**NATIONAL SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT COLLABORATION**

**NOTE OF MEETING – 6 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**In attendance by video conference:**

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| Donald Macleod (SDS Scotland) (chair) | Kayleigh Hirst (SDS Scotland) | Johane McBean (SDS Scotland) |
| Mark Han-Johnston (SDS Scotland) | Julia Lawrence (SDS Scotland) | Becs Barker (Community Contacts) |
| Beth Anderson (Scottish Government) | Hannah McShane (Scottish Government) | Juliet Cramb-Low (Scottish Government) |
| Morag Duncan (Dundee Carers Centre) | Edward Inglis (SDS Forum East Renfrewshire) | Craig McGregor (SSSC) |
| Elaine Torrance (NDTi) | Mick Hydes (SDS Forum East Renfrewshire) | Elspeth Critchley (Encompass) |
| Frank Reilly (SASW) | Gail Carstairs (ENABLE Scotland) | Jack Blaik (City of Edinburgh Council) |
| Jaynie Mitchell (COCIS) | Joanne McGee (Glasgow Centre For Inclusive Living) | Becky Duff (Carers’ Trust) |
| Alastair Minty (In Control Scotland) | Claire Roxburgh (East Ayrshire HSCP) | Laura Hendry (Cornerstone SDS) |
| Brett Rogers (In Control Scotland) | Anne Marie Monaghan (Community Brokerage Scotland) | Fran Holligan (COSLA) |
| Karen Procek (In Control Scotland) | Olivia Mann (CCPS) | Peter Scott (ILF Scotland) |
| Pauline Lunn (In Control Scotland) | Pauline Nolan (Inclusion Scotland) | Robert White (ILF Scotland) |
| Rob Gowans (Health and Social Care Alliance) | Des McCart (Healthcare Improvement Scotland) | Susan Kelso (Personal Outcomes Network) |
| Sheila Hanney (Key/Community Lifestyles) | Margaret Petherbridge (SDS Practice Network) | Louise Lapsley (East Ayrshire HSCP) |
| Jane Kellock (Social Work Scotland) | Laura Finnan Cowan (Social Work Scotland) | Donna Murray (Social Work Scotland) |
| Calum Carlyle (Social Work Scotland) |  |  |

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| **Welcome and Matters Arising** | **Actions** |
| DMd welcomed the group.  Apologies were noted from: Danielle Farrel, Arlene Bunton, Ali Upton, Iain Ramsay, Lyn Pornaro, Les Watson, Chris Sutton, John Skouse, Sandy Hunter, Joyce Campbell, Gaby Nolan, Nicoletta Primo, Ashley Drennan  The previous meeting minutes were approved by assent.  No matters arising. |  |

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| **AOB – Independent Living Fund** | **Actions** |
| In this year’s [Programme For Government](https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2023-24/), the Scottish Government have committed to reopening the Independent Living Fund with an initial year one investment of up to £9 million. The initial reopening allocation of £9m will allow ILF Scotland to support up to 1000 more people in the first year, which will nearly take it back to the number it was supporting in 2015, when it first transferred to Scotland, and will provide a good foundation for future growth of the Fund.  *Questions and comments:*   * AMM – Just to reiterate how instrumental Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) have been in securing this. This announcement would not have been possible without the continuous campaigning, over many years, of disabled people and their directly accountable organisations. * BB - It's being co-produced and it's not a postcode lottery - lots to learn from for the development of SDS and the NCS. I wonder if the ILF evidence was taken into account when the Verity House agreement was being developed? * DMy – All of the feedback we have heard from DPOs, ILF Scotland and the CILs is that the Independent Living Fund is a really good way to distribute money to supported people, in terms of accessing funds and having full choice and control, possibly because it is co-produced. * DMd – We also need to consider having more representation on the national SDS collaboration (NSDSC) from the Independent Living Movement, if the NSDSC is to be effective in supporting Scottish Government in its implementation of SDS. * AMM – The Independent Living Movement is a collection of people looking to exercise their human rights and full citizenship, it isn’t an organisation or a group, so it’s more about working together and move in the same direction. Also, at the moment ILF Scotland are recruiting a new board and a new chair, so it is a crucial time for the organisation, particularly in the context of the National Care Service (NCS) being developed, and with SDS being central to that. ILF Scotland will need to consider where it positions itself and its role in terms of the NCS. * DMd – The Scottish Independent Living Coalition (SILC) is a small group of organisations, maybe we can involve more members of SILC in the NSDSC to ensure we have full representation. * BB – I agree, how will we include people in other ways, to get a wide diversity of people who access services who want to access SDS and ILF, not just those in the SILC group. There are a lot more people who need to be involved and included. * JK – As well as thinking about widening our membership, maybe we can also consider how to put the weight of this group behind some of these current developments, in order to influence changes being made by Scottish Government (SG). |  |

