

**Personal Assistant Programme Board Meeting
Minutes**

Thursday 29th June 2023, 10:00 – 12:00

Attendees	Organisation
Donald Macleod (co-Chair)	Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Christina McLaren (co-Chair)	Scottish Government
Lyn Pornaro	Disability Equality Scotland
Sharon Shepherd	Personal Assistant (PA)
Don Morrison	Scottish Government
Charlotte Pearson	University of Glasgow
Donna Murray	Social Work Scotland
Anne-Marie Monaghan	Independent
Becs Barker	Community Contacts, Carr Gomm
Les Watson	Personal Assistant Network Scotland (PANS), WEA
Laura Purves	SDS Cornerstone
Margaret Petherbridge	Chair of SDS Practice Network (SWS and Falkirk Council)
Marianne Scobie	Glasgow Disability Alliance
Cols Young	Glasgow Disability Alliance
Natalie McLaughlin	Children's Services Reform
Joanne McGee	Take Control
Karen Albrow	Personal Assistant (PA) Employer
Julia Smith	Personal Assistant (PA) Employer
Alison Upton	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
Anna Caceres	Scottish Government
Hazel Jack	Encompass
Marianne Scobie	Glasgow Disability Alliance

Rhiann McLean	IMPACT, Strategic Improvement Coach
Jeremy Adderley	Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Mark Han-Johnston	Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Emmanuelle Le Coz	Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Sharon McLeod	Ayrshire Independent Living Network (AILN)
Julia Lawrence	Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Des McCart	Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)

In addition, 29 guests also attended the Open Meeting.

Apologies	
Iain Ramsay	Scottish Government
Gaby Nolan	Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL)
Ray McCowan	Personal Assistant Network Scotland (PANS), WEA
Kayleigh Hirst	Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Toria Fraser	Scottish Government
Allison Lockhart	Personal Assistant (PA)
Linda Connell	Personal Assistant (PA)
Peter Scott	Independent Living Fund Scotland
Fiona Davidson	Unison
Jane Kellock	Social Work Scotland (SWS)
Laura Hendry	SDS Cornerstone
Fran Hollingan	COSLA

Welcome and introductions	Actions
<p>The Chairs welcomed the PA Programme Board and the wider members to the Open Meeting.</p> <p>A PowerPoint presentation (link to presentation slides) provided an overview of the work of the PA Programme Board and its achievements to date.</p> <p><i>Origins of the PA Programme Board</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PA Programme Board first met in August 2021. • The origins of the PA Programme Board (PAPB) came from the difficulties in the process of administering the £500 Thank You Payment to PAs, who are an unregulated and unquantified workforce. • A portal and helpline were set up, supported by SDSS, and nearly 5000 PAs working with adults applied for this payment over a 3-month period. • Derek Feeley also recognised the issues of the inequities between PAs and the rest of the social care workforce in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care. <p>A workplan was developed through an iterative process, with the organisation, Matter of Focus, and included people with lived experience, employers, PAs, and others to develop a workplan. The initial workplan has 84 actions and these are being delivered through a series of subgroups (<i>see Agenda item: Updates on the work of the subgroups</i>).</p> <p>The PA Programme Board objectives, live workplan, minutes, links to the PA and PA Employer Handbook, PA newsletter and other resources are available here: https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/pa-programme-board-workplan/</p> <p>Christina provided an update from the Scottish Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Maree Todd MSP, attending the PA Programme Board Steering Group meeting on the 15th June 2023. There was a positive discussion and reassurance of her intention to continue the good work of her predecessor, Kevin Stewart MSP. There was recognition that the PAPB is a vital workstream to ensure that PAs are recognised as part of the adult social care workforce. 	

National Care Service (NCS) update

The Stage 1 timetable for the National Care Service (NCS) has been extended to run until January 2024 so the Bill that is developed meets the needs and aspirations of the people who use and work in social care.

