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**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL WORK SCOTLAND**

# **SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT PROJECT**

## **ABOUT SOCIAL WORK SCOTLAND**

Social Work Scotland is the professional leadership body for the social work and social care professions in Scotland. Our main aim is to promote the unique contribution and role of professional social work within an integrated context, balancing the responsibilities to promote social justice and empowerment with those of public protection. The key objectives of our organisation are to influence and shape legislation and policy relating to social work and social care, to champion research and evidence informed approaches, to provide professional leadership and increase leadership capacity across social work and social care, to support the development of the social work and social care workforce, and to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services.

Social Work Scotland supports a number of focused committees bringing together strategic and operational leaders from across Scotland. The Children and Families Standing Committee supports partnerships across sectors and with children, young people and families to improve outcomes for children. The Adult Social Care Standing Committee provides the voice of adult social work leadership and is committed to promoting personalised support, social justice and protection for Scotland’s vulnerable adults. The committee is engaged in partnership with Scottish Government and COSLA in the reform programme for Adult Social Care in Scotland, and hosts a national practice network supporting the implementation of Self-directed Support (SDS) across all client groups.

To date, Social Work Scotland has delivered several pieces of work to support the implementation of the Social Care (Self-directed Support)(Scotland) Act 2013, including guidance to support the Act and the development of training and self-evaluation guidance. Recently, Social Work Scotland has added to the growing evidence base around SDS with research into what best practice looks like[[1]](#footnote-1) and a focus on best practice in procurement[[2]](#footnote-2).

## **BACKGROUND**

The Scottish health and social care system is currently experiencing significant change as it moves towards an integrated and person-centred model of service provision. Self-directed Support (SDS) is a key driver of this change as it provides important legal rights for people to exercise greater choice and control over how their assessed needs are met.

Over the past decade, through research, audit and feedback from professionals and service users, Scotland has developed a rich insight into what stimulates and sustains best practice. We have identified (and observed progress towards) the development of more relational and outcomes-focused practice, built on concerted, long-term investment in local processes and protocols. This has to be allied with strategic workforce development which ensures the right mix of staff are in place and the right training and learning available. And all activities and strategies underpinned by strong, adaptive leadership, which empowers and enables local staff.

However, research also shows that there has been a slowing of pace and inconsistency in its form across different geographical regions and population groups. What we know of people’s experience of SDS reflects the challenges faced by local authorities and partners in tackling the scale and complexity of change that the SDS agenda requires. This is because SDS requires active engagement with a range of complex issues, including the nature of current social work management and practice, commissioning and procurement, financial and legal practice, all within a constrained financial reality and with serious workforce issues, such as recruitment and retention.

## **PROJECT OUTLINE**

In the following sections of this paper we outline a programme of activity aimed at making a significant contribution to the Scottish Government’s Adult Social Care reform programme, and related aims in children’s services, leading to systematic improvement in how Self-directed Support is delivered across Scotland. The Self-directed support strategy 2010-2020: implementation plan 2019-2021 was published on 12 June 2019, and forms the context for the project.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This Scottish Government project, hosted by Social Work Scotland, has funding in place up until March 2021. The project funding supports four posts: a Development Manager, two Project Officers and a Project Administrator.

Four key areas have been identified by Scottish Government as critical to the next stage of the Self-directed Support implementation (SDS Change Map - Appendix A), and these form the basis for the project:

* Senior decision makers and systems create the culture and conditions for choice and control of social care support
* Workers enable and empower people to make informed decisions about their social care support
* Workers in all aspects of the delivery of social care support exercise the appropriate values, skills, knowledge and confidence
* People have choice and control of their social care support

In the course of the project, it will be necessary to agree a nuanced and detailed description of each of these statement to ensure that we are working towards consistent and achievable expectations.

Project Deliverables:

The Project Team, working closely with Scottish Government, local authority, voluntary sector and other relevant partners, and making use of Social Work Scotland’s extensive networks (including Chief Social Work Officers), will lead a range of activities designed to give renewed impetus to SDS implementation. The project team will be supported by the Head of Strategy and Development and other SWS staff, and will link with local SDS leads and other key officers from across Scotland on the following:

1. A shared framework model offering a detailed, coherent and systematic map for the delivery of Self-directed Support. This will firmly link existing written guidance to professional practice on the ground. It is anticipated that the framework will include consideration of resource allocation systems, models of assessment and delegation of decision-making.
2. Engaging with local leadership and SDS leads in order to actively facilitate the sharing of knowledge and good practice across local partnerships;
3. Development of effective approaches to creative commissioning at a local level along with national third sector partners.
4. Support to assist local implementers to personalise their processes and systems drawing on existing local expertise and insight from implementation best practice.

We believe that local partnerships have made concerted and significant efforts to implement SDS and have delivered important beneficial changes for individuals in local communities. But to realise the intention and ambition of the project, a further boost in implementation capacity is needed, mandated through the Adult Social Care Reform Programme.

