



Community Brokerage Scotland
everyone together

SDS Improvement Plan (2023-2027)

A Brokerage Framework for Scotland

2024-27



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Foreword

Community Brokerage was first established in Scotland at the outset of the implementation of Self-Directed Support. Initially it was implemented within East Ayrshire by Community Brokerage Network, prior to a pan-Ayrshire partnership approach. Eleven years later it is now being provided nationally, through brokerage organisations, Disabled People's Organisations and Independent Support Organisations. Brokerage in its current form in Scotland provides support to individuals in their own communities, through early intervention, maximising the use of community resources. It supports people to plan and access their social care through any of the SDS options, encouraging community capacity building, walking alongside people as they actualise their choice and control.

It is vital to its integrity and success that Brokerage is independent of the Local Authority, collaborating with a range of stakeholders, to build an objective network of community resources and connections. Brokerage and other forms of Independent Support is enshrined in the SDS legislation, its key function being a means by which people can realise their human rights, through choice and control, in arranging their support. It provided this vital independent function locally over a ten-year period, funded by Scottish Government, alongside an SQA certified brokerage award and the Approved Brokers Community of Practice, through SDS Scotland, prior to development of the National Brokerage Framework which we now publish to align the functions, tasks and skills of brokerage and independent support at a national level.

This document, which has been co-produced with a range of stakeholders, sets out the values and principles that underpin a

shared national approach, while organisations retain their independent identity and local flexibility and nuance. It is a framework that brokerage and Independent Support organisations can use to improve practice to ensure the delivery of the highest quality, in keeping with standard 1 of the national SDS Framework of Standards. It is a competency framework, identifying the role of a community broker, but also the activities delivered as part of a wider remit within Independent Support Organisations. This builds capacity within Disabled People's Organisations, Centres for Inclusive Living and Independent Support Organisations: the people's collectives within the Independent Living Movement to which we hope this is a useful tool in arranging social care.



Donald Macleod

Chief Executive, Self Directed Support Scotland

What is Community Brokerage?

Community Brokerage is...



**A non-profit
model of support
brokerage**



**using a
human rights
approach**



**building
community
capacity**

Community Brokerage works by...



**building
meaningful
relationships
with people**



**with
supported
Individuals at
the centre**



**working with
people whether
they have an SDS
budget or not**

Community Brokers...



**promote SDS
principles**



**promote
individual
autonomy**



**use networks
& connections**

Introduction

Community brokerage is a model of independent support that facilitates people directing their own social care support. The purpose is to help people and carers who may need support to make informed decisions about the help they need and how it can best be delivered. It is provided by a range of brokerage, independent support, and disabled people's organisations across Scotland. It focuses on making the best use of what is available in the community to help people but also assists people who require more formal support arrangements through any of the 4 self-directed support options via their local Health and Social Care Partnership.

[Self-directed support \(SDS\)](#) is the way in which social care in Scotland is delivered for those who need early help and support and for those who meet the [eligibility criteria](#) for more intensive support in their local [Health and Social Care Partnership](#) area. This approach was initially introduced around 2007 and followed up by a 10-year National Self-Directed Support Strategy covering the period 2010 until 2020. To improve implementation a new [Implementation Plan](#) linked to the strategy was introduced in 2019 and covered the period until 2021. This was supported by the [national SDS Framework of Standards](#) published in 2021 by the Scottish Government and COSLA.

The COVID pandemic seriously disrupted a range of provision and services in the public, third and private sector from 2020 with recovery still in progress. The SDS implementation plan was significantly impacted, and lessons were learned through the pandemic experience which are incorporated in the Scottish Government's recent [SDS Improvement Plan \(2023-2027\)](#).

The Improvement Plan was developed jointly by the [National SDS Collaboration](#) which consists of a range of public sector organisations, independent support and brokerage organisations, third sector organisations, and wider stakeholders, colleagues from Scottish Government, Social Work Scotland, the Scottish Association for Social Work and COSLA.

Outcomes and Strategic fit

The Improvement Plan has 4 *key outcomes* which are:

1. Supported person and carers' choice and control over their support.
2. Enhanced worker skills, practice, and autonomy.
3. Systems and Culture
4. Leaders understand and help staff realise SDS principles and values.

Outcome 1 captures 4 themes, one of which is the theme of access to SDS support, brokerage, advice, advocacy, and tools. This theme has 4 main associated activities, and this document relates to those activities as detailed in the highlighted box. The full SDS Improvement Plan (2023-2027) can be accessed [here](#).

From the highlighted box the three key areas of work associated with community brokerage being developed as part of the National SDS Improvement Plan are:

- Continuing to deliver the [Community Brokerage Award](#) for a range of practitioners. The award is certified by the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) and sits within [level 7 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\)](#).
- Developing a National Brokerage Framework for Scotland, supporting practitioner knowledge and understanding of community brokerage and the relationship with independent support.
- Develop the Approved Brokers Community of Practice for brokerage practitioners.

