

Personal Assistant (PA) Programme Board – 31 March 2022

Co-Chairs	Donald Macleod, Self-Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) Torja Fraser, Scottish Government
Date	31 March 2022
Time	10.30 – 12:00
Location	MS Teams

Attendees	Organisation
Alison Upton	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
Linda Beath	Scottish Government (Minutes)
Don Morrison	Scottish Government
Torja Fraser	Scottish Government
Donald Macleod	Self-Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Emily Russell	Scottish Government
Sharon McLeod	Ayrshire Independent Living Network (AILN)
Ray McCowan	Workers Education Association
Linda Wilson	Unite the Union
Jeremy Adderley	SDSS
Donna Murray	Self-employed Personal Assistant and Social Work Scotland
Pauline Nolan	Inclusion Scotland
Becs Barker	Community Contacts
Peter Scott	Independent Living Fund Scotland
Joanne McGee	SDSS (Take Control)
Tony Hadley	Cornerstone
Linda Wilson	Unite
Dr Jim Elder-Woodward	Independent Living Movement
Mariane Scobie	Glasgow Disability Alliance
Jack Blaik	Scottish Government
Kevin Dugan	Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL)
James McNulty	Scottish Government
Hannah Ross	COSLA
Anne Marie Monaghan	Independent Living Movement
Michael Gettins	Personal Assistant
Apologies	
Margaret Petherbridge	Chair of SWS SDS leads network
Ian Turner	Scottish Government
Susan Brodie	Scottish Government
Les Watson	Personal Assistant Network Scotland, WEA
Karen Young	Scottish Government
Colin Millar	Scottish Personal Assistants Employers Network (SPAEN)
Lyn Pornaro	Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL)
Des McCart	NHS
Harriet Tay	Workers Education Association
Julia Smith	Independent Living Movement

Items and Actions

Welcome

Donald welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Michael Gettins joined the meeting for the first time and introduced himself to the group. James McNulty also introduced himself in the chat, he has recently joined the Scottish Government SDS Improvement Team.

Donald reminded everyone to respond to the meeting invite so that it was clear in advance who would be in attendance.

Apologies were received from Margaret Petherbridge and Ian Turner, Les Watson.

Ministerial letter

The PA letter from the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care advising PAs of the work underway to support them has now issued. This had been shared with both the Steering Group and the Programme Board in January. The letter covers issues such as the annual PA Survey, the work being undertaken by the PA Programme Board, the PANS membership offer and photo ID badge, the launch of the PA Handbook and information regarding wellbeing resources. The letter can be seen here <https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Letter-from-Mr-Stewart-to-all-PAs-29-March-2022.pdf>. The letter was also sent by email to reach all stakeholder groups who work with PAs such as the SDS leads and Support in the Right Direction project leads. The Programme Board members was also asked to share it with their networks.

Approval of minutes from 27 January 2022

Matters arising

Concern was expressed at the way that the letter from the Minister had been issued directly to PAs. It was felt that this had had unintended consequences of being seen by some in the sector as undermining the unique relationship between the PA employer and the PA..

There was support for the creation of a Communications Sub Group and it was acknowledged that this Group would be the best place to agree the wording and prioritise future communications. This is discussed later in the Minute.

All acknowledged the complexity of any communications around PAs and the need to handle it sensitively. SG explained that the letter had been sent to 6,000 people including approximately 5,000 PAs who had applied for the £500 Covid thank you payment. They acknowledged that they had shared with all the Programme Board that there would be a Ministerial letter but not how it would be delivered. SG apologised that it had arrived with PAs before it reached PA employers. This reaction was not what they would have wished and they will work closely with the Communications Sub Group in future to avoid this happening.

The Chair explained that if the Work Plan was approved then the Chairs would invite the Minister to the next Programme Board to discuss the Work Plan.

The meeting heard that it would be helpful if the Secretariat explore opportunities for a separate meeting with the Independent Living Movement and the Minister and Scottish Government representatives specifically around engagement and the roles of the PA and the PA employer.

The minutes of the PA Programme board of 27 January were approved.

Action Point: 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.

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.

PB19: Laura Hendry and Ray McCowan met to discuss how support for PAs can be delivered.

PB20: All Board members to contribute to the gap analysis exercise to be undertaken in relation to work plan.

PB21: The Secretariat shared the meeting slides with all members of the PA Programme Board on 23 March 2022. These have also to be uploaded on to the SDSS website.

PB22: Jim Elder-Woodward sent in information historical and philosophical background information to the PA role. Jim has been invited to join the training group.

PB23: Julia Smith, Les Watson, Lyn Pornarno, Sharon McLeod and Joanne McGee offered to be members of the training group. Jim Elder Woodward and Alison Upton are also involved. The first meeting of the training group was held on 18 March 2022.

Approve PA Programme board Work plan

A brief overview of the work plan was given and it was acknowledged that the Work Plan gives clear direction in terms of the actions being taken. It was stated that the Work Plan is work in progress and it will change as plans are developed and actions are closed out.

Work is also being done on a new PA Programme Board page for the SDSS website.

The meeting heard that the format of the Plan was fine and that it gave clear indication of the actions to be taken. The Work Plan was accepted by the Board.

Action plan: the Chairs to invite the Minister to attend the next PA Programme Board on 9 June to discuss the approved Work Plan

Newsletter

A PA Newsletter is being developed and there was discussion around seeking contributions and the channels that should be used to distribute it to PAs. The meeting heard that it will be shared on the PA Programme Board web page.

