In summer 2008 the Minister for Communities and Sport announced Scottish Government funding to support the delivery of independent living for disabled people in Scotland.

Independent living means disabled people having the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as any other citizen – across all areas of their daily life including at home, at work and as members of the community. Independent living asserts that disabled people are the best people to make decisions about what their needs are.

An expert group of disabled people make up the Steering Group of the Independent Living in Scotland (ILiS) Project and this is hosted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

To find out more about the project please visit our website at: www.ilis.org.uk.

You can contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission via our website at: www.equalityhumanrights.com or by contacting the helpline.

**Helpline – Scotland**

Telephone: 0845 604 5510
Textphone: 0845 604 5520
Fax: 0845 604 5530
9am-5pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesday 9am-8pm
For disabled people in Scotland, achieving independent living means enjoying the same freedoms that everyone else expects – choice, control, liberty and the means to participate and make a contribution to Scottish society. Independent living will give disabled people control over those systems and services which support their lives, and ultimately, control over their own lives.

But as this paper makes clear, there are many barriers still to be overcome before this becomes the reality. Our political, social and service structures (including but by no means limited to education, income, welfare, health, transport, planning and housing) have been slow to recognise the entitlements and to meet the needs of disabled people. Disabled people are, after all, entitled to the same rights and access to services as other citizens.

Key to making this a reality is the need to place the principles of independent living firmly at the centre of mainstream public life and support systems. Developed by disabled people some forty years ago, the time to bring these principles and practices of independent living in from the cold of the periphery of social care is overdue.

The Independent Living in Scotland (ILiS) Project provides a unique opportunity to increase momentum to achieve independent living in Scotland. The project will support disabled people to build a strong Independent Living Movement and work to make our public service function better for everyone.

This paper gives us all much to consider. We hope that public sector organisations and service providers are ready for action and willing to work with disabled people to address what still needs to be done to change our society and bring about true equality for disabled people.

Morag Alexander
Scotland Commissioner
Equality Human Rights Commission

Jim Elder-Woodward
Convenor
Independent Living in Scotland Steering Group
This report identifies specific priorities in each of the key areas, which are necessary to make independent living a reality for disabled people. It also highlights barriers and recent developments, along with cross-cutting actions for all sectors and a need to address issues in the overall political, social and service structure.

The suggested actions are summarised below and illustrated in more detail in sections 2 to 5 of this report.

Independent living requires:
• an appropriate environment and transport system
• personal support and services
• opportunities to take part in economic, social and public life

The above areas are implicit in the basic rights of Independent Living, which have been identified by disabled people (see Annex 1), and the overall political, social and service structure must also support independent living.

Although a number of recent developments (to December 2008) in legislation, policy and practice go some way to enabling independent living, many barriers remain for disabled people.

Ready for Action – the political, social and service structure and cross-cutting actions (Section 5)

There is a need to develop an appropriate overall political, social and service structure to enable independent living.

Priorities include:

Strategy
• develop an independent living strategy and vision

Structures
• involve disabled people through in all relevant initiatives and polices and throughout organisations
• develop further national or local structures and links to promote and enable independent living

Policy and legislation
• enforce and implement existing legislation and regulations and identify developments required to ensure independent living
• develop “proofing” of legislation, strategies, policies and services for independent living and impact assessment, and ensure mainstreaming of independent living
• ensure that key national and local Government strategies and initiatives are consistent with promoting independent living
• ensure that any areas relating to independent living and reserved to the UK Parliament are also considered

Awareness and attitudes
• promote a “shared understanding” of independent living and good practice for policy makers and practitioners
• develop and deliver disability equality training for staff that takes account of the principles of independent living
• address negative attitudes towards disabled people and their entitlement to independent living

Services
• work to support and build the capacity among user-led organisations working for independent living
• develop, procure and deliver public services which are consistent with independent living
• develop effective service standards, outcomes, performance measurement and scrutiny of progress

Funding
• identify the costs and benefits of independent living, funding requirements and opportunities, and promote as an investment, with funding to support developments
• ensure that the needs of all disabled people are considered when developing legislation and policy and during equality impact assessments
Ready for action – Environment and transport (Section 2)
There is a need to develop an accessible built environment; affordable, accessible and integrated transport; and appropriate, affordable and accessible housing, with access to real choice.