Key Outcome	Theme	Activities
1. Supported person and carers' choice and control over their support	1.1 Access to SDS support, brokerage, advice, advocacy, and tools	Continue to fund independent support and advice through Support in the Right Direction funding.
		Provision of access to SDS advice, independent advocacy, brokerage, and preventative support.
		Continue to build capacity of supported people and Independent Support Organisations (ISOs).
		<i>Brokerage: Continue to deliver the SQA Award for Brokerage, develop a National Brokerage Framework for Scotland, support practitioner understanding and knowledge of community brokerage and develop the Approved Brokers Community of Practice.</i>

This document:

➔ *Sets out the National Brokerage Framework for Scotland.*

- Defines what we mean by community brokerage.
- Explains the community brokerage model promoted as part of the SDS Improvement Plan (2023-2027).¹
- Provides guidance to brokerage organisations, independent support organisations, social workers, and care managers about the functions and tasks of community brokerage. It is also a useful tool for people seeking support and other stakeholders.
- Recognises that brokering is a job role for some people referred to as community brokers, but it also represents the tasks undertaken by others as part of a wider job remit usually within independent support organisations. This means broker support is provided by brokerage organisations but also by those providing independent support. This framework is for both.

¹ This is the model positively supported in both the [Thematic Review of Self-directed Support \(2019\)](#) and the [Independent Review of Adult Social Care \(2021\)](#).

The Framework:

➔ *Seeks to align the functions, tasks and skills of both community brokerage and independent support.*

- sets out the values and principles that underpin their shared approach on a national level while retaining their independent identity and local flexibility.²
- Is a Framework that both brokerage organisations and independent support organisations can use to improve the quality of their practice to ensure people receive independent support of the highest quality as detailed in standard 1 of the national SDS Framework of Standards.
- Will assist social workers and care managers to understand the role and purpose of community brokerage and independent support in the implementation of SDS and recognise their contribution to the Scottish Government's SDS Improvement Plan.

² This approach is consistent with the [Verity House Agreement](#) reflecting local delivery by default, national by agreement embraced by both local and national government.

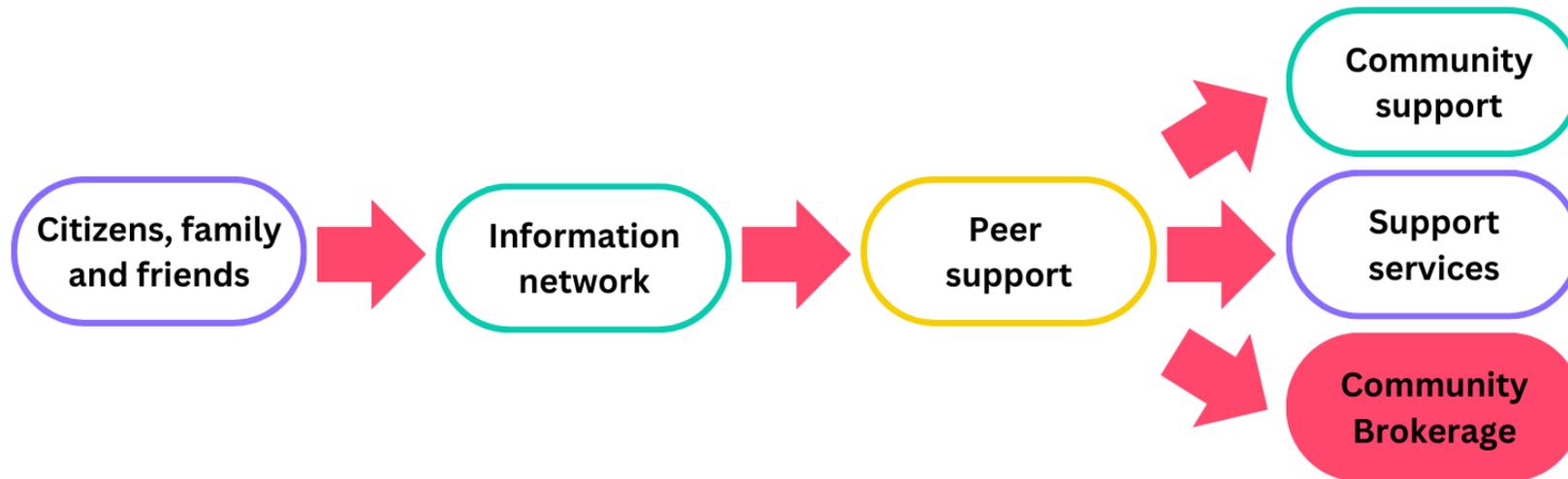
What is Community Brokerage

Detailed below is the explanation of the community brokerage model that the Scottish Government endorses. It reflects the human rights-based approach and encompasses the components in [standard 1 of the National SDS Framework of Standards](#).

Chart: Community Brokerage explained

Community Brokerage...	It works by...	Community Brokers...
 <p>is a non-profit model of support brokerage.</p>	 <p>building meaningful relationships with people, facilitating access to the support people need to live happy, healthy, and rewarding lives of their own choosing.</p>	 <p>promote the principles of involvement, participation, and empowerment by providing individuals with independent support and access to information they require to make their own choices.</p>
 <p>uses a human rights approach.</p>	 <p>keeping Individuals being supported at the centre of all activity - their personal gifts, skills, talents, and abilities are recognised, and their contribution valued.</p>	 <p>support individual autonomy whilst ensuring the person has the right level of assistance as they establish personalised support arrangements.</p>
 <p>builds community capacity and empowers individuals to self-direct their own lives.</p>	 <p>working with people whether they have an SDS budget or not.</p>	 <p>have knowledge, networks and connections within communities which they use to facilitate opportunities for support.</p>

Community Brokerage Model



1 Adapted from Community Brokerage Model (Duffy & Fulton 2009)

The community brokerage model is based on key features of relationships, natural community support systems and networks that support people but bringing in independent community broker help where needed. Building on [original work by Simon Duffy and Kate Fulton \(2009\)](#), it supports an approach with family support and access to information being the first source of help for people and independent community-based brokerage being available if they need it. It is often needed when people have exhausted family and peer support. Brokerage support should be easily accessible and available to people at any point in their experience of the SDS process.

