. For example, kitchen appliances, clothing, bedding, sensory or play equipment, technology for your child, family breaks.

Families can apply for a Family Fund grant every 24 months. You can apply if:

- you're the main carer for a disabled or seriously ill child, aged 17 or younger
- you have been resident in Scotland or Northern Ireland for at least six months
- you have a low income from working, or benefits

Visit <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/grants/apply-for-a-grant> for more information and to apply.

News Northern Ireland



Recruitment for the NI Advisory Group

The Northern Ireland Advisory Group (previously called the Northern Ireland Stakeholder Group) is seeking new members, specifically current recipients of ILF.

Group members play a crucial role by:

- offering feedback and advice on how the fund operates
- sharing their personal experiences with the fund
- contributing to the development of policies

If you are an ILF recipient living in Northern Ireland and are interested in joining the Group to help shape our future work, we would love to hear from you.



Please get in touch with Linda Scott, ILF Scotland's Director for Policy, Improvement, and Engagement, by emailing Linda.Scott@ILF.scot who will be happy to connect with you and discuss how you can get involved.

Niqi Rainey, Northern Ireland Advisory Group Member and award manager for her daughter said:

"By joining the ILF Scotland Northern Ireland Advisory Group you now know your feedback counts, that your opinion gets listened to.

"I have been able to share my experiences over the past nine years and this has helped shape the changes that ILF Scotland have brought to the Department of Health in Northern Ireland."

Caroline Wheeler, Northern Ireland Advisory Group Member and award manager for her son said:

"My Lee would have been placed in a nursing home if it wasn't for ILF Scotland being introduced in Northern Ireland.

"Now we have a choice and can have a say in how to help recipients live more independently.

"If more families or recipients join the Northern Ireland Advisory Group, it will open up discussion around helping people with complex needs."

Robert Dallas, Northern Ireland Advisory Group Member and award manager for his son said:

"Over the years our feedback has been listened to.

"There have been various policy changes that the Northern Ireland Advisory Group influenced and both policies changed for the better because of our input."

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

ILF Scotland's NI Advisory Group Affiliate Member, Amanda Paul was proud to attend today's conference at Belfast City Hall to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

This year's theme, "Breaking Barriers, Building Futures," inspires us to work toward a more inclusive future.

Throughout the event, disabled people and their advocates shared progress in employment, education, politics, and public life, while discussing the challenges that remain and what's needed moving forward.

This event marks International Day of Persons with Disabilities and is one of a series of events celebrating 25 years of the Equality Commission.

Read more here - [ECNI - News, Press Releases, Equality Commission, Northern Ireland.](#)



Disability Rights Bill Northern Ireland

In November, Danny Donnelly MLA brought a motion to the Northern Ireland Assembly, urging the Minister for Communities to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) into Northern Ireland law.

Mr Donnelly also outlined plans to introduce a Private Members' Bill to ensure statutory agencies in Northern Ireland give due regard to their responsibilities under the UNCRPD. This marks an important step towards addressing long-standing gaps in equality legislation and advancing the rights of disabled people.

Have your say!

The consultation on this proposed law is still open. Share your views by completing the survey: <https://ilf.scot/go/disability-rights-ni>



David McDonald, Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Advisory Group, leaving Parliament Buildings, on a bitter Belfast evening, together with one of his valued PAs, Daniel McGrattan, following their attendance at the motion being put forward by Danny Donnelly MLA to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Northern Irish Law.

News - General

Important Note for Award Managers - Care Provider Cost Increases

We know that the cost of care and support from care providers is increasing year on year, in line with increases to the minimum wage for social care support staff.

If you use your ILF to purchase support from a care provider organisation, they should notify you in writing in advance of any increase to their charges.

It is very important that you pass this information on to ILF Scotland so that we can increase your ILF award,

if appropriate, to make sure you have sufficient funds to pay your increased charges. We normally only backdate increases for four weeks so please forward this to us as soon as possible.

In Scotland, the minimum hourly wage for care and support staff is increasing from £12.00 to £12.60 early next year, so you may hear about planned increases from your provider in the next few months.

