

Personal Assistant (PA) Programme Board (PB)– 28 September 2022

Chair	Ian Turner, Scottish Government
Date	28 September 2022
Time	15.00 – 17:00
Location	MS Teams

Attendees	Organisation
Kevin Stewart	Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care
Alison Upton	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
Sharon McLeod	Ayrshire Independent Living Network (AILN)
Les Watson	Personal Assistant Network Scotland (PANS), WEA
Jeremy Adderley	SDSS
Donna Murray	Self-employed Personal Assistant (PA) and SWS
Jane Kellock	SWS
Noleen McCormick	SWS
Lyn Pornaro	Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL)
Gemma Wilson	SDS Cornerstone
Sharon Shepherd	PA
Helen McInnes	PA
Rachel Townson	PA
Ethan Young	Inclusion Scotland
Jim Elder-Woodward	Independent Living Movement
Marianne Scobie	Glasgow Disability Alliance
Fran Holligan	COSLA
Karen Albrow	PA Employer
Anne Marie Monaghan	Independent Living Movement
Peter Scott	Independent Living Fund Scotland
Tony Hadley	Cornerstone
Toria Fraser	SG
Don Morrison	SG
Christina McLaren	SG
Paige McNicol	SG
Charlotte Pearson	Glasgow University
Kevin Drugan	Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living
Margaret Petherbridge	Chair of SDS Practice Network (SWS and Falkirk Council)
James McNulty	SG
Linda Wilson	Unite the Union
Apologies	
Donald Macleod	Self-Directed Support Scotland (SDSS)
Michael Gettins	PA
Pauline Nolan	Inclusion Scotland
Becs Barker	Community Contacts, Carrgom

Items and Actions

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Personal Assistant (PA) Programme Board (PB) and particular Rachel Townson, Helen McInnes, Noleen McCormick and Ethan Young who have joined the meeting for the first time.

Apologies were received from Donald Macleod, Co-chair of SDSS, James McNulty of Scottish Government, Pauline Nolan of Inclusion Scotland and Michael Gettins, PA.

Approval of minutes from 9 June 2022

The minutes of the PA Programme Board of 9 June 2022 were approved.

Review of action points from the last Steering Group Meeting

The action points from the last meeting were covered. The undernoted actions have been closed since the last meeting. Updates to outstanding actions were provided.

PB36- Minister attending meeting on 28 September

PB37- Survey report published on 28 July 2022

PB38 – PANS to give SDSS details regarding the proportion of PAs who incorrectly think that they work for organisations. SDSS and PANS have now spoken.

PB41 – Les, Tony and Gemma have had a positive meeting and will meet monthly

PB43 - Lyn has been invited to join the Wellbeing group.

PB44 – SDSS confirm an article is to be included in the next PA programme board newsletter to share the information on how PAs can attend future PA Programme Board meetings.

Updates on open action points

PB35 – further detail on the PA Network Pathfinder Project to be provided by SDS Cornerstone at the next Programme board meeting

PB39 – PANS to invite Donald and Jeremy of SDSS, Marianne of GDA and Jim to attend PANS PA Panel meetings.

Update is that Donald attended PA Panel. Les to invite Jim and Marianne to future meetings.

PB40 – Disclosure Scotland (DS) to be invited to the next Programme board. Update is that DS confirmed on 4 August that they won't be able to update at September meeting. DS to attend January 2023 meeting as section 76, 'Standard Conditions' has been pushed back.

PB42 - Becs to organise a representative from Independent Support Organisations to attend the Comms and Information Sub Group?

Newsletter

The latest PA Newsletter has been posted on the SDSS webpage [Personal Assistant Newsletter September 2022 - Self Directed Support Scotland | Self Directed Support Scotland \(sdsscotland.org.uk\)](https://sdsscotland.org.uk).

Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care

The Co-Chair welcomed the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care to the Programme Board and invited him to speak.

Mr Stewart gave a brief speech in which he noted his approval for the Work Plan and explained that the National Care Service (NCS) will include fair work in its guiding principles. He took some questions from the group and encouraged members to get involved in the co-design process for the NCS.

The meeting heard from SSSC that there has been a decision not to consult on expanding the SSSC register to include PAs.

There was also discussion about the Lived Experience Panel and the need for support and capacity building for disabled people's organisations so they can in turn support disabled people to be involved in the process.

PB45 Action Point: SG to share information with the Programme Board as to how to get involved in the co-design process and the Lived Experience Panel and if there is support and capacity building to ensure that PAs and people with lived experience are involved in this.

Conversation about the Work Plan

The Chair invited Anne-Marie Monaghan to open a discussion on the Work Plan.