The community brokerage model promotes that the best outcomes for people are achieved when they benefit from positive relationships, natural support including family and community support with the least intervention possible by services and paid social care support. Where this support is not available for people or limited by experience, those who provide community brokerage have a role to play in making connections, sourcing community activities, 'self-help' type groups, equipment, and solutions to avoid the need for formal support unless it is necessary. Where formal social care support is needed community brokerage can assist people, who have chosen any of the 4 SDS options, to

maximise the use of the resources allocated to them and source solutions to the challenges they face.

A fundamental part of this model is its independence from the Local Authority/Health and Social Care Partnership. Community brokers work with the person they are supporting within the

constraints of their professional boundaries. They help people as much or as little as the person wants and in doing so will build their capacity to help themselves, maximise their independence and share their learning with their peers where possible.



The Functions of Community Brokerage

- ➔ *The main function of community brokerage is to help people who need support live their life as they choose and have their support needs met.*
 - ➔ *It provides as much or as little support as the person wants.*
 - ➔ *It includes intervening early and preventing or reducing the need for formal support by maximising access to information, informal support, natural relationships, and access to community activities.*
-

- ➔ *Where formal support is needed, community brokerage maximises the use of allocated resources, assistive technology and always facilitates the individual being supported to have as much choice and control as they wish over how their personal care and social care needs are met and their goals achieved.*
 - ➔ *Community brokerage realises the benefits of good relationship-based practice.*
 - ➔ *It promotes personal agency and building community capacity which are core aspects of the approach.*
 - ➔ *Working in collaboration with other partners and signposting individuals to other sources of assistance as required is integral to community brokerage.*
-

Community Brokers

There are many individuals known as community brokers working in brokerage organisations and there are others undertaking the functions of brokerage (but not called brokers) in independent support organisations, including disabled people's organisations.

A feature of community brokerage is the recruitment of local people which promotes the principle of people helping each other and contributes towards building capacity in a variety of ways in communities. The relationship established between the person providing community brokerage and the person receiving support is intended to enhance individuals' experience of getting the support they need. It should never replace the individual's agency or create a dependency on the 'broker.' The involvement of the person providing brokerage will be determined by the amount of support the person needs and what they can/cannot pursue for themselves. This is worked out in agreement with the person being supported.

People/brokers working within the community brokerage model must be well networked and connected into communities. They should know what is going on in communities, relate to a wide range of people, be aware of the various clubs, organisations, places, and people who are involved in the variety of activities within and across communities. People providing brokerage build relationships with people who need support, and help connect them with others, introduce them to informal support and assist them to build natural support and connections they can benefit from. This is core to what they do.

Where people have needs and don't meet local eligibility criteria for additional assistance community brokerage can help them make connections and find support in these informal ways. Where their needs are greater community brokerage can still assist them to meet those needs as much as possible in natural and informal ways but also help them pursue additional support through their local Health and Social Care Partnership. To be successful in securing additional support through SDS the person must meet the eligibility criteria within their local area – a decision that involves the social worker but usually lies with a resource allocation panel and social work managers.

Community brokers support people in a range of ways and undertakes a variety of tasks **with** people and **for** them when their circumstances require it. What people providing brokerage do will vary from individual to individual and reflect the amount of help someone is seeking. Some people look for a little assistance whereas others look for much more help and this flexibility is core to good community brokerage practice.

Using the community brokerage approach and having brokers and people practising brokerage within a range of organisations increases opportunities for people needing support. It helps them to build relationships, secure natural and informal support which can help maximise the use of their individual budget (SDS option 1 – direct payment) or resource allocated through option 2, 3 or 4 by using formal care/support only when necessary.

Independent Support Organisations

Across the country there are strong and effective community-based user-led organisations and Centres for Inclusive Living as well as robust Disabled Peoples' Organisations who provide reputable SDS support. The Scottish Government also fund several independent support organisations through *the Support in the Right Direction*³ (SiRD) funding stream to assist with the implementation of self-directed support (SDS) across Scotland. There is at least one SiRD funded organisation in most Local Authority areas.

Independent support organisations help people with SDS support, including before, during and after a formal social care assessment. In supporting SDS implementation, staff undertake a range of tasks consistent with community brokerage. Many of these excellent organisations provide additional support to people using option 1, which requires individuals to take more responsibility for organising their own support. In some areas they also help with personal assistant recruitment, payroll, and related services.

While the Scottish Government supports the community brokerage model through funding, it recognises not everyone who delivers independent support and brokerage will identify with being a community broker. However, the consistency of function, tasks and purpose that straddles both brokerage and independent support organisations benefit from a shared approach.



“The functions, tasks and purposes that straddle both brokerage and independent support organisations benefit from a shared approach”

It is this shared approach that will ensure consistent, yet flexible and high-quality support is available for people who need it. It will ensure individuals working in this area are highly competent and have a collective voice that influences policy and decision making as the National Care Service is developed in Scotland.

