

Cornerstone SDS

Aberdeenshire Newsletter



Spring 2016



“I’ll always be glad SDS made it possible to get her home.”

Hamish’s Story

It was late 2014 and my lovely late wife Petula (Tula) had been battling a brain tumour for almost 3 long years. She had done fantastically well and defied all medical expectations/predictions, mainly due to her sheer determination to keep going. However, in October 2015, she had a particularly bad seizure which left her hospitalised (in Turriff hospital), long-term bed-bound and immobile for the first time since becoming ill. Up to that point, she had largely managed to take care of herself, and what she couldn’t do herself we took care of as a family. We needed some help from carers and nurses but it was fairly minimal. However, this latest seizure changed everything.

It was heartbreaking to watch my wife’s health deteriorating, and her requiring more and more care. Although Tula was cared for wonderfully well in Turriff hospital, it was very obvious to me that she wanted to be at home. Speech was becoming very difficult for her, but the last full sentence she was able to say to me was “I want to go home”.

This made me very determined to try to make this happen. It was explained to me in hospital that in order to get Tula home, she would need 2 carers at a time for 3-4 visits of probably one hour per day (meaning a team of 6-8 carers was required to cover all the shifts), and that the council wouldn’t be able to provide this level of care using their own carers. This was a big reality check! Until that point I hadn’t realised the difficulty involved in finding that amount of care for her, and I was starting to doubt if we’d ever get her home. I was made aware of an alternative system called “Self Directed support” or “direct payments”, meaning the government/council could potentially pay us direct to employ our own carers, but in order to do this I had to become the “employer” and deal with interviews, timesheets, payroll, employee welfare etc. At first this all seemed pretty daunting, and I thought “how on earth am I supposed to do all this whilst looking after my wife, holding down a job etc”? However, after meeting with my Cornerstone SDS advisor I decided to go to a Cornerstone SDS workshop in Inverurie, which provided lots of meaningful advice on how to be a (good) employer of “personal

assistants". At this workshop it became obvious that there was no need to be intimidated, because help is provided for all the things I was concerned about. There are several payroll companies you can call on to handle wages, an HR company who handle any HR/employee law issues, and Cornerstone SDS provide lots of help and advice about all manner of things such as advertising, interviews etc. All these things are paid for with your "direct payment". I came away from that workshop with renewed determination to make it happen, and more confident having met other people in the same/similar positions, who were already making it happen for their loved ones. However, I was a little apprehensive that the stumbling block was likely to be lack of availability of carers (personal assistants), because several people at the workshop were struggling to recruit suitable carers. There seems to be a perceived lack of carers in general in this area.

With the help of our ever-helpful and always positive Cornerstone SDS advisor, Denise, we set about trying to find carers. We tried newspaper advertising, notices in shops, post offices etc, Gumtree and Facebook (with the help of my step-daughter), as well as good old word of mouth! We didn't have too much success with newspaper adverts, but had great success with Facebook and word of mouth. Someone we already knew and who had previously helped care for Tula, put a post on the local toddlers group Facebook page, and within an hour there were 3 interested potential suitable carers! I had never been a fan of Facebook before then, but it's a powerful tool if used properly, and a great way of spreading a message quickly, to many age groups too. I also made contact with a wonderful woman we already knew, whom I knew was a carer and particularly good at caring for terminally ill people. She took on the role of "Lead Carer" and even looked after the timesheets, meaning all I had to do was concentrate on loving my wife. She even recruited several carers she knew to help. That's the thing with carers, they know one another and talk to one another, so word of mouth is probably the best advertising of all if you're trying to recruit carers.

It took several weeks to interview and recruit our carers, but we ended up with about 10 that we could call on, although we had a core of 6. We eventually

"I miss my wife terribly every day"

got the green light to bring Tula home in late March. Although by this time she was desperately unwell, it was written all over her face how glad she was to be at home in her own house. Sadly, Tula passed away on 5th July, but during her last 3 months, her carers went above and beyond the call of duty in looking after her. We were able to do things with/for Tula that simply wouldn't have been possible if she'd still been in hospital, or if we'd had the council's own carers calling at rigid times. The nature of her illness was ever-changing; people used to ask me if every day was different, when in reality sometimes every hour was different, so it just wouldn't have worked with a rigid care set-up. It simply had to have flexibility, and the SDS system certainly gives you that. You can juggle your carers' hours to suit day to day changing needs, and you can even "bank" hours. I even became good friends with a few of our carers, because you find yourselves thrown together in a bad situation, working together as a very tight-knit team. In fact, I'm still good friends with a couple of them and I hope always will be.

