

**Personal Assistant (PA) Programme Board – 27 January 2022**

<b>Co-Chair</b>	Donald Macleod, Self-Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) Ian Turner, Scottish Government
<b>Date</b>	27 January 2022
<b>Time</b>	10.00 – 12:00
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Alison Upton	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
Linda Beath	Scottish Government (Minutes)
Don Morrison	Scottish Government
Toria Fraser	Scottish Government
Ian Turner	Scottish Government
Donald Macleod	SDSS
Susan Brodie	Scottish Government
Les Watson	Personal Assistant Network Scotland, WEA
Lyn Pornaro	Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL)
Emily Russell	Scottish Government
Sharon McLeod	Ayrshire Independent Living Network (AILN)
Ray McCowan	WEA
Linda Wilson	Unite the Union
Jeremy Adderley	SDSS
Des McCart	NHS
Donna Murray	Self-employed Personal Assistant ?and Social Work Scotland?
Peter Scott	Independent Living Fund Scotland
Joanne McGee	SDSS (Take Control)
Laura Hendry	Cornerstone
Linda Wilson	Unite
Harriet Tay	WEA
Dr Jim Elder-Woodward, OBE	Independent Living Movement
Karen Young	Scottish Government
Colin Millar	Scottish Personal Assistants Employers Network (SPAEN)
Margaret Petherbridge	Chair of SWS SDS leads network
Julia Smith	Independent Living Movement
Anne Marie Monaghan	Independent Living Movement
<b>Apologies</b>	
Jack Blaik	Scottish Government
Becs Barker	CarrGom
Eilidh MacDonald	CarrGom
Angela Mullen	Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL)
Pauline Nolan	Inclusion Scotland
Ailsa McAllister	Social Work Scotland
Mariane Scobie	Glasgow Disability Alliance

## Items and Actions

### Welcome

Donald welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Laura Hendry of Cornerstone to introduce herself to the Board.

The Board was advised that a Steering Group has been formed to develop the way forward for the PA Programme Board. It will meet on a monthly basis while PA Programme Board meetings are to be held on a bi-monthly basis.

### Previous Minutes

There was one amendment required to the minutes of the previous meeting.

The action that Joanne McGee (Take Control) asked us to update was actually removed in earlier versions of the minutes and not included in the version shared with the Board.

‘SSSC to share with PA Programme Board, Support in the Right Direction projects and Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) any workforce development opportunities for PAs and their employers.’

This text and the amended action is to be reinstated in the minutes and they will then be circulated to the members. SDSS will also upload these to their website.

### Progress update/successes since last meeting

The action points from the last meeting were covered. There are some issues still outstanding

1. PB7 - Disclosure Scotland will be invited to a later meeting of the PA Programme Board as they do not have the PVG process for PAs ready yet and the deadline is 2024. In the meantime, the Steering Group will continue to engage with Disclosure Scotland regarding this issue.
2. PB6 - Meeting with myjobscotland – contributions have been received from members of the Board. This action is still with SDSS who created a Short Life Working Group to achieve a collaborated solution. It is still outstanding.
3. PB9 – SWS is to invite the Chairs of the Board to attend the SWS Adults Standing Committee. As dates are yet to be finalised the Chairs of the Committee (John Campbell and Diane Fraser) are aware of the ask and SWS will be back in touch in the next couple of weeks to confirm.
4. PB12 - Joanne asked that this action point amended to read: ‘SSSC to share with PA Programme Board, Support in the Right Direction projects and Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) any workforce development opportunities for PAs and their

employers.’ This is to reflect that SSSC should also share with Disabled People Organisations (DPOs).

#### **Action points:**

- **Further work to be done on the myjobscotland issue – (PB6).**
- **Secretariat to update action point number PB12 in the action tracker and amend minutes from October 2021 meeting to include DPOs. These minutes will then be circulated to all Programme Board members.**

It was agreed that updates will be given on all action points at future meetings.

There was a request for meeting papers to be issued to Board members a few days before the meeting date to allow members to review the papers prior to the meeting.

#### **Work plan**

The first draft work plan document was introduced to the Board prior to the meeting. It is a work in progress so it will change significantly over time. This work plan will in due course form the basis of advice from the PA Programme Board to the Minister.

The work plan covers the 3 objectives raised at the Matter of Focus workshops with a further objective relating to data which has been added. However, it is acknowledged that there is a lack of data available across the whole of health and social care which means that obtaining this data is very much a long term objective.

With regard to Personal Assistant Network Scotland (PANS), (item 2a on the work plan) it was highlighted that there needs to be a degree of clarity about the needs and wants of the PA workforce. Therefore, the Board will seek greater involvement of PAs.

The meeting heard an overview of the proposal by Cornerstone of the need for smaller localised PA networks. They have recently experienced an increasing number of PAs looking for support and advice. Due to conflict of interest concerns, they are unable to help PAs. They are considering recruiting a PA support worker who could assist and would set up a PA Support network in the Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City areas. Cornerstone give out the PA Network information leaflet and also advise PAs that they can approach ACAS or one of the trade unions for help and support. However, it appears that PAs find it difficult to engage with national organisations and prefer to have local support.

Other members of the Board indicated that they recognise this potential conflict of interest and had similar experiences. Many Board members refer PAs to the PA Network and make it clear at the outset that they are unable to assist them. Take Control provide PA employers with the PA Network leaflet at the time that the contract is set up. There was agreement that there seemed to be a preference from PAs for local support.

Several people indicated that PAs should be encouraged to approach their employer with any concerns in the first instance. The meeting heard that the PANS have 11 private Facebook groups which provide peer support. The most active of these are in Shetland and Moray. However, it may be that these groups are covering too big an area to be effective

and smaller groups could be created. Part of the solution will be to build local capacity and that this will complement PANS, it will not create duplication.