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| **Personal Assistants Updates (DMd, JMn** | **Actions** |
| **PA Programme Board (DMd)**  The [Personal Assistant) (PA) Programme Board](https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/pa-programme-board/) originally came out of the £500 thank you payment that was given to front-line workers, and the recognition of how difficult it was to identify which staff were eligible for the payment. A helpline was set up, in collaboration with partners, which enabled 5000 workers to be identified and to receive the payment. This led to work to start to quantify the workforce, and the PA Programme Board, chaired by DMd, was set up with the full involvement of the Independent Living Movement, to support relationships between PAs and supported people, and enable more people to get their outcomes met using SDS.  The PA Programme Board was set up in 2021, and [the work plan](https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/pa-programme-board-workplan/) has four main objectives:   * Provide support that maximises strong mutual relationships between PAs and their Employers (PAEs) * Support the development of the PA workforce * Value and support employers so that the employer lives a good, independent supported life and self-directed support works as it is supposed to * Source robust data of current numbers of PAs in Scotland and future PA demand   There are 51 people involved in the work of the Programme Board and its nine subgroups, and this is enabling a wealth of work to be carried forward in several areas.  **PA Training Framework (JMn)**  JMn has joined SDS Scotland in May of this year to develop a tool to help PA employers to provide training to the PAs they employ. To this end, a framework is being developed, initially surveying the landscape, and then following that [with a training survey](https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/employers-and-pas-invited-to-share-views-on-pa-training/), which will lead to the development of a framework and hopefully modules as well. There is also a PAE reference group, for people and groups to be able to get updates of the work as it develops.  **PA Wellbeing (DMy)**  Wellbeing is important for everyone, PAs included. The results of the 2023 PA Workforce Survey are being analyzed and a draft report will be considered by PA Wellbeing subgroup. The survey covers a range of questions about the impact of the role on PAs’ mental health and wellbeing. We have made comment on the Scottish Government Improving Wellbeing and Workforce Culture Framework, to make sure that the voice of PAs is heard in that conversation.  We are supporting a joint test with IMPACT and Personal Assistants Network Scotland to trial the [Blue Sky Social Care Card](https://blueskycard.uk/) (a discount card for carers) for fifty PAs, since PAs aren’t eligible for the Blue Light card scheme. IMPACT will evaluate and we used funding from Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund to pay for the card for participating PAs during the trial.  **Direct Payment (DP) Model Agreement (DMy)**  This is a group which exists specifically to look at developing a model agreement to employ PAs under SDS option 1, and address the variability that is evident across Scotland.  Learning sessions have been held with Disabled People’s Organisations, Independent Support Organisations, Independent Living Movement and Centres for Inclusive Living, and representatives from 29 local authorities have answered a survey telling us what current practice is.  The group are now considering what the non-negotiables would be in a model agreement to support consistency, fairness, equity and respect of the relationship between the PA and PA employer. Part of this will be to acknowledge local practice, but still provide a model agreement that can be useable across Scotland. One thing that has come through strongly is the need to address employer support, who pays for it and who delivers it and the fact that that end-to-end peer support isn’t properly resourced at the moment.  Research carried out on global standards for PA Assistance with implications on UNCRDP and Human Rights Bill Scotland will be discussed further with the Local Authority (LA) Expert Advisory Group with a view to incorporating elements in the Direct Payment Model Agreement.  Personal Assistant Recruitment (KH)  There is a subgroup of the PA Programme Board that exists to raise awareness of the role of PA, and to consider what can be done at a national level to improve recruitment of PAs. One of the first actions this group took about 18 months ago was to create a [Personal Assistants page on Myjobscotland](https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/personal-assistant-jobs), including writing a description of the role in a way which people could understand who might consider taking up this kind of work.  