

Single Equality Scheme

2012-13



iif

**independent
living fund**

Making choice real for disabled people

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ILF equality statement

The Independent Living Fund currently supports over 19,000 disabled people living in the UK by giving them choice and control to live independent, inclusive lives within their communities, rather than in residential care.

We seek to ensure that our policies and processes are customer focused, and are designed to promote equity in service provision for users based on -

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race, religion or belief
- sex and sexual orientation

We also aim to provide a working environment in which employees are treated fairly and with respect.

The Trustees of the Independent Living Fund are committed to the achievement of the outcomes described in this Single Equality Scheme.

The scheme sets out the specific actions that we will carry out to -

- ensure compliance with equality legislation
- raise standards in service delivery
- strengthen communications and engagement with our customers
- ensure fairness and consistency in the development and implementation of our policies and processes
- ensure that we are a good and fair employer

In short, we will build on our strengths to create a culture that respects diversity and is based on the principles of fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

Foreword

James Sanderson **Chief Executive of the Independent Living Fund**

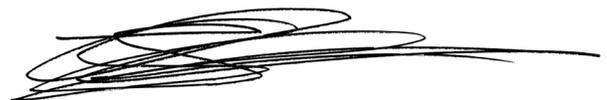
I am really pleased to report on a year that has seen us further develop our Single Equality Scheme.

A notable success this year is the way we have developed and improved our Equality Impact Assessment Board. This Board is made up of people with personal experience of many of the 'protected characteristics' covered by the Equality Act including two members who are ILF users. The result of this I believe is a more rounded and detailed assessment of policy and process prior to any change being implemented.

We have also continued to ask our stakeholders whether the service we provide meets with their approval. 2011/12 saw 96% of users rating the service provided by the ILF as 'good' or 'excellent', against a target of 92%.

We have worked with local authorities and directly with disabled people to develop our system of outcome focussed reviews. This is where we ensure people's support is provided based on what they want to achieve with their lives, with the appropriate assistance with personal support as necessary. We have had some positive feedback regarding this way of working from ILF users and we hope this will help with any future plans.

I expect the coming year to be a challenging time for the ILF. We will continue to play an active role in supporting the development of the Government Independent Living Strategy and personalisation reforms working closely with our local authority partners, disabled people and their organisations.



James Sanderson

Who we are and what we do

Our role is to deliver discretionary payments direct to over 19,000 disabled people across the UK. This gives them the resources to pay for agency care or to directly employ personal assistants, which in turn enables them to live independently within their community.

We provide this financial assistance under the terms of a single publicly financed Trust Deed overseen by a board of seven Trustees. The Chief Executive, James Sanderson, and the Senior Management Board manage the strategic direction and day-to-day running of the organisation.

We employ 122 dedicated staff and operate from our central office in Nottingham while also engaging. We also engage 79 self-employed health and social care professionals to visit users in their own homes and review their support needs.

We work in partnership with over 200 local authorities, providing a nationally consistent method for delivery of social care, achieving better outcomes for disabled people and enabling high quality independent living.

Our mission:

We are committed to continue to provide our users with a high quality service that supports them to achieve positive independent living outcomes, with greater choice and control over their lives.

We will continue to work with Government and other stakeholders and apply our expertise to assist with the development and solutions for the future support of our users, based on their lived experience.

Our values and behaviours:

Achieving the best

Using all our resources efficiently so that high and consistent standards of service are provided.

Respecting people

Treating our customers and each other with respect, welcoming diversity and valuing others' ideas and responding fairly to individual needs.

Making a difference

Supporting, challenging and inspiring customers to improve their lives and helping each other to make a difference.

Looking outwards

Working with others and learning how to get better at what we do.

Our strategic aims

Strategic aim 1: Continuing to deliver our service

- 1.1 Deliver support to our users in line with Ministerial commitment to maintain their packages.
- 1.2 Ensure an ongoing focus on the need for customer service excellence grounded on user experience, and responsive to individual need.
- 1.3 Deliver against key performance targets and demonstrate continuous improvement during the year.
- 1.4 Review the opportunities to enhance further user service through the development of policy and process initiatives.
- 1.5 Ensure that day-to-day delivery is fit for purpose within a changing context.

Strategic aim 2: Developing solutions for the future

- 2.1 Assist Government to deliver consultation on the future support of our users.
- 2.2 Work closely with Government to share the benefit of our experience to inform and support decision making.

- 2.3 Ensure that we have the resources, flexibility and skills necessary to deliver any required change programme.
- 2.4 Develop an effective governance structure to assist with the development of solutions for the future support of our users.
- 2.5 Enable progress towards an innovative and effective plan for the future, based on our experience.

Strategic aim 3: Engaging with others

- 3.1 Ensure good communication with users and stakeholders to provide clarity on the current and emerging organisational position.
- 3.2 Maintain strong relationships with the DWP sponsor team and develop opportunities for a wider programme of engagement.
- 3.3 Continue to work with our advisory group of disabled people to benefit from their lived experience.
- 3.4 Maximise the use of feedback from our users to inform our decision making, and improve opportunities for working in co-production with disabled people.