³ <https://inspiringscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/our-funds/sird-2021/>

Working Together

As well as people practising community brokerage and community brokers, there are other people who may also contribute to people's SDS process. This includes different professionals such as an occupational therapist, a community nurse and various people within Local Authorities who have roles developing the social care market, allocating resources, monitoring the use of resources, or ensuring compliance with agreements set up with individuals using option 1.

Social workers are key to the implementation of self-directed support. People practising community brokerage, community brokers and staff from independent support organisations will have regular contact with social workers. Where these relationships work well, it enhances the overall experience of people needing support and that of others involved. It is important for everyone involved to understand and respect the different roles they have and recognise each is contributing to improve the implementation of self-directed support and get the best outcomes for supported people.

Social workers, staff from independent support organisations and community brokers and those practising community brokerage all work in person led ways focusing on building relationships with the people they support. The duration and extent of their involvement in people's lives varies depending on the person's circumstances and needs. Social workers have the prime role in supporting people and generally cover every aspect of a person's life, their circumstances, and the dynamics of their relationships. They help with the issues and/or challenges the person is experiencing. Social

workers are also the route through which any of the 4 SDS options are accessed.

Community brokerage compliments good social work practice in self-directed support by also building positive relationships with people being supported. Brokerage practitioners undertake a range of tasks for and with individuals but do not replace the social worker role. They are an additional route through which people can seek assistance for directing their own social care, not for social work support.

Among other responsibilities, social workers have statutory duties for assessing need and assessing risk to keep people and communities safe. Their workload pressures mean they sometimes don't get enough time to spend with individuals or undertake some of the tasks associated with self-directed support because they must prioritise other statutory duties. Brokerage practitioners being able to undertake some of the tasks associated with SDS means 'brokers', social workers and people being supported can work well together for the best outcomes.

While the social work and brokerage roles are more than just a range of tasks there are tasks associated with SDS they undertake. The table below gives an idea of who can help individuals with the different tasks and offers them choice where there is crossover.

It is not an exhaustive list but gives an idea of the scope of the activity involved in directing your own support and where individuals might seek help as well as who they may wish to assist them.

Chart: Table of Functions/Tasks

Function/tasks	Social work	Brokerage
Build relationships with people	x	x
Assist people who don't meet eligibility criteria	x	x
Maximise independence	x	x
Provide a range of information	x	x
Undertake an assessment of need	x	
Assess risks and lead on risk issues	x	
Contribute to/manage risks	x	x
Explain the SDS options	x	x
Signpost to other resources	x	x
Provide advice	x	x
Write reports: individuals being supported	x	
Present at RAG for resources	x	
Maximise opportunities natural support	x	x
Maximise informal support options	x	x
Help people prepare for needs assessment	x	x
Support people after assessment	x	x
Develop support plans	x	x

Function/tasks	Social work	Brokerage
Cost support plans	x	x
Review support plans	x	
Build community capacity	x	x
Assist with implementing support plans	x	x
Promote personal agency	x	x
Secure support as agreed	x	x
Source solutions to challenges	x	x
Mediate for the individual	x	x
Advocate – pass to advocacy services if complex	x	x
Help people to make choices	x	x
Provide technical assistance	x	x
Support to challenge the HSCP decisions	x	x
Carry Caseloads	x	x
Maximise use of technological support	x	x
Negotiate support costs with providers for individuals	x	x

Function/tasks	Social work	Brokerage
Provide payroll services		x
Assistance with banking requirements		x
Assistance with recruitment		x
Assistance with insurance		x

Not every independent support organisation provides all of the tasks in the table, neither are they expected to, but all of the tasks will be covered by the spread of independent support organisations and brokerage across the country.

Span of Support

Some independent support organisations cover the full range of help and undertake all the tasks that individuals need from the start to the end of their journey to get their support in place and working well for them. Others provide some aspects of support required but not all of it. All are equally important, and organisations should focus on what they do well and deliver it to the highest standard. This will reflect the need in different geographic areas. In Ayrshire, for example community brokerage is provided by the Community Brokerage Network (CBN). They do not provide support for PA employers. That is available through Ayrshire Independent Living Network. Working together both these organisations provide support for people across their full option 1 journey.

Across Scotland it is important that organisations who provide independent support and brokerage are clear about the focus of

Function/tasks	Social work	Brokerage
Keeps records	x	x
Skills of inquiry	x	x
Provide emotional support	x	x

their work and services which allows for transparency and identifying gaps in provision. This means responses need/service gaps can be coordinated, and unnecessary duplication avoided. It enables organisations to work in effective collaboration and avoid competition, especially when resources are limited.

This ethical approach is about building capacity for the provision of brokerage across the country and harnessing the collective strength of both brokerage and independent support organisations. Working together within this framework of shared values and principles will:

- Reinforce the acceptable model of brokerage in Scotland.
- Rule out models which are inconsistent with this approach.
- Ensure the full spread of support needed by people is available.
- Ensure people who need help always benefit from best practice and high-quality independent support.
- Promote collaboration for new initiatives.
- Support collective responses from brokerage and independent support organisations to national policy initiatives.

