Independent Living Fund Scotland

Northern Ireland Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

16 September 2025









What this document is about



This is an Easy Read document.

It is a set of Minutes to say what happened at a meeting.

In this document the Independent Living Fund Scotland is ILF Scotland for short.



The meeting was at The Mount Conference Centre and on Zoom.



It was on 16 September from 11.30 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon.

Who was at the meeting?



David McDonald (Chairperson)

Niqi Rainey

Collette Jones

Amanda Paul



ILF Scotland Staff

Peter Scott

Harvey Tilley

Linda Scott on Zoom

Emma O'Neill on Zoom

Lee House

Sandra Sweeney

Who was not at the meeting?



Caroline Wheeler

Michaela Hollywood

Frances McHugh

Robert Dallas

1. Welcome and introductions



David welcomed everyone and thanked them for being in the Advisory Group.

Everyone said their name and what their role in the Group is.



Several Group members want to see progress on re-opening the Fund in Northern Ireland.

David said it is difficult to get meetings with politicians but we must keep trying to do this.



Some people could not be at the meeting because Zoom did not work for them.

The Group will make sure those members know about new information and what decisions were made at the meeting.



The group talked about:

- making accessibility better at future meetings
- better support for people joining meetings online
- earlier communication before meetings

2. Minutes from the last meeting



The minutes were checked and agreed.

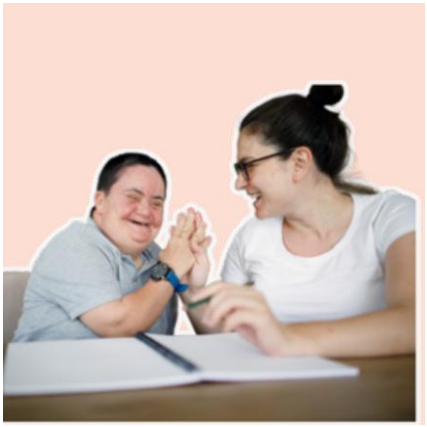
ILF Scotland's Communications Team will put them on the website.

Actions from the last meeting that are still being done



Sandra, Emma and Caroline will check:

- what is on the Direct Payment User Group Northern Ireland Facebook page
- what the Group should put on it



Work is happening with **CILNI** and **ICMS** to offer people who get ILF extra support.

CILNI – the Centre for Independent Living Northern Ireland

ICMS - Individual Cash Management Solutions – they are a company that support people to manage their money when they are cannot do this themselves



- David will deal with information about joining the Independent Mechanism Northern Ireland (IMNI) Group for reporting on United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

3. What do we need to talk about?



A meeting was set up with Robbie Butler MLA, Mark McGuikin and Colin Dunlop to talk about ILF in Northern Ireland.

Mark and Colin are part of the Northern Ireland Executive Sponsor Team.

The meeting did not happen and there has been no more communication.



The Group will ask the Vice Chair of the Committee for Health for a chance to talk to the Committee.

4. 10 Year Celebration – what people thought of it



This event showed people:

- the difference the Fund has made
- the importance of independent living



People at the event said:

- it was mostly good
- they liked the stories shared by people who get ILF
- it was important to show how **co-production** is working well



Co-production means the work is done in partnership with disabled people.

- it must be easier for people to attend future events online

The Group said that learning from this event would make future events better.

5. Policy Update



Linda spoke about the **Charter** for Involvement and the **Feedback Strategy** - these are types of big plans.

A **feedback strategy** has ways to find out what people think about something.

These are both ways to show how ILF Scotland uses co-production and is always trying to make its work better.

The Group talked about:



- having more talks with politicians and officials
- having higher ILF payments



Payments went up:

- by nearly 10 per cent in Northern Ireland
- by 5 per cent in Scotland

The Group said this was good.



Peter said that future funding to ILF Scotland from the Department of Health Northern Ireland would need to go up to keep services working.



This was important because the **national minimum wage** will probably go up next year.

The **national minimum wage** is a law that sets out what is the lowest amount of money a person should be paid an hour.



Charter for Involvement

The Charter has 12 standards to make sure disabled people are involved in decisions that affect their lives.



Linda said good progress has been made at joint Advisory Group meetings and at co-production events including:

- the event at the Scottish Parliament
- the events to develop the ILF Scotland new Strategic Plan
- the 10 year anniversary celebrations in Northern Ireland and Scotland



The Charter's **principles** are in ILF Scotland's plans, marketing and communications.

Principles are the standards for our work – what we believe in and how we want to work.



Linda encouraged members to:

- decide what the most important work in the Charter is
- say how the Charter could be better used across services

Feedback Strategy



Emma said the strategy will show how ILF Scotland gets and uses feedback from people who get ILF, Award Managers and other organisations.



It includes a Service Charter that says what standards people can expect from ILF Scotland.

It should be agreed by the ILF Scotland Board at its next meeting in November.



The Group talked about having good ways for people to give feedback and how it can make services and policies better.

6. Re-Opening of ILF in Northern Ireland



Members are worried that no-one is responsible for making this happen and that there is no support from politicians.

