

living

May 2014

Welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter for Independent Living Fund (ILF) users

Welcome to our latest edition of living, our newsletter aimed at our users and their friends and families. This edition gives you up to date news on our transfer programme and explains how we are improving our processes.

Since we wrote to you in March to tell you that the Minister of State for Disabled People had announced that the ILF will close on 30 June 2015 we have re-launched our transfer programme.

This programme is designed to make sure that all our users have a face to face visit from one of our independent assessors and an outcome-focused support plan to assist them when talking to their local authority about their future care and support arrangements.

In November last year, we had to stop all our transfer work, this means that some of our users did not have their alignments issues discussed at their visit.

We have therefore started an alignments exercise to make sure that all our users have the same outcome-focussed support plan. Read more about our alignments exercise in the "News" section.

I appreciate that many of you will be concerned about your future care and support, but we feel our programme, which we have designed in partnership with users, will support you through the process as best we can.

James Sanderson
Chief Executive

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Digital by default

As part of the Government drive to be digital by default, we have started a project to send general information about the ILF to our users and other stakeholders by email rather than by post.

To enable us to do this, we need to collect email addresses from our users or their award managers as well as their agreement that they are happy to receive general updates in this way.

If you would like us to send you general information, such as future copies of this newsletter, by email in the future please email Econtact@ilf.gsi.gov.uk

Alignment exercise

If you were visited by our independent assessors between 18 November 2013 and 6 March 2014 you were not asked how you would like to receive and manage your support in the future. This means that you have not had the opportunity to answer some questions about how you would like your care to be provided from 1 July 2015.

To make sure that all our users have the same information in their support plans we are going to write to all these users. We will also send out a form and a guidance booklet which explains each of the questions and provides some example answers or points to think about.

If you feel happy answering these questions, you can fill in the form and send it back to us. If you would like to talk to us about some of the questions, please telephone our dedicated team on 0845 601 8815. If we don't hear from you,

someone from the ILF will phone you to talk you through the questions.

Please remember this does not affect all our users only about 4,000 and we will be in touch if this affects you.

Our website has moved

All organisations that are linked to the Government have been moved to sit within one website GOV.UK

The main reason for moving all Government information to one website is that it provides a simpler, clearer and faster way to get the information you need.

Our website will still be updated regularly with all the latest news and developments so please try and remember to have a browse every now and again.

Users in Scotland

We have recently written to all our users in Scotland to tell them of the plans announced by the Scottish Government on how they will support users when the ILF closes.

ILF users who live in Scotland will continue to be included in our transfer programme as it is still important that they have a face to face visit to discuss their support going forwards and we would still want to give them an outcome-focussed support plan to support the most effective transition to new arrangements.

Policy updates

We have amended a number of policies to help you with the transition to the new arrangements.

Use of funding

This policy allows you to be more flexible in the way you use your ILF funding. If certain conditions are met and your local authority agree, the ILF may allow you to use your ILF funding towards equipment or other services if this will help with the transition of your support in 2015.

If you would like us to consider a request, you can talk to the independent assessor at your transfer review visit. If you have already had your visit, you can talk to your ILF caseworker and they will send you a flexible funding request form which both you and your local authority need to complete.

Once we have considered your request we will write to you with a decision. Until you get this decision you must continue to use your funding in the same way.

Any request for flexible support must:

- be supported by the local authority;
- assist with the transition of support from the ILF to the new arrangements in 2015;
- help you to live independently and meet a need identified in your support plan; and
- be met from your existing funding.

Through our flexible use of funding policy, we have recently agreed for a user to purchase a new chair, to provide postural support. This will assist her family to support her at home and will help ensure she remains fit and well.

Redundancy related payments

This policy was updated in February 2014 to simplify the process for users who would like the ILF to make a contribution towards redundancy costs. We may not be able to meet every request as we still have to meet the rules of our Trust Deed on the maximum amount we can pay, but we can consider contributions towards both redundancy and pay in lieu of notice (PILON).

If you would like to make a request, please talk to your ILF caseworker who will send you the appropriate form to complete. Any payment made is only for the purpose of meeting PILON and redundancy related costs.



Literature updates

We have recently updated our user guide as well the easy read version, both are available on our website.

We have also launched our “closure programme” guide (formally known as “ILF transfer review programme”) which explains the six stage review programme to help make it clear what will happen throughout the transfer from the ILF to the new arrangements and how you can best prepare.

Your questions

A response to some recent questions

Why have I not had my visit yet?

The transfer review visits are in line with our previous timetable, so your visit should be about two years after your last visit. We will write to you to let you know when we have allocated one of our independent assessors to visit you.

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I'm a group one user and I am concerned about you sharing my data with my local authority?

We have recently written to all our group 1 users asking for their permission to share personal data with their local authority as we want to let them know about the support we give you. We will not be able to share this information without your permission. If you don't give us your permission, once the ILF has closed you will need to contact them independently to talk about your care and support needs.

When will my ILF payments stop?

Payments from the ILF will stop on 30 June 2015. After this date we will not be able to make any further payments.

As we normally make payments in arrears, by 30 June 2015 we will make sure that you have all the funding you need to pay for your ILF support up until this date.

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Can I have information from the ILF in different formats?

Yes. We can produce most of our information and literature in Braille, large print, by CD and in alternative languages. Just let your caseworker know how you would like to receive information from us and we will do our best to meet your request. If you would like to receive general information by email please email us at Econtact@ilf.gsi.gov.uk

Want to get involved?

We would like some users to volunteer to help us design the literature we will send out before we close. We want to know what information you think will be the most useful to share and the best way to communicate it. If you would like to be involved in this project please contact our communications team on 0845 6018185 or email communications@ilf.gsi.gov.uk. You can be involved in the project via email or by phone.

Tell us what you think

We are always keen to hear your views. If you have any feedback on this newsletter or if you would like to share your views on your recent review visit, please let us know.

You can write to us, give us a call on 0115 9450737, or email living@ilf.gsi.gov.uk.