I miss my wife terribly every day, but I'll always be glad SDS made it possible to get her home like she wanted, and it gave us those precious final 3 months together in our own home. I'm glad I pushed for it to happen, and would do it all over again. Along the way, several professional people cast doubt on the likelihood of us finding enough suitable carers, and even suggested it was possible she'd end up back in hospital soon after getting home, but if you're determined enough and have the right team of carers you can do it! It's not easy, and it can seem intimidating, but there really are lots of people to help you. You have to use your imagination a bit to find suitable carers, but it's worth it!

The photograph was taken on the only day Tula was well enough to be out of bed in those final 3 months.

If you have a story about how SDS has worked well for you and would like to share it then contact: angi.wood@cornerstonesds.org.uk

New Premises

We have a small meeting room which is available to the community! Our office is centrally located in Inverurie and is wheelchair accessible! We have limited parking available which might be available if booked in advance.

The room is available during office hours Mon – Fri 9pm-5pm and free of charge but donations are appreciated for tea and coffee.

Contact us at 01467 530520 or Aberdeenshire@cornerstonesds.org.uk to enquire about a booking.

We have a selection of leaflets and a large notice board with information about services that are available and activities in the community. Please feel free to drop in at any time during opening hours to meet the team and see what resources are out there.



Ways We Can Communicate

One of our advisors has completed a three day British Sign Language course so we can communicate with people who use this as a form of communication.



Denise Robson

SDS Team Contact Details

We have a team of Advisors based throughout Aberdeenshire and are based at Inverurie at 25 High Street - this is where our Management and Administration teams are based. The Advisors will come out to your home to provide advice, information and support. Contact the office to find out the advisor for your area. Our SDS team across the region are:

Angi Wood, Service Manager - Aberdeenshire
angi.wood@cornerstonesds.org.uk
01467 530526

Sharon Francis, Team Leader
sharon.francis@cornerstonesds.org.uk
01467 530527

Laura Seaton, Resource Mapping Project Officer
laura.seaton@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Jemma Morrison, Senior Admin Assistant
jemma.morrison@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Helen Summers, Senior Admin Assistant
helen.summers@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Denise Robson, Advisor - North/Central Aberdeenshire
denise.robson@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Pam Williams, Advisor - Central Aberdeenshire
pam.williams@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Shona Masson, Advisor - Central/South Aberdeenshire
shona.masson@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Fay Rennie, Advisor - North Aberdeenshire
fay.rennie@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Wendy Ellis, Advisor - South Aberdeenshire
wendy.ellis@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Sue Woods, Advisor - North Aberdeenshire
sue.woods@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Deborah Benson, Advisor - South Aberdeenshire
deborah.benson@cornerstonesds.org.uk

Empire

Empire has specialised in Employment Law, HR, Health & Safety and Interim Management since 2005.

Based in Aberdeen with a branch in Inverness, we are one of the leading independent HR and Employment Law companies in Scotland, offering a complete range of services to help employers manage their people. We support businesses of all sizes whether that be 1 to 15,000 employees with varying degrees of in-house support.

We work with organisations of all sizes within the private, voluntary/third and public sectors. Our clients have varying degrees of internal HR resources, from small employers such as yourselves with no HR function to large organisations with strong, well established HR teams. We are one of the fastest growing privately owned HR consultancy businesses in Scotland with a team of 38 employees. Empire's core service is the Employment Law Advisory Service, which is currently used by over 600 organisations throughout the UK. Our HR & Employment Law consultants are either MCIPD HR professionals or qualified lawyers so are suitably equipped to advise and support you with any employment related query

you may have throughout the employee life cycle – from recruitment to termination of employment.

The typical areas of expertise on advising during the employment lifecycle include:

- Misconduct offences, whether this be minor performance breaches or serious cases of drug abuse or theft etc;
- Dismissals and terminations;
- Drafting terms and conditions including clauses/separate Agreements on post termination restrictions, intellectual property and confidentiality;
- Grievances, including informal or formal concerns from the workforce;
- Equal opportunities and all aspects of discrimination legislation;
- Redundancy
- Amendments to terms and conditions;
- Performance management, supporting employers with not only advice on procedure but in drafting performance action plans for their employees;
- Capability concerns, most commonly cases involving fitness capability but also inherent performance capability concerns;
- Absence management including long/short term sickness absence;
- Other absence from maternity to paternity, parental leave, time off for dependents etc.