Also, the group has done an awareness raising campaign last summer and again earlier this year in three areas in Scotland, which has been quite successful and has resulted in more use of the PA jobs page in those areas. Work is ongoing to enhance this page further to try to put PA roles in front of people who might be searching for other social care roles on the platform.  **PA/PAE Employer Handbook (KH)**  Some years ago, [the PA Handbook](https://handbook.scot/the-pa-handbook/) was published, and this has been developed into a [website](https://handbook.scot/the-pa-handbook/) so that it can be updated with the most relevant information to help PA employers. On the back of that, [the PA Employer Handbook](https://handbook.scot/the-pa-handbook/) was also developed, to give people working as a PA, or considering working as a PA, the advice and information they need, including employment issues such as pension, redundancy, wellbeing and training. The handbook has now had more than 4000 people using it, and it is regularly updated, for example recently on the issue of employing family members, which has become more relevant in recent years.  **PA Newsletter (KH)**  Regular updates have been going out to PAs since the PA Programme Board was set up, this is distributed ever few months and anyone is welcome to sign up ([click here for more information](https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/pa-newsletter-june-2023/)). One of the benefits of the newsletter is that it allows PAs to read case studies of other PAs, which is popular, as well as any updates that people need to be informed about.  **PA Network (KH)**  [The PA Network](https://www.panetworkscotland.org.uk/) are working to become the membership organisation for PAs in Scotland. There are currently over 1100 members and are expecting this to significantly increase once they relaunch their membership offer. The PA Network are working with SDSS to redevelop their website. When there is a launch date for the website and the new membership offer, they hope that all SDS organisations will help to publicise that to help to reach PAs across Scotland.  Annual PA Workforce Survey (JL)  The results of the second annual PA workforce survey will be available on [the SDS Scotland website](https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/) very soon. This will be an annual survey to ensure that the PA Programme Board has an accurate idea of the size and shape of the current workforce, to support future workforce planning, priorities and development. The survey includes questions on recruitment and retention, education and training needs, and workforce wellbeing. The evidence form the survey will be used to help set the PA Programme Board work plan priorities.  This year there were 798 responses, representing about 17% of the known (estimated) PA workforce. This year the profile of survey respondents suggested that the workforce is predominantly made up of white non-disabled women who are older in age. About two thirds of respondents were over 45 in age. About 19% of respondents were men, which is higher than last year, and higher than the wider social care workforce as well, which is around 15%.  81% have been working as a PA for two or more years, the average hourly rate received by employed PAs is £11.54 per hour, while self-employed PAs are charging an average of £15.07 per hour. The First Minister has just announced that the minimum wage for all social care workers will be increased to £12 per hour as of April 2024, which should result in pay rises, particularly for employed PAs. 86% of respondents said (agree or strongly agree) that they love their job, and 86% said that they are proud to be a PA, 93% said that they trust the person they support and that their employer trusts them  However only 51% of respondents said that they feel they have job security, which could be linked to the 45% that have a permanent contract, which is a much lower percentage than the social care workforce generally, 83% of whom have permanent contracts.  60% of respondents said that being a PA has a positive impact on their health or wellbeing. About half of respondents feel that they have received appropriate training to do their job, and it is felt that if we can improve the training and development offer, this might attract more of the younger workforce, who will perhaps be looking more for development and career progression opportunities, which work has already begun through the Workforce and Training Development project.  *Discussion and questions:*   * PN - I’d like to ask about the announced pay rise in the Programme for Government, and whether that will be reflected in direct payments or whether employers will need to cut the hours of support they receive? * BB - The £12 per hour rate has not been fully welcomed by registered support providers, as the implementation of it is delayed until April and they are asserting that it is not enough. It will be interesting to see how PA employers and PAs react to the announcement. * BD – Have there ever been targeted recruitment campaigns, for example, with students? * KH - There has been lots of local activity focused on students, I know many ISOs speak with colleges/universities to promote the PA role. We're also working with SG team who do the national Care to Care campaign to promote all social care roles, to promote PAs as part of this large campaign. |  |

