

Charter for Involvement Action Plan Summary of Progress 2025 to 2026

1. Background

The Charter for Involvement was developed by the National Involvement Network, supported by ARC Scotland. The Charter establishes how disabled people who use support services want to be involved and to have a say about the services they receive, the organisations that provide their services, and their wider communities.

2. Introduction

ILF Scotland signed up to the Charter for Involvement in 2018 and we worked with the Advisory Groups to tailor the Charter Statements so that they were meaningful to our recipients. We co-produced the Charter and Action Plan and published this in April 2021.

This report provides an update to the Board on the progress made during 2025 to 2026. This update was shared and agreed by the Advisory Group members and by our Senior Management Team at its meeting of 26 May 2026 and published on our website on that date.

3. Key Progress

Three joint Scotland and NI Advisory Group meetings were held during the last financial year to enable the Group to review progress to date and identify Charter priorities for ILF Scotland to action. These are highlighted below along with progress made during 2025 and 2026.

Raising the Profile of Independent Living

Group members stressed the importance of raising the profile of Independent Living to a wide range of Stakeholders.

Response: ILF Scotland celebrated its 10th birthday by holding events for our Recipients and their representatives and supporters in Scotland and Northern Ireland in June and July 2025. Attendees included our Advisory Group members, Recipients, carers, PAs, and partners from across government, public sector and third sector organisations. Speeches were delivered from advocates of disability and human rights, and people shared inspiring stories about how ILF Scotland helped them live with choice, dignity, and independence. Our website provides further information, including videos and photographs about the event:

<https://ilf.scot/news-post/celebrating-10-years-of-ilf-scotland/>

Both events were a success and feedback from attendees demonstrated how impactful attendees felt the events were and provided helpful information on accessibility needs, the difference the funding makes in people's lives, and suggestions for improvements at future events.

PA Recruitment and Retention – Support for Employers

Group members raised the significant difficulties people are experiencing in relation to the recruitment and retention of Personal Assistants (PAs) and asked for ILF Scotland to help promote the role.

Response: 13 November 2025, was celebrated as National PA Day across the UK to recognise PAs in social care who support independent living. Led by ILF Scotland, an inaugural PA week took place week commencing 24 November until 28 November 2025 to highlight the benefits of employing PAs and to highlight the need for PAs for disabled people.

Over the week, ILF Scotland launched our own dedicated content on a daily basis across our social media channels and our website, which included videos, blogs, news articles and graphics from Advisory Group members. We also created a dedicated page on our website for signposting information about employing PAs and we shared some other important resources from key partners / stakeholders, such as the PA Network.

The content was well received and we would like to dedicate the same week again this financial year, but with a lengthier lead in time. This will allow us more time to work with Group members on the content that they would like to see and for our colleagues in our Communications team to promote the content to a wider audience through additional media channels.

Support for Employers: We invited representatives from one of the insurance companies to deliver information sessions for Group members. This covered the support this particular company can provide to employers and the legal requirements of the employer role. The sessions were well attended and a future session has been agreed with an alternative insurance company commonly used by PA employers.

Managing ILF Scotland Awards

Members highlighted the need for further information, advice and guidance for Award Managers, particularly given the number of new Award Manager roles emerging as a result of the re-opening of ILF in Scotland. Members would like this to include, as a minimum, employer commitment, PA recruitment and retention, and independent advocacy.

Response: We have established an internal working group of Independent Living Assessors and Caseworkers to focus on Award Management. They have explored issues from their perspective as they are presented to them by existing and new Award Managers. They will report initial findings and these will be discussed with Advisory Group members with a view to incorporating their input and co-producing identified improvements. We plan to update our Employer Support Information Note and our Your Responsibilities Guide in 2025 to 2026 in consultation with Group members.

ILF Scotland Recipient Reviews

Group members highlighted the importance of continuously improving information, communication, and processes at all stages of reviews and that we continue to make sure that recipient choice is central to review discussions and outcomes.

Response: At least one colleague from our Independent Living Team, which includes all of our Assessors, attends meetings with the Advisory Groups to discuss Charter work and to ensure that they can participate in discussions with Group members and take suggestions on board in planning and conducting reviews and in relation to staff training.

Engagement and Involvement

Group members value the opportunity to influence policy and practice as it affects recipients and to co-produce key documents and initiatives.

Response: All ILF Scotland potential policy changes are discussed with the Group to obtain the views of the Group members as part of the policy development process. The Scotland Advisory Group met with the Minister for Social Care and Mental Wellbeing in January 2026 and the Northern Ireland Advisory Group met with the Minister of Health in February 2026, highlighting important wider policy issues. Group members participated in the co-production events to develop ILF Scotland's Strategy: Re-Opening and Beyond. Members have been involved in the co-production of our new Feedback Strategy and Service Charter. During the year, the Chairpersons of both Advisory Groups attended ILF Scotland Board meetings and members of the Board also attended the Group's meetings. Group members co-produced and delivered presentations at ILF Scotland's 10th Birthday celebratory events in Scotland and Northern Ireland, mentioned above.

Written Communication

Group members stressed the importance of clear communication by ILF Scotland that is as accessible as possible.

Response: Members were consulted in the review and publication of external communications such as our website, newsletters, and letters to recipients, with a focus on both content and accessibility. Members were jointly involved in external consultations that ILF Scotland responded to in 2025 and 2026. ILF Scotland is focusing on the accessibility of its published documents and its correspondence and delivered accessibility

training to all staff in 2025 to 2026. It is about to reinstate a working group to take this forward and will invite representation from the Groups.

Re-Opening of ILF in Scotland

The Scotland Advisory Group was highly instrumental in advocating, along with others, for the re-opening of ILF to new applicants in Scotland. The fund opened in April 2024 and since re-opening, has received applications from an additional 1,400 disabled people. Feedback from recipients so far has been very positive with in relation to the difference the funding has made to their lives and there has been strong praise for the overall process.

The Chairperson of the Scotland Advisory Group is a member of the ongoing Co-Production Working Group. This Group made recommendations to the Minister on the policy framework for the re-opened fund and have been engaging with senior ILF Scotland staff since to further inform the development of the policy framework relating to the re-opened fund.

4. Conclusion

We have made significant progress against the Charter Action Plan during 2025 to 2026. It is important that this improvement work is ongoing and we will continue to work with the Advisory Groups in 2025 to 2026 to make further progress towards achieving the Charter Standards.

The Charter provides a valuable opportunity to bring recipients, via the Advisory Groups, closer together and helps facilitate greater collaboration in the organisation's strategy, policies and delivery of

services. We are grateful to Group members for their valuable ongoing commitment to improving our services to disabled people in Scotland and Northern Ireland.