

Independent Living Fund (ILF) consultation facilitation guide

Helping you engage stakeholders on the future of the ILF

12 July 2012

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Glossary

Consultation

This is when we ask people what they think about our plans.

Independent living

All disabled people having the same choice, control and freedom as any other citizen - at home, at work, and as members of the community. This does not necessarily mean disabled people 'doing everything for themselves' but it does mean any practical assistance people need should be based on their own choices and aspirations.

Group 1

Group 1 are ILF users who started receiving funding before February 1993. There is no requirement that their local authority contributes to their care package. There are currently about 3,000 Group 1 users, about 1,700 of whom do receive some funding from their local authority.

Group 2

Group 2 are ILF users who started receiving funding from April 1993 onwards. They must have at least £200 of services provided by their local authority each week. There are currently about 16,300 Group 2 users across the UK.

Mainstream care and support system

This is any support provided by your local authority social services department, this could be from one of many teams, for example the adult team or the physical disability team.

The Government's proposal

The suggested way forwards is that from April 2015 the local authority will provide support to the person and they will receive funding for this support from the Government.

The ILF will transfer all the details for its users to their local authorities and would then close. Most ILF users already receive support from their local authority so will already have a social worker and a support plan in place.

Section 1 – About the ILF

Background

The ILF opened in 1988 and makes payments to disabled people with high support/complex needs. The money is used towards the cost of appointing personal assistants or using a care agency to provide personal care and therefore enabling them to live independently in the community.

The majority of packages supported by the ILF are joint packages with the individual's local authority. However, some users who have been with the ILF since before February 1993 do not have to have any support from their local authority, and they can receive all their support from the ILF.

The ILF currently provides financial support to over 19,300 disabled people in the UK, and has supported over 46,000 disabled people during the past 24 years.

The ILF closed to new applications in 2010. The Government recognises the role that ILF support plays and remains fully committed to maintaining users' care and support packages until 2015.

About the consultation

The Government committed to consult on the future of the ILF to help decide how to best support ILF users beyond 2015.

The Government believes that the care and support needs of existing ILF users can now be met within the mainstream social care system and that ILF funding should be devolved to local government in England and to the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will hold their own discussions following this consultation. However, if you are in one of these countries and would like to respond to this consultation we are interested in hearing your views.

The consultation started on 12 July 2012 and will finish on 10 October 2012 and the Government wants to hear your views on:

- Whether you agree with their proposal to close the ILF
- The impact that closing the ILF would have
- How to manage the closure in a way that creates the least uncertainty and disruption for ILF users and more widely, has the least impact on the adult care system
- How you would like the ILF to work with you and local authorities between now and 2015

About the Adult Social Care White Paper

The Department of Health White Paper, 'Caring for our future – reforming care and support', sets out a new vision for a reformed care and support system. Some aspects of the White Paper that may be of particular interest to ILF users are summarised below. To view the full White Paper please visit:

<http://caringforourfuture.dh.gov.uk>

The White Paper sets out how the focus of care and support will be transformed to promote people's wellbeing and independence instead of waiting for people to reach a crisis point. Active communities will reach out to those around them, families and individuals will have better information to plan and prepare for their future, and people will have more options to keep them well and independent.

This Government will transform people's experience of care and support, with high quality services that respond to what people want. This means that people will have control over their own budget and their own care and support plan. They will be empowered to choose the care and support that best enables them to meet their goals and aspirations. This Government will put people, and not institutions, in control.

About personal budgets

Personal budgets were introduced in 2008 in England, and all local authorities are expected to have been offering them from April 2010. They enable local authorities to take a personalised approach, which means that each person's care and support will be designed and delivered around their individual needs.

The 2010 Department of Health publication, 'A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens' extended the rollout of personal budgets to give people and their carers more control and purchasing power. They asked Councils to provide personal budgets for everyone eligible for ongoing social care, preferably as a direct payment, by April 2013.

Figures show that over 338,000 people had a personal budget at the end of March 2011 with about half going to older people. This means that about a third of the approximately one million people supported by Councils on a week-by-week basis now receive a personal budget and the total amount of money allocated overall is projected to have passed £1.5 billion. This represents almost £1 in every £7 spent by councils directly on care and support services.

The White Paper will legislate to give people an entitlement to a Personal Budget. It will also set out an entitlement to independent advice to help people plan their care and support.

