



SiRD2021 consultation

A consultation on the process and criteria for the next Support in the Right Direction programme was carried out by Scottish Government, Self-directed Support Scotland and Inspiring Scotland, between November 2017 and January 2018. The consultation engaged with organisations either providing, or with an interest in, independent support for people who require social care, and was to enable a collaborative approach to the development of the Support in the Right Direction (SiRD) 2021 Fund. It was confirmed through the Consultation that the aim of SiRD2021 is:

Increased delivery of independent support for people who require social care

The consultation was designed to seek the views of organisations likely to apply for funding, on the application process, timescale and criteria for the new fund. The consultation took place through:

- events in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen – 60 people from 42 organisations attended;
- an online survey asking the same questions that were discussed at the events – 9 responses were received;
- a webinar covering the key points for people who were unable to make a face to face event - 16 people from 13 organisations took part and,
- a presentation and informal feedback from members at Self-directed Support Scotland's AGM.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation events for their valuable contributions and feedback. Some clear messages came out which we are incorporating in the development of SiRD 2021, along with the findings of the Craigforth research into independent support that was carried out in 2017. In addition to consulting currently funded SiRD projects Craigforth spoke with 141 individuals who have received support from the funded projects. A summary of information collected through the Consultation is described below.

1. The application process

As part of the Consultation we asked about a process for applying to SiRD2021. This was done through a questionnaire at the events and through the on-line survey. 69 responses were collected, however not all responders answered every question.

Timescale

Based on discussions so far, we proposed that announcing SiRD2021 funding decisions by the end of June 2018 was important. This would allow 3 months' notice for currently funded SiRD projects whose funding is due to finish at the end of September. We also presented a rough time-table of when application materials would be available and when assessment of applications would take place.

All responders agreed that announcements in June were satisfactory, apart from two - one who wanted decisions earlier (but didn't specify when) and one who suggested August.

We also asked what was the minimum time groups would need to put together an application. 5% of respondents said they would need just 4 weeks, 32% said they could put an application together in 6 weeks, 43% of respondents suggested 8 weeks was required whilst 19% were looking for longer application periods.



A detailed timetable for the application process has now been developed. This works towards notifying applicants of funding decisions by the end of June 2018. We are currently working towards having application materials available for 8 weeks. Details of the time-scales for the application process will be available with the application materials at the beginning of February 2018.

Application method

We asked about preferred application methods:

- 24% responders preferred Word applications,
- 38% preferred online applications and
- 38% had no preference

We also asked about application styles:

- 36% preferred structured questions,
- 45% preferred open questions or to submit project plans and
- 19% had no preference (or liked both)

Finally, we asked about application process

- 16% preferred a one-stage process,
- 64% liked a two-stage process whilst
- 20% had no preference (or liked both)

We discussed what might make up a two-stage process and there was general agreement that a face-to-face component was good with 60% of responders preferring a project visit over 30% preference for presentation to a panel.

It was clear people were keen for some contact beyond an application form and that a mixture of structured and open questions is helpful when applying.

People referred us to good and bad application processes they have experienced and fed back that it was important any process have application materials that were easy to use and share and that there is clear criteria with transparency on how applications will be scored.

Recognising the fundamental importance of being able to easily use and share application materials, it is likely that the SiRD2021 application form will be a Word document for completion. This will be available electronically. Due to the tight timescales and some uncertainty about applicant numbers a two stage process may not be possible in all cases however pre-application surgeries and informal conversations will be enable any applicant group to discuss project ideas and work out if they meet funding criteria. The application process will also involve gathering follow-up information, or discussions and visits with applicants to determine strategic fit where necessary.

