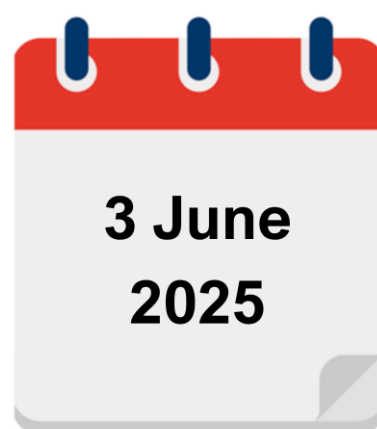




Northern Ireland Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

3 June 2025



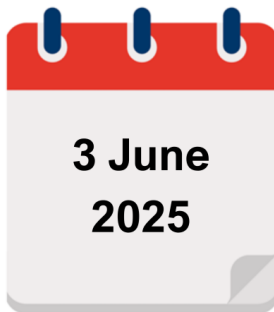
What this document is about



This is an Easy Read document.

It is a set of Minutes to say what happened at a meeting.

In this document the Independent Living Fund Scotland is ILF Scotland for short.



The meeting was at The Mount Conference Centre and on Zoom.



It was on 3 June from 1 to 3 in the afternoon.

Who was at the meeting?



David McDonald - Chairperson

Frances McHugh on Zoom

Michaela Hollywood on Zoom

Caroline Wheeler on Zoom

Amanda Paul

Colin Dunlop on Zoom

Leona from Mark Bates Insurance

ILF Scotland Staff

Peter Scott on Zoom

Claire Henry

Harvey Tilley

Emma O'Neill

Karen Burnett on Zoom

Lee House

Sandra Sweeney

Jackie Aitken on Zoom

Brendan Burns



Who was not at the meeting?



Robert Dallas

Niqi Rainey

1. Welcome and introductions



David welcomed everyone to the meeting.

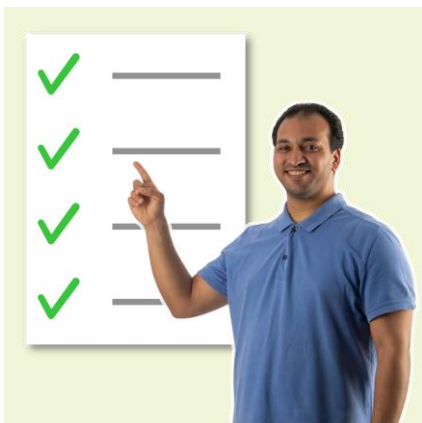
2. Minutes from the last meeting



The minutes were checked and agreed.

ILF Scotland's Communications Team will put them on the website.

Actions from the last meeting



These actions have been done:

1. Peter will write to the Minister of Health to invite him to the Event.
2. David will contact Danny Donnelly about dates for the Celebration Event.
3. Lee will organise a meeting to talk about the Celebration Event.



These actions are still being worked on:

4. Niqui will talk with Caroline about putting ILF issues on the Direct Payments Users Northern Ireland (NI) Facebook Group.



5. Communications Team will make Question and Answer information for the Direct Payments Users NI Facebook Group.



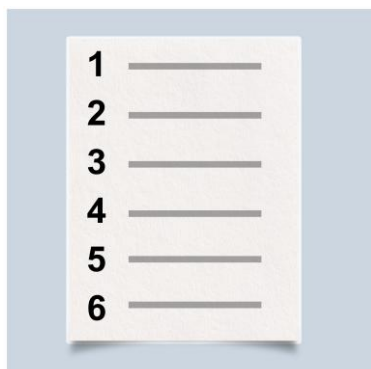
6. Peter will talk to companies like the Centre for Independent Living about who deals with ILF awards if Award Managers are ill.

3. What do we need to talk about?



The group talked about adding information about ILF to the Direct Payments Facebook user group to explain:

- what ILF Scotland does
- funding
- support
- employment **policies**



Policies are the rules and agreements of an organisation.



Direct Payments User Group and ILF Information

Caroline and Niqui will add ILF information to the Direct Payments Facebook page.

People using this Facebook page often ask about:

- insurance
- how much workers are paid an hour
- holidays
- **maternity pay** – the money you get while taking time off work when pregnant and after having a baby
- Universal Credit
- getting different advice from different social workers



Admins check what people post on the group to:

- make sure people are being respectful
- give support and refer people to solicitors and other organisations when needed





Information is needed to make it clear what the difference is between ILF and Direct Payments.

Actions



- Sandra, Emma, and Caroline will check what is on the Facebook page and what information the group could add



- check how we could work with local organisations to offer users support choices



- David will check for a reply about joining the Independent Mechanism Northern Ireland (IMNI) group for reporting on United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

4. Annual uplift



An **annual uplift** is a yearly increase in the amount of money we send to people who get ILF.

They use it to give their PAs a pay rise.

The amount is set by the government and this year the uplift is 9.78 per cent.