Priorities include:
Environment
• support the work of access panels and promote well-designed neighbourhoods
• develop incentives to advocate good practice across all sectors

Transport
• promote early implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005
• promote the development and sustainability of multi-modal transport provision and demand-responsive transport
• promote local accessible transport measures
• enforce parking bays reserved for Blue Badge holders
• improve information and support, and develop travel training for disabled people
• develop and or extend concessionary travel

Ready for action – housing (Section 2)
There is a need to develop barrier-free housing of all types and require all public sector and new housing to meet an agreed standard; and require a higher proportion of all new housing to be built to wheelchair-accessible standards
• end the process of removing adaptations, develop adaptations services and provide appropriate funding
• continue to develop low-cost home ownership schemes
• improve information and support
• develop accessible housing registers
• establish a more accessible system for allocating social housing which takes account of disabled people’s independent living

Ready for action – personal support and services (Section 3)
There is a need to develop access to equipment, personal assistance and health as well as information and appropriate communication, peer advocacy and support.

Priorities include:
Equipment, personal assistance and health
• promote “joined-up”, holistic, self-directed, rights-based, personalised provision (across all relevant services)
• develop a reliable process for early identification of those at risk of crisis, and promote early intervention
• promote self-management of long-term conditions
• develop a framework of minimum entitlements
• promote self-directed support, appropriate infrastructure, joint working across sectors including a strategic and consistent approach, and consider individual budgets for disabled people to ensure independent control
• promote good working conditions for personal assistants to disabled people

Information and communication, peer advocacy and support
• identify current user-led information, advice, advocacy and support, and develop provision across Scotland
• improve experiences at transition, for example between school and further or higher education or training.

Ready for action – economic, social and public life (Section 4)
There is a need to develop opportunities for, and access to: employment; income; education training and learning; and other aspects of life, such as leisure activities, social and public life.

Priorities include:
Employment and income
• develop and establish a national framework for supported employment of disabled people
• address barriers to keeping a job when an impairment is acquired, or deteriorates

Education, training and other aspects of social and public life
• develop and improve information and support with employment, education and training, volunteering, access to services and benefit entitlements
• improve transition planning and support
• develop opportunities for work experience, training, participation and volunteering
• improve protection from harassment, and reporting, prosecution and monitoring of hate crime
1. Introduction

What is “independent living”?

The definition adopted by the ILiS project is: “Independent living means disabled people of all ages having the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens at home, at work, and in the community. It does not mean living by yourself or fending for yourself. It means rights to practical assistance and support to participate in society and live an ordinary life”.

But to achieve this, key areas of everyday life need to be as accessible to disabled people as they are to other members of the community. These key areas are:

• the environment and transport
• personal support and services
• economic, social and public life
• the overall political, social and service structure

The areas outlined above are consistent with the basic rights of Independent Living developed by disabled people (Annex 1). At the heart of the promotion of independent living are the views of disabled people and the philosophies and development of the Independent Living Movement (Annex 2).

To help realise this agenda, the Scottish Government announced, in June 2008, the provision of funding to support the development of independent living in Scotland. As a result, the “Independent Living in Scotland” (ILiS) project is being hosted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) until 2011. The project aims to:

• strengthen and develop the disabled people’s Independent Living Movement in Scotland
• support the involvement of disabled people in shaping the Scottish Government’s approach to independent living
• support representatives of the Independent Living Movement to advise the ILiS project

The project’s Steering Group, which commissioned this report, comprises members of the Independent Living Movement in Scotland, with representatives from a range of user-led organisations of disabled people. The report aims to:

• summarise the key issues relevant to independent living in Scotland
• identify relevant developments and actions
• identify priorities and options for future action highlighted by disabled people

This report considers in turn each of the key areas highlighted above, drawing on reports and information from organisations and focuses on the experiences of disabled people themselves. For each of the key areas the report highlights the barriers, legislative and policy developments and disabled people’s key priorities for action.