The meeting heard about the importance of the role of the employer. The PA employer has employer insurance which gives them a source of support and advice which they should be encouraged to use for any employment issues and in the case of disputes.

The meeting heard that PAs often contact the Health and Social Care Partnership because a discussion with the PA employer has not resolved issues. PAs are referred to other organisations as it is important that appropriate independent advice is sought. This dispute may result in industrial tribunals. It was suggested that PAs should be able to approach a union for support or PA insurance could be offered. This may not be attractive to a PA as the role is often low paid and sometimes part time, the cost of union fees and insurance premiums are high.

It was agreed that a local approach was needed. It was acknowledged that insurers can try to resolve and offer mediation between the PA employer and their PA. However, PAs need independent advice, especially if they are working alone. Insurance companies offer support sessions about employment advice and employers can contact them at any point.

Unite the Union does have members who are PAs. The union's role is to ultimately offer independent support to its members. PAs are employees and need to be protected.

The meeting heard that many of the things that PAs contact the PA Network about could be helped greatly by providing better induction training for both employers and PAs, particularly focussing on the importance of communication and relationship building.

It was suggested that information for PA employers on how to best support PAs could be part of the Local Authority Direct Payment Agreement which is signed between the LA and the PA employer.

In summary, it was recognised that the PA needs support, that PANS needs a higher profile so that all new employers and PAs are signposted to PANS website.

#### **Action points:**

- **Laura Hendry and Ray McCowan to meet to discuss how support for PAs can be delivered.**
- **All Board members to contribute to the gap analysis exercise to be undertaken in relation to work plan.**

#### **Training**

Alison Upton of SSSC delivered a session on training. It is recognised that PA networks are a critical link to "being part of something" and training.

There are points about the PA role that differ from others in social care. However, there are key employment principles that sit across both roles. There is a need to think about lived

experience – all clients are important but there are courses which are accessible for PAs. With the SSSC's Open Access, it is possible to design a bespoke package for PAs.

Gap in funding training: GCIL carried a training officer for 3 years without funding. However, the role was unsustainable as they could not find funding to train PAs and employers. LCIL had PA Employer/PA training which had been written by PA employers and it was delivered by disabled people. The training was always over-subscribed but due to funding issues, as in the case of GCIL, delivering this training has been unsustainable.

The meeting heard that AILN offer a variety of services to PA employers which include: 'Being an Employer' training and the opportunity to speak to a peer at the very start of the process. While there is pressure to begin to be an employer AILN ensure the employer is aware of their responsibilities and obligations and they provide a reference folder filled with information and advice which includes Health and Safety advice, having difficult conversations information, the responsibilities of being an employer, insurance information, putting together staff duties, etc. They also ensure employers know that they can access the training at any time.

AILN also have a PA Mentor, who is able to speak to prospective PAs about their role and draw their attention to the PA role which is quite distinct as the person is working in someone's home.

It was highlighted that specific training needs that have to be certificated can be difficult to access, for example, advice from occupational therapists. The meeting heard that some training may be mandatory and without it the PAs and PA employers will not be covered by the Employers insurance policy.

The meeting heard that there is no training on independent living; the history of PAs; and the difference between a PA and a care worker.

Alison suggested that a gap analysis exercise could be carried out in relation to training.

The meeting heard that Falkirk Council ensure that the direct payment includes sufficient funds to enable the direct payment recipient to be a good employer. This amount should include training and include paid time to attend training that is relevant to the role. There are some things a PA employer would need to offer to ensure their own health and safety and that of the PAs.

The meeting heard that not all HSCPs provide money within the direct payment for training or to fund cover to allow time off for training.

Julia Smith, Les Watson, Lyn Pornarno, Sharon McLeod and Joanne McGee offered to be part of a group looking at the issue of training.

Jim Elder-Woodward will work with the SDSS PA Handbook group regarding training on independent living; the history of PAs; and the difference between a PA and a care worker.

### **Action points:**

- **Secretariat to share the meeting slides with all members of the PA Programme Board. These have also to be uploaded on to the SDSS website.**
- **Jim Elder-Woodward to send in historical and philosophical background information on the PA role. Jim has been invited to join the Training Sub Group.**
- **A Training Sub Group has been set up to look at what training should be available to PA's. Julia Smith, Les Watson, Lyn Pornarno, Sharon McLeod and Joanne McGee offered to be members.**

### **Comms strategy**

The Board members were thanked for all of the feedback on the draft communications strategy. The aim of the strategy is to promote the vision of the PA Programme Board to a wider audience. All members of the Board need to support the communications strategy. The objectives are:

- To understand and promote the work of Personal Assistants who are part of our integrated health and social care workforce
- Share across sectors and communities key guidance, practice and new stories.
- Share findings and promote the work of the Personal Assistant Programme Board.
- Through the PA Programme Board address issues which affect Personal Assistants.
- To raise awareness of how other workers in the system can support the work of the PA.
- To increase the number of PAs and to retain and build on the existing PA workforce.

The issue of mailshots was raised and concern was expressed that these letters need to be carefully worded due to the fact that PAs who care for children were not included in the social care £500 payment. It was also highlighted that some PA employers were uncomfortable that they had not provided the PA with the thank you payment. It was suggested that a segmented approach might be better with one letter tailored specifically for PAs and another for PA employers so that the role of the employer is not seen to be undermined. Care will need to be exercised as there are some PAs who support both adults and children. It was highlighted that any mailshots must also comply with GDPR.

The meeting heard that ILFS could send a letter directly to PA Employers funded by them.

### **AOB / Date of next meeting**

The Chair thanked members for attending and for their contributions to the discussion.

Following the meeting it was agreed that the next meeting of the Programme Board would be on 31 March 2022.