Independent Living Fund Scotland

We also support independent living in Northern Ireland

Approved

Board Meeting

Teams

Monday 24 February 2025 11:00am - 1:20pm

Present:

Anne-Marie Monaghan	Board Chair
Stephanie Hayle	Board Director
Alison Nicolson	Board Director
Kirsty Aird	Board Director
Marion McDonald	Board Director

In Attendance:

Peter Scott	Chief Executive Officer
Harvey Tilley	Chief Operating Officer
Jim Maguire	Finance Director
Paul Hayllor	Director of Digital and Information Services
Linda Scott	Director of Policy, Improvement and Engagement
Robert White	Director of Self-Directed Support
Aileen McNiven	Head of Business Services

1. Welcome, declarations of interest and apologies

Anne-Marie Monaghan (Anne-Marie) welcomed everyone to the 38th ILF Scotland Board Meeting. A warm welcome was extended to Marion McDonald for her 1st ILF Scotland Board Meeting.

Anne-Marie referred the Board Directors to the Pre submitted Questions and Comments.

2. Apologies

Apologies received from Mark Adderley, Vice Chair and Board Director.

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest received.

3. Chairs Remarks

Anne-Marie started the meeting by offering the Board's sincere condolences on the passing of Trisha Beveridge, ILF Scotland's Finance Officer, who will be much missed.

Anne-Marie shared the resignation of Etienne D'Aboville who has stood down to focus on his own health during the next months. Anne-Marie has accepted Etienne's resignation with immediate effect, at his request. Anne-Marie extended the heartfelt thanks of the Board to Etienne for all of the work he has done and hope to meet in an informal social way if possible.

Anne-Marie attended the successful community of practice session pulled together by Social Work Scotland and ILF. ILF were presenting on the re-opening processes with this being well received.

Over the last few months Anne-Marie has engaged widely with the Board Directors regarding Induction, Strategy Development Day, Risk and Assurance Workshop and the Development Workshop. Appraisals have been held for most Board Directors, the CEO, and also for Anne-Marie using the 360-degree feedback process. This new process will be evaluated in due course through informal feedback.

Jim attended the Public Services Reform Summit on behalf of Anne-Marie and Peter due to the Strategy Development Day falling on the same day :17th February 2025.

4. **Minutes of Previous meeting** (refer to Paper 1)

The Board approved the minute of the previous meeting of 22 October 2024, with no changes.

5. Matters Arising

Scottish Government - Emergency Spending Controls: Formal notification from the Scottish Government is expected stating that the Emergency Spending Controls, (in place since August 2024) will continue into 2025 to 2026.

Transition Fund (TF): Following a recent request to the Scottish Government (SG) (on behalf of the ILF Scotland Board) to uplift the TF Grant in Aid (GiA) 2025 to 2026 in-line with inflation and back date to 2017, Peter Scott (Peter) shared the disappointing news that the TF 2025 to 2026 GiA will remain at £5m (to include Administration costs).

The Board noted their frustration that the TF GiA would not be increased in line with inflation and backdated to 2017.

6. **Action Log** (refer to Paper 5)

Raising visibility of our Board to Advisory Groups and Staff: In order to raise the visibility of the Board with our advisory group and staff, Linda shared the forthcoming Northern Ireland (NI) and Scotland Advisory Group dates, inviting Board Directors to update when they may be available to attend. The Board agreed to invite the Chairs of the NI and Scotland Advisory Groups to a forthcoming Board Meeting 2025 to 2026.

Action 1: The Board Directors to inform Linda of dates they can join the NI and / or Scotland Advisory Group.
Action 2: Linda will invite the Chairs of both Scotland and Northern Ireland Advisory Groups to join a Board Meeting during 2025 to 2026.
Action 3: Kirsty Aird (Kirsty) offered to meet and work with Linda Scott (Linda) to consider options which will raise the visibility of the Board with staff and stakeholders.

Northern Ireland Advisory Board
04 March 2025
03 June 2025
02 September 2025
02 December 2025

Scotland Advisory Board
12 March 2025 (may change)
29 May 2025
28 August 2025
11 December 2025

Governance – next steps: The Chair suggested a joint development session, (following the Risk & Assurance Development Day in March) to be organised to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board (Strategic) and the Executive team (Operational).

Action 4: Aileen and Anne-Marie to identify a suitable date for the Governance session during 2025 to 2026.

