

FACTSHEET:

Self-directed Support (SDS) for adults

Information for the Voluntary Sector

1. What is self-directed support?

Self-directed support (SDS) is the mechanism for supporting Independent Living. SDS is the mainstream way of providing social care support in Scotland. It means having rights to the practical assistance and support that people need to participate in society and live an ordinary life.

SDS supports people to make informed choices and decisions about what support is right for them and how they can live independently in their own home or community. This support could relate to their physical health, mental health, addiction issues, a very specific condition or even where people have no clear diagnosis. It is about any factors affecting their Independent Living.

SDS is not a benefit and does not affect any benefits that someone receives, as the funding is to meet a person's assessed need for social care and support.

2. Why is it important that you read this?

SDS came into law in 2014 through the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013.

However, many people with a neurological condition who need support haven't heard of SDS and do not understand their rights and choices under this legislation.

We want to make sure that people are able to exercise their rights to make Independent Living a reality for them in Scotland.

3. Who is eligible for SDS?

SDS is available to anyone who meets eligibility criteria for support. **Each local authority sets their own eligibility criteria**, so this might be different in different parts of Scotland.

Some local authorities limit SDS to those assessed as being at a critical or substantial risk.

4. How SDS can help someone with a neurological condition

There are an estimated 600 different neurological conditions impacting 1 in 6 people in the UK.

An SDS budget can be used in different ways. People can pay for a person called a Personal Assistant, or use a care agency, or receive support directly from their local authority.

It can also be used to pay for specialist equipment, adaptations, or to access opportunities in the local community, such as shopping, leisure activities and attending doctors' appointments.

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5. How can you support someone with a neurological condition, or their carer to access the support they need

The likelihood that someone with a neurological condition is eligible for SDS can be high. You can support someone by checking out the local eligibility criteria and connect them with their local independent SDS information and support service. More details here: 'Find Help' on the SDS Scotland website:

<https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/>

You can help people prepare for their initial contact with the local authority by helping them to:

- explain their medical challenges
- have their medical history ready
- highlight which other people or organisations are involved
- highlight if they have a carer
- be upfront about adjustments needed

Once a person's eligibility for support is established, the council will work out what their SDS budget is, based on their assessed needs. The person will then get a choice of the **four options of SDS** and be given support to put together a 'Personal Outcome Plan', to show how they would like to use their SDS budget.

See page 4 for the four options of SDS.

You can find out more information on eligibility here: <https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Statutory-Guidance.pdf>

If you're looking for other sources of local support, your Third Sector Interface (TSI) will have a directory of local groups and organisations and the support they offer.

6. Support for family and friends who are also carers

Many people who care for friends or family members do not recognise themselves as carers.

It is important that unpaid carers are aware that SDS can also apply to them. This is the case even if the person they care for is already in receipt of support under SDS or they live in a different area.

Carers have to be offered an Adult Carers Support Plan (ACSP) or a Young Carers Statement (YCS). This enables them to have a 'good conversation' about their needs as a carer and be connected to relevant local support.

If the carer meets local eligibility criteria for carers, they could be offered an SDS budget in their own right, to give them a break from their caring role, or to support their own health and well-being.

"We use our daughter's SDS budget to employ Personal Assistants - doing all the recruitment ourselves. This means we can employ people who are flexible enough to suit our daughter's needs".

Parent of a young person with ME

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ACSPs and YCSs are often carried out by local carers centres. You can find more details and helpful information for carers from the Coalition of Carers: <https://www.carersnet.org/>

7. Communication and Capacity

For some people, their neurological condition can make them unable to speak or communicate effectively, even though they may be fully cognisant and aware of what's going on around them.

It is important not to confuse difficulties with communication, with difficulties in understanding.

People may need additional support to communicate their views to health and social care staff. Family members and carers might be very helpful in supporting this.

Some people may also need the support of an independent advocate, who can help people get their views across to relevant professionals. You can find details of local advocacy services from the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA): <https://www.siaa.org.uk/find-an-advocate/>

8. What to do when things change

We all know that things can change, sometimes very suddenly. Even if someone's circumstances change soon after an assessment, they can still ask the local authority to review their needs.

This includes any deterioration in the person's condition or if their carer is finding it harder to support them.

With rapidly progressive conditions, such as MND, and fluctuating conditions such as MS and ME, timescales can be difficult to manage. It can be helpful if people have contingency plans in place once they complete their assessment of need.

If someone thinks their need for support is critical, they should ask for support or a review as soon as possible.

9. Preparing to leave hospital

When people are admitted to hospital it is important to ensure they have continuity in the care and support they receive. Some people may need additional 'social care' support when they are in hospital.

When people are ready to be discharged from hospital, there should be an **agreed discharge plan** in place. Unpaid carers should be involved in this plan.

Sometimes people are offered a short-term re-enablement service to enable people to return home with some support. This gives people a bit of 'breathing space' to work out what their longer term needs are under SDS.

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There are four options for receiving SDS which are:

Option 1: A direct payment, where the council gives you the money you need to pay for your support

Option 2: You agree that someone will arrange the service of your choice on your behalf

Option 3: An arrangement, where the local authority identifies a service you would be happy to use and they arrange this for you

Option 4: A mix and match of any of the other 3 options

If you meet local eligibility criteria, the council has a duty to tell you about these four options and how these relate to your circumstances.

Self Directed Support Scotland

Contact us on:

info@sdsscotland.org.uk

Scottish charity no: SC039587

Company registered in Scotland:

SC371469

Neurological Alliance of Scotland

Contact us on:

info@scottishneurological.org.uk

Scottish charity no: SC048555

10. Additional Information

More information about carers:

You can find further support as a carer from your local Carers Centre listed on the [Coalition of Carers in Scotland website here](#):

<https://www.carersnet.org/what-support-can-i-access/>

More information about advocacy:

You can search for a local advocacy service on the [Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance website here](#):

<https://www.siaa.org.uk/find-an-advocate/>

More information about SDS:

There are now Independent SDS Information and Support services in all local authorities in Scotland. They help local people to apply for the support they need. You can find your local organisation by using the 'Find Help' search tool on the [SDS Scotland website](#) here:

<https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/>

For updated SDS guidance see:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-accompany-social-care-self-directed-support-scotland-act-2013-2/>

Thanks to these NAOs member organisations for helping to produce this document



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