A Programme of Regional Forums for the National Care Service across Scotland over the summer. There will also be online meeting opportunities. The aim is to:

- Offer engagement opportunities to include the voices of those with lived experience of social care delivery and support in the development of the NSC.
- Involve the different regions across Scotland to ensure communities are represented in designing an NCS that is tailored to local needs.
- Further information and how to sign up can be found here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/national-care-service-65751751823>

PA's of Children and Families

- The board welcomed Natalie McLaughlin, of the Scottish Government Children Service Reform Workforce Team, who are carrying out work to make improvements across the sector for children who are receiving care and the workforce who are delivering care.
- Part of this work includes engaging with PAs who work with children to make improvements.
- If anyone would like to get involved or has any suggestions, please contact Natalie directly on: Natalie.McLaughlin@gov.scot

Review of minutes and action points from the last meeting

The minutes of the PA Programme Board of 6 April 2023 were approved.

Most actions raised at the last meeting related to subgroups and have been referred to the subgroup Chairs or have now been closed.

Actions

Updates on the work of the subgroups	Actions
<p>Donald provided updates on the work being undertaken by each of the subgroups (link to presentation slides).</p> <p>Training subgroup</p> <p>The training subgroup received funding from the Scottish Government for the development of a Personal Assistant Training Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two part time members of staff, Emmanuelle Le Coz and Johanne McBean, have been recruited for one year to undertake this project. • They took up their posts in May 2023 and are based at Self Directed Support Scotland. • To date, they have produced a project plan and have met with the training subgroup and a range of stakeholders, including PAs, Employers, and organisations who support them. • They are scoping out what training is currently available to PAs and what works well and not so well. • By April, 2024, they will deliver a co-produced National PA Training resource that can be accessed by all PAs and PA employers. • Due to the sensitive nature of this work consideration is being given to setting up a smaller reference group for Emmanuelle and Johanne to work closely with to test out ideas and innovations before sharing with the wider group. <p>PA Direct Payment subgroup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Direct Payment (DP) subgroup undertook a survey of 29 local authorities to explore current practice and challenges for both adults and children’s services, and what was important to include in a Direct Payment model agreement. • The subgroup recognise that the agreement needs to be clear and written in plain English, be brief, be co-produced and focus on outcomes. • Participants also highlighted that key components were long term stability and consistency of the direct payment workforce and the need for consistent rates across authorities. • The survey identified some areas that might be useful to explore further: 	

- Use of assessments and the extent they inform decision-making in relation to direct payments and included on-costs, and use of contingency funds.
- Support and training offered to PA employers and PAs.
- The subgroup have met with DPOs, CILs, ISOs and SIRDs. Seven local authorities have signed up to be part of the workstream. Further learning sessions will include ILF Scotland, payroll services, SDS Practice Network and insurance companies.
- The DP subgroup have also been invited to the National Direct Payment Forum on 30th June 2023 to discuss our work. They will also be discussing PA Recruitment and a recent employment status report.

PA Communication and Information subgroup

- Recommendations include extending the campaign on a national level, to include PAs in national social care recruitment campaigns (e.g. CareToCare) and the development of focused local campaigns. The campaign has also highlighted the need to develop the '[myjobscotland](#)' site – there was a drop off from the initial increase in people viewing the site and therefore indicates potential for the site to list vacancies directly.
- A content review process has been developed to keep the PA and PA Employer Handbooks up to date.
- Christina McLaren attended the last subgroup meeting to discuss the PA Programme Board's Terms of Reference (ToR). A revised draft of the ToR will be shared with the group shortly for final approval.

PA Recruitment subgroup

- The initial workplan action for the group was to develop the 'myjobscotland' webpage for PA vacancies, this has now been running for the past year. A radio and social media awareness campaign in January saw a large uptick in visits to the 'myjobscotland' webpage. The learning from this campaign suggested the journey to get interested PAs in front of relevant adverts can be a convoluted process, so Scottish Government colleagues are exploring the potential to develop the MJS page to accommodate individual vacancies and a vacancy count.
- The subgroup heard from Skills for Care and Scottish Government colleagues on the work they are doing with Job Centres and the DWP to promote social care and the PA role. The subgroup plan to

link in more closely with SG work with Job Centres and wider social care recruitment campaigns to promote the PA role.

PA Wellbeing subgroup

The aim of the Wellbeing subgroup is to develop a strategy to promote the wellbeing of the isolated PA workforce.