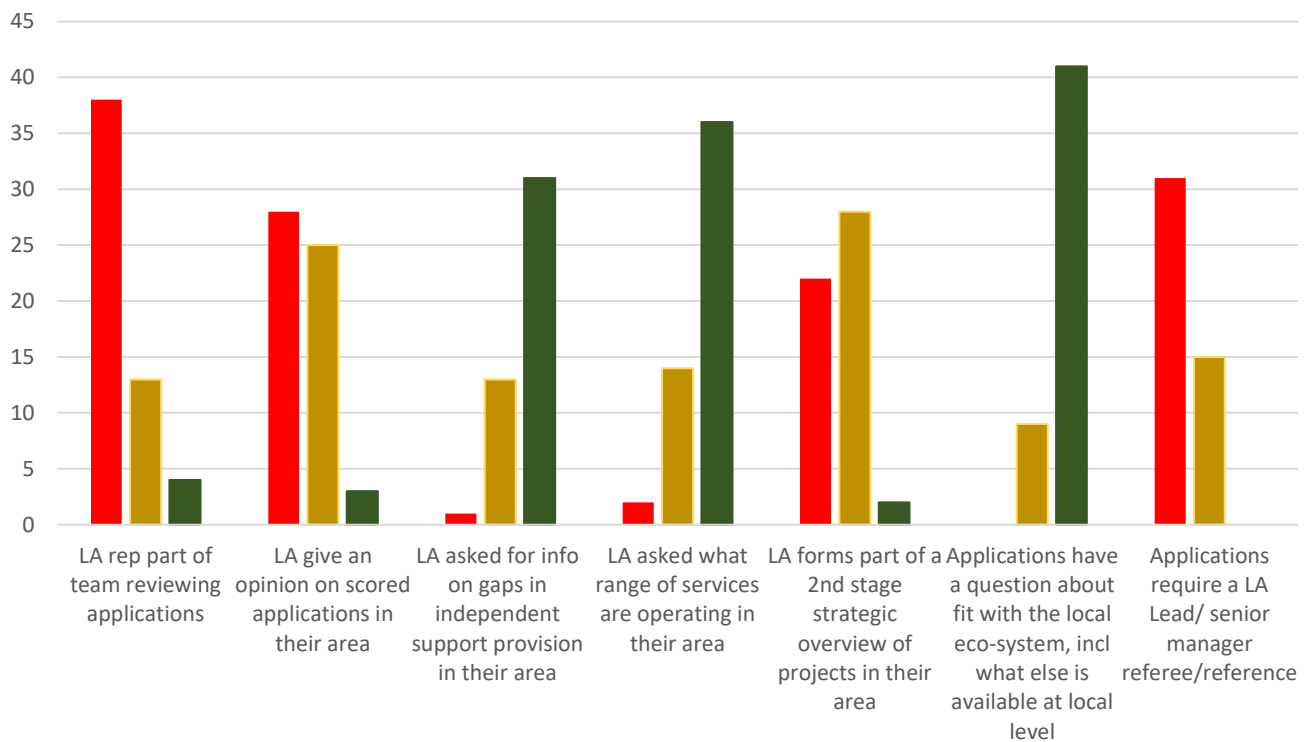


2. Process and Local Fit

A purpose of the consultation was also to help determine how to take national money and place it in the local environment well. We talked about a 'local eco-system' to acknowledge that independent support projects work in a complex local environment and that it is important they work with a wide range of organisations as well as the Local Authority/ IJB.

Relevant authorities are required to provide information on sources of information, advice and advocacy to those who are accessing Self-directed Support so, as part of the Consultation, we wanted to get views on how best to involve them in discussions about future funding plans.

Consultation participants were presented with some options to discuss and asked to indicate how helpful they thought they would be using a Red, Amber, Green scale - as well as come up with their own ideas.



Red = This could be difficult, handle with care
Amber = This could work, but some reservations
Green = This would work and be helpful

The general feeling was that there was merit in involving local authorities and that engagement before funding decisions were made was positive. There were reservations over how it was done, with options involving local authorities in reviewing, scoring, or being a Reference to applications being least preferred. There was a clear preference for potential applicants to answer how they fit with the local eco-system and to show what else is available locally and to demonstrate their referral pathways. Preferences were also for Local Authorities to provide information about what services are in their area and the gaps.



A lot of discussion centred around how to get a good picture of what is available locally – who to ask, and who to involve. The importance of good relationships was discussed, and the challenge of regular staff changes, and projects delivering across multiple local authority areas or nationally was acknowledged. There were also points raised about the differences between children and family, adult and older person services

Recognising the importance of fit within the local context, it is likely applicants will be asked to demonstrate their understanding of their local context, their role and relationships in the environment they are operating in as well as their understanding of the constraints and how they are mindful of these. There will also be a strategic review of applications from different areas. The local authority will not be involved in assessing which projects are funded, but involving them at this stage would provide an opportunity to discuss what may be funded in their area and allow for effective working relationships to be developed. We will also survey local authorities separately to find out what independent support services are in their area

3. Determining Fund Criteria

We asked groups (and through the survey) to discuss questions on five key areas that could be used to help determine funding criteria.