The project activities are summarised in the following table.

| Activities, rationale and purpose | Project outcomes linked to SDS Change Map[[4]](#footnote-4) | Link to SDS National Strategic Outcomes[[5]](#footnote-5) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Working with partnership areas to understand barriers, enablers and issues  Aim to gain a nuanced understanding of live systemic issues at local level across children & families and adult social work.  Local areas will require to focus on different challenges. | Senior decision makers and systems create the culture and conditions for choice and control of social care support | Systems are more widely understood, flexible and less complex |
| Seeking strategic solutions to operational issues  From understanding the practical barriers on the ground, work with national and local partners to identify strategic solutions which are implementable at local level.  Promoting creative and diverse approaches to commissioning SDS options and addressing implications for regulation of care and non-regulated provision. | Senior decision makers and systems create the culture and conditions for choice and control of social care support | Systems are more widely understood, flexible and less complex  Commissioning is more flexible and responsive |
| Providing partnership areas with evidence-based advice and assistance  Draw on available evidence, inspection findings, collective expertise from practice networks, and the expertise of national partners to provide coherent, relevant and timely input into local partnership areas. | Workers in all aspects of the delivery of social care support exercise the appropriate values, skills, knowledge and confidence  Workers enable and empower people to make informed decisions about their social care support | Supported people have more choice and control  Workers are more confident and valued |
| Facilitating and promoting knowledge exchange, and disseminating good practice across professional groups  Providing active support to link local partnerships in learning together.  Provide a platform for national dissemination of developments from the project and input from other national programmes. | Workers receive clear and consistent information, training and capacity building in supporting and delivering self-directed approaches | Workers are more confident and valued |
| Facilitating clear communication about the project and the project outputs to the wider public  With partners, ensuring the availability of a range of clearly understood communications promoting SDS to the wider public, emphasising SDS as strengths-based approach to meeting assessed needs. | People have access to good quality information, advice and practical assistance in understanding creative support options and how they might work | Supported people have more choice and control |
| Identifying professional development needs  Reviewing and revising SDS training course and supportive materials available to workers, and working with partners to develop ongoing opportunities for professional development. | Workers receive clear and consistent information, training and capacity building in supporting and delivering self-directed approaches | Workers are more confident and valued |
| Identifying resource constraints and workforce demands, and enablers of good practice  Understanding how the financial climate and workforce issues impact on the implementation of SDS and communicating these to the Adult Social Care reform programme; and seeking where possible to find solutions to issues. | Senior decision makers and systems create the culture and conditions for choice and control of social care support | Systems are more widely understood, flexible and less complex |
| Development of an SDS Implementation Framework  Bringing together learning and good practice from local and national partners to create a functional, easily understood strengths-based framework which can be used flexibly to meet local need and circumstance.  Seek formal national adoption of the framework. | Senior decision makers and systems create the culture and conditions for choice and control of social care support  Workers enable and empower people to make informed decisions about their social care support  Workers in all aspects of the delivery of social care support exercise the appropriate values, skills, knowledge and confidence  People have choice and control of their social care support | Systems are more widely understood, flexible and less complex  Commissioning is more flexible and responsive  Supported people have more choice and control  Workers are more confident and valued |

## **RISK AND ISSUES**

While Scottish Government and its partners remain committed to achieving the policy intention of Self-directed Support, the current climate does present significant barriers to ambitious transformational change. We have identified key areas which will be considered during project delivery.

* Tensions and conflicts between different, extant policy, legislation and change agendas.
* Fear and hostility to the SDS policy from key stakeholders, whose power is potentially undermined by successful implementation.
* Resource gaps may be identified that cannot currently be met.
* Workforce availability might be such that personalised options are not practically achievable in some geographic locations.
* Transformation fatigue: many of the individuals involved in this project will also be involved in other transformation projects. It is difficult to attend to many adaptive problems simultaneously.

Further 'sticking points’ are likely to be identified in the course of the project, and the Project Team will help surface these risks and issues through the governance structure developed for the Adult Social Care reform programme (of which this project is part). Through generating a clear understanding of the current complex landscape, the project will aim to identify pragmatic solutions utilising the collective experience to date. Whilst it may not be possible for significant risks and issues to be mitigated within the project, the project will highlight those areas of change which the project team and advisors believe to be necessary to the successful implementation of SDS, engaging with other key policy areas such as workforce to influence emerging agendas.

1. **GOVERNANCE**

The project team will report in to the Adult Social Care reform programme through the Programme Delivery Team, People-led Policy Forum and Leadership Alliance, and will make clear links to related structures in Children and Families and Justice policy areas.

Crucial to its approach is regular engagement with an advisory group of key national stakeholders (including Scottish Government, SDSS, CCPS, In Control, HIS, HSCS, Scottish Care, Care Inspectorate, SSSC) who can actively work with the project team in an iterative manner to ensure a national understanding of SDS across the wider partnerships of education, health and justice, and share learning from other SDS-focussed programmes, and who can help understand and tackle the remaining structural hurdles to effective implementation.

## **APPENDIX A – Self-directed Support Change Map**[[6]](#footnote-6)

1. <https://socialworkscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BestPracticeandLocalAuthorityProgressinSelf-DirectedSupport.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://socialworkscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Self-directed-Support-and-Prcocurement-Best-Practice.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/self-directed-support-strategy-2010-2020-implementation-plan-2019-21/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See appendix A. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00510921.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Scottish Government, 2019 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/self-directed-support-strategy-2010-2020-implementation-plan-2019-21/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)