Portability and National Minimum Eligibility

At the last Spending Review, government made the decision to prioritise funding for care and support. The additional funding it has provided means that, with a focus on efficiency, local authorities are able to maintain current levels of eligibility for care and support. However, we recognise that the current system of locally determined eligibility is confusing and unfair for many. Therefore, from 2015, we will introduce a national minimum eligibility threshold. Once implemented, local authorities will be free to set their eligibility threshold at a more generous level, but will not be able to tighten beyond the new national minimum threshold. Given the commitment to a national threshold, and the funding in this Spending Review, there should be no need for local authorities to tighten current eligibility thresholds.

This change will mean that people's entitlements to care and support will be much clearer and fairer, reducing the variations in access that currently exist between local authorities. We think it is right that people's individual care and support plans continue to be determined by their needs and circumstances, so that care and support does not become a 'one size fits all' service. However, introducing more consistency around access will help people to plan with much greater certainty for their future. It will give people using services, and carers, greater confidence that they can move around the country without losing access to care and support.

The introduction of a national minimum eligibility threshold will help to overcome some of the barriers that people face when they wish to move home. We will go further, and legislate to remove the uncertainty that people feel when they move home. We will require local authorities to continue to meet the assessed needs of people who have moved into their area immediately, until they carry out a new assessment of their own. This will ensure that no one sees an interruption in their support before a new assessment is made, and a new package of care and support is put in place.

Section 2 – Getting involved

The purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to enable groups and organisations that are affected by the changes around adult social care and the ILF in particular, to facilitate their own consultation events.

It is generally aimed at people who would like to run an engagement activity mainly for disabled people, but will be helpful even if you want to submit your own thoughts.

It gives facilitators sufficient background information about the ILF, the people that it supports and how ILF funding is used, as well as enabling facilitators to answer some of the basic questions that may be asked during their consultation events.

Why should you get involved?

We understand you are extremely busy and often short of time and resources. We also recognise that you may have already told Government about the issues that affect you.

But, by getting involved it will help ensure that the Government can take account of the maximum number of views and opinions about the future of funding for ILF users. We would appreciate your involvement in whatever way you are able to – whether it is holding an event, or letting other people know about the consultation.

How can you help others to respond?

Apart from running an event, you can let other people know about the consultation or involve your members and people you know in the consultation process. You could:

- include an article in a newsletter or email bulletin
- hold a discussion at one of your regular meetings, such as a trustees meeting, or service users group
- hold a small focus group
- publicise the consultation document on your website and include a link to www.dwp.gov.uk/future-of-ilf
- share information about the consultation document with your networks and people you know

If you are planning to run an engagement activity for a local authority, service providers, or families and carers, you may want to tailor exercises or specific discussion questions for that audience.

We want a wide range of people, organisations and sectors to be involved.

Advice for facilitators

If you are arranging an event or a group discussion you will need to consider the different groups of people that might attend. This will have a bearing on how you approach some of the questions and how much time you spend discussing them. For example, you would focus on different questions depending on whether attendees were from local authorities, or if they were group 1 or group 2 ILF users.

What sort of information are we looking for?

We are interested in the experiences of people gaining support from their local authority or the ILF and the opportunities and difficulties they have come across in securing this support. We are interested in things that have helped them arrange this and the elements of support that they most value. We are also interested in the level and type of communication that people would like to receive throughout the proposed changes and in the meantime.

We would also like to hear from organisations with experience in running events that would be willing to help smaller organisations who have not been involved in engagement activities before.

Section 3 – Supporting you

The consultation document

The best way to respond to the consultation is through the online consultation tool as this will ensure that your contribution is received and recorded straight away. You can find the online tool on the DWP website at: www.dwp.gov.uk/future-of-ilf

Alternatively, you can email your response to the consultation to:
ilf.consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

You can also post responses to:

ILF Consultation Team
Ground floor
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1A 9NA

If you would like to discuss alternative accessible ways of responding to the consultation or would like to receive this document in an alternative format you can contact DWP using the email address above, by telephone on 0207 449 7999 or by textphone on 18001 0207 449 7999.

When responding, please say whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.

- If you are responding as an individual, please let us know whether you live in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- If responding on behalf of an organisation, please make clear who the organisation represents, whether your organisation is specific to England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland or the United Kingdom as a whole and how the views of members were obtained.

Please make sure your response reaches us by 10 October 2012.

We have given notification about this consultation to a large number of people and organisations who have already been involved in this work or who have expressed an interest in it. Please share this document with anyone you think will want to be involved in this consultation.

