



Hello,

Hope the start of 2024 has been good for you. The following is an update on the team, information on an overlooked benefit which you may be able to claim, and some other useful bits of information.

### Changes to the team

In February we said goodbye to Amanda Witherspoon, she was our ISF co-ordinator. She will be missed and we wish her all the best in her new position.

Laura Purves, who was already part of our team in another post has moved and has become the new ISF co-ordinator.

Wendy Ellis has taken on the role of Senior SDS advisor and will be supporting the team going forward.

Denise McDougal has been welcomed into the team as the new SDS advisor for South Aberdeenshire and Deeside.

Emma Sim has joined us as the new SDS finance officer. She will be dealing with our payroll service as well as ISF payment along side Jackie Reid.

### Attendance allowance

As recently highlighted by Martin Lewis, up to 1,100,000 miss out on £3,500/yr by not claiming attendance allowance.

- It ISN'T means tested. It's for pensioners who need some daily living help. With Attendance Allowance (AA) your finances are irrelevant, there's no means testing, it's not just for those on lower incomes. To get it, you must be of state pension age (so currently at least 66).
- You must've needed either help or supervision for six consecutive months (even if you didn't get the help). Help means assistance with daily living (eg, washing, eating, shopping). Supervision means someone to watch you to avoid danger to yourself or others.
- If you have Power of Attorney for someone, you can apply for them. If you're looking after someone who meets the criteria, you can apply for them as long as they can sign the form or you've Power of Attorney.
- Basic Attendance Allowance is worth £68 a week (£3,540 a year). There are two rates of AA: *Lower*: Those who need help during the day OR night get £68/wk (£3,540/yr). *Higher*: If you need help BOTH during the day and night OR have under 12mths to live, it's £102/wk (£5,300/yr). Claims CAN'T be backdated, so do it ASAP.
- Beware if you get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Both PIP and DLA are usually worth at least as much as, and often more than, AA and you can't get both.

[www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim)

### PA Support Post

As some of you are aware we have had a PA support post for the past two years. Unfortunately our funding for this post has come to an end. PA's will still be able to get support through the PA Network Scotland (PANS).

PANS are a national organisation who support PA's across Scotland. There are exciting developments to the support offered by PANS coming in the next few months. We will update you further as soon as we are able.

PANS still offers ID badges for all PA's. There is a link on their website: [www.panetworkscotland.org.uk](http://www.panetworkscotland.org.uk)

### Annual Leave

It is important to ensure that your PA's are having regular periods of annual leave throughout the year and are not waiting until December to take their years entitlement. Annual leave is a 'use it or lose it' employment benefit so it can not be paid out at the end of the year. We have included an annual leave sheet to support you in tracking how much annual leave needs to be taken a year and how much has been taken to ensure that your PA is getting all of their used.



## 'By My Side' - New Research looking at people's experience of using Independent Support to access social care



Have you had help to sort out your social care support?

Self Directed Support Scotland would like to learn about your experience of using Independent Support. There are organisations which are independent from the council and can give you help and advice about social care and Self-directed Support, or SDS.

They include:

- Independent SDS support services
- Carers' centre
- Advocacy services
- Brokerage services
- Peer Support groups

SDS Scotland will use the results to find out:

- What works well for people and what helps people the most
- If there are any gaps in support
- What would improve support in the future

The survey takes 10 minutes to complete and is anonymous.

Fill in the survey now: [qrco.de/bmysidesurvey](https://qrco.de/bmysidesurvey)

The survey is open until **Monday 1 April 2024**.

You can get a paper copy if you would like one or an Easy Read version. SDS Scotland can also help you complete the Survey online. Call their freephone Helpline on **0800 841 1222** for more information. This will be open from **Monday to Friday, 9.30am–4.30pm**.

You can also sign up to take part in an online Focus Group discussion on Eventbrite here: [By My Side Focus Group discussions](#).

## Dementia Adventure



The 2024 holiday booking is now open. Dementia Adventure offers small group or individual holidays for people living with dementia and the people who care for them. There is a range of supported holidays for people with dementia. These are fully supported with one to one support available.

For more information or to book please follow this link: <https://dementiaadventure.org/holidays/>