David suggested telling the Vice Chair of the Committee for Health about this problem and the Group agreed.

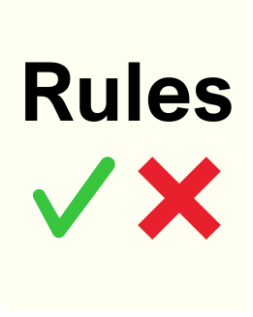
There was also discussion about involving disabled speakers in future events at Parliament about re-opening the Fund.

7. Sleepover rates



In Scotland social care workers are paid the full hourly rate for sleepover shifts.

In Northern Ireland social care workers are paid a fixed nightly rate which can be below the national minimum wage rate depending on the hours worked and the kind of support provided.



David is waiting to hear from Colin to see if HMRC rules apply in Northern Ireland.

8. Direct Payment User Group Northern Ireland (NI) and ILF Information



ILF Scotland has recently joined the Direct Payment User Group NI Facebook group.

ILF Scotland's communications team will do a Facebook post to explain:

- Scotland's role
- that applications are not yet open in Northern Ireland



Niqi said the post should be on the group page and people should be encouraged to comment and ask questions.

The Group agreed that ILF Scotland's communications team should reply to any messages using the ILF Scotland Facebook account.



If there are questions that ILF is not included in, Niqi or Caroline will tell ILF Scotland's Communications team.

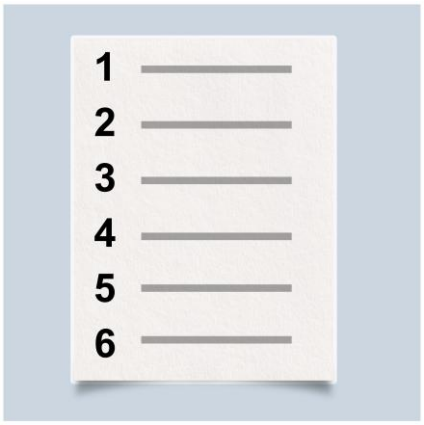
It is often confusing to know if a direct payment is managed by ILF or a Trust.

9. Terms of Reference – these explain the work of an organisation and how it will be done



David suggested that:

- draft minutes are sent to the Chair and Vice Chair less than a month after the meeting



- the draft agenda is sent to the Chair and Vice Chair 2 weeks before the next meeting

Linda will change the Terms of Reference for this Group.



Lee will send it to members for any comments before it is checked at the December meeting.

Linda suggested a short pre-meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss the agenda and any issues.



The Group think this is a good idea.

10. Any other business –anything else we need to talk about?



The Group agreed that ILF Scotland should publish clear guidance about people moving from Employment and Support Allowance to Universal Credit.

They will use newsletters, social media, and the website to do this.



The Group talked about how it can be difficult for family members to manage an ILF award if they become ill or cannot continue.

Sandra shared information from a recent paper by ILF Assessors looking at other ways to manage ILF awards.



David said that **microboards** could do this – these are small unpaid groups of people who help someone with a disability to make a life plan and do the work to make it happen.

The Group will keep this on the agenda for future meetings.

Actions from today's meeting



- everyone should be able to easily take part in future meetings – Lee
- make sure minutes and agendas are sent out on time – Lee
- the ILF Scotland Communications Team will put the minutes of the June meeting on the website
- make sure there is follow up about the meeting that should have happened between Robbie Butler MLA, Mark McGuikin, and Colin Dunlop to discuss the re-opening of ILF in Northern Ireland – David



- make sure there is better accessibility at future engagement events particularly for people taking part online – Linda
- share ideas about ways of sharing feedback – Advisory Group members



- make sure the way that ILF Scotland gets feedback follows best practice from other organisations– Emma
- talk about the reopening of ILF in Northern Ireland with the Vice Chair of the Committee for Health and copy the Group into future emails or letters – David
- have disabled speakers at future events at Parliament about reopening the Fund – David



- ask the Department of Health Northern Ireland if HMRC rules about sleepover rates apply in Northern Ireland – Colin
- make a post for the Direct Payment User Group NI Facebook group about ILF Scotland's role and to explain that applications are not open in Northern Ireland – ILF Scotland Communications Team



- make sure the post is clear on the group page and encourage users to:
    - comment with questions
    - share individual enquiries about ILF where needed with the Communications Team

    - Niqi and Caroline

- put the changes to the timing and way of sending out minutes and agendas into the Terms of Reference then send it to the Group

This will be checked at the December meeting - Linda



- publish guidance about ESA on the newsletter, social media and the website - ILF Scotland Communication Team

- have Award Management on a future meeting agenda when we get feedback from the ILF Scotland internal working group – Linda and Sandra

11. Next meeting and arrangements



The next meeting will be on Tuesday 9 December 2025 at 11:30 in the morning.

The Group talked about the plan for the Christmas lunch at The Mount.



Members must let The Mount know if they have any allergies or different diets.

The Group will invite Mike Nesbitt, Minister for Health, to the meeting and the lunch.



This is the end of these Minutes.

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