

Personal Assistant (PA) Programme Board - 10 August 2021

Chair	Donald MacLeod Anna Kynaston
Date	10 August 2021
Time	10.00 - 11.30 am
Location	MS Teams
Attendees	Organisation
Donald MacLeod	Self-Directed Support Scotland
Anna Kynaston	Scottish Government
Alison Upton	Scottish Social Services Council
Cheryl Glen	Scottish Social Services Council
Helen Martin	Fair Work Convention
Jeremy Adderley	SDSS
Joanne McGee	SDSS (Take Control)
Peter Scott	Independent Living Fund Scotland
Ailsa McAllister	Social Work Scotland
Anne-Marie Monaghan	Independent living movement
Becs Barker	Community Contacts, Carr Gomm
Clare Thomas	COSLA
Colin Millar	Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network
Julia Smith	Personal Assistant Employer
Donna Gordon	Personal Assistant
Donna Murray	Self-employed Personal Assistant
Les Watson	Personal Assistant Network Scotland
Jim Elder-Woodward	Chair, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living; Chair, Scottish Independent Living Coalition; Vice Chair, Inclusion Scotland
Lyn Pornaro	Centre for Inclusive Living
Lynda Wright	SDS Practice network
Marianne Scobie	Glasgow Disability Alliance
Pauline Nolan	Inclusion Scotland
Sharon McLeod	Ayrshire Independent Living Network
Sharon Onley	Encompass
Fiona Davidson	Unison
Linda Wilson	Unite the Union
Megan Fisher	GMB Scotland Trade Union
Toria Fraser	SG
Don Morrison	SG
Emily Russell	SG
Kerry Brooks	SG
Susan Brodie	SG
Colin McKnight	SG
Laura Cochrane	SG
Lorraine Carlyle	SG
Karen Young	SG
Apologies	Organisation
Des McCart	Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)
Jack Blaik	Independent Living Fund Scotland
Angela Mullen	Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living

Items and Actions

Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed group members to the first meeting of the Programme Board (PB) to consider Personal Assistants (PA's) and thanked everyone for their interest in this essential work. They explained that the Board's work must respect the unique value of the PA role and relationship with their employer. Background information on board members was issued in advance of the meeting.

The Chair role is shared by SG and SDSS. Anna Kynaston, Deputy Director National Care Service and Social Care Workforce wished to extend Scottish Government's thanks those of the Board who were part of the Short life Working Group and worked with us at pace to set up the PA portal. She recognises the enormous amount of innovative and practical work achieved in a very short space of time to allow SG to start to pay Pas.

Purpose of the Programme Board

The PB will play a key role in offering tangible outcomes to support improvements to the situation for PAs in Scotland and it will require passion and pace to create a work plan in the short time available to us.

The purpose of the Programme Board is to offer advice to the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, Mr Stewart on how to ensure PA's are fully recognised as members of the social care workforce. The group will consider the issues that are preventing PA's being recognised.

The board will produce an initial report to the Minister that will coincide with the end of the National Care Service consultation. Final decisions will sit with the Minister, however the Board will provide a route to policy development. Any future work agreed by the group will be fed into long term SG work streams.

The work of the group will be transparent and informed by the wider Independent Living Movement. Members will meet on a monthly basis and there may be facilitated discussions with a wider group of stakeholders.

£500 payment PA pathway

Although we have no exact data at this stage we are working on an estimate of approximately 6000 PA's (paid by option 1 of SDS and Independent Living Fund Scotland) working in Scotland. The £500 PA pathway demonstrated that the PA workforce are difficult to reach. PA's were asked to apply directly for the payment rather than via their employer. Payroll providers played a key role in the communication strategy to reach PA's and their employers to make them aware of the payment.

The application portal has been open for 7 weeks. To date, over 4000 applications have been received and over 2500 payments have been made. A dedicated PA bonus helpline was set up to support individuals with their application. Call handlers provided digital support and have filled out applications on behalf of individuals, to date over 1000 calls have been handled.

Some concerns have been raised regarding: technical issues with the application form, the eligibility of PA's to children and unpaid carers, pensions and benefits, and the privacy of employers who were reluctant to disclose the source of their funding.

It was noted that after submitting an application there is a slight delay for applicants before they receive their payment due to the verification procedures. Overall, the application and payment

process is working well. SG thanked all contractors for their hard work and support with the PA £500 thank you payment.