2. The environment and transport

Independent living requires: an environment that is accessible (including streets, pavements, shops and offices); a transport system that is affordable, accessible and integrated; and access to a choice of housing that is appropriate, affordable and accessible.

2.1 Barriers

Many factors make getting into and around buildings and public places difficult for disabled people. Some buildings pre-date current legislation relating to accessibility for disabled people: some structures and environments are not subject to building standards. It is rare for new buildings in Scotland to be totally accessible and funding for improvements to existing buildings can be limited.

Disabled people have had limited involvement in planning the built environment. Not only is there variation in the coverage and capacity of access panels, and their involvement in local work, there can also be little take-up of disabled people’s expertise and a low value placed on their input. For their part, professionals involved in planning and developing the built environment can exhibit a lack of understanding, inappropriate attitudes to enabling access and a focus on meeting only the minimum standards required.

Disabled people do not have equal access to transport. In fact, many vehicles and facilities are physically inaccessible. There is variation in the provision of demand-responsive transport; costs can be high and concessionary fares schemes limited. There are also gaps in access to information, travel training and support for travel. Disabled people are sometimes uncertain that their needs will be met, unaware of access improvements or unaware of the services available to them. Some services are not provided at the times required, and the need to book assistance for journeys in advance can make travel difficult. Disabled people can also encounter inappropriate attitudes from staff and others, and there is considerable abuse of and lack of enforcement of reserved parking bays.

A lack of accessible and affordable housing means disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to live in social rented housing, or in housing which is of a poorer standard and or unsuitable for the needs of the disabled person. There can be conflicting policy objectives and a range of problems with adapting housing to disabled people’s needs, such as delays, funding, information, waiting times, charging and not addressing problems fully. There is a lack of information about housing needs and provision (including advice, support and matching people to appropriate housing), and a lack of awareness and inappropriate attitudes by some providers. The social housing application process is complex to negotiate and therefore inaccessible to many disabled people, including people with learning disabilities.
2.2 Legislative and policy developments

Some of the most relevant legislative and policy developments relating to the role of the environment and transport in independent living include:

- The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act (2006); PAN 78 on Inclusive Design and proposals for certain planning applications to be accompanied by a design and access statement
- Regulation (EC) No 1107/2006, providing disabled people with new rights travelling through airports
- Major changes to the Blue Badge parking scheme (2008)
- A Disabled Persons’ Parking Places Bill recently introduced into the Scottish Parliament
- Concessionary travel changes in Scotland
- The Housing (Scotland) Act (2006); the Homelessness (Scotland) Act (2003); and the Housing (Scotland) Act (2006)
- Revised Building Standards requiring (from 2007) that all new dwellings in Scotland, where reasonably practicable, must be designed to a ‘liveability’ standard

Work to include issues for disabled people is evident in policy documents such as: the Transport Strategy for Scotland; transport strategies and local housing strategies; and Strategic Housing Investment Plans (which are being fully implemented from 2009-10). Guidance exists (e.g. in relation to wheelchair-accessible housing) and there has been some progress delivering disability awareness training for staff in key organisations. Consultation and involvement mechanisms for considering relevant issues for disabled people have been implemented by many organisations, with the use of access panels to provide advice on the built environment and the Scottish Disability Equality Forum funded to provide support to local access panels. The Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland continues to consider transport issues.

Recent improvements to transport services include a national agreement to provide a seamless rail service to disabled people, with a national booking service and a 10-year programme to make stations more accessible. Changes to concessionary travel were made in 2006, and the Community Transport Association was awarded development funding in 2008.

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard in 2004 improved social rented housing (although the standard does not include accessibility), while a Supporting People programme (from 2003) provided housing support to vulnerable people. Some disabled people are eligible for the “Carbon Emission Reduction Target” home-insulation programme and the Low-cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT) shared equity scheme.

The Scottish Government invested in providing alarms and other technology in homes to support independent living. Specialist information has also been developed through Traveline, Disabled Persons’ Housing Services and Centres for Inclusive Living (CILs), while information on accessibility of property is one criterion identified in Home Reports.

