

ILF Scotland Newsletter

July 2026



Welcome

A warm welcome to our summer 2026 edition of the ILF Scotland newsletter. This year is an important one for us.

As we mark two years since our main Fund reopened to new applications in Scotland, it is encouraging to reflect on the difference it is making in people's lives. We continue to hear powerful feedback from Recipients and their families about the positive impact on independence,

confidence, and connection to their communities. We are, however, disappointed not to secure re-opening of the Fund in Northern Ireland. We remain in close dialogue with colleagues at the Department of Health and are exploring options alongside our Advisory Group.



We also look forward to the outcome of the independent evaluation of our Transition Fund, which is now underway. We expect it will highlight the positive impact this Fund is having for young disabled people in Scotland, supporting them to build confidence, develop skills, and take greater control over their lives as they move into adulthood. This learning will help to inform the future development and sustainability of the Fund and should also help us to improve access to independent living opportunities across all of our work.

Alongside this, the launch of the joint Scottish Government and COSLA Coming Home Action Plan represents a significant step forward in supporting people to leave long-stay hospital and inappropriate out of area settings, and to live closer to home. ILF Scotland is proud to play a key role in this work, administering a new £20 million Coming Home Fund to help ensure people have the right support to live independently, and with dignity, in their own communities.

As always, our focus remains on working in partnership with disabled people, families, and other partners to remove barriers to independent living and to improve access to the support and assistance people need to have a good life. I would like to thank everyone who contributes to this work, from our Recipients and advisory groups to our board, staff, partners, and government colleagues.

We know there is so much more to do, but together we are continuing to make meaningful progress towards a society where independent living is a reality for all.



Peter Scott OBE

Chief Executive Officer
ILF Scotland

ILF Scotland News

Celebrating two years since the Independent Living Fund reopened in Scotland

This year marks two years since the Independent Living Fund (ILF) reopened in Scotland, and we want to take a moment to reflect on what that has meant for those who receive support through the Fund.

Over the past two years, we have received more than 1,600 applications from disabled people seeking the additional support they need to live independent lives - and the impact this has had is clear.

What Recipients told us

When we spoke to Recipients and their families about their experiences, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

- 88% said they had achieved their independent living outcomes
- 95% said the funding had made a significant impact on their lives
- 94% were very satisfied with both the application process and our Assessor visits

One Recipient told us:

"It's been brilliant. I am living my best life. It has really helped me out a lot. It has allowed me to do the things I want to do. It has helped make me even more independent."

Another Recipient's father shared:

"My son is thriving on being active and outdoors. After years of regression and anxiety, he is now responding really well to the extra ILF support."

"He is now enjoying activities like cycling, walking, swimming, driving, and exploring new interests, such as his passion for music, which helps him relax."

Looking ahead

Peter Scott OBE, ILF Scotland CEO, said: "This feedback, provided by Recipients and families, demonstrates the transformative nature of ILF. It has been described as 'truly life changing', and families have emphasised the substantial difference it has made to independence, wellbeing, and overall quality of life."

"This evidence reinforces the central purpose of ILF Scotland: to enable some of our most disabled citizens to live with dignity, autonomy, and meaningful connection to their

communities. As we move forward in what are challenging times, I extend my sincere thanks to our Recipients, their families, our key partners including Scottish Government and Local Authorities, our Board of Directors, the Co-production Working Group and our dedicated staff team."

As we celebrate two years since reopening and reflect on the feedback we have received, we remain focused on the future and our vision of independent living being a reality for all disabled people living in Scotland and Northern Ireland.



Welcoming new funding to support independent living

We are pleased to share that the Scottish Government and COSLA have announced the 'Coming Home Action Plan', which will support almost 400 people with learning disabilities and complex support needs to move out of long-stay hospital settings and into housing closer to home, family and friends.

For many people and families, the opportunity to live nearer to loved ones can make a life-changing difference to independence and wellbeing. This funding will provide bespoke support, along with home adaptations, equipment and technology, to help people return to their communities.

