



Cornerstone SDS
Aberdeenshire



Newsletter

Autumn 2017

Brenda's Self Directed Support

My introduction to Self-Directed Support came at a difficult time. I'd been having support from an agency, having been allocated 12 hours a week. This had changed my life and enabled me to get out and take part in the community, a pleasure that I'd missed for many years after I developed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD very suddenly 14 years ago. This made a drastic difference to my life, one day I was working full time in care, walking miles, enjoying life, the next I could barely walk across a room.

I went from caring for others to being dependent on my husband 24/7. It took many years to get the support I needed and during that time I was pretty much a prisoner in my own home. It came as an even harder blow when I lost the care I'd been getting with the agency. I had built up great relationships with the Care Assistants who supported me to go out. But my care package had been cut to two hours twice a week. As we live quite rurally this wouldn't give me time to just get out shopping so I wanted to put my hours together on one day but



the agency couldn't manage this. My care manager told me about Self-Directed Support Option 1 and how I could use my budget to employ my own Personal Assistants (PAs). At first I felt a bit apprehensive about being an employer but I agreed to go ahead and meet with an SDS Advisor from Cornerstone SDS, Debs. We had a meeting to discuss my needs and see how the options would work for me. Despite having a degree in social care and years of experience, it's very different when you're faced with having to make these choices

and decisions about yourself, but I needn't have worried.

It is strange at first being an employer, but a payroll provider takes control of all aspects of PA wages, so you don't need to worry about any of that. Recruiting in the beginning felt quite daunting but my SDS Advisor supported with advertising, applications and interviewing. I made the interviews as relaxed as possible for the potential candidates and Debs supported me with this. I had the

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added reassurance of requesting for references from previous employers and also advising that they would be required to join the PVG scheme.

I now have two fantastic carers, Marion and Clare and also a great relief carer, Lilian, who covers when required. The great thing about SDS Option 1 is the flexibility. If we don't manage to get out one week because I've not been well, it means we can use the hours at another time for a longer trip. This has allowed me to do things I've not managed for years, like a recent trip to Peterhead Prison. It also means I don't feel bad asking Clare to pop and pick up my medication, she would do it for nothing, but I feel better knowing I can pay her for her time and effort.

It's a two way thing too. My carers both say that they get as much fun and satisfaction out of it as I do. Marion says when she's having a hard week she then thinks *"Oh, I've got Brenda on Wednesday, I wonder*

where we'll be going this week?!"

The Cornerstone SDS Service have a resource mapping service and were able to put me in touch with Brighter Breaks who were running a scheme to provide opportunities for people living with full time carers to get a break. I had a fantastic trip to a silent retreat, near Inverness, something I've always wanted to do, although Riki said it can't have been very silent with me there!

I'm now going to be developing the work I did there, funded by my church.

I'm hoping to apply to do a counselling course at Aberdeen University and see if I can use my carers to enable me to attend.

I would advise anyone who is thinking of this option through SDS to take a deep breath and go for it. It's nowhere near as hard as you imagine. There's loads of support there. Never feel you are on your own. Debs is always happy to pop in. When we know Debs is coming

Riki says *"Oh no, I'll be baking again!"* (she likes her scones!)

I am very happy with how things have turned out and wouldn't wish it any different now, although it was hard losing the agency support at the start. It has helped build my confidence again as I feel more in control of my own life.

It was good when I had the chance to swap stories with other people in a similar situation. The Employment Law workshops run by Empire and Cornerstone SDS were good for this and it was such a shame they were so poorly attended and stopped. Meeting face to face like that was very useful and supportive. If they run again I would really recommend people to go.

My goals for the future? Clare, Marion and I enjoy our music in the car when we're out and about. Clare bought a new CD for us not long ago and one day I'm determined to get Marion to sing along! If I can do it, so can she!

Health & Safety

All employers have legal responsibilities to manage Health & Safety within the workplace under the Health & Safety at Work Act. All employers should look after the health, safety and welfare of their staff and ensure compliance with all legal requirements. The HSE website provides useful resources for all employers.

Please utilise the Health & Safety Executive website to obtain free information and Guidance.

