

Parent/Carers Self Directed Support

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Self Directed Support?

Self directed support (SDS) is Scotland's approach to delivering social care. SDS puts the person at the centre of the support planning process. SDS enables people to have more choice and control over the support they receive. SDS allows you to choose how your support is provided, and gives you as much control as you want of your individual budget.

There are four options under SDS:

- **Option 1 – Direct Payment**
You can choose and direct how the budget is used, and manage your own budget. A direct payment can be paid into an SDS payment card account and/or to Payroll provider.
- **Option 2 – Individual Service Fund**
You choose how the budget is used but the money is managed by someone else. You can choose to have all, or part of your individual budget paid to an Individual Service Fund.
- **Option 3 – Council Arranged**
You can ask us to choose and arrange services for you. These may be our in house services, or may be services provided by certain organisations that we contract with. We arrange payment for these services for you.
- **Option 4 – mix of any of the above options**
You can choose to have a mix of the three options above to suit your individual needs.

Who is available to help me understand Self Directed Support?

Your child's allocated worker can help you but Aberdeenshire Council has commissioned Cornerstone SDS to provide independent information, advice and support to anyone who is considering SDS.

Do I have to agree to any one Option if there are no services in my area?

No, the Option you choose should be the one that is right for you. The Option you choose will depend on the level of choice, control, flexibility and responsibility you want to have.

What responsibilities do I have if I choose Option 1?

Option 1 comes with the most choice, control and flexibility but it also comes with the most responsibility.

You can choose to have your individual budget paid into an SDS payment card account. This account will be opened in the name of the person managing the budget, so in your name or the name of a nominated person. You would use this money for your care needs as detailed in your support plan.

If you choose to receive a direct payment, then you can employ your own personal assistant(s). However, to become an employer there are things you need to know.

If you wish to employ your own personal assistants you are responsible for recruitment and advertising, processing payroll, ensuring tax and national insurance is paid, arranging public and employer's liability insurance, providing contracts of employment and ensuring that the carer has appropriate training for their role. If you would like help to become an employer we can arrange for you to get help to undertake these responsibilities through Cornerstone SDS Support Service, who will assist with arranging all the right support for you as an employer.

If you identify that your personal assistants need specific training to enable them to meet your needs, you will need to discuss this with your worker. Your worker might add the training and additional hours for the personal assistant to attend training to your support plan. This will enable extra money to be paid into the direct payment account in time for the training to be undertaken.

There will be some forms to fill out to allow us to set up your direct payment. Your worker or Cornerstone advisor will be able to help you complete the forms.

If I have money left over in the direct payment account can I spend it?

No, if you have money left over it doesn't mean you can spend it on anything other than your agreed outcomes. Any balance may go towards your following year's budget, or we may recover these funds from you.

Who are the Individual Service Fund Providers I can use for Option 2?

You can only use providers off the Aberdeenshire Council Framework which are Cornerstone ISF and Inspire ISF.

Can I employ a Personal Assistant through Option 2 or 3?

No, Personal Assistants can only be employed by you through Option 1 – Direct Payment.

Can I ask my child's allocated worker to arrange the support they need?

Yes, this would be Option 3 – Council Arranged. You may have less choices available to you in terms of who will provide the support and when the support is provided. For example, your child's allocated worker could arrange for your child to attend a Wrap Around Care group which are social groups for children and young people or arrange care at home through one of the providers on our Framework.

What responsibility will I have for my child's support?

Self directed support offers you much more flexibility, but managing it is also a responsibility. If you choose Option 1 you will have the most flexibility and responsibility for managing your child's support, but you can get help with this.

Self directed support lets you take on as much or as little responsibility as you want depending on the option you choose.

Can I save money or Personal Assistant/Support Worker hours in case I need extra during the school holidays?

The money and personal assistant/support worker hours should be used as agreed in the Support Plan. If you think your child will need more hours or support during the school holidays you should discuss this with their allocated worker. They might agree to change the Support Plan to make sure your child gets the support they need at the right time for them. Remember, you can request a review of your child's support plan at any time.

Who will be able to see what is being spent out of the direct payment account?

If you have chosen Option 1 – Direct Payment your child's allocated worker will be able to look at the Direct Payment account to see how you are spending the money. This will help them make sure you are spending the money as agreed in the Support Plan.

If you employ personal assistants you will also be able to have direct access to the budget total, currently through Fife Business Services Ltd via Cornerstone SDS, but you must request this information be made available to you.

The Children's Services Finance Officer will also receive information if you have too much or not enough money in your account. They will also be able to see if you have not used the account for more than 30 days. This information will be shared with your child's allocated worker so that they can discuss the reasons for this with you.

If I move from one council area to another will my child still get the same level of support?

Not necessarily. If you move to another council, they will need to do their own assessment of your child's needs. If you move to Aberdeenshire from another council the local Children and Families team will need to do their own assessment of your child's needs before a package of support can be agreed.

Will self directed support affect any benefits my child receives?

No, your child's benefits will not be affected.

Can I employ a family member as my child's personal assistant?

You may be able to employ a close family member as your child's personal assistant if:

- You are unable to find a care agency or employ a personal assistant who can deliver the service your child needs
- Your child has special communication needs which would be difficult for a care provider to support
- Your child needs support at times that care providers would not be available
- Your child's cultural or religious needs can only be met by a family member

- You and your child's allocated worker agree this is appropriate

Employment of a family member must be authorised by a Social Work Manager or Head of Children's Services.

You should think carefully about employing a family member who lives in the same house as your child, as it will be difficult to separate the time when they are your employee and when they are providing unpaid care.