ILF Scotland will play a key role in delivering a significant portion of this funding. Working collaboratively with national and local partners, we will help remove barriers and ensure people can return home, or remain at home, with the right support in place. This will help people spend

less time in hospital or supported accommodation far from home.

We believe everyone has the right to live in their own home, connected to the people and communities that matter to them. This initiative is an important step towards making that vision a reality.



Letter changes

We would like to let you know about an upcoming change to how we send letters. From 31 July, most of our letters will be issued through our new mailing provider, Gov Notify.

Only letters that require a document to be returned will continue to be sent directly by our office staff. As a result, most of the letters you receive from us after this date will no longer have the ILF logo on them.

Working Families Best Practice Award Winner



We are delighted to share that ILF Scotland has been named 'Best for All-Round Flexibility' at the Working Families Best Practice Awards 2026.

The judges said our approach to flexible working stands out because flexibility is built into everything we do, at every level of the organisation. Our approach is built on trust, dignity and inclusion, and is continuously shaped by the real experiences and needs of our colleagues, including carers, disabled staff and neurodivergent team members.

The panel described ILF Scotland as a truly deserving all-rounder, recognising our ongoing commitment to creating a supportive and adaptable workplace for everyone.

We are incredibly proud of this achievement. Our sincere thanks go to the Working Families Awards, and congratulations to all the other winners.

Consumer Duty – What This Means for ILF Scotland

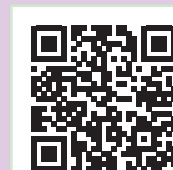
The Consumer Scotland Act 2020 regulations 2024 introduced a duty on relevant public authorities in Scotland from 1 April 2025.

A consumer is anyone who uses public services, including people who apply to ILF Scotland and those who receive funding from us.

The Consumer Duty helps make sure that people who use ILF Scotland services are considered in all key decisions. It requires us to understand potential impacts, avoid harm where possible, and put the interests of applicants and Fund Recipients at the heart of our work.

We are required to publish information about the actions we take to meet our responsibilities under the Consumer Duty and this information will be available on our website. For more information, please visit:

www.consumer.scot/the-consumer-duty



Guidance for Award Managers

We are currently reviewing both our Your Responsibilities Guide and Employer Support Information Note with the help of our Advisory Group members. We will publish updated versions on our website and highlight these in our next newsletter.

The revised information will also consider recent legislative changes in the Employers Act 2025, which aims to strengthen worker protections while clarifying employer responsibilities, including for individuals who directly employ Personal Assistants (PAs). The Act highlights the importance of fair contracts, transparent pay, and safe working conditions.

Employers' Liability Insurance: A reminder for Employers

In the meantime, we would like to highlight Employers' Liability Insurance. If you employ a PA, you must have Employers' Liability Insurance in place from day one. Failure to do so may result in daily fines and significant legal and compensation costs.

ILF Scotland strongly advises that PA employers choose enhanced insurance, sometimes referred to as 'Gold' or 'Plus' level. This often includes additional support for redundancy, employment law advice, and health and safety guidance, which employers must follow. Failure to follow advice

provided by insurance companies can lead to financial penalties.

Where a PA is directly employed using ILF Scotland funding, we can meet the cost of Employers Liability Insurance. We can also contribute to insurance costs where the PA is jointly funded by ILF Scotland and a Health & Social Care Partnership or Trust. We will not cover insurance costs for a self-employed PA or for staff employed by a care or support provider.

If you already have a policy in place, we encourage you to contact your insurer to check that you have sufficient cover.

For more information about Employer's Liability Insurance, visit www.gov.uk/employers-liability-insurance



For advice on employment law changes, you can contact the ACAS Helpline on 0300 123 1100.



United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

UNCRC sets out the fundamental rights of every child and young person. It is the most widely adopted human rights treaty in the world, and covers all aspects of a child's life, including their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Scotland is the first devolved government in the world to directly incorporate UNCRC, after the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 came into effect in July 2024. For ILF Scotland, incorporation means ensuring we are engaging with our applicants and Recipients who are under 18, so that they are empowered to have a voice in decisions that may affect them.

