

Strategy Engagement Events – Summary Report

From January to March 2025, we plan to update ILF Scotland's strategy to guide our priorities and focus for the next three years.

As part of this strategic planning process, it is vital that the voice of our recipients, and our other stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide their input on how ILF Scotland should prioritise its activities in this next strategic cycle.

All ILF Scotland recipients of both the Transition Fund and the Independent Living Fund were invited by letter to attend one of four online engagement events.

Holding events online allowed us to hold sessions quickly and economically and offered a degree of flexibility for people to participate, however, we are aware that some people feel excluded from online events, and we received feedback to confirm this from those that prefer an in-person event.

Over the course of four online events, there were a total of 92 people registered to attend. As expected for online events there was a drop off in numbers with 37 attending, slightly lower than expected.

While the discussion was guided by questions from the facilitators, discussions were open to any areas. Common themes emerged and are summarised below.

ILF Scotland

Feedback on ILF Scotland was very positive, often described as life-changing and allowing families to remain together. Assessor visits were consistent, beneficial and handled sensitively. People found ILF Scotland easy to contact, responsive and supportive, often in stark contrast to other agencies.

It was felt ILF Scotland should be leaders, upholding the rights of disabled people and the independent living movement. “Keep doing what you do” was mentioned across all sessions.

The Transition Fund had been very beneficial to recipients, providing invaluable support, including some young people at end-of-life care. There was a suggestion that the upper age limit should be raised. It was noted that the Transition Fund was not available in Northern Ireland.

Social Care

Everyone expressed concern about the levels of funding in social care and were very clear that ILF Scotland should provide additionality and should not replace local authority budget cuts.

It was recognised that social workers change frequently, and many recipients did not have a named social worker. The shortage of social workers was noted as a major issue for new applications.

Re-Opened Fund

There was a consistent view that applications purely through social work was a huge barrier, especially due to lack of resource in local authorities, a lack of knowledge and in some cases willingness to help. There was a lack of consistency in approach.

It was felt that applications should be available through other routes, such as directly by the applicant, Disabled People's Organisations and GPs.

Many attendees thought that greater awareness of the re-opening was needed, through advertising campaigns and engagement events. It was suggested that existing recipients should be used to help promote the Fund.

The Threshold Sum was too high, especially in relation to unpaid care. This was raised across all the events as an issue, meaning many people missed out on applying to the Fund as their family provided a large amount of unpaid care. Lack of consistency in local authority funding was also raised, and it was felt funding did not always equal the needs of the person.

It was noted that young people especially do not always want their parents to be their carer, yet there was a lack of choice.

When discussing who needs funding the most, it was difficult to reach consensus, other than this is a challenging area. It was felt those who needed funding the most were often the most difficult to reach. Many people do not have or want, social work intervention, yet need funding.

The lack of advocacy was raised, and it was asked if ILF Scotland had a greater role to play in this area. Living in rural areas meant a lack of local support groups who can provide advocacy.

The issue of PA recruitment and retention was an issue, with many recipients and Award Managers managing a team of carers, which was described as a “full time job”.

Flexible Funding

Common themes around flexible funding confirmed that that this is vital for recipients and their families. Funding should not just be for social care, but available to help with mental and physical well-being. There should be freedom to choose what funding is spent on, such as hobbies, attending concerts and events and most importantly holidays.

It was noted that having to ask for flexible funding or justify what money is being spent on can lead to feeling a lack of dignity.

More awareness about flexible funding and the ability to discuss potential planning for this would be welcomed.