7. Urgent Matters

Board Resignation

Following the recent resignation from the Board by Etienne d'Aboville (see Chairs Remarks), the Chair informed the Board she has instigated the recruitment process to fill two Board Director vacancies. Iain McAllister, Deputy Director and the Public Appointments Team have both been informed.

8. Audit & Risk Committee Update (ARC) (verbal update)

Alison gave a verbal update on the most recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting (11 February 2025) highlighting the following key points:

- Management accounts are in line with expectations with exception of new fund grants where £1.3m of the £7.8m likely to be spent by year end.
- 2025 to 2026 Budget discussions: the budget was fully scrutinised during the ARC with pertinent discussions on:
    - the ability to allocate all of the reopened fund grants in next financial year
    - Transition Fund having an effective real-terms reduction again as held at £5m (no inflationary uplift), highlighting the importance of flexibility across the funds.
    - a circa £300k stretch on the admin budget in 2025 to 2026.

- External Audit - one outstanding action which is being progressed relating to the KPI development work which is linked to the new strategy work.
- Internal audit - Partnership Working – a good report received. Two audits have been deferred but diarised for March 2025 (Re-opening) and April 2025 (Workforce Planning).
- The ARC recommended the Board to reappoint Henderson Logie, as the Internal Auditor, noting only one tender bid was received, however acknowledged the qualitative work over the previous 3 years.
- The Sage replacement will be delayed and likely picked up later in 25 / 26.

The Board noted the Audit & Risk Committee update.

9. **Draft Budget 2025 to 2026** (refer to paper 3 & 4)

Jim Maguire (Jim) spoke to the 2025 to 2026 Budget & Key assumptions papers.

Following full and detailed scrutiny during the recent Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) Alison Nicolson (Alison) gave assurance to the Board with a 'recommendation to approve' the Budget for ILF Scotland 2025 to 2026.

The Board are hopeful the GiA will lay out expectations to permit flexibility between the funds which may allow additional funds to be available to the TF. Concerns were raised regarding the possibility that SG Emergency Spending Controls will be carried into 2025 to 2026 and may restrict future plans.

Capital Funding: the Board supported the urgent need for approval from SG to use available funds to replace the ICI platform, which is used to make award payments. Without SG approval to support further work on the new platform, award payments will become unstable.

The Board approved the Draft Budget for 2025 to 2026 subject to receiving the GiA letter from the Scottish Government in due course which was consistent with the recommendation from the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

10. **Management Accounts to January 2025** (refer to Paper 5)

Jim Maguire (Jim) spoke to the recently scrutinised Management Accounts and Finance Commentary (ARC – 11 Feb 2025) advising on the key points covering the award funds and administration management accounts to January 2025.

The Board noted the Management Accounts and finance commentary to January 2025.

11. **Summary Risk Report** (refer to Paper 6)

Paul spoke to the paper which was recently scrutinised at the Audit & Risk Committee. The Board acknowledged the risk process is working well in drawing attention to pertinent issues.

Paul directed the Board to the elevation of many risks due to the SG Emergency Spending Controls, briefly outlining the rationale. He also explained the cause-and-effect analysis is working well with other risks closing and reducing.

The Board noted the Summary Risk Report, acknowledging the scrutiny from the ARC.

12. **MiCase & PQs** (refer to Paper 7)

Linda referred the Board to the paper, drawing attention to the PQ from Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP for Glasgow and the letter from the Chair of the Scottish Advisory Group, Jim Elder-Woodward to Maree Todd, Minister of Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport on Available Income and other matters.
The Board noted the MiCase & PQs.

13. **ILF Fund Re-Opening Report & Dashboard** (refer to Paper 8)

Peter referred the Board to Paper 8, updating that 568 applications have been received with the rate increasing daily. The expectation is c.700 applications will be received 2024-25. 115 engagement events have been completed to date during 2024-25, which has led to the increasing rate of applications.

Concerns were raised regarding the Local Authority (LA) bottle neck which has slowed the application process with 4 LAs yet to submit any applications. Work to consider fresh allocation numbers to LAs for 2025 to 2026 is underway and will be shared in due course.

The Co-Production Working Group (CPWG) will meet again mid-March. The Board welcomed the positive addition of the Care Component included in the threshold sum criteria. The addition of the component has been well received. Further work by the CPWG to review the threshold sum and realise DPO led applications is ongoing. It is expected 100 DPO led applications will be available during 2025 to 2026 subject to agreement with SG and, of course, discussion with DPOs.