Since opening, the Transition Fund has supported over 6,000 Recipients under the age of 18, and there are over

40 Recipients of this age within the re-opened Independent Living Fund.

We are keen to strengthen our commitment to children's rights by rolling out training on UNCRC and children's rights across our workforce.

We are also expanding our Young Ambassadors Group – find out more later in the newsletter.

Our first UNCRC report will be published in August 2026, including a child friendly version of the report to ensure it is accessible to young people.

Charter for Involvement

The Charter for Involvement helps make sure disabled people who use support services have a say in the services they receive, the organisations that provide them, and their wider communities.

We have continued to make significant progress against our Charter Action Plan during 2025 to 2026, through collaborating with our Advisory Groups to make further progress towards delivering Charter priorities. Their ongoing feedback and involvement play an important role in helping us make positive changes.

We are pleased to share an update on the progress against our Charter for Involvement Action Plan for 2024 to 2025 on our website:

<https://ilf.scot/go/charter-for-involvement>



Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Report

In April, we were pleased to publish our fourth Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report, outlining the progress made against our 2024-2026 equality outcomes and setting our priorities for 2026-2028.

Equality is at the heart of what we do, shaping our everyday activities, thoughts, behaviours and plans. We are committed to continuously improving how we mainstream equality across the organisation.

While our key focus is on addressing inequalities experienced by people with protected characteristics, we are also considerate of broader diversity issues. Over the past year, we have strengthened our focus on areas including neurodiversity, cognitive diversity, social mobility and socio-

economic diversity, while recognising how intersecting characteristics can create additional barriers to inclusion.

Read the full report on our website to learn more about our progress and ambitions for the next two years: <https://ilf.scot/go/mainstreaming-and-equality-outcomes-report>



Corporate Parenting Plan Progress

In April 2024, we introduced our second corporate parenting plan for 2024 to 2027. The plan aims to empower disabled people to live independently through our funds and we are pleased to share our latest progress report.

Corporate Parenting means organisations and services working together to make sure young people get the right support and opportunities to succeed and become independent. We continue to work with other corporate parents and care experienced young people to improve our plans, services, and processes.

The Transition Fund specifically supports young disabled people aged 16 to 25 as they move on from school or children's services, helping them build independence and take part in their communities.

We have made good progress against our five commitments and published a progress report in April this year. You can read the full report on our website: <https://ilf.scot/go/corporate-parenting-plan>





PVG Update

Changes to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Membership Scheme came into effect from 1 April 2025, making it a legal requirement for anyone in a regulated role, such as a PA, to be a member of the PVG Scheme.

It is the PA's legal responsibility to be a PVG member, not the employer. Carrying out regulated work without PVG membership is a criminal offence.

We highly recommend that if you employ a PA, you request confirmation of their membership by viewing their membership certificate or online confirmation. During ILF Scotland Recipient reviews, we will ask if your PA is a PVG member and record this, however we will not record individual details.

A further change has taken effect from 1 April 2026, where the PVG Scheme has moved from lifetime membership to a new five-year period. Anyone joining the scheme from that date will receive a five-year membership.

If your PA is already a PVG member in the lifetime scheme, no action is needed at this stage, but Disclosure Scotland will contact them at some point as part of a phased transition of moving members from the lifetime scheme to the five year membership scheme. Disclosure Scotland is contacting lifetime members to check their details before making the transfer.

For more details visit Disclosure Scotland or our website:

<https://ilf.scot/go/pvg-changes>



Feedback Strategy

We published our Feedback Strategy in December last year. This sets out the framework for feedback opportunities from Recipients and applicants who interact with our services.



During the financial year 2025 to 2026, we sought feedback for a number of projects including from Recipients of the re-opened ILF from April 2024, feedback from complaints and compliments we received and feedback from our 10 year celebration events last year in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The majority of the feedback was very positive - you can

read more about this on our website <https://ilf.scot/go/feedback-strategy>

The next stage of our Feedback Strategy is to consider and co-produce feedback mechanisms for the next financial year 2026 to 2027. We have set up a staff working group to discuss those next steps and will continue to co-produce any plans with representatives of our Advisory Groups.