We will publish a summary of the responses to the consultation and the action that we will take as a result of them in autumn 2012. A PDF of the responses publication will be available online on the consultations section of our website:
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations>

Section 4 – discussion questions

Question 1

Do you agree with the Government's proposal that from 2015, the care and support needs of current ILF users should be met within the mainstream care and support system, with funding devolved to local government in England and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales?

Suggested discussion questions

Check if people understand the question. In England people would be supported solely by their local authority. In Scotland and Wales their own Government will decide how people shall be supported in the future.

- Does the group agree or disagree with the proposed approach? How many people agree and how many disagree?
- Discuss why people agree or disagree?
- What experiences have led people to their opinions?
- Is it the experience of someone in the group or people they know?
- Can you see any advantages to the proposed approach?
- Can you see any disadvantages to the proposed approach?
- Does anyone have any suggestions for an alternative?

Question 2

What are the key challenges users would face in moving from joint to sole Local Authority funding of their care and support needs? How could any impacts be mitigated?

Suggested discussion questions

Check if people understand the question. If people are funded just by their local authority what key challenges might this present? How can we make sure these have less of an impact on ILF users?

- What are your experiences of receiving support from your local authority?
- Do you think anything will be easier if you only need to be in contact with your local authority?
- Are there things that would need to change before local authorities could provide the support previously provided by the ILF?
- Do you think there are any benefits of the ILF and Local Authorities working together to provide support?
- Do you think there are things that the ILF pay for or support that the ILF provides that local authorities will not?
- Are there any things that you think should stay the same?

Question 3

What impact would the closure of the ILF have on Local Authorities and the provision of care and support services more widely? How could any impacts be mitigated?

Suggested discussion questions

Check if people understand the question. If the ILF closed, how would this affect local authorities and other care and support services? How can we make sure these have less of an impact on ILF users?

- Do you think the care and support that individuals receive would change? If so, in what way?
- Is there information or actions that would help Local Authorities manage the following:
 - Relationships with ILF users
 - Finance
 - Administration
 - Workload
- And what are the main challenges you think Local Authorities would face with each of these or any other areas?
- Would people need to get support from anywhere other than their local authority?
- Are other people or organisations currently involved in providing care or supporting individuals? What would be the impact on them?
- Would local authorities need any specific information from the ILF to enable them to mitigate any potential impacts?

Question 4

What are the specific challenges in relation to Group 1 users? How can the Government ensure this group are able to access the full range of Local Authority care and support services for which they are eligible?

Suggested discussion questions:

Check if people understand the question. Group 1 users might not currently be known to their local authority so do not get any support or services. How can they get eligible support from their local authority if the ILF closes?

Making local authority contact

- If you have had contact with your local authority adult social services, what was your experience?
- Are there challenges for someone changing the source of their funding from the ILF to their local authority? If so, what are they?

Accessing local authority support

- What help would someone with high support needs require in order to help them to identify the services that are available to them and they were eligible for?
- What support is currently offered by the local authority to people with high support needs?
- Would there be challenges for the local authority assessing these people for the first time?

Arranging local authority support

- Have you experienced arranging support from your local authority?
- Did this pose challenges? What were they?
- How could Group 1 users overcome any challenges?
- What did you find helpful?

Question 5

How can DWP, the ILF and Local Authorities best continue to work with ILF users between now and 2015? How can the ILF best work with individual Local Authorities if the decision to close the ILF is taken?

Suggested discussion questions

Check if people understand the question. The Government remains fully committed to maintaining users' care and support packages until 2015. Their proposal is close the ILF from 2015, so if this happens what things could the DWP and the ILF do to best support ILF users between now and then. What arrangements should the ILF put in place with local authorities?

- How should DWP, the ILF and local authorities work with users between now and 2015?
- What would local authorities and users need to have in place to make a transfer work?
- What information would ILF need to provide to local authorities?
- How should ILF and Local Authorities work together to ensure the correct transfer of information?
- Should any third parties be involved in the communications?
- How should current ILF users be involved in the information exchange between the ILF and local authorities?

Section 5 – How to respond

Different ways you can respond

The best way to respond to the consultation is through the online consultation tool as this will ensure that your contribution is received and recorded straight away.

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Ground floor

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London SW1A 9NA

If you would like to discuss alternative accessible ways of responding to the consultation you can contact DWP using the email address above or by telephone on 0207 449 7999.

The deadline for your views is 10 October 2012.

What happens next?

We will analyse all the responses and produce a summary of responses and the Government's decision going forwards as soon as practicably possible.

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