2.3 Priorities for action

Disabled people have identified a number of priorities for action, including to: enforce and implement existing legislation and regulations; identify further legislative developments required; promote the involvement of disabled people on all relevant bodies, and in the development and implementation of policies; work with relevant organisations to ensure that key strategic documents and initiatives are consistent with promoting independent living; develop disability equality training for planning, transport and housing staff; ensure that issues reserved to the UK Parliament relating to transport are addressed; and ensure that the needs of all disabled people are considered.

Specific actions include to:

- Support and promote the work of access panels and promote well-designed neighbourhoods, with access to all aspects of the environment
- Ensure implementation of the DDA and promote early implementation of adjustments (e.g. accelerating station improvements)
- Promote the development of accessible multi-modal transport provision and demand-responsive transport
- Promote local transport measures (e.g. a requirement that taxis must be accessible)
- Enforce reserved parking bays
- Improve transport information and support, and develop travel training for disabled people
- Develop concessionary travel and extend the free travel scheme
- Develop barrier-free housing of all types; require public sector housing to meet an agreed standard; require new housing to be built to an agreed standard; and require a higher proportion to be built to wheelchair-accessible standards
- End the process of removing adaptations from homes; develop adaptations services; and provide appropriate funding
- Continue to develop low-cost home-ownership schemes
- Improve housing information and support and develop accessible housing registers
- Develop a more accessible and equitable system for allocating social housing which takes account of independent living for disabled people
- Develop incentives to promote good practice, such as a perhaps creating a “national accessible design award scheme”
Personal support and services are essential to enable independent living and include: access to equipment, personal assistance and health services (with appropriate ways to purchase community-care services, such as self-directed support, previously direct payments); and access to independent information and appropriate communication, the support of peers and advocates.

3.1 Barriers
The provision of health and social care services does not always meet disabled people’s needs, with inequalities evident in health outcomes. Examples of problems in this area include: a lack of facilities in hospitals; variation in the delivery and standards of personal and domestic care; timing of provision; expectations and needs of unpaid and ‘non-professional’ carers; lack of provision for specific groups of disabled people (e.g. those with learning disabilities); problems at transition points in people’s lives such as leaving home or full time education; some disabled people funding their own care packages and consequently facing hardship; and a lack of joined-up, holistic provision. Some staff in health and social care settings have limited knowledge of disability issues and there can be an emphasis on the “medical model” of disability, or a resistance to the principles of independent living, such as a lack of focus on “rights”, and people’s needs being addressed in ways that do not enable choice and control. Financial pressures on the public sector and increasing demand for services may restrict provision.

There is variation between different local authority areas in the availability and implementation of self-directed support, and many disabled people do not access this. A range of problems exist, and these relate to a lack of: infrastructure; support; promotion and “championing” of independent living, willingness; flexibility; and resources for self-directed support. There can be problems moving between local authority areas, with contributions to packages of care, and with negative staff attitudes. There are also difficulties for disabled people as purchasers of care or employers of personal assistants. Concerns have been raised about the potential impact of the new, and much more restrictive, Independent Living Fund (ILF) funding criteria, and about implementing individual budgets.

Gaps exist in information, advice, advocacy and support available to disabled people, with no comprehensive network of user-led organisations, a lack of capacity and concerns about future funding of the few organisations that exist. In addition, there can be insufficient awareness of, or access to, support amongst disabled people. There can also be an absence of co-ordination between information providers, and a lack of links between user-led organisations of people with learning disabilities, mental-health issues, sensory and physical impairments.

3.2 Legislative and policy developments
Some of the most relevant legislative and policy developments relating to the role of personal support and services in independent living include:

**Legislative**
- the DDA (1995 and 2005)
- Community Care (Direct Payments) Act (1996)
- Registration of Care (Scotland) Act (2001)
- Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act (2002)
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act (2000)
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act (2003)
- National Health Service Reform (Scotland) Act (2004)
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act (2007)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act (2007)

**Policy**
- “Delivering a Healthy Scotland – Meeting the Challenge” (2006)

Mechanisms have developed for considering or delivering some aspects of provision, with an Equalities and Planning Directorate established NHS Health Scotland which is taking forward the Fair for All – Disability Initiative. The Joint Improvement Team of the NHS is working on a number of areas relevant to independent living. Community Health Partnerships have been established, with a move to single shared assessments and enabling people to live in their own homes in the community. An initiative entitled ‘Better Together’ aims to use patient experience feedback to improve NHS services.