The subgroup have been:

- Looking at data from the PA workforce survey questions on wellbeing.
- Exploring potential uses for £50,000 provided by Scottish Government to improve PA wellbeing.
- IMPACT, the evidence based social care programme have provided two strategic improvement coaches, Rhiann McLean starting on the 1st July and Richard Brunner on the 27th Aug. They will be based with PA Network Scotland and SDS Cornerstone.
- Exploring alternatives to the Blue Light Card which is not available to PAs at present. The group are currently exploring the Blue Sky Social Card, based with a social enterprise group led by disabled people.
- Developing a wellbeing section in the PA/E handbook and gathering resources from SSSC, Care Inspectorate, Wellbeing Hub etc.
- Feeding back to the Training Framework development project on training for employers to support the wellbeing of their PAs.

PA Data subgroup

SG analytical colleagues are working on an initial report into the size of the PA workforce because it is essential that we find out the size of the workforce for planning purposes.

- This work will begin in August.
- There is not one source of this data.
- This report will summarise the existing data on the size of the PA workforce and will outline next steps to further develop the evidence base, including whether it is necessary to commission additional research.

The second annual PA workforce survey took place in April 2023 and the emerging findings will be shared in agenda item: PA Workforce Survey 2023 – Emerging Findings.

Glasgow University have made a successful application to the Scottish Graduate Social Science School for a fully funded PhD looking at Personal Assistance.

- The PhD focus will be on research on workforce, changing conditions and social care reform, and the student will join the data subgroup.
- The candidate will conduct a Masters in research starting in September 2023, with a start date of September 2024 for the PhD.

PA Networks subgroup

Becs Barker has agreed to Chair the group going forward. The group plan to reconvene in July and the focus will be on formalising the group’s name and purpose which is around peer support and the ability for people to build networks between themselves as groups of PAs.

PA Workforce Survey 2023 – Emerging Findings	Actions
<p>The annual PA workforce survey aims to gather up to date information on the size and shape of the current PA workforce to support future workforce planning, priorities and development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention • Education and training needs • Workforce wellbeing <p>Julia provided a presentation on the emerging findings so far (link to presentation slides).</p> <p>The second annual PA workforce survey took place in April 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 798 responses. • This year our profile of survey responders indicates the PA workforce are still (compared to last year) largely a homogenous group of white, nondisabled women who are older in age, with two thirds (64%) of responders being aged 45 years or older, 6% identifying as belonging to an ethnic minority and 22% considering themselves to have a disability. • There was a slight increase in the number of males responding to the survey (19%), which is higher than the wider sector and last year's survey responders (both 15%). 	

The survey analysis is still underway but some of the highlights so far include:

- 81% of respondents have worked for 2 or more years as a PA, showing a collective wealth of experience to draw from.
- Most survey responders (70%) work with adults aged 16-65 years with only 8% working with children under 15 years of age.
- Most survey responders provide assistance or support to only one individual, which increases to 86% providing support for between 1 and 3 individuals.
- The average pay of PAs who answered the survey was £11.54 per hour with self-employed PAs charging an average of £15.07 per hour (see further discussion below)
- Two in five (39%) of PAs work 31 hours or more per week, with 7% working more than 50 hours.
- More than half of the PAs (57%) who answered the survey also provided unpaid care and support on top of their paid work. This is an increase from last year at 48%.
- Around half (55%) of PAs said they have enough training to do their job well, but one in five felt they hadn't enough training.
- Most PAs agree (44%) or strongly agree (43%) they love their job and 48% strongly agree and 39% agree they feel proud to be a PA.

The PA Programme Board were thanked for their support in sharing the survey, with 30% of respondents coming via this distribution method's survey link.

Questions followed the presentation, and it will be determined by looking further at the data if it is possible to provide comment to these in the survey report:

- Exploring regional trends, e.g., range of hourly DP rates paid by local authorities
- Explore evidence around PAs providing extra care and support outside paid hours
- Are PA employers topping up the rates their LA pay and how they are funding this?
- Where PAs supporting multiple employers is this through choice or necessity (e.g. small DP packages)
- What makes the PAs report higher satisfaction with role compared to general Social Care practitioners
- Future surveys could also include a question on hours of support provided (shift length)