- 3.5 Use our knowledge and experience of supporting users to live independently to continue to contribute to wider developments in social care.

Strategic aim 4: Supporting our people

- 4.1 Deliver the comprehensive strands of our people strategy.
- 4.2 Maximise internal meeting structures and communication methods to continue to deliver strong employee engagement.
- 4.3 Consolidate the recent organisational restructure to ensure it remains fit for purpose within a challenging and changing environment.
- 4.4 Further embed the use of our performance management system in order to maximise its benefits.
- 4.5 Formulate and deliver a comprehensive learning and development strategy.

Strategic aim 5: Delivering sound governance

- 5.1 Maintain strong and appropriate Governance structures and internal control systems and review our framework documents and policies.
- 5.2 Continue to deliver prudent and robust financial management within the delegated budget provision for 2012- 13 in line with our responsibilities.
- 5.3 Continue to deliver strong performance management, productivity and value for money.
- 5.4 Design and implement an audit strategy that provides the Board of Trustees and the Accounting Officer with the appropriate levels of assurance.
- 5.5 Take corporate social responsibility for our wider community and environment.

Equality legislation

The general equality duty, set out in the Equality Act 2010, covers nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

As a public body, under this duty, we have a legal responsibility to give due regard (in the exercise of our function) to -

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Giving due regard to advancing equality of opportunity involves -

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different to the needs of other people
- encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

Specific duties

As well as the general equality duty, we are required to publish information about how we have demonstrated compliance with the general equality duty across our functions.

This information must include information relating to people who share a protected characteristic, who are its employees and/or people affected by its policies and practices.

We also have to publish evidence of analysis we have undertaken and details about how we have engaged with people who would be considered to have an interest in furthering the aims of the general equality duty.

Organisations are also required to -

- publish details of their equality information and the equality objectives at least every four years in a manner that is accessible to the public
- ensure that their staff and leadership are aware of the general equality duty's requirements
- ensure that decision makers comply with the general equality duty before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration, as well as at the time a decision is taken and implemented

Our progress

We first published our interim Single Equality Scheme in October 2009, committing our organisation to a number of equality objectives and a range of actions to be undertaken in order to achieve them. A Single Equality Scheme for 2011/2012 has also been published.

The following table confirms the ILF progress and achievements in relation to the action points stated in the Single Equality Scheme 2011/2012.

	Outcomes	Action	Lead	Progress/Achievements
1	Our funding is flexible and gives our users choice and control.	To consult extensively with users, user-led organisations and stakeholders about how to increase flexibility.	Jesse Harris	Our Advisory Group has representatives from our users, disabled people's organisations and Trustees. They meet regularly to discuss policy and process change. ILF users are representatives on our Equality Impact Assessment Board (EIAB) and they provide quality assurance on decisions.

	Outcomes	Action	Lead	Progress/achievements
2	To work towards the advancement of independent living in the transformation of social care.	To ensure we take responsibility for making the wider system work through effective partnerships and support for others. And by making a positive contribution in the implementation of the personalisation agenda by using our accumulated knowledge and experience as a key player in the delivery of social care.	Jesse Harris	We attend regular personalisation meetings around 'Think local. Act personal' (TLAP), Right to Control, ADASS Physical Disabilities, Sensory impairment and HIV/AIDS Network and Self Directed Support meetings with ADSW in Scotland.

Our progress

	Outcomes	Action	Lead	Progress/Achievements
3	User feedback continues to inform our practice.	To further develop our user satisfaction surveys.	Jesse Harris	<p>The comments from each experiential survey received are collated and recorded. Any feedback that causes an area of concern is referred to the relevant department within the ILF, however as the responses are anonymous it is not usually possible to identify the user that the comments relate to.</p> <p>The reporting on the experiential surveys has improved and comments are included in the monthly Corporate Affairs Report presented to the Senior Management Board.</p> <p>Updates are also provided to the Trustees at each of their meetings.</p>

	Outcomes	Action	Lead	Progress/Achievements
4	User outcomes are measured as a key performance indicator.	To develop a system for measuring and reporting on user outcomes.	Jesse Harris	<p>The ILF has been reporting on user outcomes for a number of years through our review visit programme. The report format has been reviewed and improvements have been implemented.</p> <p>These improvements have resulted in a more formalised and structured reporting system for user outcomes.</p>
5	Procurement process supports the aims of the Equality Act.	To review the ILF procurement process in line with the Equality Act guidance for public bodies.	Roland Knell	There has not been a review of the ILF procurement process in line with the Equality Act guidance for public bodies.

Our progress

	Outcomes	Action	Lead	Progress/Achievements
6	Maintain the 'positive about disabled people' accreditation.	To conduct an annual review of progress against commitments and take actions to improve as necessary.	Gillian Smith	Evidence was provided to show that we continue to meet the five commitments. In July 2011 it was confirmed that we continue to meet the required standard and can therefore retain this accreditation.
7	Employees continue to be informed by the needs of disabled people.	To increase the opportunities for employees to participate in ILF Assessor visits as part of their ongoing development.	Jesse Harris	In the last year there has been a number of ILF staff that have attended assessor visits. The feedback from the visits has been very positive. Staff have stated that it really made a difference to see how our funding actually works in practice. It was also noted that disability is very diverse and as ILF funding is flexible it can be adapted to suit a users individual needs.

