



The Re-Opening of the Independent Living Fund in Scotland - Information for Local Authorities

Introduction

The Independent Living Fund re-opened to new applicants in Scotland in April 2024. You can find out more about re-opening on the dedicated [re-opening webpage on the ILF Scotland website](#).

ILF Scotland was established in July 2015 to continue administering funding for recipients in Scotland, following the closure of the UK ILF in June 2015, however the Fund had been closed to new applications from 2010.

Re-opening the Independent Living Fund will attract an initial investment of £9m to enable up to 1,000 additional disabled people in Scotland with the most complex needs to access the support they require to live independent lives. Definition of 'Complex Needs'. ¹

¹ The UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Complex Needs and Dual Diagnosis have established that a person with complex needs has “two or more needs affecting their physical, mental, social, or financial wellbeing”.

Applying to the Re-Opened Fund

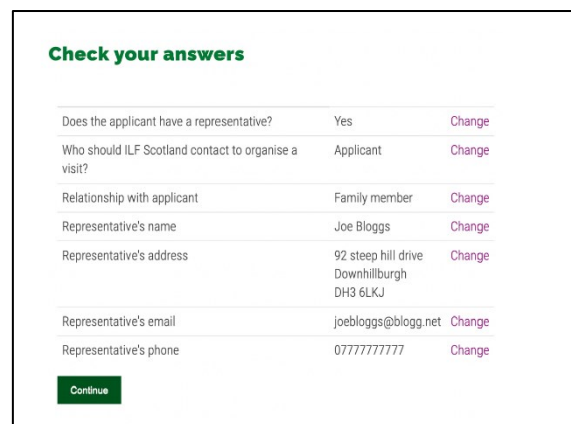
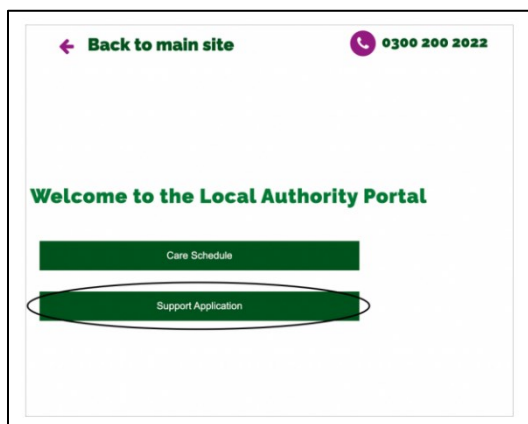
Applications should be made by local authority (LA) health and social care departments on behalf of potential recipients through ILF Scotland's LA online portal.

To ensure that the Fund is affordable in the first year, each LA area will be allocated a share of 1,000 places, with allocation proportionately based on population size and prevalence of disability in that area. [The allocation per Local Authority area can be found on the ILF Scotland website.](#)

LAs should engage directly with potential recipients prior to applying to ILF Scotland. We will direct any enquiry we receive from individuals about applying to the re-opened fund towards each LA through its preferred contact route. [You can view the contacts for each local authority here.](#)

The online application screens will look like this:

[Get help with the digital application form here.](#)



Prioritising Funds

ILF Scotland funding will focus primarily on those disabled people with complex support needs who have significant independent living outcomes that are not being met from their LA - those with 'unmet needs'. As a consequence, people who have most or all of their independent living outcomes met by their LA will **not** be a priority for ILF funding. This funding is not intended to support those outcomes that are the responsibility of another public body.

There is no upper limit on the LA contribution but where this already encompasses 24 x 7 support we will require a strong case to be made for there being unmet independent living outcomes.

ILF Scotland will use its professional judgment to evaluate the difference that its additional funding could make towards meeting key independent living outcomes that are currently unmet and will prioritise applications on behalf of those:

- At risk of residential care or other forms of institutional, congregate, or non-community-based living.
- At risk of family breakdown due to unpaid carer stress.
- Experiencing loneliness and isolation because of disability.
- Requiring assistance to develop or maintain relationships because of disability.
- Requiring support to access social and recreational opportunities.
- Requiring assistance to access active citizenship.
- With significant independent living outcomes identified by their LA that do not fall within local eligibility criteria.

LA practitioners should indicate from the above list, those priorities that the application is intended to support.

The LA, on submitting the application, will be required to confirm that:

- The person on whose behalf they are applying, meets the access principles of the Fund.
- The funding applied for is additional to locally assessed eligible need and represents an unmet need.
- The outcomes applied for have not been previously, and are not currently, funded by the LA.

ILF Scotland Assessors may seek further reassurance on these aspects during a home visit arranged to assess applications and will return applications that, in their assessment, do not correspond with the guidance given here.

ILF Scotland expects a local authority practitioner to attend the visit with the ILF Assessor.

LA ‘Threshold Sum’

The LA contribution at the point of application will be treated as the person’s own threshold, which should be at or **above** £800 per week.

In order to meet our Access Principles for the re-opening of ILF, a person must be in receipt of local authority services equal to or greater than £800.00. However, if the applicant receives significant support from a person living in the same home, and is eligible for a Carers Support Plan, ILF Scotland can add a notional care component to a maximum of

£315 per week to bring the amount up to the £800 Threshold Sum. The important consideration for local authorities is that the person's caring role is having a significant or critical impact on the carer and were it not for the unpaid care in place, the applicant would meet the £800 Threshold Sum required to access ILF.

If a person does not receive services or a personalised budget of this amount, they do not meet the access principles at this time and an application cannot be submitted on their behalf.