The Board acknowledged the incalculable amount of work over the last 18 months and thanked all staff for their continued hard work and focus to make independent living a reality for disabled people in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The Board noted the ILF Fund Re-opening Report & Dashboard.

14. National Care Service (NCS) & Social Care Crisis (verbal)

Anne-Marie shared that part 1 of the NCS Bill has been discarded. The amended Bill will be known as the Care Reform (Scotland) Bill.

The following have been agreed on by SG, COSLA and the NHS:

- Anne’s Law being enshrined into the legislation to uphold the rights of people living in adult care homes to see loved ones and identify an essential care supporter.
- Ensuring all those working in or supplying services to the health and social care sector follow the same information standards allowing easier communication.
- Improved information standards allowing health and care services to communicate and strengthen the protection of adults at risk.
- The creation of a National Chief Social Work Advisor Post, in statute to bring strategic leadership at a national level.
- There will be a National Social Work Agency established.

The Bill will also retain measures to establish a legal right to breaks for unpaid carers. Ahead of the legislation, SG have identified an additional £5 million in the draft 2025 to 2026 Budget to support 15,000 carers to take short breaks from their caring responsibilities.

Work to establish a NCS Advisory Board is progressing and will first meet in March, interim in the first instance until the full board is established.

The Board agreed that ILF Scotland should be a member of the NCS Advisory Board.

Anne-Marie advised that the planned meeting between SILC (Scottish Independent Living Coalition), Disability Equality Scotland, GDA, GCIL, LCIL, Inclusion Scotland, and COSLA was cancelled due to inclement weather (Storm Eowyn). Further discussions are ongoing to decide if SILC and COSLA will meet and can find common ground to be able to improve the lives of disabled people.

The Board noted the NCS & Social Care Crisis update.

15. **Board Directors Register of Interests** (refer to Paper 9)

The Board noted the Register of Declared Interest for 2025, acknowledging individual responsibility to update the Register if there any changes.

16. **Framework Agreement** (refer to Paper 10)

Peter spoke to the paper, reminding the Board the paper had been shared several weeks in advance to allow full scrutiny by the Board ahead of the meeting.

The key changes highlighted were:

- Inclusion of the promotion and advancement of independent living
- Specific revised delegated financial authorities
- Inclusion of reference to UNCRPD, with SG considering. SG have asked disability equality colleagues for guidance and wording. (section 6)

The Board discussed the positive changes outlined, noting the Framework Agreement is with the Scottish Government for final agreement.

Action 5: The Board noted the Terms of Reference (ToR) will be reviewed following sign off of the Framework Agreement with Scottish Government and ToRs will be submitted for approval at a future Board Meeting.

The Board approved the revised Framework Agreement subject to no further material changes proposed by the Scottish Government.

17. Q3 2024-25 Executive Summary & Operational Report (refer to Paper 11)

Harvey spoke to the paper highlighting the following key points:

- Re-Opening: Over the past year, 115 engagement events have been completed by the SDS team which included raising awareness, sharing information, training etc. on top of business as usual. There has been a 70% year on year increase on activity due to the re-opening for example an increase in calls, reports and visits.
- PA Rates: Harvey shared a worrying trend of an increase in hourly care provider rates with regular requests for over £30 per hour. This demonstrates the market is clearly not working for disabled people.

- Transition Fund: 1st time applicants have increased by over 10%, with Harvey sharing this is excellent, acknowledging there has been little engagement work over the last year.
- Workforce Plan: Despite the SG Emergency Spending Controls being in place, the Sponsor Team approved Phase 1 in November 2024. This phase is to recruit the critical posts which are required to support the 'back office' functions of Finance, Policy, Communications, Digital & Information and Business Services. It is hoped Phase 1 will be completed within Q1 2025 to 2026, with both internal and external recruitment currently live.
- Strategy Co-Production: Good engagement has been reported across all events with encouraging feedback from attendees: recipients, award managers, LAs, DPO and other stakeholders.

The Board noted the Q3 2024 to 2025 Executive Summary & Operational Report, thanking the Executive Team for the comprehensive detail within.

18. **Health & Safety Report (01 October 2024 to 31 December 2024)** (refer to Paper 12)

Aileen McNiven (Aileen) referred the Board to the Health & Safety Report giving Board Directors assurance on the Health & Safety management within ILF Scotland. The Board noted the Health & Safety Report.

