

PA Programme Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 28th September 2023, 10:00 – 12:00

Chairs updates

- **National Care Service (NCS)** Stage 1 extended to Jan 2024.
- The First Minister has announced a wage uplift to a minimum of £12 per hour from April 2024.
- The **Independent Living Fund (ILF)** is reopening and will be delivered by ILFS.
- [DPOs issued open letter to the First Minister](#) on prioritising disabled people in his policies.
- DPOs plan to issue a letter in opposition to the Bill on assisted dying.

Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation (IRISR) Report

- The [IRISR Recommendations Report](#) was published on 27th September.
- The recommendations will be presented to the Minister who will consider them before taking next steps.
- The PA Programme Board discussed their reaction to the recommendation around bespoke registration for PAs:
 - *It is recommended that a co-produced and bespoke scheme of registration for Personal Assistants (PAs) which recognises their skills and role, and opens up access to training and development, should be developed. Such a scheme would **expressly** seek not to create barriers, and through co-production, would create positive opportunities for both the Personal Assistant and their employer.*
- A full note of the IRISR discussion has been taken by the PA Policy team and shared with the Regulation, Improvement and Integration Support team in Scottish Government for inclusion in the advice to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, as she responds to the recommendations of the report.
- While the recommendation is for a bespoke co-produced scheme, concerns include that the registration of PAs may challenge the agency of the employer as well as negatively impact the retention and recruitment of PAs.

Subgroup updates

Training subgroup

- Delivering co-produced National PA Training resource for PAs and PA employers by April 2024.
- Online survey Consulted with 33 stakeholders and to explore PA Employers/PA training needs.
- Framework guided by an employer reference group chaired by AMM.

PA Direct Payment subgroup

- Survey of 29 local authorities and learning sessions with key stakeholders complete.
- Results will inform what is important to include in a Direct Payment National Model Agreement.

PA Communication and Information subgroup

- Terms of Reference for PAPB updated to ensure language is appropriate and accurate.
- Content review process developed to keep the PA and PA Employer Handbook up to date.

PA Recruitment subgroup

- Working with 'My Job Scotland' website to improve the visibility of PA vacancies.
- Exploring working with Job Centres to promote the role of PA locally.
- Contributed PA case studies to the *Care to Care* advertising campaign (launch due Nov).

PA Wellbeing subgroup

- IMPACT Coaches working on PA wellbeing evidence review (UK and international literature).
- Piloting a discount card with 50 PAs ([Blue Sky Social Care Card](#)).

PA Data subgroup

- Members provided feedback to the SDSS team on the draft report on the PA workforce survey.
- Scottish Government audit sources of data to estimate the size of the PA workforce.

PA Networks subgroup

- Remote/rural members updated on how social needs might be met in the future.
- Agreed membership to include an HSCP and/or SiRD representing urban communities.

Disclosure Scotland

- Disclosure Scotland are implementing the remainder of the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 by 1 April 2025.
- This includes making PA a regulated role with mandatory requirements for PAs to be members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme to carry out the role.
- PAs/PA employers will be able to apply via downloadable or paper form. The changes may bring an online application.
- There will also be the option for an umbrella organisation to play a role in helping PA employers assess suitability for the role based on conviction information.
- Gareth Wilks to be invited to the meeting of Programme Board on 14 December to provide further updates.

Organisational Updates

PA Network Scotland (PANS)

- PANS to become a full national membership organisation (soft launch by end of 2023; hard launch, in the new year), including a revamped website.
- PANS recommend Unite as the union for PAs to join. Unite have indicated that they may create a PA branch of the union.
- To date, PANS have issued over 1100 badges to PAs.

SDS Cornerstone update

- PA Advisor contact list now stands at around 460 PAs.
- Over 300 contacts made by PAs, with most predominant queries relating to pay and contracts.
- The PA Facebook Social Group sitting at 131+ members since its launch 6 months ago.
- PA indicate a preference for peer-to-peer contact online, compared to in-person groups, where there has been less interest.
- PA Advisor project met with Moray and Angus councils on how they could support their work.

Other Updates

SDS Improvement Plan 2023-2027

[SDS Improvement Plan](#) met last week and discussed:

- Devising methodology for the implementation and evaluation of the plan
- Ensuring the right membership of the group

PA Newsletter

- [Latest edition of PA newsletter \(14 September\)](#)
- 4,490 newsletters were delivered, with a 50.31% open rate to date, which is very good.

Actions for PAPB

- PA Policy team to share a full note of IRISR discussion by the PA Programme Board on 28 September 2023 with Scottish Government officials in the Regulation, Improvement and Integration Support team.
- Gareth Wilks (Disclosure Scotland) to be invited to the meeting of the PA Programme Board on 14 December 2023 to provide a further update on making PA a regulated role with mandatory requirement for PAs to be members of the PVG Scheme to carry out the role.