Importance of Brokerage and Independent Support

The Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 places a duty on the Local Authority to provide information about other persons or organisations outwith the authority who can provide assistance or information about the SDS options and how to manage the options. Community brokerage and independent support organisations provide that assistance and information. The legitimacy of their role, contribution, and function within the SDS system is embedded within the SDS Act. They have a clear role to play and should be enabled to deliver support with the objectivity which comes from their independent position. Everyone involved in the implementation of SDS must adhere to the national SDS Framework of Standards⁴ which epitomises what good independent support looks like.

Section 9 of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 ascribes a range of duties in relation to the social worker's provision of information and support to any adult, child or carer who needs it.

Section 19 also states that authorities must, 'in so far as is reasonably practicable' promote (a) 'a variety of providers of support, and (b) 'the variety of support provided by it and other providers.'" This is reinforced in the 2022 updated Statutory Guidance for self-directed support under the SDS Definition and Statutory Principles.

"Informed choice is the principle that the supported person must be provided with any assistance that is reasonably required to enable the person to express views about the options for SDS available to them and to make an informed choice. This is a key principle, essential to ensuring that the person can be fully involved in designing and implementing their support. This will require consideration of, for example, advocacy, brokerage, interpretation or other communication support."

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/self-directed-support-framework-standards-including-practice-statements-core-components/>

Community brokerage and independent support organisations promote people's rights and help them have their choices protected and respected. They help people explore options for support, articulate choice and assist with putting their choice(s) in place in a way that makes sense for them and their plans for their own life. Brokerage and independent support promote independent living and the four statutory principles of the SDS Act. These are:

- Participation and Dignity
- Involvement
- Informed Choice
- Collaboration

Independence from the Local Authority/Health and Social Care Partnership is fundamental. This independence offers people increased opportunities for objectivity and separates the source of the individual's SDS funding (no matter the option) from their source of support and advice. Independent support plays a crucial role in maximising choice and the amount of control someone wants to have over their support arrangements.



What good brokerage looks like.

The National SDS Standards

The National Standard for independent support (including brokerage and advocacy) plays a critical role in ensuring independent support is there for people who need it and that it is readily accessible. The standard specifies the components that need to be available for good delivery of self-directed support:

- It requires that support and advice should be tailored to people's needs and is accessed as early as possible with specialist provision for specific vulnerable groups as well as addressing communication barriers people experience.
- It explains that independent support organisations should have access to Local Authority training for managing risk, child and adult protection, adults with incapacity and mental health.
- It offers that independent support organisations are included in planning and commissioning.
- It requires independent support and brokerage organisations to provide evidence of the quality of support they provide.
- It requires Local Authorities to provide evidence that all those needing independent support are referred to relevant providers and receive the support they need.
- It recognises the negotiation and mediation role of independent support organisations.

- It highlights challenges made by the independent support organisations to Local Authorities/Health and Social Care Partnerships are opportunities to learn from people's accounts of their own needs and should not be seen as a threat to systems and processes.
- The standard states that independent advice, support, and advocacy providers should work to clear national principles and guidelines, to ensure consistency of practice throughout Scotland.
- The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance has produced [Advocacy and Self-directed Support Guidelines for Advocates](#), and this National Brokerage Framework provides guidance for independent support and brokerage organisations.

“Standard 1 states that independent advice, support, and advocacy providers should work to clear national principles and guidelines, to ensure consistency of practice throughout Scotland”

Core Values

An important facilitator for SDS implementation and good quality support is a core value base. Core values are beneficial for organisations working together to ensure a repeatable and scalable system that offers consistent high standards for those receiving support. It also provides a solid foundation giving cohesion and consistency for those working within the system and sets out expectations on them. The core values that underpin the practice of community brokerage in Scotland are detailed below:

<i>Respect</i>
<p>Respect for the individual, their life choices and what is important to them. Treat them in a way that values them as a person and respects their belongings and property. Respect must also be extended to the professionals working in collaboration. Recognise differences and be aware of the impact of self.</p> <p><i>At the heart of respect is caring.</i></p>
<i>Integrity</i>
<p>Integrity is the foundation of our character and enables honesty and truthfulness to ourselves and others. Implicit is personal responsibility and the ethical principles we hold. It should be evident in the work we do and the engagement we have with others.</p> <p><i>At the heart of integrity is compassion.</i></p>

<i>Equality</i>
<p>Equality is ensuring every person has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives using their gifts, talents, and abilities. A person's opportunities must not be curtailed by their personal characteristics and people should be recognised as having equal worth.</p> <p><i>At the heart of equality is fairness.</i></p>
<i>Citizenship</i>
<p>Citizenship is a right from birth, and everyone has a place in the society we live. Active citizenship should be encouraged and recognise that everyone has skills, gifts and abilities and they should be supported (where needed) to share them. At the heart of citizenship is the right to contribute – with support as needed.</p> <p><i>At the heart of citizenship are human rights</i></p>
<i>Quality</i>
<p>Quality is a measure of the standard of support provided and it should always be excellent. This should reflect the application of best practice, upholding core values and result in positive feedback from those we support.</p> <p><i>At the heart of quality is improvement through learning</i></p>

Principles and Practice

Brokerage and independent support organisations promote independent living and the four statutory principles of Participation and Dignity; Involvement; Informed Choice; and Collaboration from the SDS Act. Good community brokerage requires adhering to the following additional principles that reflect the nature of our practice and provides people with the quality of support they need.