19. **Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy** (refer to Paper 13)

Paul introduced the paper explaining the aim for ILF Scotland is to achieve Net Zero in relevant areas by 2040 and work in partnership with the Scottish

Government on areas out with our control. ILF Scotland will aim to have an educated workforce who will make an individual commitment to reducing the carbon footprint in the workplace and aspirationally into personal lives too.

Paul explained ILF Scotland will take a proactive approach to reducing ILF's carbon footprint and maintain quality-of-service delivery.

The Chair thanked Mark Adderley (Mark) and Stephanie Hayle (Steph) who have both worked closely with Paul and the team to develop the strategy.

Following discussion, the Board approved the Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy.

20. **Net Zero Champion Update** (verbal)

Steph shared that both Mark and Steph have recently looked at consistencies and training opportunities for the Net Zero aspirations outlined in the above Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy, to ensure best value is applied across the piece. Marion McDonald (Marion) offered to introduce Mark and Steph to an expert colleague who may be able to offer their skills and experience as appropriate to support the strategy implementation.

The Board noted the Net Zero Champion Update.

21. **Equality Committee Update** (verbal)

Steph gave a brief update on the recent Equalities Committee which included the following key points:

- Following consultation by the Scottish Government the Equality Duty Action Plans and Equality Mainstreaming Reports should remain separate documents.
- Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) Training for Managers is ongoing and will be completed by the end of May 2025.
- 35 Hour working week evaluation delayed due to capacity within the team.
- Neurodiversity Training – Steph shared potential providers to consider this training across the organisation.

The Chair thanked Steph for the update. The Board noted the Equality Committee update.

22. **Digital & IT Strategy 2025 to 2028** (refer to Paper 14)

Paul spoke to the Digital & IT Strategy, thanking Mark and Alison for their supportive input in recent months.

Audit Scotland's recommended a Digital & IT Strategy should be implemented with Paul and the team working hard to develop the strategy to ensure a viable approach across the organisation.

The Board noted the key aspiration of the strategy is to enable the strategic priority of sustainable growth that is being able to support more people accessing and using ILF Scotland funding.

The Board scrutinised and discussed the paper acknowledging the reasonable and practical approach. The Board approved the Digital & IT Strategy 2025 to 2028.

23. Cyber Security Champion Update (verbal)

Kirsty updated and assured the Board of the critical and diligent approach the organisation has to cyber security with annual cyber training provided to all staff and Board Directors by the Scottish Government.

The Board noted the organisation is conscious of the elevated risk during the transition phase to new systems. Kirsty acknowledged the sensible and ongoing approach adopted by ILF Scotland.

The Chair thanked Kirsty with the Board noting the Cyber Security Champion Update.

24. AOCB

Close of Meeting: 1:20pm

Next Board Meeting Dates:
Next Board Development Day: 10am – 4pm Monday, 24 March 2025 (Denholm House)
Next Remuneration Committee: 11am, Tuesday 01 April 2025 (virtual)
Next Audit & Risk Committee: 10:30 am, Tuesday 13 May 2025 (virtual)
Next Board Meeting: 11am, Tuesday 27 May 2025 (Denholm House)

Action Points

Action 1: The Board Directors to inform Linda of dates they can join the NI and / or Scotland Advisory Group.
Action by: Linda / Board Directors
Timescale: 2025 to 2026
Action: Dates circulated to Board Directors

Action 2: Linda will invite the Chairs of both Scotland and Northern Ireland Advisory Groups to join a Board Meeting during 2025 to 2026

Action by: Linda

Timescale: May 2025

Action: Complete. NI Chair will attend November 2025. Scotland Chair will attend September 2025.

Action 3: Kirsty Aird (Kirsty) offered to meet and work with Linda Scott (Linda) to consider options which will raise the visibility of the Board with staff and stakeholders.

Action by: Linda and Kirsty

Timescale: May 2025

Action: Linda and Kirsty met Wednesday 14 May 2025 to discuss options

Action 4: Aileen and Anne-Marie to identify a suitable date for the Governance session during 2025 to 2026

Action by: Aileen and Anne-Marie

Timescale: May 2025

Action: To be identified and confirmed

Action 5: The Board noted the Terms of Reference will be reviewed following final sign off of the Framework Agreement with the Scottish Government and ToRs will be submitted for approval at a future Board Meeting.

Action by: Peter, Aileen and Anne-Marie

Timescale: By August 2025

Action: On the 27 May 2025 Board agenda for approval.