We expect local authority funding to be maintained at the level confirmed when the local authority made the application to ILF Scotland. If a LA reduces its contribution, it must advise ILF Scotland in advance of the fact and be aware that this may place the ILF award in jeopardy. This is in line with the [Joint ILF Scotland / COSLA Agreement](#) that confirms that the local authority should provide ILF Scotland with early notification of any reassessment of need and potential adjustment to the total level of funding provided by either the local authority or ILF Scotland.

ILF Scotland's Process for Assessing Submitted Applications

- ILF Scotland Specialist Caseworkers will review all submitted applications.
- Caseworkers will contact LA applicants if any additional information is required.
- If an application is assessed as not meeting the access requirements of the re-opened fund, caseworkers will raise this with managers who will review and, if required, an ILF Assessor

will contact the practitioner who completed the application.

Following this, the application may be declined.

- Those that appear to meet the aims and priorities of the Fund will be allocated to an ILF Scotland Assessor who will contact the potential recipient or their representative where appropriate, to arrange a visit. They will also contact the LA practitioner with a view to that person being present at the visit.
- Following the visit, the ILF Assessor will complete their assessment and will advise the caseworker who will approve or decline the application as appropriate, based on the Assessor's recommendation.

If you wish to enquire further before applying to the Fund, please speak with whoever leads on ILF in your Authority or you can contact ILF Scotland via enquiries@ILF.scot.

Access Principles

LAs will need to ensure that a potential recipient meets the following access principles:

- They live in Scotland.
- They are aged 16 years or over at the time of application.
- They access SDS.
- They receive a net weekly budget of at least £800
- Or the applicant's net weekly SDS budget is less than £800 but they have an unpaid carer living in the same home with them who provides a significant amount of unpaid care and who is eligible for

a Carers Support Plan. This is aimed at applicants who, were it not for the amount of unpaid care received, would meet the £800 Threshold Sum.

ILF Scotland's existing policy framework will largely remain but will be amended where necessary to incorporate the access principles recommended by the Co-production Working Group and agreed by Ministers, set out below.

1. Qualifying Benefits

Access to the Independent Living Fund will **not** be linked to receipt of Disability Living Allowance, or other disability-related benefits. See [Policy 14 – Qualifying Benefits for ILF Scotland Awards](#).

2. Age

The reopened Fund will be open to applications from people aged 16 or over.

3. Threshold Sum

The Fund will re-open using a Threshold Sum as a key access principle. The threshold sum is the value of the LA / SDS care package and has been used by ILF since 1993 as a proxy for level of need. This approach will allow the Fund to open promptly in April 2024.

The threshold sum is a minimum of **£800 per week** (after deduction of any LA charges). ILF Scotland can apply a notional carers component to top the budget up to meet the £800 Threshold Sum. See [Policy 24 - Statutory Input to ILF Scotland Funding](#).

By way of illustration, an applicant received a net SDS budget of £700 per week but received a significant amount of care and support from an unpaid carer who lives with them and is eligible to an Adult Carers Support Plan – ILF can apply a notional carers allowance of £100 to meet the Threshold Sum of £800.

4. Capital Threshold

The re-opened fund will not impose a capital limit on applicants. In practice, capital limits may be applied by LA partners as part of their SDS assessment process. See [Policy 39 - Treatment of Capital](#).

5. Maximum Award

The Fund will open with a maximum award of £330 per week. This is based generally on 10 to 15 hours of independent living focused support, considered meaningful in relation to the realisation of Article 19 of the UNCRPD. Awards will not always be sufficient to secure the intended outcomes but setting an affordable maximum award is essential to working within the funding provided by Scottish Ministers and thereby ensuring the sustainability of the fund. See [Policy 20 - ILF Scotland Payments](#).

6. Award Management

The Fund should be accessible to those who are unable to manage their own affairs. Management of awards by suitable third parties will be permitted, as in the existing Fund. Policies should emphasise supported decision making, rather than substitute decision making, where possible. LAs should not normally manage awards. See [Policy 26 - Managing an ILF Scotland Award](#) and [Policy 17 - Financial Management Support and Payroll Services](#).

7. Available Income Contributions (ILF Charges)

Available Income contributions (charges) will not be a feature of the re-opened Fund. Ministers have committed to removing social care charges, including ILF charges, within the lifetime of the current Parliament. See [Policy 4 - Recipient Contribution](#).

8. Additionality of ILF

New ILF awards must be used in ways that genuinely deliver improved independent living outcomes for recipients and must at all times be additional to locally assessed eligible need. See [Policy 24 - Statutory Input to ILF Scotland Funding](#).

9. Relationships with Local Authorities

It is important for the success of the Fund that ILF Scotland and LAs work well together, because of the LA's knowledge of their own populations, and because they hold key information that will be required for an ILF award to be approved. However, from the outset, the recipient should always be at the centre of a three-way relationship with ILF Scotland and their LA.

Please see the [Joint ILF Scotland / COSLA Agreement](#) as approved in March 2024 by COSLA's Health and Social Care Board.

10. Use of ILF Funds

The existing ILF Scotland policy intends to maximise flexibility, choice and control for recipients while ensuring appropriate use of public funds and that entitlement to welfare benefits is not compromised. Our policy on use of funds will be maintained for new recipients. See [Policy 41 - Use of ILF Scotland Funding](#).

You can view [all of ILF Scotland Independent Living Fund policies on the ILF Scotland website.](#)

Transition Fund

ILF Scotland also delivers a one-off [Transition Fund](#) grant of up to £4,000 for young disabled people aged 16 to 25 years to help them become more independent and active in their communities.

They can also apply for a [Technology Grant](#) to access a basic piece of IT equipment to help them get online and communicate and participate with their peers and others.

If both sets of access principles fully apply, a person could access both Funds.