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| **Scottish Government Updates** | **Actions** |
| Juliet Cramb-Low is the new head of Unpaid Carers’ Policy and SDS Improvement at SG. There has been some minor internal restructuring within this team recently in light of staff changes. Unpaid Carers’ Policy is being merged with the SDS Improvement team, and the team welcome conversations from anyone on unpaid carers or on SDS. This team is part of the The Adult Social Care Local Improvement And Transformation Division, which has a new director, Rachel McGruer, who will be able to give an update at the next meeting of the NSDSC.  JCL offered to source and circulate an up to date organigram, and this was welcomed by group members.  Comments and questions:  BB – A questionnaire was recently circulated in connection with the NCS roadshows, with a letter requesting completion by a particular (rather short) date. When I contacted SG to ask for assistance, since the respondents have learning difficulties and would need significant support, I was told that the easy-read version had not yet been developed but that it would be circulated later, with a later closing date. I would like to request that we work together to make sure that accessible ways of including supported people are developed at the same time, and that sufficient time is given not just for people to complete them, but for the people who support them to support people to complete them. We need good lead-in times, and the information to be available equitably at the same time.  RG - We have raised similar issues with the NCS co-design team recently around the survey. They have taken them on board but has also been an issue for people we work with.  DMd – This is something that comes up over and again, and I am sure there are some members in the meeting today who represent organisations that could support SG with that, if necessary.  BA - I'd also say that another benefit of our merging with the Unpaid Carers team is that they have a number of very long serving and supportive members who hold a wealth of information on social care that we can draw on. Though very much understand the frustration from your point of view with constant change and a feeling of starting over.  AMM – What is the mechanism to pass on meaningful information to SG, given all of the changes that have been and are being made within SG? It often feels like we go back to the beginning every time there is a reshuffle.  JCL – We are very conscious of the challenge of maintaining expertise and knowledge. SG does make the effort to maintain knowledge through ongoing staff changes and movement, and also there are a large number of professional advisors who have a high degree of knowledge and expertise in their particular areas, and they do a lot to maintain continuity.  DMd – This group was initially started to try to assist SG in implementing SDS policy as effectively as possible, so maybe this is something the NSDSC can contribute to, going forward, and we can discuss that at our next meeting.  JK – The SDS project team and some of the other members of the NSDSC would be more than happy to meet with you and your team to present some of the work we are doing.  JCL – That would be very welcome.  JMl – Very welcome to hear that the unpaid carers and SDS departments are being combined, as there are a lot of people that both would apply to, so this is a hopeful step to making that be more joined up in future.  PL – You mentioned that charging is in this division. The Assembly, a group of people with learning disabilities, are protesting today that they don’t want to wait another three years for charging to be scrapped. What is happening to prevent this from carrying on until the end of this parliament, as the First Minister has just said in the programme for government?  JCL – That's not my area, but I can take that back to the relevant team within SG.  JMl - The reality is for many families like ours, our son can't pay his charges so it's family that are covering them when they don't have the ability to challenge them. It seems the more disabled you are the poorer you need to be.  PN - It's really frustrating that that commitment was made but we don't know what is happening with it, especially in a cost of living crisis.  JK - |  |

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| **National Self-directed Support Stakeholder Updates** | **Actions** |