	Outcomes	Action	Lead	Progress/Achievements
8	Encourage and learn from the participation of disabled people in the workplace.	To continue to investigate further opportunities for work placements.	Gillian Smith	<p>It is recognised that as the ILF workforce has reduced this has resulted in fewer opportunities being available for one-day work experience for disabled people.</p> <p>In October 2011 we re launched the 'ILF one Day Customer Focus' to offer opportunities for staff to participate for one day a year at local disability related organisations. There has been a positive response to the re launch and we will continue to promote and offer this opportunity.</p>
9	Promote good employment practice.	To continue to investigate and use membership of employer forums on equality as a means of identifying and sharing best practice.	Gillian Smith	<p>The HR team are members of various networking groups within the East Midlands which consider best practice within the HR field including equality.</p> <p>The EIAB ensures that all of the internal HR policies follow and promote good employment practice.</p>

Our progress

	Outcomes	Action	Lead	Progress/Achievements
10	Publish information about how the general duty is met.	To ensure that information about our Single Equality Scheme and equality monitoring data is published in accordance with the guidance available to public bodies.	Jesse Harris	The Single Equality Scheme is regularly reviewed and the published scheme along with the equality impact assessments provides assurance to third parties that we are meeting our responsibility in line with the general equality duty.
11	Produce equality impact assessments on all new or revised user and staff policies and procedures.	The EIAB to continue its work to review the equality impact assessments to ensure that they meet our responsibilities in line with the Equality Act.	Jesse Harris	An equality impact assessment is completed for all new and revised user and staff policies and processes and is presented to the board. The redesign of the equality impact assessment form, training for the board members to understand the ILF responsibility in line with the Equality Act have ensured that the process of completing, reviewing and agreeing to an equality impact assessment is comprehensive and robust.

About the Equality scheme

The original scheme was developed through consultation with users at regional meetings, as well as our stakeholders in local authorities and our employees.

Our Chief Executive, James Sanderson, and the Trustees have overall responsibility for the delivery of the scheme. Actions have been allocated to the relevant Directors and Heads of Department within the ILF and they are responsible for ensuring actions are completed and reporting on progress.

Although the Single Equality Scheme sets out some of the specific work actions for our organisation, detailing how we will be meeting the equality duty, it is not intended to limit our scope and ambition around equality and diversity.

We see the Single Equality Scheme as a document that can (and should) change, evolve and grow over time to reflect the understanding of our users' needs, and our own changing organisational priorities.

The action plan that follows details the work we propose to undertake in the coming year.

The action plan 2012-13

	Outcomes	Action	Lead
1	Our funding is flexible and gives our users choice and control.	To continue to consult with users, the ILF Advisory Group, user-led organisations and stakeholders about how to increase flexibility and ensure that their experience informs practice	Jesse Harris
2	To achieve a nationally recognised accreditation for our commitment to equality.	To be assessed for the 'Committed2Equality' (C2E) standard.	Gillian Smith
3	Maintain the 'positive about disabled people' accreditation	To conduct an annual review of progress against commitments and take actions to improve as necessary.	Gillian Smith
4	Publish information about how the general duty is met.	To ensure that information about our Single Equality Scheme and equality monitoring data is published in accordance with the guidance available to public bodies.	Jesse Harris

	Outcomes	Action	Lead
5	Produce equality impact assessments on all new or revised user and staff policies and procedures.	The EIAB to continue its work to review the equality impact assessments to ensure that they meet our responsibilities in line with the Equality Act.	Jesse Harris
6	User feedback continues to inform our practice.	To further review and develop our user experiential surveys.	Emma Hynd
7	Staff to gain a fuller understanding of the needs of disabled people.	Promote the one-day concept, which enables staff to spend a day working with disability organisations. Staff will also be encouraged to attend user visits, user group meetings and consultation events.	Gillian Smith
8	Promote good employment practice.	All employees will receive refresher training on equality and diversity. We will also review and reaffirm the organisational culture statement.	Gillian Smith

The action plan 2012-13

	Outcomes	Action	Lead
9	Procurement process supports the aims of the Equality Act.	To review the ILF procurement and purchasing process in line with the Equality Act guidance for public bodies. To ensure that the recruitment process for independent assessors addresses equality and diversity elements at the interview stage and within contracts.	Roland Knell/ Jesse Harris
10	Outcome focused support plans for users.	To continue to review and develop the revised system for measuring and reporting on user outcomes.	Jesse Harris
11	All user equality and diversity issues are addressed through the ILF review visit programme.	To continue to use the independent assessor's quality assurance system to ensure that user equality and diversity issues are identified and addressed.	Jesse Harris
12	To gain further awareness of the protected characteristic 'gender reassignment'	To identify individuals or organisations that can support the ILF, in particular members of the Equality Impact Assessment Board, to develop knowledge on this particular protected characteristic.	Jesse Harris

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