For more information:

Risk Management and example Risk Assessments:
www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm

Accident Reporting:
www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm

New and Expectant Mothers in the workplace:
www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/

Writing a Health & Safety Policy (where employers have 5 or more employees):
www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/managing/writing.htm

Occupational driving (where PAs are required to drive the employers vehicle or their own vehicle for work purposes):

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf

In general, health and safety laws apply to all businesses including employers of Personal Assistants. Health & Safety laws are there to protect you, your employees and the public from workplace dangers.

The approach you take should be proportionate to the size of your business and the nature of your business activity. For most small, low-risk businesses the steps you need to take are straightforward. If you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write down your risk assessment or your health and safety policy.

Non-compliance with the law can have serious consequences for both employers and employees. If an employer fails to comply with health and safety legislation they can be prosecuted.

Some hazards you might want to consider are:

Icy paths, Poor housekeeping (causing trips/slips), Inadequate training (leading to back injury)

Aberdeenshire Unpaid Carer Information Pack

A new resource is now available to unpaid carers as well as being a resource for professionals working with unpaid carers in Aberdeenshire. This information pack is for adult and young (under the age of 18) unpaid carers who care for someone who may not be able to care for themselves. It contains information that carers and professionals told us they'd find useful to have in one place including:

- Details of support available for unpaid carers in Aberdeenshire
- Concessions, finances and funding
- Respite & short breaks
- Emergency Planning
- Training for unpaid carers
- Useful contacts and lots more!

The pack can be located at: <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/20913/unpaid-carers-info-pack-june-2017.pdf> or a printed version can be requested from Quarriers Carer Support Service.

If you'd like to give feedback, make any comments, have queries or suggestions about the pack or about the future of support to unpaid carers in Aberdeenshire, email us at carersupport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Shona's Story

My initial experience of Self-Directed Support came when my daughter no longer enjoyed going to respite. She was on the autistic spectrum and had a mild learning disability and she felt that we were *"putting her away"*. This couldn't have been further from the truth! The reason we had encouraged respite was to try to increase her social contact as she was not interested in any social activity out of school.

Through a support group that I had attended I had heard of Self-Directed Support, so when respite had stopped I enquired about using the funding to employ a support worker who could support with social activities. I was put in touch with Cornerstone SDS who were the support service in place to help me through the process. I was lucky that I had interviewing experience in my own job role but I can imagine that this might be daunting to anyone who has not had this experience. However the SDS Advisor was supportive throughout the entire process and made sure that everything ran smoothly. We since had to repeated the recruitment process twice more and each time I have found the support from Cornerstone SDS invaluable.

When my husband, who was in his early sixties, was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's and no longer able to be left at home on his own, I had no hesitation in asking my Care Manager for a Self-Directed Support assessment. Again I found the support from the SDS Advisor invaluable.

My own health was suffering due to the amount of stress I had been under as I was also still trying to work full time. I had promised to try to keep my husband at home as long as possible so it was important to try to get the care that my husband needed by the right person and at the times that suited us as a family. I was fortunate in that I had fantastic support from his CPN and other members of the multi-disciplinary team and was able to identify key times in the day when he needed support.

Having an SDS package meant that I was able to employ someone at the times that I needed and as his condition deteriorated he was reassessed and his care package increased to reflect the change in his needs. This meant that I was able to employ more carers and I was involved in the recruitment process so I knew they would be suitable and able to work at the times we required. This level of support meant that I was able to care for my husband at home for the best part of two years.

A rapid deterioration in his health following a mini stroke meant that caring for him at home was not possible. My SDS Advisor and Empire HR provided the help and support to terminate the employment of the carers, providing the appropriate letters and guidance through the whole process. They are always at the end of the phone or email for advice and support with the carers.

I realise that I was lucky to have found the carers that I did. Becoming an employer did seem quite daunting at the start, but for me it was and continues to be a positive experience and makes a big difference to our lives.

Payment Card

Aberdeenshire Council have been researching how they can improve their Direct Payments process for some time and in particular ways to make the financial monitoring process much easier for individuals. Completing these returns can be very time consuming for all concerned.

Aberdeenshire Council will be changing the way that they make Direct Payments in the near future. They will be making payments in to an account called a Payment Card account rather than the recipients own bank account. The person receiving the Direct Payment will be issued with a debit card to make payments for their care and support

needs. They will be able to use ATM machines, online transactions and telephone banking to manage this account. They will also be able to make purchases in stores where this had been agreed with the practitioner and if it is part of the support plan.

Once transferred over to the new system, people should see little difference to the way they purchase their care and support at the moment; however they will benefit from not having to submit financial monitoring returns.

