

Personal Assistant (PA) Programme Board – 9 June 2022

Co-Chairs	Donald Macleod, Self-Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) Ian Turner, Scottish Government
Date	9 June 2022
Time	10.00 – 12:00
Location	MS Teams

Attendees	Organisation
Alison Upton	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
Sharon McLeod	Ayrshire Independent Living Network (AILN)
Les Watson	Personal Assistant Network Scotland (PANS), WEA
Ailsa McAllister	Social Work Scotland, SWS
Jeremy Adderley	SDSS
Donna Murray	Self-employed Personal Assistant (PA) and SWS
Jane Kellock	SWS
Becs Barker	Community Contacts, Carrgom
Lyn Pornaro	Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL)
Joanne McGee	Take Control, GCIL
Gemma Wilson	SDS Cornerstone
Sharon Shepherd	PA
Jim Elder-Woodward	Independent Living Movement
Marianne Scobie	Glasgow Disability Alliance
Jack Blaik	Scottish Government (SG)
Fran Holligan	COSLA
Karen Albrow	PA Employer
Anne Marie Monaghan	Independent Living Movement
Linda Beath	SG
Toria Fraser	SG
Emily Russell	SG
Don Morrison	SG
Christina McLaren	SG
Apologies	
Ray McCowan	PANS, WEA
Margaret Petherbridge	Chair of SWS SDS leads network
Peter Scott	Independent Living Fund Scotland
Susan Brodie	SG
Kevin Dugan	GCIL
Karen Young	SG
Colin Millar	Scottish Personal Assistants Employers Network (SPAEN)
Tony Hadley	Cornerstone
Des McCart	NHS
Harriet Tay	PANS
Julia Smith	Independent Living Movement

Michael Gettins	PA
James McNulty	SG
Pauline Nolan	Inclusion Scotland
Linda Wilson	Unite the Union
Kevin Stewart	Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care

Items and Actions

Welcome

The Chairs welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Sharon Shepherd, Gemma Wilson, Karen Albrow and Fran Holligan joined the meeting for the first time and introduced themselves to the group.

Apologies were received from Kevin Stewart, MSP, Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care. He was due to attend the meeting to hear about the progress on the work plan. It was agreed that he would be invited to the next PA Programme Board meeting on 1 September 2022.

Action Point: Secretariat to invite the Minister to the next PA Programme Board on 1 September 2022.

Approval of minutes from 31 March 2022

The minutes of the PA Programme Board of 31 March 2022 were approved.

Review of action points from the last Steering Group Meeting

The action points from the last meeting were covered. The undernoted actions have been closed since the last meeting.

PB24: The Secretariat to explore opportunities for the Independent Living Movement to meet the Minister to have further engagement around the role of the PA employer and the primacy of the relationship between the PA employer and the PA.

PB25: The Chairs to invite the Minister to attend the next PA Programme Board on 9 June to discuss the approved Work Plan.

PB27: Inclusion Scotland, GCIL and other Board members to add the survey link to their PA employer newsletter.

PB28: The Secretariat to invite Michael to Training Sub Group and provide him with future Training Sub Group meeting dates.

PB29: Secretariat to add Michael Gettins to the member list for the Training Sub Group.

PB30: Anne-Marie, Jim and Becs to meet to discuss the increased need for PA and PA employer training in NHS Highland area due to more Option 1 packages.

PB31: Where possible for Board and Sub Group meetings the Secretariat should support work to seek additional PA representation by contacting Board members who have PA networks, where the invited PAs decline a meeting invitation.

PB32: Any PA Programme Board member who wishes to be involved in sub groups should contact Donald Macleod.

PB33: GCIL to advise Chair of nominated representative for the Recruitment Sub group.

PB34: To set up a Communications Sub Group to work on and prioritise future communications and for those Board members who wish to join to contact the Secretariat. The Sub Group will invite GCIL, Jim Elder-Woodward, Becs Barker of Community Contacts and Michael.

Newsletter

The latest PA Newsletter has been posted on the SDSS webpage [Personal Assistant Newsletter June 2022 - Self Directed Support Scotland | Self Directed Support Scotland \(sdsscotland.org.uk\)](https://sdsscotland.org.uk). The newsletter is covering work being done by the PA Programme Board and the various sub groups in relation to training, PA survey, recruitment and the PA handbook.