Relationship Based

Building trust with people is central to good practice. Have good conversations to help people unearth what they might not already know. Serve the person and break down power imbalance. Invest time, care and bring understanding and compassion into that relationship. Set realistic time and ethical boundaries. Do what you say you will do. Take a relationship-based approach and work with multi-disciplinary partners. Move at the supported person's pace. Acknowledge the complexity in a person's life.

Community Based

People are best served by local organisations based in their own communities providing support in flexible ways. Local needs must be recognised, and responses must reflect that need and be developed with people who use it and their friends, families, carers, and other relevant stakeholders. Where it makes sense to do so and with permission connect people up and support the development of new initiatives initiated by supported people. Where it makes sense to do so assist with the pooling of budgets for greater benefit to those who wish to do so.

Not for Profit

Independent support and brokerage are about building capacity within people to help themselves and assist each other to promote strong and resilient communities. Priority must never be to generating profits or diverting money to shareholders. Any profit that may be generated must be reinvested in independent support and brokerage. Brokerage business models reflecting social enterprise, community enterprise, and community interest companies where there is social benefit, environmental benefit and investment in the local economy should be prioritised.

Available for all Ages

Everyone who needs help should be able to access independent support and brokerage services no matter what level of need they have or the nature of the challenges they experience. The range of people supported may be children and young people, those with physical disabilities, older people, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health issues, people who have problematic drug or alcohol use, people who are homeless, people who are neurodivergent or those experiencing illness. This list is not exhaustive but an example of the range of people who can use independent support. Brokers should have skills, knowledge and understanding of the various challenges people face and reflect that in their practice.

Invest in Local People

Investing in local people contributes to building local capacity and strong communities. Local organisations should seek (as much as possible) to recruit local people who know and understand the communities in which they work. This could be geographic communities or communities connected by other commonalities. Investing in people with lived and living experience is important to improve quality by learning from their experience.

Maximise Informal Support

The starting point for any support arrangement should be the natural relationships, assets and resources that people have in their own lives and those they have access to in their community. Formal paid support should never replace natural and/or informal support without good reason and consideration of the associated risks. This does not rule out accessing formal support, but people should not have solely formal paid support in their lives.

Recognise People's Own Contribution

Brokers should recognise that everyone has gifts, skills and abilities and the promotion of inclusion must ensure that individuals are not just passive recipients of what happens to them but can make their own contribution. People should be supported to identify and offer their contribution to the lives of others and communities where they wish to do so.

Maximise Personal Choice and Control

Relationships, power balances and person-led support are at the central to exercising choice and control on how people are supported, and social care is provided. Individuals should be supported to have as much or as little support over the planning, organising, securing, and reviewing their support as they choose.

No Cost to the Individual

Access to independent support and brokerage to assist people with all aspects of SDS should be universally available for those needing social care support and others who don't meet local eligibility criteria. There must be no financial cost or charging to individuals being supported or their families, friends or carers. It must be free at the point of access and for the duration of their brokerage support.

Competent staff

All independent support and brokerage must be provided to the highest standard and reflect best practice. Self-reflection should be encouraged and working within the brokerage competency framework is expected. Access to the formal SQA certified community brokerage award should be available to those providing brokerage.

What “Good” Looks Like for Supported People

Individuals being supported have different ideas about what good looks like for them depending on their own aspirations, preferences, and life experiences. Disabled People’s Organisations gather feedback on the support they provide and the SiRD funded projects offering independent support or brokerage provide regular

evaluation reports⁵ to Inspiring Scotland.⁶ These reports give details on feedback from supported people and often have case study examples to demonstrate the difference independent support and brokerage makes to the lives of people being supported.



⁵ https://inspiringscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SiRD-Year-5-mid-year-update_FINAL.pdf

⁶ <https://inspiringscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/our-funds/sird-2021/>

Competency Framework

This National Framework aims to ensure high quality brokerage support is available for those who need it. For this reason, the competency of staff who deliver it is of utmost importance. Their practice must be of the highest standard and reflect the values and principles of community brokerage. This will give confidence to people who need support and contribute to improving their outcomes.

“It is important that the person who is providing any assistance is able to provide that assistance. While there is no requirement for the person to have professional qualifications in supported decision-making, they should have an understanding of the type of assistance required and the limits and boundaries of what is meant by assistance. In other words, they should be aware:

- of their role and the limits of their role;*
 - and the fact that their role is to help the supported person to make decisions and not to make decisions on the supported person’s behalf.”*
-

This competency framework for those practising community brokerage is based on the five core principles of brokerage which are respect, integrity, equality, citizenship, and quality. It explains what brokers need to know, how it is applied through their practice, the qualities they should demonstrate at all times and the skills they need for the role.