| **Social Work Scotland SDS project update**  **Review of SDS standards** - Our core group has met to screen the standards based on Equality impact assessment and Island/community impact assessment. That data has been captured and will inform the next stage of the process, which are a series of “lens group” meetings, essentially focus groups with experts in particular areas(Children, Physical and Sensory Impairment, Learning Disability and Autism, Older People, Carers and Geography). This will allow the groups to consider each standard fully and feed back in full. People have been very forthcoming in offering their time to get involved, and many others have offered to submit written feedback and to participate in one-off meetings. We do have a plan in place for how to sort and analyse all of the information we will be gathering through this process.  **SDS Resources work stream & SDS Practitioner Toolkit –** The SDS practitioner toolkit is nearly at the stage of going to the designer, and the key part of the work after that will be making sure this toolkit is available on the intranets of HSCPs and local authorities to make it accessible to practitioners.  We will also be tying into SDS Scotland’s work on the SDS handbook, as well as the review of SDS standards, to make sure that this toolkit is part of a wider portfolio of resources to support practitioners.  **Self-evaluation framework** – We are coming to the close of our 100-day beta testing of the self-evaluation framework with three volunteer local authorities. We have already started to reshape the framework based on the rich learning coming from these test sites. There is considerable value in having local learning which can then inform improvement work, making sure that is sympathetic to what is needed, rather than a more traditional one-off evaluation with a more performance-based approach. We are hopeful that this learning approach can also feed into the work still to be done to develop a monitoring and evaluation process with regard to the SDS implementation plan.  We are planning two events: Firstly a practitioner event with the SDS community of practice and others to look at what we have learned from the self-evaluation work, and to identify a next tranche of local authorities to work with the next version of the self-evaluation process, and secondly a leaders’ event, in recognition of the importance of leaders leading from the front for this work to be effective.  **SDS Scotland Update**  SDS Scotland are working with SWS to test the self-evaluation framework in connection with the SDS standard on Independent Support and Advocacy, working with members (Independent Support Organisations).  Quality Mapping – this is work looking at people’s experiences of services to establish where some of the gaps are in independent support, and whether people are getting access to independent support, and this work will be ready to report at the end of March 2024.  SDS Handbook – building on the successful model of the PA and PA Employer handbooks, this handbook aims to give people information at any stage of the SDS process, to empower people to navigate the system, and point them towards the support they need. There is a working group being formed, including lived experience, carers, local authorities, and people from the third sector. There is a lot of information about SDS already available, which can be quite daunting, so this handbook is being considered as a curated resource making it clear where people can find accurate, relevant and useful information.  Work is underway to take forward recommendations of the earlier work on SDS in autism, and other work is being considered with regard to dementia and addictions.  Teaching for the next round of the Community Brokerage Award is due to start this month, with three cohorts working towards that award.  **SDS Scotland AGM - Wednesday 15 November 2023**    Join us for our 2023 Annual General Meeting, held online via Teams.  Non-members are welcome to join after our formal AGM has finished at 11.30am for a series of presentations and workshops covering the latest developments in Self-Directed Support.    Tickets are free - to secure your space please [book now via Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sds-scotland-agm-2023-tickets-722605752257?aff=oddtdtcreator).  The meeting will be held online via Microsoft Teams. Subtitles and chat function will be available.  If you require BSL interpretation please let us know by Monday 23 October at the latest.  If you have any other accessibility requirements, please let us know when you book your ticket, or contact us at [info@sdsscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@sdsscotland.org.uk)  **In Control Scotland Update**  Lunchtime sessions open to disabled people, unpaid carers and anybody with an interest in SDS are now open again on the last Thursday of the month from midday to 1pm on MS Teams, which is designed as a kind of introductory programme to SDS, and would be perfect for any new staff to start to find out about SDS.  Following last year’s option 2 work, ICS are close to publishing their option 3 research on how practice has changed since SDS started (within the next month).  