

Note of Meeting

Scotland Advisory Group

28 August via Zoom 11 am to 1 pm

Present

Jim Elder-Woodward - Chairperson

Chris Mercer

Gordon McKee

Chloe McKee

Nic Reid - left meeting at 12 noon

Justina Oguguo

ILF Scotland Staff

Peter Scott

Lee House

Emma O'Neill

Linda Scott

Jill Fotheringham

Kathryn Gibbons

Apologies

Joan Turner

Andy Higgins

Nic Reid

Stuart McCabe

Julia Smith

List of Actions:

1. Share Policy 41 Flexible Funding with Advisory Group (Lee)

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as accurate.

All previous actions were completed, including updates from the ministerial meeting with the then Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Marie Todd.

No further matters from the previous minutes required discussion.

Actions from previous meeting

1. Emma / Lee to send out the Strategy Draft report for review and comment from the Group. (Done)

3. Additions to Agenda

No additional agenda items were raised.

4. Matters Arising

Marie Todd has moved on from her previous role and the new Minister for Social Care and Mental Wellbeing is Mr Tom Arthur MSP.

Peter and Anne-Marie Monaghan met with Mr Arthur recently and while positive, it would appear that significant policy movement is unlikely ahead of the upcoming election.

Key advocacy issues remain:

- abolition of ILF available income charging (currently £43 per week)
- representation of lived experience on the National Care Service Advisory Board

ILF Scotland will write to the new Minister to reintroduce the group and extend an invitation to attend a future meeting. (Done – Minister invited to attend the December meeting)

5. Review Visit Update

ILF review visits remain on schedule, though assessors report longer, more complex visits due to increasing challenges for recipients.

Re-Opened Fund:

- Over 1,050 applications received (of 1,400 places)
- Approx. 600 recipients now receiving payments.

Key issues identified:

- recruitment and retention of Personal Assistants (PAs)
- high provider costs (£30+ per in some cases)
- social work budget reductions and reassessments
- providers handing back packages that are deemed too small
- Assessors often stepping in to provide informal support where local authority involvement is limited

6. Policy Update

UNCRC

Deferred to the next meeting due to staff illness.

Flexible Funding (Policy 41)

Revised policy allows recipients to apply for one-off payments for activities or items that support the independent living outcomes they agreed as part of their ILF Scotland award whether or not they have unspent funds.

Requests are assessed on an exceptional basis once per review period.

Members welcomed the change and requested the policy link be shared.

ILF Scotland Board Update

Two board vacancies remain; recruitment is being progressed by the Scottish Government. Peter advised of the desire to ensure more diverse lived experience representation (rural, urban, BME, etc.)

Ongoing board priorities:

- securing additional budget for the Transition Fund (static at £5m for 10 years despite rising demand)
- ensuring continuity and expansion of the Re-Opened Fund beyond 1,400 recipients

Charter for Involvement

Review of 2024 to 2025 priorities confirmed continued focus on:

- PA recruitment and retention
- Raising ILF's profile in colleges and job centres

Kath Gibbons will now attend all meetings to ensure assessor alignment with charter priorities.

Feedback Strategy & Customer Charter

Updated drafts have been reviewed by the group and will go to ILF's Senior Management Team and Board for approval before final publication.

A final version will be circulated for member feedback.

7. Any Other Business

Discussion on PA recruitment challenges across Scotland.

- Indeed and MyJobScotland offer inconsistent results across regions
- some success with local Facebook groups, Job Centres, Nextdoor.co.uk, and colleges / universities for recruiting students
- ILF staff will explore further collaboration with Skills Development Scotland, Job Centres, and educational institutions.

Recognition that low pay, inconsistent training, and agency practices contribute to sector-wide recruitment instability.

8. Future Meetings and Arrangements

Next Meeting: Thursday 11 December 2025 – to include the Christmas gathering.

Members agreed an in-person meeting in Glasgow (central venue preferred, near transport links).

ILF Scotland to circulate options shortly.

Possible joint meeting with the Northern Ireland Advisory Group in November.