Chart: Competency Framework for People Practising Community Brokerage

	<i>What You Know</i>	<i>What You Do</i>	<i>What You Are at All Times</i>	<i>What Skills you need</i>
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You understand diversity You understand discrimination You understand stigma and marginalisation You are aware of stereotyping You are aware of your own biases, triggers and beliefs You understand disrespect You understand confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat everyone with dignity and respect Work effectively with people from all backgrounds and experience Work effectively with people who have a range of differing levels of understanding, opinions and views Demonstrate respect in all aspects of your work Respect confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair Aware Adaptable Compassionate Empathetic Understanding Patient Modest Professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of Human Rights legislation Knowledge of Equality legislation Knowledge of SDS legislation Ability to identify and to set up and follow good practice procedures Ability to understand and adhere to standards set by this professional body Excellent listening skills Ability and willingness to overcome own triggers, biases and beliefs and not allow these to influence your practice / decisions Good verbal and written communication skills Ability to comply with policies and procedures Good group and individual skills / coproduction abilities Proven background working in confidential environments (or proven background working with clients in a confidential way) Knowledge of the Data Protection Act 2018



	<i>What You Know</i>	<i>What You Do</i>	<i>What You Are at All Times</i>	<i>What Skills you need</i>
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You know the principles underpinning community brokerage You understand decision making You know the standards required for your conduct You know, understand and apply the highest level of integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always uphold the principles of community brokerage You support people to make their own decisions You work to the National SDS standards Work with a “can do” attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honest Trustworthy Transparent Consistent Reliable Competent Kind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open and transparent communication and working style/manner Are committed to enhancing the lives of those we work with in a fair and equality focussed manner Commitment to helping your client Commitment to co-production Committed to enabling the individual Understand and can communicate at different levels and an ability to recognise the requirements of the individual Have experience and / or qualifications in Person Centred Planning Excellent relationship building skills and ability to nurture these Skills in communicating sensitively and with varying ability levels Patience Responsibility Helpful Ethical Experience of working inclusively with clients in an ethical way

	<i>What You Know</i>	<i>What You Do</i>	<i>What You Are at All Times</i>	<i>What Skills you need</i>
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You understand inclusion • You understand inequality and the various forms • You are aware of the barriers that cause inequality • You understand equality does not mean everyone gets the same but that people need different opportunities and help to be equal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You work to ensure people are included • You work to reduce inequality and create opportunities for people • You break down barriers for people not put them up • Challenge inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observant • Inclusive • Confident • Assertive • Disciplined • Responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to working in non-discriminatory manner • Enable choice, control and flexibility • Overcome barriers • Commitment to enhancing the lives of those you work with in a fair and equality focussed manner • You have a peer to peer approach and understand there is an equal partnership in your role • Identify gaps in locality • Good listening skills • Ability and willingness to relate to a range of people from different backgrounds and/or with different challenges • Have a non-judgemental attitude or ethos • Good negotiation skills • Good diplomacy skills • Experience of working with inclusively with clients



	<i>What You Know</i>	<i>What You Do</i>	<i>What You Are at All Times</i>	<i>What Skills you need</i>
Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You know and understand everyone's right to be a citizen You recognise power and abuse of power You understand the need and value of community connections and relationships You understand the role of others You understand influence You understand safeguarding and what to do to protect people You understand enabling and can apply it in your role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You work to ensure people can take up their right to be active citizens You help people to make their contribution if they need help You work alongside others as a team and respect their role You network effectively and build up a variety of useful contacts You never abuse power You work to make a community stronger You positively influence the lives of people you have contact with You help people take balanced risks You act to protect people where there are safeguarding issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good at listening Conscientious Calm Friendly Approachable Welcoming Tolerant Optimistic Encouraging Supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You recognise everyone has skills and abilities which are of value in their wider community You recognise the importance of community capacity building but also capacity building in individuals You understand equality and human rights legislation and the importance of empowering the individual Recognise the different types of advocacy and how this differs from brokerage A clear understanding of vulnerable adults, adult support and protection and mental health legislation An understanding of capacity and what this means in context with other legislation Feeling confident to take action Critical thinking skills Advocacy skills Good communication skills Thinking outside the box Understand the importance of power sharing and the different forms of power and their correct and incorrect application



	<i>What You Know</i>	<i>What You Do</i>	<i>What You Are at All Times</i>	<i>What Skills you need</i>
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You understand the importance of having a good life You know how to support people to explain what that means to them You know how to put this into a plan You understand how plans are costed You understand achievement / outcomes You understand choice and control You understand the needs of Carers and those they look after are separate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You work to help people direct their own support You work with all 4 SDS options You work to help people achieve their goals You help them to be creative with their individual budget or resource allocated You help them get the most from their individual budget or resources allocated You help them build up informal support arrangements You help people network with others and build their social capital You respect Carers and work alongside them positively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visionary Effective Encouraging Imaginative Insightful Resilient Motivating Committed Creative Inspiring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to enable and encourage Good listening skills Ability to have good conversations Understanding of the “spirit” of the SDS Act Good Communication Skills Understanding of Person-centred Planning Quality Standards Good knowledge of local opportunities Understanding of the role of a Community Broker Non-judgmental Good written and verbal communication skills Recognize the importance of equality issues Recognition of barriers and how to reduce them Good knowledge of Carers’ Act and role of Carers Positive attitude Can do approach Maintain Professional Boundaries Be respectful at all times Establish a good working relationship which places the individual in control of their decisions Clarity in terms of your role within the process Good understanding of applicable legislation Willingness to undertake training and continue to development professionally within the role. Attend meetings and Support and Supervisions Sessions to enhance your skills and show competencies once a year.

Everyone practising community brokerage, irrespective of the setting or whether or not they are called a broker, is expected to consistently demonstrate the level of competence expressed in this broker competency framework. This framework can be incorporated into appraisal systems and can be used for identifying training needs leading to competency-based training for brokers.