Scotland



Scottish Living Wage Increase

We are pleased to share that the Scottish Government has agreed a pay uplift for adult social care workers.

The minimum hourly rate for PAs will rise from £12.60 to £13.45 per hour from 1 April 2026. This means an increase of 6.75%.

The uplift will allow you to increase your PA's hourly rate of pay to a minimum of £13.45 per hour for every hour they work including overnight hours of support. You must pass this increase on to your staff and should not use it for any other purpose.

We have automatically increased all relevant awards with effect from this date and have written to all our Recipients to let them know what this means for their award.

If you use a Payroll Agency - please advise the agency to pay your PA the increased rate of pay from 1 April 2026.

If you use a Care Provider Organisation - we will not automatically apply an uplift for services purchased by Recipients from Care Provider Organisations. If your provider notifies you of an increase, please send the letter to your ILF Caseworker.

If you have any questions about the pay uplift, or if your individual circumstances have changed, please contact your Specialist Caseworker on 0300 200 2022 or email enquiries@ilf.scot



Become a Young Ambassador!

Are you aged 16-25? Have you received funding from ILF Scotland?

Would you like to have a voice about our services, give feedback, share ideas, and help shape what we do? If the answer is yes, we'd love to hear from you.

We have a group of amazing young people who are currently Young Ambassadors, and we're excited to expand the group. We will work with members to update its remit with the aim of a relaunch during 2026.

You will have the opportunity to get involved with events, blogs, articles and podcasts. We want to hear what matters most to you - what topics you'd like to discuss, how best to communicate

and how we can make it easy and enjoyable for you to take part.

Being a Young Ambassador is a great chance to try something new, build your confidence, develop your communication and presentation skills, and add something impressive to your CV.

More information is available on our website and if you think you'd like to get involved, please contact us at communications@ilf.scot to arrange an informal chat.



Have you joined the Personal Assistants Network Scotland?

Personal Assistants Network Scotland (PANS) is a membership organisation committed to providing meaningful benefits and support tailored to the needs of PAs across Scotland.

Personal Assistants
Network Scotland

They advocate on the behalf of PAs, and work to strengthen recognition, opportunities and the value of the profession.

Why get involved?

Membership is completely free and gives PA access to a wide range of benefits including training opportunities, practical resources, professional development, and discounts on shopping, cinemas tickets, holidays and more.

By joining PANS, you'll become part of a supportive network that promotes independent living, shares best practice, and champions the vital role PAs play across Scotland.

Visit their website to find out more or become a member:

www.panetworkscotland.org.uk



How are your digital skills?

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) offers two checkups to assess your digital skills.

- Life skills measure the digital skills you need for everyday online life, such as communication, handling information, online safety and transactions.
- Work skills measure the digital skills needed to work effectively in a job or work environment.

resources if you request more information on specific topics.

Why not take the checkup today and see if you have any gaps in your digital skills?

Check your digital skills on their website: <https://skills.checkup.scot>

The checkups take no more than 10 minutes to complete. You can choose to have your results emailed to you, along with additional



Northern Ireland



Join our Northern Ireland Advisory Group

Help Shape ILF Scotland Services in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Advisory Group is looking for new members. The group is open to ILF Scotland Recipients and their representatives, and we would love to hear from disabled Recipients who want to share their experiences.

Members can help influence how ILF Scotland services are delivered and developed by providing feedback and ideas for improvement.

No specialist knowledge is required, and support will be provided to make participation accessible.

To find out more or express an interest, please contact Linda Scott, Director for Policy, Improvement and Engagement, at Linda.Scott@ILF.scot



National Minimum Wage Increase

We are pleased to share that the Department of Health in Northern Ireland has agreed a pay uplift for PAs.

The minimum hourly rate for PAs will rise from at least £12.21 to £12.71 per hour from 1 April 2026, an increase of 4.1%.

The uplift will allow you to increase your PA's hourly rate of pay to a minimum of £12.71 per hour. You must pass this increase on to your staff and should not use it for any other purpose.