Annual PA Survey [click here](#)

SDSS gave a short update on the annual PA Survey which was issued to PAs on 30 March 2022. The meeting heard that there has been a significant interest in it so far (151 responses) and that it will be open until 30 April 2022. It is planned to issue further communications to maximise uptake and Board members are asked share the survey with their networks. GCIL will add it to their PA employer newsletter and Inclusion Scotland also.

The meeting heard that the Survey had been designed in three parts so as to make it as easy as possible for respondents who can choose how much of it to complete. SDSS explained that the majority had completed the full survey.

Although the work relating to analysing responses will start after the closing date, initial data shows some interesting themes around large proportion of PAs who responded who are female and over 50 years old. The meeting also heard that over half of those who had responded on the first day of the Survey don't feel recognised or valued for the work they do. The survey also shows PAs views around their welfare and the numbers who work long hours (over 50 hours per week).

All expressed interest in seeing the analysis of the survey, knowing the location of PAs and finding out the number of employers per PA. The meeting heard that SDSS are looking for feedback relating to what information they should look for and they will share preliminary themes and analysis and distribute these after the survey closes on 30 April.

Action Point: SDSS to share analysis of the Annual PA survey after it closes on 30 April 2022.

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

PA subgroup updates

SDSS gave an update on progress explaining that a PA Handbook Sub Group was formed to agree preparation of the PA Handbook which is due to be launched soon. The Chair asked anyone who wished to be involved in subgroups to contact him.

As regards the Communications Sub Group GCIL will identify a suitable representative, Jim Elder-Woodward and Michael who is a PA and Becs Barker of Community Contacts all offered to join.

Training Sub Group

An overview of the first Training Sub Group meeting that took place on 18 March 2022 was provided. The work covered by this Group sits within recommendation 48 of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care (IRASC). This requires the Group to address the training needs of PAs to ensure they are an integral part of the social care workforce with access to relevant training. The meeting heard that while some PAs may not wish to participate in what is being offered to the PA workforce, this Board is tasked under the IRASC to consider the needs of the whole workforce.

The Training Sub Group discussions need to focus on the unique nature of the PA and PA employer relationship and the members have committed to ensuring this is not compromised in any way because of the Training Sub Group activity. PA employers are well represented on the group and additional PA representation would be beneficial. The Group recognises that it cannot represent the diverse scope of the Independent Living Movement, but participants are committed to sharing the activity of the group through their own groups, connections, and networks to ensure the broadest and most inclusive approach possible to this work.

The meeting heard that the Training Sub Group actions form part of the Programme Board Work Plan, which was created to advise the Scottish Government Minister. They will work collaboratively and agree how to achieve particular outcomes and on the priorities. The work achieved will be reported back to the Programme Board.

Michael Gettins offered to be part of the Training Sub Group.

Joanne McGee of Take Control offered to be part of the Wellbeing Group

Becs of Community Contacts asked Anne-Marie and Jim to meet regarding training. NHS Highland are moving more and more to Option One as the only option and, as a result, the requirement for training for PAs and PA employers is becoming greater.

The Meeting also heard that more needs to be done to ensure that there are always a minimum of two PAs present at all meetings of the Board and Sub Groups.

Recruitment Sub Group

SDSS had run a recruitment sub group which had focused on the launch of the myjobscotland jobs page. There had been limited data back that could be used but it was felt that it was a good idea for this sub group to continue to meet.

Wellbeing Sub Group

There was discussion around the establishment of a Wellbeing Sub Group and colleagues who are interested in being part of this group were asked by the Chair to get in touch.

The Meeting heard that it would be good to remind ourselves of the four conditions added to the Terms of Reference before we carry out an action.

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

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

Action Point: 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.

Action Point: 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.

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

Action Point: GCIL to advise Chair of nominated representative.

Action Point: 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 the GCIL representative, Jim Elder-Woodward, Becs Barker of Community Contacts and Michael, who is a PA.

AOB:

PANS gave an update on the PA Network pathfinder project which is going to be run by Cornerstone. This will be a pilot project in the North East with a view to facilitating the creation of PA networks and relationships that have been informal with a view to seeing if this can be replicated. PANS are supportive of this project.

Action Point: Further detail on the PA Network Pathfinder Project to be provided by Cornerstone at the next Programme Board meeting.

Pay Uplift £10.02/Pay Rates

The meeting heard concerns regarding the latest pay uplift for PAs who look after children who had not been included in the rise to £10.02. Some PAs look after adults and children and are being paid different rates depending on who they are looking after.

The meeting heard concerns around the need to respect the role of the PA employer under Employment Law, and to ensure the LA does not take on the role of the employer, whilst recognising that the Local Authority has a duty under legislation to review all option 1 packages in line with the 1968 Social Work Act, the Adult Support and Protection and Adults with Incapacity Legislation.

SWS are gathering data on rates in children and families and adults and they will work with Health and Social Care Partnerships around the Direct Payment system to improve consistency across Scotland. It was agreed that there were many pay rates across Scotland.

The meeting heard calls for an agreed minimum rate of pay, and equalisation of rates for the same/similar jobs, with some differentials in rates depending on the job the PA is being asked to do, like there are across other sectors. There's a difference between 'light touch' assistance and more complex support, driving, communication support and so on and these should be remunerated accordingly.

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 9 June 2022.