Please send your letter to enquiries@ilf.scot or
ILF Scotland,
Ground Floor,
Denholm House,
Almondvale Way,
Livingston EH54 6GA



Strategy Engagement Events

In November and December, we held four online engagement events to help us develop ILF Scotland's next Strategic Plan which will run from 2025 to 2028.

We hope to host an in-person event in the New Year for those recipients who are unable to participate in an online event.

Visit our website <https://ilf.scot/events/> for more information.

ILF Scotland Co-production Events 2024



ILF Awards/Nominations

In September this year, ILF Scotland was nominated for a Public Finance award. The Public Finance Awards recognise the people, products and services that demonstrate excellence and originality within public finance.



ILF Scotland was delighted to be shortlisted in the category of Delivering Sustainability and Social Value for their Northern Ireland Social Return on Investment Study. Unfortunately, we didn't win this time but still good to be recognised for our efforts.

The study we submitted demonstrates the value to society

of enabling disabled people to live independently in their communities.

Read the Delivering Sustainability and Social Value for their Northern Ireland Social Return on Investment Study <https://ilf.scot/publication/social-return-on-investment-sroi-evaluation-northern-ireland/>

ILF Scotland Recognised as a Top Family-Friendly Employer

Working Families has unveiled its annual list of the UK's most flexible and family-friendly employers, with ILF Scotland securing a spot in the Top 10 competing with organisations from

various sectors, including law, finance, education, energy, and public services.

Read more: <https://workingfamilies.org.uk/news-events/news/top-employers-for-working-families-2024-announced/>

Switching From Analogue to Digital Landlines

The technology that you currently use to make landline phone calls is due to be upgraded over the next few years.



Transition from
analogue to digital
landlines

**LATEST
NEWS**

This means that by January 2027, your current landline phone will need to be upgraded in order to work.

In future, calls will need to be with a connection that uses broadband.

You don't need to do anything until your provider tells you your telephone service is changing, or until you decide to change your telephone service.

Using a broadband connection will mean that your phone won't work during a power cut. If you rely on your landline - for example, you don't have a mobile phone, you're unable to use a mobile phone or you

don't have mobile signal inside your home - your provider must make sure you are able to contact the emergency services during a power cut. This could be in the form of battery back-up so your landline will continue to work or giving you a basic mobile phone to use in this situation.

Visit the OFCOM advice page for more information: <https://ilf.scot/go/bt-landlines>

Complaints

The team at ILF Scotland is committed to providing a high-quality service. However, we understand that sometimes things might not go as planned. If our service does not meet your expectations, please let us know so we can work to resolve the issue.

We value all feedback, including complaints, as it helps us improve the way we do things. For more information, please see our Complaints Handling Procedure at <https://ilf.scot/go/complaints-handling>

You can also view how to make a complaint and our current

complaint statistics at <https://ilf.scot/how-to-make-a-complaint>

To make it easier for you to share any concerns, we now have a new email address: complaints@ilf.scot. Please contact us directly so we can address your concerns as quickly as possible.



Tell Us Your Story



Case Study – Marylouise

<https://ilf.scot/case-study/mary-louises-story/>



Case Study – Obioma

<https://ilf.scot/case-study/obiomas-story/>

We believe that sharing your stories is the most powerful way to show others how our funding positively impacts people with disabilities.

We would be thrilled to hear from our recipients about how ILF Scotland's support has helped you reach your independent living goals, just as Marylouise and Obioma have.

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

Have your say!

During a recent audit of our communications and engagement activity we received a 'good' rating, however we are always striving to improve and would love to hear from you to know what we can do better.

If you have any ideas or would like to make any suggestions for what you want to see in next year's newsletters, please let us know.

We are also 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 tell us.

Thanks for reading this newsletter. We hope you found it interesting. If you have feedback or ideas for future issues, please get in touch. We would love to hear from our recipients about how ILF Scotland support has helped you. Email: communications@ilf.scot or call our main number **0300 200 2022**.



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