It will be in place by the end of month, with payments going back to 1 April.



The uplift is only for directly employed personal assistants (PAs).

Wages cannot be more than 18 pounds 53 pence an hour.

Rates are different for self-employed workers.



An agreement about wages has been signed by ILF Scotland and the Governments of Northern Ireland and Scotland.

5. Mark Bates Insurance



Leona from Mark Bates Insurance talked about the different kinds of insurance and training available.

Actions

- David will check what insurance is available for temporary PAs and then tell the Group what he found out
- we will share guidance from the Department of Health on how PAs can have training so that they are all at a similar level
- we will encourage employers to keep good records about workplace safety and repairs
- we will contact an insurance provider to find out about training providers



6. Policy update



Feedback Strategy

A **feedback strategy** is our plan to find out what people think about our work.

A draft has been made, a working group has given feedback and then a document called a Feedback Charter will be made.

Employment and payment challenges



People are confused about:

- employment rules
- insurance policies
- who can get funding
- budgeting for direct payments

There are often difficulties with:

- **redundancy payments** - the money that is paid if someone's job finishes
- **financial assessments of trusts** – people are worried their Trust has not correctly calculated the amount of money they have so they may be overcharged





- what insurance covers

The Group would like to have a direct payments group where recipients could talk about problems and policies.

Other Notes



The group talked about the differences in **sleepover rates** between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Sleepover rates are the money paid to social care staff who work through the night.

Admins are checking that unregistered agencies do not advertise on the Facebook group.



The feedback strategy is being made and will include a service charter to show what standards we follow.

Useful Universal Credit information has been sent to the group.

Next Steps



- keep making ILF information on the Direct Payments user page better
- finish speaking to other organisations that can help ILF Recipients and Award Managers make the most of the help they can get
- check the ILF uplift payment is made
- think about having a direct payments recipient group.



Board Feedback

Peter said there are 2 spaces on the Board and they would like to recruit from Northern Ireland.



This is managed by the Scottish Government and not by ILF Scotland.

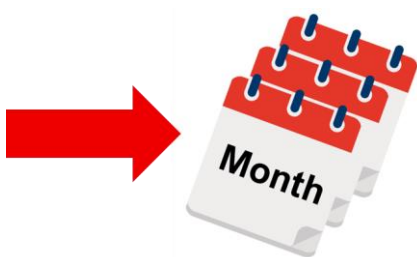
The minister will make the final decision on this post.



The Board have invited David and Jim to the next Board meeting.

The Board have been invited to the 10 year celebration event.

7. Terms of Reference



This was moved to the next meeting.

8. Re-opening ILF in Northern Ireland (NI)



Harvey has information about how the Scotland re-opening has worked.

The Minister will be sent a final proposal about re-opening the ILF in NI.

9. Event planning for 10 year celebration of ILF Scotland



The Group talked about organizing the Life Worth Living conference.

It will be on 3 July from 6pm at the Great Hall of Parliament Buildings at Stormont.



The event will be sponsored by 3 MLAs - Danny Donnelly, Robbie Butler and Maolíosa McHugh.

The event will have British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language interpreters.



Postal invitations were sent to Scotland last Friday.

Email invitations will be sent this week.

Holly is working with the Assembly and Department of Health on media invitations.



The event will be live streamed or recorded and put online afterwards.



Discussion Topics

There will be:

- speeches by David, ILF recipients and **non-recipients**



Non-recipients are people who cannot apply for the ILF fund as it is not open in Northern Ireland.

They campaign for the fund to be re-opened.

- presentation on social return on investment by Finbar if he is available
- remarks by Minister Mike Nisbet
- closing by MLAs



There will be a panel with Frances, Michaela, Caroline, Nicky and 4 non-recipients sharing their stories.



There will be a meeting on 19 June to practice stories with recipients and non-recipients separately.



There will be a visit to Stormont to talk about audio / visual needs, accessibility, and health and safety.



We will decide seating arrangements when we know how many people are coming to the event.

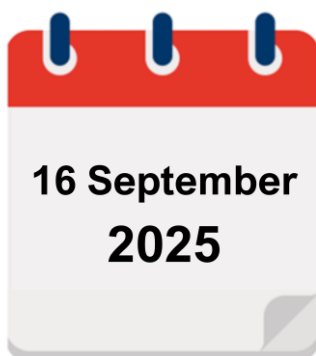
People from this Group could go to the Scottish ILF celebration event on 25 June.

Actions

- David and Linda will finish the invitation list and link with people at Stormont
- Emma will arrange sign language interpreters
- Holly will send out media invites
- group members will prepare for an online story rehearsal on 19 June
- plan visit to Stormont after 19 June to finalize event setup
- check the venue is available after the Scottish event on 25 June
- send out event details and Scottish event invites to group members



10. Next meeting and arrangements



The next meeting will be on Tuesday 16 September 2025.



This is the end of these Minutes.

Made with