We have automatically increased all relevant awards with effect from this date and have written to all our Recipients to let them know what this means for their award.

If you use a Payroll Agency – please advise the agency to pay your PA the

increased rate of pay from 1 April 2026.

If you use a Care Provider Organisation - we will not automatically apply an uplift for services purchased by Recipients from Care Provider Organisations. If your provider notifies you of an increase, please send the letter to your ILF Caseworker.

If you have any questions about the pay uplift, or if your individual circumstances have changed, please contact your Specialist Caseworker on 0300 200 2022 or email enquiries@ilf.scot



Self-directed support network in NI

The Self-Directed Support (SDS) Network NI was launched in March with an online event bringing together people with lived experience, health and social care staff and other key stakeholders.

Speakers talked honestly about the powerful impact of SDS when people have real choice

and control, and the frustrations when flexibility is limited. Trust staff shared their perspective too, showing strong commitment to improve

consistency, clarity and shared problem solving as the network moves forward.

To learn more about the SDS Network NI and upcoming events visit www.selfdirectedsupport.org/hubs/northernireland





Transition Fund

We're changing the way we fund Driving Lessons and Theory Tests.

The Transition Fund is introducing an important change to the way funding is provided for Theory Tests and Driving Lessons.

What's changing?

As of 1 April, applicants must now pass their Theory Test and provide their certificate before we fund practical driving lessons.

For applicants requesting support with both their Theory Test and Driving Lessons, funding will initially cover:

- Theory Test fees
- Training and study materials
- Other approved items agreed as part of the application

Once the Theory Test has been successfully passed, funding

for practical driving lessons can then be awarded.

Why are we making this change?

This decision has been made following feedback from both applicants and driving instructors.

We want to give applicants every chance of succeeding in passing their Theory and practical Driving Tests so this change should help to ensure an uninterrupted practical learning experience.

Our current processing time for applications is 12 weeks. If you would like to discuss your application further, please get in touch by emailing enquiries@ilf.scot



Transition Fund Evaluation

We are carrying out an evaluation of our Transition Fund between now and October this year. The purpose of the evaluation is to consider how best to ensure a sustainable future for the Fund. The evaluation is being conducted by an independent external company, Social Value Lab, who are currently recruiting for a team of Peer Researchers who have lived experience of disability.

Their work will involve designing and administering a survey to Transition Fund Recipients to better understand the demand for the Fund and what impact it has had in the lives of Recipients. The evaluation will also involve a Social Return on Investment

analyses (SROI) to determine the social value generated by the funding.

We will update the evaluation findings on our website in due course and include an update in our December newsletter.



Complaints

The team at ILF Scotland are committed to providing a high-quality service. However, we understand that sometimes things might not go as planned. If our service does not meet your expectations, please let us know so we can work to resolve the issue.

We value all feedback, including complaints, as it helps us improve the way we do things. For more information, please see our Complaints Handling Procedure at <https://ilf.scot/go/complaints-handling>



You can also view how to make a complaint and our current complaint statistics

at <https://ilf.scot/how-to-make-a-complaint>



To make it easier for you to share any concerns, we've created a dedicated email address:

complaints@ilf.scot

Please contact us directly so we can address your concerns as quickly as possible.



We want to hear from you!!

We'd love to hear your feedback on our newsletters so we can make sure we're sharing the news you want to hear about.

We'd really appreciate it if you could take our quick survey – it shouldn't take more than a few minutes.

Scan the QR code below to take the survey, or visit:

<https://forms.gle/p6NbCE1VQPSiAFwS8>



The screenshot shows a 'Newsletter Feedback' survey form. It includes a title, a brief introduction, and two main questions: 'How do you find the length of the newsletter?' with radio button options (Too long, Too short, Just right) and 'How would you rate the design?' with a star rating scale from 1 to 5. There is also a 'Sign in to Google' button and a 'Learn more' link.



Follow Us

Did you know you can keep up to date with everything ILF Scotland by following us on social media?

We regularly post important updates and information about things happening in Scotland and Northern Ireland which might be of interest.

Keep in Touch

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