Brokerage Skills, Knowledge and Understanding

To ensure provision of high-quality support and competency among people providing brokerage there are key skills and knowledge they require. This is especially important when recruiting and/or training staff and helps to focus attention on specific training requirements and skills development. Many brokers bring valuable lived/living experience, and this can significantly enhance their contribution alongside the requirements below.

Chart: Skills, Knowledge and Understanding required for brokerage

<i>Skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills in engaging people • Excellent listening skills • Skills in building trust with people needing support • Skills in working collaboratively with others • Skills in negotiation • Support planning skills • Mediation skills • Digital skills for computer use • Skills in arithmetic and costing of support plans • Skills in writing and recording information succinctly • Inquiry and basic research skills for using search engines

<i>Knowledge</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of independent living • Knowledge of disability rights activism • Knowledge of human rights • Knowledge of the SDS legislation • Knowledge of the SDS Statutory Guidance • Knowledge of the SDS Improvement Plan • Knowledge of social care policy • Knowledge of activities and community assets • Knowledge of groups and key people in communities who are well networked • Knowledge of basic technological options for support • Knowledge of potential sources of funding for signposting people

Understanding

- Understanding the prejudice and discrimination experienced by marginalised groups
- Understanding equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Understanding of self-directed support
- Understanding the role and function of different staff
- Understand the role of the social worker and function of social work
- Understanding their own role in relation to the role of others
- Understanding relevant legislation
- Understanding of the SDS process in their locality
- Understanding difference between formal and informal support
- Understanding boundaries

This is not an exhaustive list but expresses key areas required on which to build recruitment, training and competency. Highly competent staff will increase the possibility of delivering high quality brokerage.

“Highly competent staff will increase the possibility of delivering high quality brokerage”

Promoting Competency & Improving Quality

The Three-Pronged Approach

Linked to the three areas of development and investment indicated in the SDS Improvement Plan a three-pronged approach has been established to promote broker competence and improve the quality of community brokerage across Scotland. It has been developed to strengthen community brokerage provision across the country and ensure strategic cohesion and collaboration. The three-pronged approach consists of:

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- ➔ *Co-producing the National Brokerage Framework (NBF) where the values and principles of independent support and community brokerage are aligned, and the model of brokerage promoted in Scotland explicit.*
 - ➔ *Funding and promoting access to the SQA certified Community Brokerage Award to improve and independently verify the competence of those providing community brokerage.*
 - ➔ *Funding and Promoting the Approved Brokers Community of Practice (ABC of P) to provide opportunities for continuous professional learning, peer support and building capacity among brokerage practitioners.*
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Each of these approaches has value but the hope is the final benefit will be greater than those of the individual components given the interdependent nature of this work. It contributes to improving the quality of independent support and brokerage for

people who need it and enables practitioners to deliver that support confidently and objectively.

Community Brokerage Award

The Community Brokerage Network developed the Community Brokerage Award which has been certified by the [Scottish Qualification Authority \(SQA\)](#). It sits at level 7 within the [Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework \(SCQF\)](#). This customised award is recognised nationally as meeting the standards of competency for practising community brokerage. There are 5 units to the full award and although they can be taught as standalone units, all 5 are recommended for completion with SQA certification on successful completion. The units are:

- Describing Self-directed Support
- Support Brokerage
- Increasing Choice and Control Using SDS
- Supporting People in Support Planning
- Community Development and Brokerage

Historically the Award has been delivered by the Community Brokerage Network. For candidates undertaking the award as part of the new 2024 cohort and onwards SDS Scotland will be the new SQA Assessment Centre and will develop the capacity for greater national reach.

The Scottish Government funded a number of places on the award in 2023 and targeted independent support and brokerage organisations. The purpose of the investment is to ensure high quality independent brokerage support is available to people who need it. The award will continue for the foreseeable future from the new SDS Scotland Assessment centre.

Approved Brokers Community of Practice

Individuals who successfully complete the Community Brokerage Award can receive ongoing support to always ensure best practice. Qualified brokers who have completed the course have set up a Community Interest Company. It provides ongoing training, peer support and a safe space for problem solving and exploring creative solutions to challenges faced by people being supported and those providing the support. It gives access to newsletters, briefings, training sessions and will provide a digital resource where individual learning can be recorded, stored, and accessed with ease. Membership to this Approved Brokers Community of Practice (ABC of P) is available to anyone who completes the Community Brokerage Award and will provide a route for ongoing professional support and development.



Next Steps

Adoption of framework and roll out.

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- ➔ *The intention is that this National Brokerage Framework will be adopted by organisations providing community brokerage and people practising community brokerage across Scotland. This will enable positive collaboration and a consistent approach to brokerage that supports the core values of respect, integrity, equality, citizenship, and quality.*
 - ➔ *The framework will be of value to other stakeholders involved in self-directed support to help them understand the purpose of community brokerage, the role of people practising community brokerage and the added value it brings.*
 - ➔ *A self-assessment tool will be coproduced by practitioners from independent support and brokerage organisations who are delivering community brokerage and other stakeholders.*
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- ➔ *The tool will enable organisations and individuals to voluntarily map their learning and development against the core values, principles, competencies, knowledge, skills and understanding required to provide high quality community brokerage.*
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Community Brokerage Scotland
everyone together



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