Individuals will still be able to have part or all of their budget paid to an organisation for them to manage on their behalf, for example managed payroll accounts and Individual Service Funds.

Aberdeenshire Council will support individuals during the transfer of their existing Direct Payment bank account to the new Payment Card Account.

There is no need to do anything at this stage. Aberdeenshire Council will contact the Direct Payment recipients in the coming months to provide them with information on when they will be transferred over and how this will be done. Individuals should continue to manage their Direct Payment and submit their financial monitoring returns as normal in the meantime.



Self-Directed Support Service User Reference Group Looking for New Members

What is the group for?

The Health and Social Care Partnership set up a Self-Directed Support Reference Group to involve people who use social care services and others who have an interest in promoting the use of Self-directed Support in Aberdeenshire.

The purpose of the group is to provide an opportunity for people who use social care services to influence the development and implementation of Self Directed Support in Aberdeenshire.

It is an advisory body for the Self-directed Support strategy group and helps to:

- Promote meaningful engagement
- Share information, experience and knowledge
- Get the voice of service users heard by people in the organisation who deliver the services and the people who make policy decisions
- Engage in partnership working

- Strengthen service user involvement, engaging with individuals and relevant groups.
- Make recommendations on actions

If you would like to know more or are interested in joining the group please contact

SDS Reference Group Coordinators:

Alison Elrick Tel: **01467 537178** Email: alison.elrick@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Fish Update

Contact details for Fish Insurance can be found on the leaflet which was issued by your SDS Advisor.

This was recently updated so for those who have been an employer for a while the updated details are as follows: **0333 331 3900**



Banff Advisor Update

Denise has now left the service and Amanda Watson has joined the team and is now the SDS Advisor for the North region, covering Fraserburgh, Banff, Fyvie and surrounding areas.

Amanda will be in touch with you soon if you are in her area to introduce herself and I am sure you will enjoy meeting her in the near future.

You can contact Amanda on:

Mob: 07900741955

Email: Amanda.watson@cornerstonesds.org.uk



ILF (Independent Living Fund)

The Scottish Independent Living Fund (ILF) was established on 1 July 2015 - following the UK Government's closure of the UK ILF. ILF Scotland administers the £47.2 million a year national Fund, which enables disabled people with high support needs to choose to live in their communities and lead independent lives. There are currently 2,591 ILF recipients in Scotland (correct as of 31 March 2017).

New ILF Scheme

On top of the £47.2 million of support (transferred from UK Government) for existing

Scottish ILF users, Ministers have committed an extra £5 million per year to open a new scheme of ILF support.

This new ILF scheme will provide a short-term award to people aged 16 to 21, to help the transition into adulthood. It can be used to help the young disabled person to be active, participate and contribute

to their local community; aimed at helping them to reach their potential and make a lasting difference to young lives.

The new ILF scheme will open to new applications later in 2017.

Independent Living Fund Scotland

0300 200 2022 | Direct Dial: **0131 244 6424** | Mobile: **07890 559 196**

www.independentlivingfund.scot



Independent
Living Fund
Scotland

Updating of Contracts

If you have been an employer of PA's for a while now, your employees might have been issued with contracts from Peninsula, who were the employment law service that was used. We have been using Empire for over three years now and have recently been working with Empire with the updating of employee contracts.

If you have been sent updated contracts for your employees it is important that you issue these to your employee and obtain a signed copy back to keep in the employee support file.



Cornerstone SDS Stats

Cornerstone SDS is an impartial advisory service, commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council to provide you with all the information you need to choose the best possible care through SDS, providing support with:

- General Advice and Information
- Resource mapping (Assistance to find information on local resources)
- Option selection and/or informing the support planning process
- Support the individuals to become employers

The service has now been operating for three years and we are currently supporting 460 clients through Self-Directed support, 376 of whom are employers of Personal Assistants.

We work closely with the social care practitioners and continually look for ways we can make this link stronger. We are especially keen to make everyone aware that our team of advisors can support with the personalisation of the support plans.

A care and support plan is a summary of your assessed needs, your outcomes and how you want to use your personal budget to achieve these outcomes.