In Control Scotland are now recruiting for trustees, if group members know anyone who would be suitable.  [Programmes and Information Sessions | In Control Scotland (in-controlscotland.org)](https://www.in-controlscotland.org/programmes-informationsessions)  Working Together For Change is a group of supported people, carers and practitioners coming together for six months to make real change within self care and SDS. Closing date for applications for paid employees has closed, however ICS are looking for supported people and carers to get involved. The closing date has been extended to Friday 15 September. There will be three in-person days in Perth and the rest of the sessions are online, and there is a small budget to support people to get to the in-person days.  **Health and Social Care Alliance update**  The Alliance are now funded specifically to work in a specific area of the SDS improvement plan, to do with sensory loss, and there will be more detail on that later in the year.  The Alliance has also been involved in the National Care Service co-design, as well as work around the Scottish Human Rights Bill, particularly highlighting how SDS can be useful within that.  The Alliance has published an event report, together with the presentations of the Social Care and the Human Rights Bill Consultation event, please see below.  *(double click to open these documents)*  **Inclusion Scotland Update**  Inclusion Scotland have hosted a webinar on the National Care Service proposed amendments, and once these are finalised, these will be discussed with Scottish Government.  The People Led Policy Panel are now recruiting, there are up to fifteen places for supported people and carers who have sensory loss, are from BAMe backgrounds, and/or young supported people and young carers, and people with lived experience of dementia and social care support.  Inclusion Scotland are also to meet with the NCS Charter Scottish Government co-design team at the end of September to look at the final draft of the charter, and to do specific work on co-design subsequently.  Inclusion Scotland have been working with the Scottish Independent Living Coalition on a letter ahead of the programme for government, and are happy to hear that ILF is going to be reopened, and that the immediate plan for the Disability Equality Strategy is being rolled sometime soon. |  |

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| **Any Other Business** | **Actions** |
| **AOB from Inclusion Scotland -**  Inclusion Scotland have an opportunity that we hope you will share with your networks and the people you work with. The People Led Policy Panel (PLPP) are currently recruiting more members. Please share the message below with your networks and anyone you know who fits the bill and might be interested in applying.    Our People-led Policy Panel is a group of people with lived experience of using or trying to use adult social care support. We are working with the Scottish Government and others on improving and reforming the system and co-design of a new National Care Service.  At this time, we are particularly welcoming applications from people who need social care support with certain additional lived experiences:   1. Young people or young carers aged 18-28 who use adult social care support or have supported someone who uses adult social care support from a young age 2. Deaf, Deaf Blind, deafened, hard of hearing or visually impaired people who need or use adult social care support. 3. People with experience of Dementia either as an unpaid carer/supporter or a person with Dementia. 4. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) supported people or unpaid carers who use adult social care support 5. Supported people/ unpaid carers from different faith groups 6. Supported people and unpaid carers who identify as Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer, Non-binary or Intersex (LBGTQI+) 7. Supported people and unpaid carers who have recent experience of pregnancy or maternity 8. Supported people and unpaid carers who live in the Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland or other remote island community.     BSL / English Interpreters and/or Electronic Note-takers will be provided at meetings and events on request as well as other requests for accessible information and communications by panel members.    Here is a link to the webpage which includes more information about how to apply. It includes information in BSL. <https://inclusionscotland.org/disabled-people-become-a-leader/people-led-policy-panel/plpp-recruitment-2023>  The next meeting of this group will be on **Wednesday 11th October 2023**.  [**Click here to join the meeting.**](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NTFhNDI5NTEtNzIxZC00YjI1LThlMjEtMTM0Njc0MGY1Mjcy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223f56ffd8-b90c-4687-b8ed-f572197e94cf%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%226b5f8009-5ce2-4c65-922f-43460a4bf777%22%7d) |  |