Employment Law Information Sessions

Last year we held a series of workshops for employers, offering expert and useful information and advice on various relevant subjects around employment law. Those who did attend found the sessions very useful and relevant as being an employer of Personal Assistants can feel daunting to some and we are hoping to see more people attending this year.

There will be tea and coffee available after the session and a chance to meet and chat with other people who will be able to share their experiences of being an employer.

To enable you to plan ahead and make arrangements to attend we have organised the sessions for the whole year ahead and below is a list of all the sessions. We will send out letters prior to the information sessions as another reminder of dates and times.

Session 1 – Employers Roles and Responsibilities

This will cover an overview of the obligations that you will need to be aware of as an employer. The session will run through the practical and legal framework covering the employee lifecycle from recruitment through to the employee leaving employment.

Banchory - 7th April 2pm-4pm at Dalvenie Gardens, Raemoir Lane, Banchory, AB31 5QN

Banff – 14th April 2pm-4pm at Banff Castle, downstairs reception room, Castle street, Banff, AB45 1DL

Stonehaven – 18th April 2pm-4 pm and 6.30pm-8.30pm at the Belvedere Hotel, 41 Evan street, Stonehaven, AB39 2ET

Huntly – 25th April 2pm-4pm at the Linden Community Centre, Castle Street, Huntly, AB54 4SH

Peterhead – 28th April 2pm-4pm at Peterhead Community Centre, Balmoor Terrace, Peterhead, AB42 1EP

Ellon – 5th May 2pm-4pm at the Station Hotel, Commercial Road, Ellon, AB41 9BD

Fraserburgh – 12th May 2pm-4pm at the Leisure Centre, Maconochie Place, Fraserburgh, AB43 9TH

Inverurie – 19th May 2pm-4pm at the Family Resource Centre, 24 Victoria Street, Inverurie, AB51 3QS

Session 2 – Recruitment

This will cover all the key steps in the recruitment process and ensure you follow safe recruitment practices.

Banff – 11th August 2pm-4pm at Banff Castle, downstairs reception room, Castle street, Banff, AB45 1DL

Ellon – 18th August 2pm-4pm at the Station Hotel, Commercial Road, Ellon, AB41 9BD

Stonehaven – 15th August 2pm-4pm at the Belvedere Hotel, 41 Evan street, Stonehaven, AB39 2ET

Peterhead – 25th August 2pm-4pm at Peterhead Community Centre, Balmoor Terrace, Peterhead, AB42 1EP

Huntly – 22nd August 2pm-4pm at the Linden Community Centre, Castle Street, Huntly, AB54 4SH

Fraserburgh – 31st August 2pm-4pm and 6.30-8.30pm at the Leisure Centre, Maconochie Place, Fraserburgh, AB43 9TH

Inverurie – 6th September 2pm-4pm at the Family Resource Centre, 24 Victoria Street, Inverurie, AB51 3QS

Banchory – 13th September 2pm-4pm at Dalvenie Gardens, Raemoir Lane, Banchory, AB31 5QN

Session 3 – Absence

This will cover the various types of absence and how to manage this and will include short and long term sickness absence, annual leave, maternity leave and other leave which your employee might be entitled to.

Stonehaven – 17th October 2pm-4pm at the Belvedere Hotel, 41 Evan Street, Stonehaven, AB39 2ET

Banff – 20th October 2pm-4pm at Banff Castle, downstairs reception room, Castle street, Banff, AB45 1DL

Huntly – 24th October 2pm-4pm at the Linden Community Centre, Castle Street, Huntly, AB54 4SH

Peterhead – 27th October 2pm-4pm at Peterhead Community Centre, Balmoor Terrace, Peterhead, AB42 1EP

Ellon – 1st November 2pm-4pm and 6.30pm-8.30pm at the Station Hotel, Commercial Road, Ellon, AB41 9BD

Inverurie – 3rd November 2pm-4pm at the Family Resource Centre, 24 Victoria Street, Inverurie, AB51 3QS

Banchory – 10th November 2pm-4pm at Dalvenie Gardens, Raemoir Lane, Banchory, AB31 5QN

Fraserburgh – 16th November 2pm-4pm at the Leisure Centre, Maconochie Place, Fraserburgh, AB43 9TH

Managed Accounts

If you have chosen Option 1 to directly employ Personal Assistants, you will have a separate account which your direct payment is paid into. You can manage this account yourself and make all the necessary arrangements to pay your staff and complete the required documents for returning to the council. This is what we call a standard account.