Annual PA Survey [click here](#)

SDSS gave a short update on the initial results of the annual PA Survey which was issued to PAs on 30 March 2022. The meeting heard that data was emerging relating to demographics, gender, and PA status (employed or self-employed). A preliminary report will be issued soon.

Concern was expressed about where PAs go for help, there were a significant number of people who responded to the survey who indicated that they looked to a trusted person such as a GP. There are concerns that PAs don't understand that SiRDs are not their employer. It seems that the survey is highlighting that PAs don't know what independent support is and they might be using organisations inappropriately. There is a need to be clear about the purpose of each independent support project. SiRD funding isn't specifically for PAs, for example, even though most will support them

Jim expressed the concern that not enough attention is given to train and empower employers to take on their responsibilities to support their PAs. PA support seems to have developed without reference to employers. He fears that the role and status of the employer is being undermined.

Action Point: Preliminary report on PA Survey results to be issued by SDSS.

PANS membership organisation update

PANS gave an update and advised that there had been c400 applications for an ID badge. They now have c. 1200 members (not including people who are members via social media). However, it was evident that around 5% of PAs applying for an ID badge were under the impression that they worked for organisations and not a PA Employer. SDSS asked for this data to be shared with them.

It was highlighted that this may be happening as some care organisations are calling their staff PAs when they would have previously been called care assistants, care workers, support workers, etc.

The meeting heard that this problem becomes greater in rural and remote areas where the only option is SDS Option 1. Often these people don't know that they are employers, let alone that their PAs know who their employers are. We had one employer who didn't know the names of his employees.

Jim expressed the view that there is a need to train people in the historical philosophy of independent living - both PAs and their employers.

Concern was expressed that, if 5% of PAs don't know who is employing them; extrapolating, this suggests that they are not aware of their employment rights etc.

PANS have a PA Panel and any PA can join it if they want to. There are currently around 30 members although not everyone is able to be at every meeting. However, there may become a time when PANS will have to limit numbers.

PANS are trying to get PAs more involved in the PA Programme Board but feedback has been that PAs are unable to attend meetings that are held for two hours during the working day. A more suitable time for them would be early evening. He will raise this again at the next PA Panel meetings to see if he can get some PAs who could attend. However, he asked whether someone from the PA Programme Board could come along to the PA Panel meetings. Donald, Marianne and Jeremy offered to attend these meetings and Les will provide details of meeting dates.

Action Point: PANS to give SDSS details regarding the proportion of PAs who wrongly think that they work for organisations.

Action Point: PANS to invite Donald and Jeremy of SDSS, Marianne of GDA and Jim to attend PANS PA Panel meetings.

Disclosure Scotland

Donald advised that he is working with SDS regarding the Disclosure Scotland Act. He felt that it was important to share information regarding the forthcoming changes relating to PVGs for PAs. Disclosure Scotland are phasing in changes gradually but these will be fully up and running by 2024. There will be umbrella bodies who will be responsible for the PVGs and there will be cost implications for PAs/PA employers. These umbrella bodies still need to be set up and Disclosure Scotland will give further information on these developments at the next PA Programme Board meeting in September.

Concerns were expressed about who these umbrella bodies would be. Take Control are doing this work at present but it is a paper based system. There is also the feeling that if they acted in this capacity as an umbrella body then there was also the potential that there could be a conflict of interest.

It was also highlighted that these umbrella bodies will also face difficulties in advising PA employers about who they can/should employ if they are not able to share any

information regarding the criminal record of individuals who have applied to become a PA.

The meeting also heard that disclosure only gives a snapshot at a moment in time to support the decision making around recruitment of the individual and that the decision to recruit does not rest with the umbrella body. Concern was also raised about the capacity of support organisations to take this on. If they were to take this on it might result in less time for their core work of offering independent support, advice and information.

Action Point: Disclosure Scotland to be invited to the next PA Programme Board on 1 September 2022.

Minister's Meeting with People with Lived Experience

The Co- Chair gave an overview of the meeting that was held with the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care in May. There will be another meeting with him once the NCS Bill has been published. Anne-Marie stated that this was a very useful meeting where the Minister was able to explain the process that the Bill needs to take and that the process of engaging with people will continue as the bill progresses through the various stages until it is enshrined in legislation. The meeting heard an overview of the processes and the likely timescales.

