

# Points on Practice

## Children's support services and Self-directed Support

### Introduction

Children in Scotland (CiS) and P&P held seminar in Glasgow in June 2013 aimed at organisations who were current or future providers of Self-directed Support (SDS) to children, young people and their families. The event aimed to support providers to:

- Identify the barriers and find solutions for children, young people and families to access SDS.
- Share practice on delivering personalised support to children and young people.
- Understand what services and types of support are covered by the SDS Act 2013.
- Hear from parents and young people about the difference that SDS makes.

### Background

The event was an opportunity for voluntary sector support providers to discuss the practical issues they may be facing in preparing for SDS. There were presentations from:

- The Scottish Government,
- Children in Scotland
- P&P
- Who Cares? Scotland,
- The Life Changes Trust
- In Control Scotland

And from two parents with experience of using direct payments to create more personalised support for their children. There were also opportunities for workshops discussions, practice sharing and to identify solutions. Topics presented included the Scottish Government current consultation on the guidance and regulations accompanying the Act, information about specific projects and personal experiences from parents about accessing SDS.

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) Act was passed in January 2013 and will be commence in 2014. The Scottish Government are currently working on guidance and regulations to accompany the Act and are funding a wide range of support and provider

organisations to build the capacity of advice and support provision. CiS and P&P have both been funded by the Scottish Government to carry out activity and will be engaging with their members over the next few years on Self-directed Support issues relating to children, young people and families. The presentations and workshop handouts from the event are available on the [P&P website](#)

### Provider Perspectives

Participants to the event highlighted the following challenges for providers of support for children and young people under SDS:

- The **shift in funding** from block contracts to individual budgets.
- The **sustainability of services** and residential care homes. Risk to the continuation of quality services'.
- How to **manage conflict** between the wishes of parents/carers and the choices of the child or young person. SDS could bring increased or unwanted responsibility for vulnerable families who may already be under stress.
- How to **manage transitions** and plan future support for children and young people. SDS could be an opportunity to improve transitions and support planning.
- The question of whether SDS will be used to **reduce budgets** and overall care packages.
- **Workforce issues:** how to ensure that support workers have the right skills, qualifications and values to promote SDS.
- How to manage the demands on the workforce of providing 24 hours, 7 days a week, flexible, personalised support.

### Feedback

- There is a lack of information for parents and families about the opportunities that are available at local level.

- The policy on SDS at government level is clear and positive but the reality at local level is that there is a lack of clarity on the process to follow.
- Children will need support and information to understand their options under SDS. Capacity to understand and make choices will depend upon the age and maturity of the child.
- The principles of SDS are good but the practical reality for some families may be challenging (for example -young people with offending behaviour, or parents with drug/alcohol dependency).
- There is a need for more information sharing between providers of best practice examples and what is working.
- Good practice guides should be developed and shared.
- There is a need for information and data on what users want in terms of support both nationally and locally.
- 'Horror stories' about Direct Payments are turning people off Option 1.
- There is a need for better engagement with local authorities and with their SDS leads.
- Providers could bring training and good practice on support planning and outcomes to local authorities.
- Concerns were expressed that many local authorities are not ready for SDS.

other legislation which could impact on the delivery of SDS. These include the Children and Young People Bill and the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Bill which makes provisions for health and local authorities to integrate health and social care services.

1. Ensure that children and young people are at the centre of the SDS process. Providing real choice means that the young person's voice is heard, shared and acted upon.
2. Find children, young people and parents who are willing to be SDS Champions and tell positive stories of why SDS works for them. Share good practice examples with other families and support providers.
3. Balance risk management and child protection issues with enabling choice.
4. Think about service models and how to personalise support. Some 'group activities' may need to provide more personalised support e.g. after school clubs, respite services, and play schemes.
5. Young people and families should have access to independent advocacy, advice and information about the full range of options and support available to them under SDS.
6. Ensure parents/carers/guardians have full involvement in assessments and decision -making around support planning whilst also involving the child or young person. Assessments and support plans should be co-produced and outcomes focussed.
7. SDS brings an opportunity to design services around the child and the family, to develop new and different services, and to be creative and 'think outside the box'.

### Next steps

The Scottish Government consultation on the regulations and guidance surrounding the SDS Act closed in July 2013. Both P&P and CiS held consultation events and submitted responses to the Government. P&P have been funded by the Scottish Government to create good practice guidance for users and providers on SDS. The Act will come into force early in 2014 and there are a number of pieces of



### About P&P

P&P is a four year policy and practice change programme supporting providers to prepare for, and showcase good practice in the journey to Self-directed Support. P&P is open to all third sector care and support providers.

More about P&P

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/providers-and-personalisation>

### Legal

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