

Note of Meeting

Scotland Advisory Group

5 December 2024 @ West Beer Brewery

Present

Jim Elder-Woodward - Chairperson

Justina Oguguo

Joan Turner

Kate Walsh

Martha Shortreed

Chris Mercer

In Attendance

Mary Bell

ILF Scotland Staff

Peter Scott

Lee House

Harvey Tilley

Apologies

Catherine Symington

Chloe McKee

Gordon Mckee

Linda Scott

Nic Reid

Stuart McCabe

Andy Higgins

List of Actions:

1. Lee to send out the terms of reference so group members can vote decide on chair and vice chair.
2. ILF Scotland to draft letter for Jim to send to ministers to ask about timescales on removing Available Income charges.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jim welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone agreed that Lee would record the meeting.

2. Minutes from previous meetings

Minutes agreed and signed off. Lee to pass to communications team to upload to ILF Scotland website.

Actions from previous meeting:

1. Peter will seek a response from Scottish Government regarding ILF Scotland charges. (Done)
2. Lee to look at alternative venues for the Christmas lunch and meeting. (Done)
3. Lee to send out the minutes from the Joint Stakeholder Group and arrange next meetings in October. (Done)

3. Matters Arising

Harvey advised the group that ILF Scotland held 4 online events to co-produce the 2025 to 2028 Strategy. Held online as more economical but one in-person event planned for early 2025. Harvey advised that around

half the planned attendees attended, however, the level of engagement and quality of feedback was very strong. One of the main themes emerging around unpaid care and the threshold sum of the re-opened fund, which people think is a bit high. Flexibility of funding has also been raised and how ILF Scotland can even more flexible than it currently is. The particular difficulties faced by people living in rural areas was also mentioned as well as recruitment of PAs and the cost-of-living crisis.

Justina asked Harvey where we are with the National Insurance changes. Harvey advised Peter would address this on arrival at the meeting.

4. Terms of Reference / Chairperson and Vice Chairperson Review

Harvey discussed the terms of reference and detailed requirements for a meeting and terms of appointment. It was agreed that Lee would send out the Terms of Reference to allow members to view and vote on a Chair and Vice person.

5. Re-Opening 2015 Fund Update

Harvey advised the group that as of 5 December 2024 we have had 367 applications to the re-opened fund. 112 have been registered on the system but have not been completed. 103 applications have gone into payment.

Harvey advised that a number of local authorities that have not submitted any applications. Edinburgh and East Renfrewshire have submitted the most applications.

Harvey advised that ILF Scotland Assessors have spent a considerable amount of time supporting local authorities in training and raising awareness of the re-opened fund. Local authorities have struggled to have staff available to support the identification of eligible people and the submitting of applications. The co-production working group is keen to pursue the potential for a citizen led application approach, supported by third sector organisations but this could take up to 12 months to implement. Harvey advised that the potential inclusion of an unpaid care component within the threshold sum is being considered, which would reduce the amount of SDS budget people need to be in receipt of to be legible for the fund.

The average award for all currently in payment is £290.00 per week. The threshold sum review paper has been submitted for the next co-production meeting in early 2025.

Peter joined the meeting at 12.35 pm.

The group asked if one of the DPO links could be with Citizen Advice Bureau to support submitting applications.

The group felt ILF Scotland staff supporting applications being submitted would be a great idea moving forward.

6. Review Visit Update

Harvey advised the group that the review visits are now up to date. Current issues arising include availability of social workers for review meetings. It has been difficult to get the correct people at the meetings.

There have also been a number of payroll and award management issues.

7. Policy Update

Peter advised the group that there had been a reply to the letter sent to the Government regarding Available Income removal. The letter stated the Government are dedicated to removing the AI charges along with the wider reform of social care charges. There is no commitment to timescale on this matter but will continue to work towards the changes needed to abolish charging.

8. PA Awareness Raising Campaign

Carried forward to the next meeting.

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Future Meeting Dates & Arrangements

Wednesday 12 March 2025