Northern Ireland Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

9 December 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 9 December from 11.30am to 3pm.

Who was at the meeting?



David McDonald (Chairperson)

Niqi Rainey

Charles Rainey

Collette Jones

Robert Dallas

Caroline Wheeler

Amanda Paul

Tina Price – Department for Health



ILF Scotland Staff

Peter Scott

Linda Scott

Emma O'Neill

Lee House

Sandra Sweeney

Jill Fotheringham

Jackie Aitken on Zoom

Karen Burnett on Zoom

Anne Marie Monaghan on Zoom

1. Welcome and introductions



David welcomed everyone and asked people to introduce themselves before he started the meeting.

2. Minutes from the last meeting



The minutes were checked and agreed.

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

3. What do we need to talk about?





Sandra gave the Group an update on talks with:

- **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



These talks are to see if these organisations could be **award managers** for people in Northern Ireland who get ILF funding.

An **award manager** is the person or organisation that checks the money is spent in the right way.



The Group also discussed if award managers should be paid.



Caroline said it is difficult to manage a Direct Payment, ILF Award and Guardianship.



Peter said ILF Scotland cannot pay award managers and that it is a voluntary role.

We will arrange a meeting to talk about award management as it is very complicated.



The group talked about **paying arrears in advance**.

This means paying for something after it has been delivered or after the work has happened.

4. Meeting with Mike Nesbitt, Minister for Health in Northern Ireland



David talked about a recent event at parliament where Charles, David and Amanda spoke about independent living.

The Minister was not at the meeting when they were talking.

The event was on radio television and social media.



The Minister would like to meet in late January or early February at Stormont to talk about reopening the fund in Northern Ireland.

Charles, David, Amanda and Caroline will meet before the Minister's meeting.

5. Board Update





2 new Board members have been chosen and 1 is from Northern Ireland.

They will start their roles in 2026.

The Board is looking to have another person who can link in with the **Transition Fund** and has experience and knowledge in this area.



The **Transition Fund** is a grant of up to 4 thousand pounds for young, disabled people in Scotland to help them try something new and help them get active in their community.

6. Policy update from Linda



The hourly rate for Personal Assistants (**PAs**) will go up from 12 pounds 21 pence to 12 pounds 71 pence in April 2026.

At the next meeting Linda will say if this change is going well at ILF Scotland.



Tina said the Department of Health are checking the policy about overnight rates.

At the next meeting she will talk about research with the Trusts in Northern Ireland.



When we send information out

A **pre-meeting** is a meeting before the main meeting.

There should be a pre-meeting for the Chairperson and the Depute Chairperson to talk about the agenda.



All minutes should be done soon after each meeting so they can be checked.



Direct Payments User Group Northern Ireland Facebook page

Admins like Niqi and Caroline will send posts or questions to ILF Scotland's communications team.

The ILF Scotland Facebook account will be used to reply.



ILF's introduction post should show very clearly on the group page and encourage users to comment with questions.

This would allow ILF to answer them directly.



The Group talked about how important it is to have clear, accessible communication.

There is often confusion between ILF and direct payments that are looked after by a Trust.

Terms of Reference (ToR)



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

Linda said the ToR has been updated to show that pre-meetings will happen.

Group members will check the ToR and let Linda know if it needs any more changes.

7. Any other business – is there anything else we need to talk about?



The Group decided that a Wednesday or Thursday would be best for the meeting with the Minister from 12 midday to 3 pm.

The suggested dates were 12, 21 or 28 January.



The Group will talk about Award Manager policy at the next Joint Advisory Group meeting.



Linda said that **Policy 26** will be checked and changed in March 2026.

Policy 26 is about being an Award Manager for yourself or for someone else.



The Group want to thank Colin Dunlop for all his work in supporting them and ILF Scotland as he moves on to his new role.

10. Future meetings and arrangements



Lee will check different food options for lunch at future meetings.

Lee will check with The Mount to see if is available on 2 or 10 March for the next meeting.

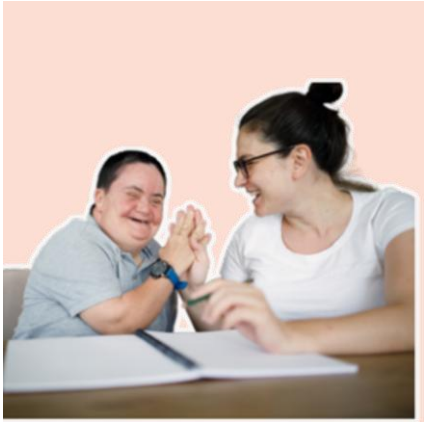


If those dates are not available other dates could be 11, 25 or 31 March.

List of actions from the last meeting



- Sandra, Emma and Caroline will check what is on the Facebook page and decide what information the Group should put on it
- the information about ILF should be shared on the Direct Payments User Group Facebook page in January



- check how work is going to arrange working with CILNI and ICMS to offer people who get ILF the choice of extra support
- 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.



This Action has been done.



This is the end of these Minutes.