

PA Programme Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 14th December 2023, 10:00 – 12:00

Chairs updates

- The Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Maree Todd MSP, attended the PA Programme Board Steering Group meeting on 29 Nov 2023 and was impressed by the scale of the work to progress the coproduced workplan and the subgroup activities driving this forward.
 - The group reiterated the views expressed at the PA Programme Board meeting on the 28th September 2023 following the publication of the [IRISR Recommendations Report](#), particularly around a bespoke registration scheme for PAs and what the Minister should consider when she responds to the recommendations of the report.
 - Discussions also highlighted the need for support and capacity building of the **Independent Living Movement**, as well as onward support of the work by the subgroups, particularly the **Direct Payment Agreement** and **Training Framework**.
- The Scottish Government forecasts a **challenging position in next week's budget announcement for the financial year 2024/25**. Allocations and savings will align closely with Ministerial priorities and available grants to organisations will be shared as soon as possible.
- **National Care Service (NCS)** National Forum 2023 took place on 30 Oct 2023. Further negotiations are underway to the design and implementation of the NCS, including the establishment of a NCS Board.
- The deadline for feedback on the **Post-legislative Scrutiny of SDS** has been extended until 12 January 2024. SDSS will consult with their members and submit a response.

Subgroup updates

Training subgroup

- Delivering co-produced National PA Training resource for PAs and PA employers by end April 2024.
- Emmanuelle gave further information in agenda item, "PA Training Framework update".

PA Direct Payment subgroup

- Survey of 29 local authorities demonstrated variation in how Direct Payments (DPs) are administered across Scotland leading to inconsistency.
- Key piece of this work is to co-produce a national agreement for DPs for employing PAs and develop an SDS Standard around DPs for employing PAs which would be approved by Scottish Government/COSLA.
- A good model will include:
 - Having enough money in a DP to enable employers to recruit, pay, retain, and develop their PAs and to be a good employer.
 - Having access to resourced peer and independent support (e.g. DPOs, CILs, ISOs).
 - Having access to resourced training for PA Employers and PAs.
 - Clear guidance in tricky areas e.g. self-employment, redundancy, health-related tasks.
 - Fair pay for PAs.
- 12 LAs in the Expert Group and there is an appetite from LAs and DPOs for good practice guidance and clear roles and responsibilities.
- Re-opening of the ILF in Scotland gives an opportunity for alignment with good practice.

PA Wellbeing subgroup

- IMPACT Coaches working on PA wellbeing evidence review (UK and international literature).
- Piloting a discount card with 35 PAs ([Blue Sky Social Care Card](#)) with results due in Jan 2024.
- Reflective Practice Theory of Change led by Wellbeing Hub will provide reflective practice and peer support sessions for PAs (from Nov 23 – March 24) and examine the learning.

PA Recruitment subgroup

- Testing phase [MyJobScotland](#), the main recruitment website for social care jobs in Scotland.

- Launch in New Year the listing of PA vacancies directly on the MyJobScotland site.
- Opportunity to gather useful data on PA vacancies across the country not currently available centrally.
- Two new PA case studies shared as part of the Scotland-wide *Care to Care* digital press and media advertising campaign to raise profile of the role.

PA Networks subgroup

- Supporting the PA Network Scotland in creating 12 new roles for regional PA Network representatives across Scotland to link in with the national focus.
- Roadshow in the Highlands (including remote option) to generate interest in the PA role.
- Exploring support of local networks, such as place-based work in Ardnamurchan.

PA Data subgroup

- PA workforce survey report will be published early in the New Year and the Data subgroup is examining the data and what it tells us about the PA workforce.
- Scottish Government finalising report auditing sources of PA data to estimate the size of the PA workforce.
- The group are currently exploring a new survey of Insurance companies and Payroll providers.
- Lisa Paul, based at the University of Glasgow, will begin PhD on data around PAs in Autumn 2024. Don will introduce Lisa to subgroup Chairs while she is working on her Masters qualification in 2024.