There have been reviews of issues such as NHS wheelchair services, the needs of unpaid carers, and services to younger disabled people. Following the review of wheelchair services, the Scottish Government has set aside funding to implement the recommendations. Statutory guidance was issued in 2007 to take forward a Sensory Impairment Action Plan, and additional funding in previous years supported the implementation of delayed discharge action plans. Other developments have included the provision of free personal and nursing care and cuts in prescription charges, with planned abolition in 2011.

Self-directed support gives disabled people the choice to purchase support individually but there are also Independent Living Fund grants for personal care. New guidance for self-directed support was issued in July 2007, setting out what local authorities are expected to fund, including a local independent and user-led support service.
Support has been provided to Self-Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) and the Scottish Personal Assistant Employers’ Network (SPALEN). SDSS has been established to provide peer support to new and existing support organisations, and a guide aimed at disabled people directing their own support was issued in March 2008.

Other developments have been made in some user-led services, such as Centres for Integrated or Inclusive Living (CILs). The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance published principles and standards and a code of practice for independent advocacy in 2008.

3.3 Priorities for action
The key priorities for action in personal support and services identified by disabled people mirror those in the previous section, with a need to: enforce and implement relevant legislation and policy, and identify developments required; involve disabled people in all relevant bodies and developments; ensure that documents and initiatives relating to health, social care, information and advocacy, self-directed support and wider access to services and support are consistent with promoting independent living; develop training for NHS, social care and other relevant staff; ensure that issues which effect disabled people are considered.

Specific actions include to:
- promote joined-up, holistic, self-directed, rights-based, personalised provision across all relevant services
- develop a plan for early identification of those at risk of crisis, and promote early intervention
- promote access to self-management of long-term conditions
- develop a framework of minimum entitlements
- develop specific initiatives (e.g. health checks; holistic and self-assessment; one-stop access to adaptations; handyperson schemes; support for carers; development of Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network (SPALEN))
- promote self-directed support, an appropriate infrastructure that promotes joint working, and a strategic and consistent approach
- consider issues relating to individual budgets (including ensuring that they complement, rather than replace, direct payments and are implemented in an empowering way)
- promote good working conditions for personal assistants
- map current user-led information, advice, advocacy and support, and develop provision in all areas which is accessible and effective.
- develop work to improve experiences of disabled people at transition points in their lives

Independent living requires opportunities for disabled people to participate fully in economic, social and public life, including: employment and access to an appropriate income; education, training and learning; and other aspects of life, such as access to leisure activities, social and public life.

4.1 Barriers
Disabled people are less likely to be in work and more likely to be dependent on benefits than non-disabled people. They can face discrimination in recruitment (particularly in economically turbulent times) or in the workplace, and can have difficulty sustaining work as a result of barriers. Young disabled people are more likely not to be in education, employment or training. There can be tension between policies, barriers in some employment-focused support, working practices and schemes, gaps in information for disabled people and employers and inappropriate attitudes amongst some employers.

Disabled people also experience financial inequality, with low income and benefit levels (and anomalies in benefits), high costs arising from items and services such as adaptations, social care, mobility and communication aids, and often low or no savings. They are therefore more likely to live in poverty than non-disabled people, and fuel poverty among disabled people is a problem.

Disabled people have poorer education and training experiences and outcomes than non-disabled people, and there can be problems caused by physical access,

In public life, disabled people have limited involvement in positions of authority and hold fewer public appointments. They are also less likely to be involved in volunteering. A range of factors can make it difficult for them to become involved in community, leisure, social and public life, such as: a lack of physical access; gaps in support and information; inappropriate attitudes; lack of funding; and the use of health and safety to exclude disabled people. There have also been a number of high-profile cases of hate crime against disabled people.