PA subgroup updates

Training Sub Group

There have now been three Training Sub Group meetings. The focus has been on working out priorities and discussion regarding the tile on the National Induction Framework. There needs to be recognition that the role of the PA is not the same as a social care worker. To assist with this, Jim has written a paper which explains what a PA is and the Chair is going to circulate this to all Training Sub Group members.

The Sub Group is going to pull together a proposal regarding the National Induction Framework. Training was funded in the past but due to austerity the funding has been removed. The Chair has written a brief proposal on this and she will circulate it around the members of the Training Sub Group. It is felt that the direct payment should include a budget to cover PA training requirements. Work is also being done relating to terms and conditions for PAs. The Training Sub Group meets on a monthly basis.

The Co-chair advised that he had met with SSSC regarding the National Induction Framework. It is possible that behind the tile they will be able to put Jim's information and the Pa handbook and behind the tile in the employers section there will be a link to the PA employer's handbook. This will raise awareness of existing resources. These will be shared with the group so that the information is consistent. There is also a need to make it clear that the duty of care for a PA lies with the PA employers and not with the Local authority.

Recruitment Sub Group

SDSS had met with COSLA regarding the [Personal Assistant Jobs | myjobscotland](#) webpage and the PA videos that they have developed which can be added to the site. Exploring if they can get useful information regarding data from the site and they are sense checking adverts and social media adverts with a view to ensuring that jobs that are advertised use the title “Personal Assistant”. Also once the SDSS Impact Campaign has been signed off they will be able to use that too.

PA Network Pathfinder Project

SG gave an update on the PA Network pathfinder project which had its first meeting in May. This is a pilot project which aims to increase the number of local PA networks in the North East. It is going to be run by Cornerstone with input from PANS who aim to learn from their experience with Aberdeen.

SG will contact Inspiring Scotland. The Chairs of the PA Programme Boards are going to Practice Network meetings to talk about the Programme Board and ask if there are PA networks in their areas.

Gemma gave an introduction to her role in Cornerstone and shared a link to their website - [Support for Personal Assistants - Cornerstone SDS](#). To date, Gemma’s focus has been to put a work plan in place and ensure performance framework, compiling data on the number of PAs, PA employers, peer-to-peer support, and raising awareness of her post. PA employers have been notified and they should advise PAs. Communications are out with Abderenshire. Aberdeen City have provided information to care managers. Cornerstone is to discuss joint working with the SDS lead Michelle Fleming of Moray Council. PANS to meet Gemma of SDS Cornerstone to discuss working together.

Action Point: PANS to arrange a meeting with Gemma of SDS Cornerstone to discuss how to work together.

Communications and Information Sub Group

The Chair gave an update on the first meeting of this group which took place on 9 May. They discussed membership and looked at setting up the terms of reference for the sub group. Also the direction and remit as well as the communication/information issues from the PA Programme Board work plan. They recognise that this is a substantial remit relating to internal and external communications. They are working to identify the key definitions of independent living and will review the PA and PA Employer handbooks (prior to publication as well as after publication). The group will also assess the SDSS Making an Impact campaign and make sure that communications and videos are accessible to all with consistent language being used throughout. The next meeting will be on 21 June. Members plan to go to PA Panel meetings to explain what the role of the sub group is. It was also suggested that there should be representation from an independent support organisation (funded via the SG Support in the Right Direction programme) on this sub group and offered to provide a representative.

Action Point: Becs to organise a representative from Independent Support Organisations to attend the Comms and Information Sub Group.

AOB:

The meeting heard that the bulk of the work is carried out by the chair of the Sub Groups and that the work of the Sub Group will only be achieved if all the membership is invested in the work.

A Wellbeing Sub Group will be set up soon which will be chaired by Donna Murray. Lyn of LCIL asked to join this group.

Action Point: LCIL to be invited to join the Wellbeing Sub Group.

PAs should be encouraged to be involved in the PA Programme Board. There is an “open approach” to the group. Any PA who wishes to attend these meetings should feel that they can attend at any time.

Action Point: Donald to share the information on how PAs can attend future PA Programme Board meetings.

Date of Next Meeting

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

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Programme Board would be on 1 September 2022.