Independent Living Fund update – Peter Scott

- Derek Feeley in his Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland recommended: *“The Independent Living Fund Scotland should form part of the suite of services supported at national rather than local level and become part of the National Care Service”*.
- The **Independent Living Fund (ILF)** is reopening and will be delivered by ILFS after receiving a £9 million investment in the 2024/25 Scottish Budget to support up to 1,000 new applicants.
- This will be delivered by a co-production working group involving disabled people, their Independent Support Organisations and other key stakeholder members whose role is to make recommendations to the Minister. The group will also update the ILF policies and reopen with amendments that consider the new landscape since 2010 (e.g. SDS legislation).
- Questions focussed on the threshold sum, ILF charges, supporting the employer and DP Model Agreement and the opportunity to look at shared good practice and consistency:
 - The recommendation to the Minister is that the threshold sum criteria will be used to access ILA in the short term but to review this within the first year.
 - The ambition of ILF is to have the charges removed by the end of the parliamentary term in parallel with wider social care charges.

The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 update – Gareth Wilks

- PVG scheme will become mandatory on **1 April 2025** – undertaking a regulated role without being a member will be an offence. There will be no equivalent offence for PA Employers.
- Exceptions to the regulated role continue for activity carried out during family relationships (living in the same household), and personal, non-commercial relationships.
- Discussions focused on the importance of clear guidance that does not put PAs off applying and concerns that a mandatory Scheme provision may challenge the agency of PA employers to employ who they want to because of an underlying assumption they are always vulnerable:
 - [Review the guide to the Act and what is classed as regulated activities.](#)
 - [PAs/PA employers can apply via downloadable or paper form.](#)
 - [Sign up to Disclosure Scotland’s news and updates.](#)
 - Gareth can be contacted on: gareth.wilks@disclosurescotland.gov.scot

Training Framework update

- Delivering co-produced National PA Training resource and developing two new modules related to the PA role for access by all PAs and PA employers as they choose by April 2024.
- Framework guided by a PA Employer reference group chaired by AMM.

- The name is still to be decided but the working title is: “PA Training Framework for Employers” to acknowledge employers (at their request) within the framework.
- Discussions with key stakeholders and a snapshot survey indicate a need for:
 - Training should not be mandatory unless it is specific to their Employer's support needs.
 - Exploring options for training held in a central fund or option to manage training apportioned through their Employer's Direct Payment budget or ILF.
 - Well-trained PAs need well-supported Employers, such as an employer toolkit (information and guidance) and training locator (to help find available training).
 - Evaluation and review systems to link to training that is consistent in quality and content.
 - Training and content and delivery should be delivered through Centres of Inclusive Living and co-produced with disabled people.
- The next step is to secure additional funding to implement these findings into practice.

Organisational Updates

PA Network Scotland (PANS)

- PANS to become a full national membership organisation for PAs that is led by PAs.
- Ambition to incrementally increase membership to 5,000 PAs (currently stands at 1,200).
- Revamped website and database being piloted with 50 PAs followed by a soft launch in early 2024 with existing 1,200 members; and a nationwide hard launch, by end March 2024.
- Retail and financial services partners will offer a range of membership benefits.
- Unite has signed up as the trade union partner and they have indicated they may create a PA branch of the trade union.
- Regional advocates to be recruited to support PAs to access local and national networks of peer support led by a PA Advisory Board.

SDS Cornerstone update

- PA Advisor contact list now stands at around 460 PAs.
- Over 400 contacts made by PAs, with most predominant queries relating to pay and contracts.
- The PA Facebook Social Group sitting at 150 members since its launch 9 months ago.
- This quarter, PA Advisor information in Angus also being shared through Dundee Carers Centre – not yet generated many contact enquiries from this PA workforce but early days.

PA Newsletter

- [4th edition of PA newsletter \(December 2023\)](#)
- 4,457 newsletters were delivered, with a 49.2% open rate to date, which is particularly good.
- Latest edition includes news on the uplift to a minimum of £12 per hour in April 2024 for social care workers and a case study of a PA who is aged over 70.

Action for PAPB

- Donald Macleod and the Scottish Government team to meet with Disclosure Scotland in early 2024 on making PA a regulated role with mandatory requirement for PAs to be members of the PVG Scheme. Donald will continue to sit on the Disclosure Scotland's Stakeholder Engagement Group during 2024/25 representing the PA Programme Board.