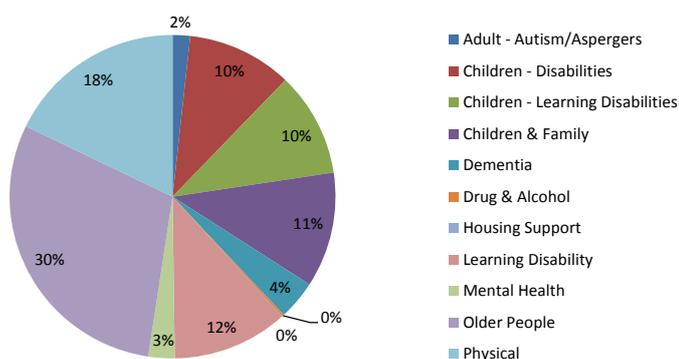
If required, your Cornerstone SDS Advisor can help you to enhance the care and support plan. This can help you identify all the resources available, so you can meet your outcomes in the most efficient way.

The Cornerstone SDS Advisors have completed Person-Centered Support Planning training and have a range of planning tools available. These can be used to give structure to conversations, leading to practical ways to capture information that feeds into care and support planning.

The tools ensure that you get to the heart of what really matters to you, and that we use this information creatively to inform the best possible solutions. They help our Advisors to think through the different options available, so that we can be confident that we are using available resource in the best possible way.

Most importantly it gives you more of a say, leading to increased choice and control over how you live your life – which is a fundamental principle of Self-Directed Support and personalised services.

Client Breakdown



Resource Mapping

Our resource mapping service is in place to provide you with information about resources available in your local area. Our project officer, Hannah Reynolds, gathers and holds a database of all providers and community resources in Aberdeenshire and the costs for their services. Hannah can signpost you to these services and can also carry out individual research to find specific resources to meet your individual needs.

Some examples of the resources Hannah has found so far are:

"An elderly couple that I met at an Alzheimer's Scotland group wanted to get involved in more social activities near Torphins. I found a new 'Senior Citizens Group' in Westhill on Thursdays and a Soup Lunch and Games group every 2nd Tuesday at the Church in Torphins."

"I was also able to find an additional needs drama class (Rhona Mitchell's School of Drama) in Inverurie and an additional needs singing group by SensationALL in Westhill for a young boy who likes music and drama."

"A more unusual request was to find a couple of alternative activities for one a young person who was interested in comic books and Science-Fiction. Through using the website www.meetup.com I found two groups in Aberdeen for him to attend one being 'The League of Science-Fiction Film Fans Aberdeen' who meet up twice monthly to watch a film and discuss and another group, 'Silver City Comics' who meet up once a month and create their own comic books together."

If you are looking for resources in your area please get in touch with Hannah who will be happy to help

Tel: 01467 530525

Email: hannah.reynolds@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Word Search

Y T S O R F P L C C L E V V R
R I P E A U A R O H F G I Z O
Y I B L M N A F L A S N M T A
Z M L P M C I Y O N C A L N S
A E K U K R D O U G R R A A P
N I T L E N T A R I U O N R O
N U I S I R E M F N N D O B O
A N I W G X B D U G C E S I K
G D N E E W O L L A H T A V Y
E G N I L T S U R O Y S E C D
W O O D L A N D M Z G E S O E
B L U S T E R Y E T X V O L T
G N I N R U T E N W O R B D L
C H I L L Y R N Y N I A R E I
B R I S K B C R I S P H K R W

AMBER
BREEZY
CHANGING
COLOURFUL
CRUNCHY
FROSTY
HARVESTED
RAINY
SEASONAL
VIBRANT
WOODLAND

AUTUMNAL
BRISK
CHILLY
CRACKLING
FALLEN
GOLDEN
ORANGE
RIPE
SPOOKY
WILTED

BLUSTERY
BROWN
COLDER
CRISP
FIRESIDE
HALLOWEEN
PUMPKIN
RUSTLING
TURNING
WINDY

Further information about SDS can be found on the Scottish Government's website - SDS Scotland:
www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk

If you would like to find out more about the Cornerstone SDS Aberdeenshire service please get in touch with us at:

25 High Street
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire
AB51 3QA

Tel: 01467 530520

Email: aberdeenshire@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Facebook: Cornerstone SDS

We are always seeking ways to improve our service so if you have any feedback on the service we provide we would welcome your comments. You can do this by speaking to your advisor or by contacting the Service Manager, Angi Wood on 07825050028 or email angi.wood@cornerstonesds.org.uk

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