4.2 Legislative and policy developments
Some of the most relevant legislative and policy developments relating to the role of economic and social participation in economic and social participation in
independent living include:

**Legislation**
- Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act (2000)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)

**Policy**
- “Workforce Plus” Scottish Executive (2006)
- “Partnership Matters” Scottish Executive (updated 2007)
- “Diversity Delivers” Scottish Government (2008)

Mechanisms for considering relevant issues have developed, including: a Supported Employment Task Group; a disabled student stakeholder group hosted by Scottish Government; and “Equality Forward” established by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council.

There have also been initiatives to provide employment support to disabled people and to improve education and training access, while the UK Government, through its Independent Living Strategy, has made a number of commitments relevant to employment support and benefits.

Specific initiatives and changes to some services have been made to promote the employability of disabled people, including the “Equality Matters in Business” project hosted by Scottish Enterprise. Disabled young people are increasingly included in mainstream schools, and there is a greater recognition of the importance of support for disabled young people during transition points.

The Scottish Government is committed to social justice and to social inclusion and has done work to enable communities to develop. The Government will identify different funding available to sport and cultural organisations, ensuring equal provision for disabled people, and has provided increased funding for disability sport (2007-8). Fuel poverty support has been extended to some families with disabled children, and extra funding has been allocated for non-medical personal-helper allowances for disabled students. The Electoral Commission has given funding to enable deaf and deafblind people to take a more active role in Scotland’s political process.

**4.3 Priorities for action**

Disabled people have identified priorities for action, which again echo those in other areas, and include to: enforce and implement relevant legislation and policy and identify new developments; involve disabled people in all relevant bodies and developments; ensure that key strategic documents are consistent with promoting independent living in areas such as employment and enterprise, education, lifelong learning and training, funding, sport, leisure and arts, public appointments, community safety initiatives, poverty and deprivation; develop disability equality training for relevant staff in these areas; ensure that reserved issues in employment, training, benefit reform, income and poverty are considered; and ensure that issues for all disabled people are addressed.

Specific actions include to:
- develop and improve information and support with employment, education and training, volunteering, access to services and benefit entitlements
- improve transition planning and support, and develop mechanisms for positive transitions
- develop national and local opportunities for work experience, training, participation and volunteering
- improve protection from harassment, and reporting, prosecution and monitoring of hate crime

**Ready for Action**
- develop and improve information and support with employment, education and training, volunteering, access to services and benefit entitlements
- improve transition planning and support, and develop mechanisms for positive transitions
- develop national and local opportunities for work experience, training, participation and volunteering
- improve protection from harassment, and reporting, prosecution and monitoring of hate crime
To achieve independent living, there must be an appropriate overall political, social and service structure. This must include: national and local mechanisms to consider independent living issues; “mainstreaming” of independent living in legislation, policy and service delivery; involvement of disabled people at all stages; accessible, coherent, co-ordinated services that give disabled people choice and control; appropriate attitudes and behaviour towards disabled people; and appropriate national and local funding and resources.

5.1 Barriers

Independent living is undermined by the lack of recognition of its benefits and the rights of disabled people to have control over their own lives. It is therefore not visible in some policies, strategies, legislation and services. As noted, there are gaps in some services and in the capacity of user-led organisations, as well as problems with access to some services and limited involvement of disabled people. Practices can be fragmented and there is often little meaningful measurement of performance against factors relevant to independent living.

Different groups can face different barriers. These groups include older and younger disabled people; disabled parents; disabled people from ethnic minority and other equality communities and groups; people with communication support needs; people with learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorder; people with Alzheimer’s disease; people with mental-health problems; people with “low-incidence disabilities”; and people with other specific impairments.

These groups may require tailored support and services. In addition, some disabled people experience inappropriate attitudes and inadequate responses from service providers and other community members. There has also been a lack of resources to support independent living and inappropriate use of existing resources, with variation in provision, and complex funding arrangements. There has also been a lack of focus on the economic benefits of independent living.