National Care Service consultation

As a result of the recommendations from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, Colin McKnight (SG) provided an update on the [National Care Service consultation](#) which was launched on 9 August 2021 and will close on the 18 October 2021. Easy read and accessible versions of the consultation are being prepared and will be published online as soon as possible.

There will be a number of general and themed engagement events available throughout the consultation period, an event with the people led policy panel is being arranged. The consultation has a specific section on Personal Assistants. SG encouraged members of the group and their networks to engage with the consultation and share their views. It was noted that several members have arranged their own consultation events for their networks. Members were interested in having the SG NCS team attend their consultation meetings, and to be involved in arranging events. The aim of the SG consultation events are to reach as wide an audience as possible, with organisations and individuals with lived experience being fully represented. SiRD organisations offer advice and support to PA's and their employers, members noted that their involvement in the consultation would be invaluable.

Action: SG secretariat to arrange circulation the easy read and accessible versions of the NCS consultation

Action: SG NCS colleagues to attend/ arrange consultation events with members of the Programme Board who expressed an interest in this.

Matter of Focus mapping workshops

Ali Upton provided an update on the Personal Assistants Outcomes Mapping Project that was led by SSSC. The purpose of the project was to develop a shared understanding of how PA's can be better recognised and valued as part of the workforce. The project involved working collaboratively with those with lived experience and stakeholders to develop outcome maps. The presentation provided a summary of the three workshops facilitated by Matter of Focus, key findings, an overview of the 2 outcome maps and next steps. The PowerPoint slides of this presentation have been circulated to the group.

Action: SG secretariat and Donald MacLeod to look into facilitated sessions for the Programme Board.

Fair Work Convention

Helen Martin provided an update on the Fair Work Convention. The purpose of the Convention is to work with employers, Unions and academics to promote Fair Work and provide advice to Ministers. The presentation outlined the five dimensions of Fair Work, provided information on the Social Care Inquiry, summarised the recommendations from previous research into PA's carried out in 2016. The survey sample size was low but it provides indications of areas which need to be considered in any future research into PA workforce.

Action: SG to circulate the Fair Work Convention's PowerPoint slides

Topics for further discussion

Several themes emerged throughout the meeting and the Chair advised that the group will cover these topics in more detail in future meetings. These themes included:

PA relationship

- PA's and their employers have a unique relationship which provides individuals with control over their support and a great amount of flexibility on how they live. Any recommendations from this group or the NCS consultation should not be detrimental to the relationship between PA and employer.

Independent advice:

- The group expressed support for further investment in independent advice and user led organisations. These organisations help individuals manage their SDS package and assist PA employers with their employment responsibilities (recruitment, training, staff management, health and safety).
- Individuals should have access to independent advice prior to their assessment, to help them make an informed decision about becoming an employer. Members were also in favor of increased investment in SDS funding to ensure PA employers are financially able to increase wages and pay for staff training.
- Currently, employers have little control over pay and terms and conditions for PA's. Many employers would like to increase pay but are prevented from doing so by their budget. PA employers are also concerned that attempts to improve working conditions for PA's may cause their budget to be reduced.
- Members would like to see an increased focus on supporting and empowering PA employers via user led organisations, this would create better employment for PA's. Concern was noted that the role user led organisation could have in a National Care service was missing from the consultation.

Consistent approach:

- Members would like there to be consistency in SDS option 1 across Scotland.
- In some rural areas a lack of PA's can prevent individuals accessing SDS option 1, the lack of provision of care services can force individuals into SDS option 1 in other areas.
- There is inconsistency in the amount of funding provided for training PA's, some local authorities no longer fund training and many employers do not have enough money to fund this themselves. Informal training, such as shadowing is not certificated and would not be satisfactory for insurance purposes.

Training:

- It was suggested that training should be based on the principles of independent living, and for individual issues, training should involve both PA's and employers. Some local authorities do not allow direct payment recipients to employ self-employed PA's. Members were in favour of this being an available option, however there are employment law issues with HMRC that need to be addressed.

Registration and regulation:

- In terms of recognition/regulation/ registration, it was suggested that an informal scheme that PA's could opt into allowing them to access training and development may be an option.

AOB / Date of next meeting

The Chair thanked members for attending and for their contributions to the discussion. The next meeting of the Programme Board is TBC.