The other and most popular option is to have a managed account. You provide the payroll provider with the amount of hours your PA/s have worked and they calculate the tax and NI and arrange for them to be paid. You as the employer

still have responsibilities to the staff you employ and need to ensure that your payroll provider is carrying out its role. This includes sending quarterly monitoring returns to Aberdeenshire Council. The payroll provider has the dates when these returns need to be sent and should also be sending you a copy as well as your Care Manager. If you are not receiving this, please contact your payroll provider to request that you get them as this is a good way to ensure you are monitoring and being responsible for your direct payment. If you have any issues with this please let your Cornerstone SDS Advisor know.

Adult Support & Protection Information for Employers

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 is a piece of law to try to protect people from being harmed.

This is because some people may find it more difficult to stop harm happening to them. The Act calls people in this situation 'adults at risk'.

The Act defines adults at risk as people aged 16 years or over who:

- Are unable to safeguard themselves, their property (their home, the things they own), their rights or other interests;
- Are at risk of harm; and
- Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than others who are not so affected.

Having a particular condition such as a learning disability or a mental health problem does not

automatically mean an adult is at risk. Someone can have a disability and be perfectly able to look after themselves. For an adult to be considered at risk, all three parts of the definition must be met.

The Act

The Act introduces new measures to identify and protect individuals who fall into the category of adults at risk. These measures include:

- Requiring councils to make the necessary enquiries and investigations to see if action is needed to stop or prevent harm happening;
- Requiring specific organisations to co-operate with councils and each other about adult protection investigations;
- The introduction of a range of protection orders including assessment orders, removal orders and banning orders; and
- A legislative framework for the establishment of local multi-agency Adult Protection Committees across Scotland.

Are you being harmed?

If you are unable to protect yourself from being harmed it is important to tell someone. Everyone has a right to be safe.

If you think you know someone who is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, you must tell someone. Remember, the person being harmed may not be able to report it.

If you would like more information you can find information on the Scottish Government website <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care>

Self-Directed Support – Option 2 – Individual Service Funds (ISF)

Aberdeenshire Council has selected four organisations to provide support to individuals who select Option 2 Individual Service Funds. This allows someone who meets the eligibility for care and support, to have lots of control over the shaping of how their services are delivered to them, but without the responsibility of setting this all up and of managing the money needed to pay for the services.

People who choose the SDS Option 2 can select from one of four organisations who will be able to provide this support management service. There is a cost for the initial meetings – to get to know you; to understand more about the type of services you would like and how these will be delivered and to set in place the management of all of this. Thereafter there will be a weekly charge which will vary depending on the amount of time your care and support takes to manage on your behalf.

The organisations that you can select from are:

Barnardos

Melanie Duncan - 01224 624090

melanie.duncan@barnardos.org.uk

Inspire

01224 280005

aberdeenshireisf@inspiremail.org.uk

Cornerstone SDS ISF Service

Fay Rennie - 07900740227

fay.rennie@cornerstone.org.uk

Claire Milne (finance) - 01224 256053

claire.milne@cornerstone.org.uk

Enable

020 3137 45 89

info@enablemoneymanagement.co.uk

Upcoming events

Look out for us at your local supermarket.
Dates so far...

18th March Tesco @ Newtonhill

2nd April Tesco @ Banchory

8th April Tesco @ Fraserburgh

Resource Mapping Update

We are working alongside CareData and developing a database of all the resources and activities available to you in the local and wider community. Ways of extending the information available is being developed and we plan to have this helpful information available and free to everyone.

As well as carrying out the resource mapping for the database, our Resource Mapping Project Officer is available to help you source specific activities, classes or support on an individual basis. This can be done as a referral from the care manager or by calling Laura direct.

Some of the different resources Laura has found so far:

- a field for someone to take part in Archery
- sourced a fund which was available to help a child access funds for a special buggy and car seat to enable her to leave the house safely
- Supported activities for an individual with autism who finds it difficult to join in generic groups
- Low cost social activities for an individual in South Aberdeenshire
- Care agencies available in specific areas of Aberdeenshire
- Dementia support

Laura Seaton



*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

Cornerstone SDS
www.cornerstonesds.org.uk