5.2 Legislative and policy developments

A number of developments have addressed longstanding problems for disabled people; some of the most relevant include:

Legislation
• the DDA (1995 and 2005); specific regulations relating to Scotland; and the Equality Act (2006)
• recognition of independent living by the Council of Europe and European Commission
• the Disabled Persons (Independent Living) Bill (although it is not currently intended to proceed with this)

Key reports
• including those published by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (2005); Scottish Parliament (2006); Scottish Executive (2006); Disability Rights Commission (2007)

Other developments
• a UK Independent Living Review and Independent Living Strategy (2008), and a commitment by the Scottish and UK Governments to independent living, supported by funding
• the UK Government signing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities in 2007 (but ratification is still required as this report goes to publication)
• structural developments to date including the establishment of a UK national Office for Disability Issues (2005); a national forum called “Equality 2025” (2006); a cross-governmental group; and a reference group in Scotland (2008)
• key organisations are committed to equality, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was established in 2007. Looking to the future, the Scottish Government has made a commitment to a Public Sector Equality Forum, and intends to arrange a discussion of independent living among public sector leaders, as well as to work with local authorities

In addition to the above, there has also been a commitment to public service reform, and an emphasis on user choice and control, as well as on engaging the community and including disabled people. Reports have been prepared on linguistic access and the Scottish Government has continued core funding for Scottish Accessible Information Forum (SAIF). The Scottish Government is committed to strengthening hate-crime legislation and tackling negative attitudes.

Public awareness has been raised through the UK Government’s “Images of Disability” and Scotland’s “see me” campaign.

5.3 Priorities for action

Priorities for action in the overall structure show a need for: better enforcement of existing legislation, review and development of legislation and policy; involvement of disabled people; appropriate joined-up policy; and the development, procurement and delivery of services consistent with the principles of independent living; staff and public understanding; and consideration of issues for all disabled people.
Specific actions include to:

- develop an independent living strategy and vision for Scotland
- develop further national or local structures and links to promote and enable independent living (e.g. local partnerships and strategies; inclusion of disabled people on particular groups)
- develop “proofing” of legislation, strategies, policies and services for independent living and impact assessment, and ensure mainstreaming of independent living
- promote a “shared understanding” of independent living and good practice (e.g. in joined-up, client-led, holistic assessment and provision) for policy makers and practitioners through guidance and training
- build capacity among national and local user-led organisations
- address negative attitudes towards disabled people
- develop effective service standards, outcomes, performance measurement and scrutiny of progress
- identify the costs and benefits of independent living in Scotland, key funding requirements and opportunities, and promote independent living as an investment, with the provision of funding to support appropriate developments.

6. Links to the Scottish Government’s objectives

The benefits of independent living to disabled people, the economy and wider society are evident. There are also clear links to the Scottish Government’s strategic objectives, which further illustrates the need for independent living.

The Scottish Government has 5 strategic objectives, and a single overarching purpose, which is:

‘To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.’

The 5 strategic objectives are commonly known as: “Wealthier and Fairer”, “Healthier”, Safer and Stronger”, “Smarter” and “Greener”.

While the links between independent living and each of these could form the subject of an entirely separate report, this report sets out many of the key priorities for disabled people at this time and makes plain the link between the strategic objectives and independent living.

The Scottish Government also has 15 “national outcomes”, designed to help identify policy and spending priorities. While none refers specifically to independent living, most are relevant. One relates to the creation of more effective public services, and this has been taken forward at a local level through, for example, the removal of ring-fencing from much local authority funding and the introduction of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs). SOAs allow local authorities to define what they will contribute to the national outcomes, taking account of local needs and opportunities.

The achievement of independent living at a local level will therefore rely on the necessary actions being identified as a priority in SOAs.
The ILiS project presents a clear opportunity to strengthen the Independent Living Movement in Scotland and to promote independent living in Scotland.

This report has identified the key requirements of independent living, with many issues requiring action for independent living to become a reality for disabled people. It has also highlighted areas identified by disabled people as being central to enabling choice, control and freedom. These are the key strands of independent living, and their priorities should help to inform the work of the ILiS Steering Group and the ILiS project. The achievement of independent living would undeniably change the lives of many disabled people in Scotland.