PA Training Framework – Workplan	Actions
<p>Emmanuel presented on the work of the National PA Training Framework (link to presentation slides). Updates on the work of the PA Training Framework are available via the project’s microsite – here.</p> <p>The project runs for one year and will deliver a proposal for a Training Framework by April 2024.</p> <p>To date, our workplan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the stakeholder (to date have met with a mix of 24 PA Employers, PAs and organisations (e.g. Support in the Right Direction (SiRDs, Local Authorities) • Auditing and mapping currently available training in Scotland for PAs – what is working well and not so well, and gaps • Prepare a draft proposal for the December PA Programme Board • From early 2024 focus will be on Training Framework content development to fill gaps • Present in April 2024, pilot of delivery models, evaluation and costing <p>Next steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of PA Employers and PAs to explore future training needs and priorities • Creating a list of what training is available across Scotland and where (this information will be shared as an article in the PA Handbook) • Giving invited presentations to groups with a focus on PA Employer and PA training across Scotland • Explore pathways between the social care workforce and the role of PAs • Exploring co-delivery of training between the employer and the PA (e.g. managing relationships and boundaries) • Alongside PA Training Framework, the possible development of an Employer Training Framework 	

Other updates	Actions
<p>PA Newsletter</p> <p>Latest edition of PA newsletter went out on 8 June 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to latest edition: https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/pa-newsletter-june-2023/ • We are developing ways to make the newsletter more engaging and to reach a wider group of PAs. • <i>There are currently around 4,500 PAs on the newsletter mailing list who will receive an email every few months.</i> • PA stories will be a regular feature in order to highlight the variety of the role. This edition included a case study from Lorraine, on her typical day as a PA. • The most popular content of the newsletter was Lorraine’s story and the link to the PA Handbook. <p>SDS Improvement Plan 2023-2027</p> <p>This SDS Improvement Plan 2023-2027 was published on 12 June 2023. The development was facilitated by SDSS and coproduced with the National SDS Collaboration, COSLA and the Scottish Government.</p> <p>Discussions are underway with the National Collaboration on how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the publication of the SDS Improvement Plan. • Support its implementation to shape the work of the group and individual members. • Involve the members in the evaluation of the plan. <p>The group discussed a launch of the plan, and it was agreed that further discussions are needed with the National Collaboration to explore a range of suggestions to promote it.</p> <p>PA Network Scotland (PANS) update</p> <p>PANS are currently in transition to become a membership organisation that will be free to join:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, over 5000 people have engaged with PANS, and includes PAs, PA employers, staff from SDS organisations and local authority social workers. • On transition PAs will become full members with associate membership being available to all non-PAs and corporate membership being available to SDS related organisations. • Work is underway to create a members database and updating the website to support this. 	

- Working to attract professional bodies to create a suite of benefits that will be available to PA members, including discount entry to leisure facilities, shopping and eating out.
- Continuation of ID badges to enable PAs to be recognised as part of the social care workforce. To date over 1000 badges have been issued.

PANS are currently forming a PA Advisory board (mostly made up of PAs) to ensure that the network progresses and evolves into the support service that PAs need and want.

They also intend to employ PAs to work as regional network advocates (reps) to:

- Create peer support groups.
- Feedback their views and opinions to the advisory group.

PANS have met with Unite and Unison unions to explore offering free or discounted union membership to PAs. Another consideration may be the potential of a branch within unions to represent PAs. Discussions are ongoing.

SDS Cornerstone update

A new PA Advisor, Laura Purves, started in the role 29/05/2023.

The PA Advisor contact list now stands at around 350 PAs with most joining since the pilot began a year ago. Going forward the plan is to extend the pilot and talks are underway with Angus and Moray.

Over the past year there has been around 200 enquiries made by PAs, with issues relating to pay, holidays and asking about what training is available being the most common.

The Cornerstone SDS PA Facebook page has been running for a few months, giving PAs a chance to connect with one another. The group currently has around 100 members. PAs are asked to comment on why they are joining the group, as this suggests there is a desire for peer-to-peer contact. Responses indicate a higher demand for online, as opposed to in person groups, where there has been less interest.

Dates of next meetings	Actions
The dates for the next meeting of the PA Programme Board in 2023 are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday 28th September, 10:00-12:00• Thursday 14th December, 10:00-12:00	