

National Guidelines on Self-Directed Support (Scottish Executive, 2007) (Unedited extracts of key points)

Self-Directed Support puts the principles of **independent living**³ into practice and enables people to be **active citizens** in their communities. Like the **social model of disability**, it is about reducing or removing the physical, organisational or attitudinal barriers that people may experience in the world around them. It is about flexibility, choice and **control** and having a decent quality of life. It is ultimately about promoting confidence and wellbeing for those with an assessed need.

Self-Directed Support builds on the platform provided by **direct payments** legislation and the Disability Discrimination Act. It is used instead of, or in addition to, support services provided by the local authority. It can buy support at home, such as having a bath or getting washed and dressed. Out of the home it could be to support an individual in college, or to enjoy leisure pursuits more. It may also be used to pay for someone to provide care and support to enable them to take a short break with the person. These services can be purchased from a care agency or voluntary organization, from a local authority or by employing **personal assistants**. The aim is to meet needs (as assessed by the local authority social work department) in creative and flexible ways.

This means that **assessment** of need is no longer about which service a person should be referred to, but about individualising the support a person can receive, including offering eligible people self directed support. Scotland's **Changing Lives** agenda further reinforces the need for self-directed support as part of new social work strategies that better take account of individual's needs and models are still evolving.

Self-directed support does not affect any other state benefits that an individual may be receiving. Self-directed support does not put an individual at an advantage over other people who have requested services: the same prioritization and eligibility is applied whether for self-directed support or arranged services.

The Scottish Executive published the *Changing Lives* report in February 2006 which followed an independent review of Scottish social care. The report states clearly that doing more of the same in social work will not work and there is an expectation that organisations seek innovative approaches to ensure that individuals and communities get the support that is right for them.

It also states that people who use services, and their family carers, will have more control over the services they are getting.

How to set up self-directed support

The social work care manager will need to spend time with a person to work in partnership to find out what support is needed and what it is possible to provide. They can give the person information about the assessment process, **including self-assessment**. Some **local support services** are also able to spend time with individuals to prepare them for the assessment so that they can get the most from it. They may also be able to get support from a peer group who already have self-directed support and know how things work in practice.

The individual will need to show the council that the support they want to buy meets their assessed needs, and must have a separate bank account for their individual budget. The person will need to show how they are spending the money by recording it in various ways and by keeping bank statements and receipts on request. Lots of people get a bookkeeper to help with this, or use a local pay roll service to help with paying any staff they employ. There are local authority funded local support services in most areas that can help with these matters.

Self-assessment questions

How long does it take you to get up, go to the toilet, bathed, get dried, dressed and get ready?

How long does it take to have breakfast and clear up afterwards?

How much time does it take to prepare and cook other meals and clear up afterwards? You should include other snacks or drinks you have either during the day or night.

Do you need assistance to use the toilet at other times of the day or night?

If so, how often?

Do you need a rest period during the day? How much assistance do you need with this?

Do you go to college, work (voluntary or otherwise) or any other regular activity for which you need assistance?

How many hours per week does it take to clean your house – vacuuming, dusting, changing your bed, washing and ironing, laundry etc?

How often do you go to the bank, post office and how long does it take you to deal with correspondence, pay bills etc?

How often do you go shopping and how long does it take?

How often do you go to a social or recreational activity and how much time does that take?

How long does it take to get ready for and to get to bed at night?

Do you need assistance during the night for anything such as turning, going to the toilet or taking medication?

Do you need support to plan your day, budget, meal, care arrangements, future?

There may be other activities you want to add to this. The full list will help you to estimate the number of hours of assistance you will need each week.

Single shared assessment (SSA)

The local authority should inform users of local support services to support them explore opportunities for self-directed support and to prepare for the assessment. Local support services have a key role in equalising the relationship so that individuals can choose and manage their support. Local authorities should fund those local support organisations who have the capacity to do so to provide this service.

Self-assessment and preparing for being assessed

Individuals should be encouraged, as part of a self-assessment process, to consider for themselves what care and support they might need. Doing so will better assist the person in articulating their own needs and so enhance their self-care, which may help prevent escalation where more

extensive service provision becomes necessary. It may also assist someone to regain their previous capability.

Self-assessment forms should be designed by user groups to prompt people to think through the tasks with which they need assistance before their needs are assessed by the local authority (see above example of a self-assessment checklist). In addition, some local support services are able to provide courses that can enable users to think of themselves as active citizens making decisions about how to best meet their support needs.

Brokering an Individual Budget

The care managers are best placed to perform this function. Their skills and creativity help them know about an individual's aspirations and wishes, work with them through times of change and help them attain choice and control.

Ability to manage self-directed support

Almost any disabled or older person should be able to get self-directed support if they choose it. Appropriately trained **advocacy** workers should be made available for people who are unable to make the necessary arrangements themselves (eg people with learning disability or cognitive impairment).

Where the authority decides, in exceptional circumstances, that a person is unable to manage self-directed support, the reasons for this decision must be communicated competently and sensitively in writing. This allows for any misinformation to be challenged or clarified. The authority should also make the individual aware that they can use the complaints procedure to challenge the local authority's decision not to offer self-directed support.

Carers' assessments

A carer's assessment may be carried out separately, or combined with the assessment of the cared-for person.

A carer's assessment does not at present give the carer an entitlement to self-directed support in their own right.

Health Needs and Continuing Health Needs

Health monies can be used to enhance the hourly rate so that a worker with health skills can be employed, or to increase the number of hours funded so that, for example a second, or other worker can attend to health needs at specific times of the day.

Residential accommodation and short breaks

An individual budget may be used to pay for short breaks in residential respite provision or towards purchasing more flexible short breaks. For example, self-directed support can be used for a PA to accompany a user on holiday, so providing a complete break for the carer, or children may have a short break with a specialist care worker

*Kirsty has Huntington's disease which affects her mobility and speech. She also experiences occasional problems with choking. She says: 'Fantastic scheme, makes our life so much easier, can't praise it enough. Help from our **local support organisation** is only a phone call away at all times'.*

'...The difference that self-directed support has made to my life has been fantastic... I feel sad that there are people who may be scared of doing this. People should get the support they need and be encouraged...' (Young person in receipt of self-directed support)

'...My personal assistant comes to suit me and now I can go to the doctor when it is convenient. I go to the gym and swimming on a Monday, riding with the Riding for the Disabled Association on Tuesday. The difference is like being let out of jail. Now I am free, it has taken a lot of stress and worry away.' (Physically disabled man in his mid 30s)

Source document

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www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/07/04093127