**Meeting of the National SDS Collaboration**

**Wednesday 3 September 1-3pm**

**Chaired by:** Donald Macleod, Chief Executive, Self Directed Support Scotland

**Attended:** Alison Upton, Ann Marie Penman, Anna Shaughnessy, April O'Neil, Ashley Drennan, Becky Duff, Becs Barker, Beth Anderson, Brett Rogers, Calum Carlyle, Cheryl Taylor, Clare Thomas, Colin Holligan, Danielle Farrel, Diane Hamilton, Don Morrison, Donald Macleod, Donna Murray, Elspeth Critchley, Frank Reilly, George Hannah, Hannah Mcshane, Hannah Ross, Iain McGregor, Jackie Eaton, Jane Kellock, Jaynie Mitchell, Joanne McGee, Karen Procek, Kaye Robertson, Laura Finnan Cowan, Laura Hendry, Lee Shennan, Leila Talmadge, Lisa Paul, Lowri Butler, Lyn Pornaro, Megan O’Hara-Knight, Morag Duncan, Narek Bido, Paul Barrowman, Pauline Lunn, Rebecca Robinson, Rob Gowans, Robert White, Sharon Leitch, Sharon Stevely, Sheila Hanney, and Zoe McIntyre (notes).

**Apologies:** Alastair Minty, Andy Miller, Alison Bavidge, Ashley Mazs, Geri McCormick, Gordon Dodds, Hilda Campbell, Iain Ramsay, John Skouse, Juliana Heron, Lewis Shaw, Lisa Paul, Michelle Fleming, Rebecca Aldridge, and Ronald Culley.

1. **Welcome**

Rebecca Robinson from Scottish Government and Narek Bido from Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living were introduced to the National Collaboration.

1. **Addressing Outcome 3: Systems and Culture**
	1. **Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation: Consultation on Definitions of Care (SB/SD)**

Presentation delivered on work underway to date regarding definitions of care. Feedback provided included:

* + - Need for clarity on the difference between regulatory standards and good practice standards
		- Importance of using collaborative, non-confrontational language that doesn't create mistrust between different service providers
		- Suggestion to focus on an affirmative tone that highlights good practices
		- Request to explicitly link standards to Self-directed Support principles
		- Recommendation to strengthen references to independent living
		- Highlight the need for better implementation guidance, especially for new social workers
		- Emphasise prevention and early intervention in the standards
		- Develop a clear implementation plan
		- Create mechanisms to help navigate the complex landscape of different standards and frameworks
1. **Reflection in discussion groups**
* How could we work collaboratively to improve systems and culture?
* How are supported people involved in planning in your area?
* What’s your experience been of flexible use of budgets, for supported people and for unpaid carers?

Key discussion points included:

* Prioritising Relationships Over Resources
	+ Sustainable change comes from valuing people and relationships above financial constraints.
	+ Systems often default to cost-saving measures, sidelining the human impact.
	+ Investing in trust and collaboration can lead to more effective and resilient support systems.
* Flexibility and Trust in Budget Use
	+ Year-on-year budget cuts limit innovation.
	+ Systems often lack trust in individuals to manage their own support.
	+ Examples of carers returning unused funds show that trust works.
	+ Flexibility can reduce long-term costs and improve outcomes.
* Power-Sharing and Inclusive Collaboration
	+ Disabled people and carers are not treated as equal partners.
	+ Collaboration often feels defensive or tokenistic.
	+ Community-led, bottom-up approaches can drive meaningful change.
	+ Local SDS forums are making progress by connecting with leadership and using SDS standards to influence practice.
* Accessibility and Equity
	+ Challenges arise in consultation processes due to poor venues, inaccessible materials, and lack of inclusive design.
	+ Disability Equality Training for social workers is essential to improve engagement and understanding.
* Accountability and Learning
	+ SDS Framework of Standards helps embed good practice and empower supported people.
	+ Local SDS meetings and continuous improvement groups support transparency and shared learning.
	+ A shared space for collecting and showcasing good practice could help hold systems accountable and inspire change.
	+ Peer support networks and feedback loops are vital for continuous improvement.
	+ Autonomy, reflective practice, and cross-sector collaboration can help rebuild confidence and competence.
	+ Newer social workers may lack grounding in values-based practice due to systemic pressures.
1. **Current issues**

Hannah McShane provided update regarding restructure within their Scottish Government team.

**5. AOCB**

Date of next meeting – 1 October 2025