3.1 Geography

We wanted feedback on:

- Should we be trying to make sure that there is a geographical spread of funded projects, eg 1 per Local Authority?
- Should funding be weighted towards areas where there is less provision?
- Do we solicit applications where there are gaps in provision?
- If there is reasonable existing provision, do we fund less in that area?

There was consensus that it was important to try and create equal access to independent support across Scotland, however not at the expense of quality. People felt that each area is different and will have its own challenges so funding should depend on the local context.

3.2 Access and scale

We wanted to know:

- Should it be a criterion for funded groups to be open to the public and to people with a range of care needs/range of users/ their Carers?
- Should there be a consideration on the scale (in terms of numbers) of client facing work? For example, if extremely high-quality work is done with a very small number of clients, is this appropriate if it limits access for others?
- Is there a good way of framing any criterion like this?

People felt that we should not make it a 'rule' that projects must work across all user groups but that it is up to projects to show how what they do works in and is best for the local context. There was a clear feeling that some groups are further from accessing support and Self-directed support than others and there should be some focus on this. People also felt it is important to try and ensure that there is a



complete 'pathway' in each area but that there is a difference between urban & rural provision – ie availability of other, complementary options, with perhaps more generalist services in rural areas by necessity. People felt that numbers don't tell the whole story as people have varying needs. Scale (numbers) was felt to be less important than impact.

3.3 Specialist knowledge

We asked:

- Is there a need for specialist back-up knowledge? If so, for what groups?
- How do you think that should work with Fund criteria?
- Is it at the detriment to geography?

It was agreed that there could be a need for specialist knowledge, although there was no clear consensus on who for or what it would look like. Access to specialist services in rural areas can be difficult and it was felt that, if funded, a specialist service should cover all of Scotland. However, specialist projects also need to be aware of local need, knowledge and networks. People said that good referral pathways are crucial for specialist knowledge to work, creating the opportunity for collaboration.

3.4 Activity range

We asked:

- Should the Fund have criteria that all projects should provide, or be able to actively refer, to the full range of 'end-to-end' independent support?

It was agreed that it is important for an individual to be able to access what can be referred to as 'end to end' support, however this does not all have to be provided by one organisation. Projects should be able to show how they will enable people to access a range of support, either themselves or through collaboration.

3.5 Budget eligibility

We wanted thoughts on:

- Should funded work be only with people eligible for social care in their area or should it include work with people who are not/will not be eligible for social care budgets?
- If so, what does that look like? ie – should it be time- limited, not service provision, how is it different from other person-centred work

The consensus was that support for people without a social care budget should be fundable, for many reasons:

- If providing end-to-end support, you are working with people before you know if they are eligible.
- Working with people without a budget is preventative and allows you to identify gaps and natural & community supports to help people plan for the future and have a good quality of life.
- Eligibility is being 'tightened' – so more and more people are unable to receive funded support. This can lead to a greater level of need - 'crisis' intervention.
- Independent support gives people that do not meet the eligibility criteria support to challenge decisions.
- Changing criteria means eligibility is changing, so this is difficult to measure/predict.



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If supporting people without a budget, there needs to be an end for the support and specific goal setting to avoid creating dependency (outcome focussed).

4. Determining Fund Priorities

Finally, we gave contributors a difficult task and asked them to rank different independent support activities in order of importance. It was acknowledged that all the activities listed would be a priority to people at different times and there is an understanding that projects would likely want to undertake as many of the activities as possible.

From both the events and the survey however, it appeared that direct work and activities to help people identify what outcomes they would like to achieve, decide which SDS route they want to go down, put together a package of support, clarify or challenge assessment outcomes, and manage a funded package were ranked more highly than general SDS awareness raising activities.

5. Next steps

A working group from Scottish Government, Self-Directed Support Scotland and Inspiring Scotland has been working throughout January 2018 to develop the funding programme and application materials for SiRD2021 using information gathered through the Consultation. Detailed information on the application and timetable for assessment, decision and announcement will be available from the 5th February. In the meantime, any queries can be directed to:

Karen.geekie@gov.scot

jess@sdsscotland.org.uk

Ashley@inspiringscotland.org.uk

kaylie@inspiringscotland.org.uk