Annex 1: The basic rights of Independent Living

The basic rights originated in the early 1980s, when they were known as the 7 Needs of Independent Living. They then developed into the 12 Needs and, latterly, the term ‘needs’ was replaced with ‘rights’. The basic rights continue to evolve and respond to the needs of all disabled people.

- Information
- Peer support
- Accessible environment
- Accessible transport
- Barrier-free housing
- Suitable equipment
- Personal assistance
- Education
- Income
- Employment
- Health
- Peer Advocacy
- Communication
Annex 2: The philosophy and development of independent living

The philosophical basis of independent living

Independent living is not simply about enabling disabled people to live in their own homes, or providing appropriate social care. It is a wider concept, enabling disabled people to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, giving them control of all aspects of their lives.

It is about ensuring that appropriate support and services are in place, so that disabled people can make their own decisions and have the same opportunities as non-disabled people to take part in all aspects of community life.

Independent living recognises that everyone can express their own choices, and is linked closely to citizenship rights and responsibilities. The definition of independent living adopted by the ILiS project is at Section 1, Introduction, of this report.

The development of independent living

A range of reasons has led to a growing recognition of the need for independent living, including:

- the growth of an Independent Living Movement amongst disabled people and campaigning work to highlight key issues
- growing evidence of the benefits of independent living to disabled people and to society as a whole (including enhanced individual well-being; links to key public policy goals; economic and social benefits)
- a recognition of the link between independent living and human rights.

The growth of the Independent Living Movement

One of the main features of the development of independent living has been the “ownership” of the concept by disabled people and the development of the Independent Living Movement.

The Movement in Scotland has evolved from that started in the USA in the 1960s. The Movement began in the UK in the late 1970s (coming to Scotland in the early 1980s), as disabled people became increasingly frustrated with the lack of control over their own lives. Disabled people began to call for the adoption of the philosophy, principles and approaches of independent living, so that services and support provision would meet their requirements more appropriately.

The early focus in the UK was on enabling disabled people to live in the community, rather than residential care. As part of the growth of the Movement, Centres for Independent Living also developed. Run by disabled people, these offer peer support and services. Two Centres have been established in Scotland (in Edinburgh and Glasgow), and there are also other local user-led support organisations and a range of disabled people’s organisations with a campaigning role in Scotland. The role of people with learning disabilities in the Independent Living Movement should also be acknowledged.

The Independent Living Movement is led by disabled people, and is firmly rooted in their views of the way forward and a recognition of their expertise. The Movement has also, however, faced continuing obstacles, with funding and capacity problems, as well as difficulties in combining the need for campaigning work and the requirements of delivering user-led services.

Despite these challenges, the Independent Living Movement is continuing to develop, alongside other changes. In early 2008, a “Scottish Alliance for Independent Living” was formed, bringing together key members of the Movement, four organisations for disabled people and the EHRC.

The need to continue to increase the capacity of disabled people and their organisations to take this agenda forward is acknowledged, along with all of the implications for user-led involvement and support. It is well recognised that this requires work in areas such as leadership, disability awareness, organisational development and governance, management issues, and a general focus on other capacity issues discussed in the report. These developments are part of the overall approach to promote independent living in Scotland.

The implications of independent living

The promotion of independent living affects how disabled people’s needs are identified and the manner in which support and services are provided. The Disability Rights Commission (2007) noted that:

“The concept of independent living embraces all aspects of life… the existence or absence of barriers to engaging in these areas of life will determine whether disabled people are able to be active citizens.”

It is necessary, therefore, to address barriers in all relevant areas and to ensure approaches to provision are individualised and rights-based, thus recognising the diverse experiences of all disabled people. It is not sufficient to provide “equal treatment”; it is essential to remove existing barriers to opportunity, and to provide additional resources, where required, to address them.
This report drew upon the range of material in the bibliography of the report ‘Independent Living in Scotland – A Policy Scoping Study’ (Disability Rights Commission, 2007) alongside new published material and website information.

A full list of the sources for this are included in the electronic version of this report on the ILiS website. Please visit www.ilis.co.uk.