The meeting received an update from SDSS on the PAPB Workplan which is now available on the SDSS website [PA Programme Board Workplan - Self Directed Support Scotland | Self Directed Support Scotland \(sdsscotland.org.uk\)](https://sdsscotland.org.uk). Attendees were shown the four objectives as well as the outcomes, the actions and how to navigate this resource.

Anne-Marie invited the SWS team to present on their work to create a national direct payment model agreement. The meeting heard about the actions to co-produce this agreement. There is a wide variation across Scotland in the implementation of option 1, including rates of pay and more which impact the PA employer and PA and affects recruitment.

The approach builds on learning from the SDS framework of standards collaboration. It will define what good looks like for all involved. The aim is to ensure parity with the social care workforce and to identify the essential ingredients in the model with everyone and then to implement it across Scotland prior to the NCS. This work will need support from SG, COSLA and PA employers. People will be contacted soon to be part of an advisory group and there will be a community of practice of the LA who responded to the initial survey in Autumn 2021 to function as a solution focused forum. Work will also be taken forward to support growing skills based training for social workers.

The meeting also heard from SDSS of the results of the first PA survey which is expected to be an annual activity. The survey ran until end of April 2022 and was designed to provide a snapshot about the PA workforce, their conditions, their role and what motivates them.

The report was published in July 2022 and available on the webpage: [Report is out: First Annual Personal Assistant Workforce Survey - Self Directed Support Scotland | Self Directed Support Scotland \(sdsscotland.org.uk\)](#). SDSS explained that among the key findings from the survey there were strong positives such as job satisfaction but indicators which need further investigation such as less than half agree that they have sufficient support; large numbers are doing unpaid care and 60% of the respondents who answered the question on training indicated they had had no training in any previous year. This evidence will inform the development of the Work Plan.

The meeting heard that there is a gap around the size of the PA workforce with ongoing work to consider how to calculate the size of the PA workforce and make projections of the future size of and need for this workforce. There is work also underway to add detail to PA handbook around the contract of employment.

Anne-Marie as chair of the Training Sub Group gave an update to the meeting about the work of the Sub Group which looked at a range of training going on, and found no consistent approach across the country. She explained that work is ongoing to determine what the group thinks the key principles are for PA training, and to ensure that PA employers are involved. The meeting heard that a proposal has been drafted for a nationwide training framework. Anne-Marie is currently in the process of making final changes to incorporate comments from the Scottish Government which will then be shared with the Sub Group. The proposal considers two main themes which relate to:

1. PA and PA employer relationship and training that may be required there.
2. The links between PAs and social care workforce ensuring an alignment so that there can be movement between these two workforces. The meeting heard that this relates not only to necessary training but also to widening career opportunities and progression to find ways to enable employers to help their PAs in career development.

Anne-Marie invited SDSS to update on the Communications & Information Sub Group whose main focus was to sign-off the PA handbook and Make an Impact campaign earlier this year. Jeremy Adderley showed members the make an Impact campaign logo, visuals and stories [Make an Impact. Become a PA. - Self Directed Support Scotland | Self Directed Support Scotland \(sdsscotland.org.uk\)](#) (there have been 6500 impressions of the video case studies) and how it links to the PA vacancy page on myjobscotland webpage [Personal Assistant Jobs | myjobscotland](#). The meeting also heard that there is further communications planned in particular looking to target women from 45-65 (which represents the majority of respondents to the PA survey) and men of all ages as they are underrepresented in the research and there is a focus on a small number of geographic areas using local case studies for local media (Inverclyde, Aberdeen City and Falkirk).

PB46 Action Point: Chair of Training Sub Group to add Rachel Townson to membership.

Taking Stock Discussion

The Co-Chair Ian invited Christina McLaren from SG to introduce the taking stock session.

Christina noted the good progress of the Board in the past 14 months and outlined that part of good governance is taking stock of what has been achieved and what is still to be done. The Programme Board has a Work Plan which is transparent and accessible; the seven Sub Groups are driving forward the work of the Work Plan and the PA survey now gives us some greater granular detail about the workforce.

Members were invited to comment on what they think is working well, as well as any gaps or barriers that they are aware of. Attendees agreed that the Programme Board is a good example of co-production and collaboration and has raised the profile of the challenges faced by PA employers and PAs and the importance of this unique relationship. It is important to support the PA workforce to be recognised as part of the adult social care workforce.

Other attendees noted they were pleased to have been involved and to have made progress but some work has taken more time than anticipated, partly due to time pressure for everyone hampering some Sub groups from getting up and running.

The meeting heard that while all priorities are important, recruitment is the most important. As responsibility to find a PA rests with the PA employer, it can be extremely challenging and the meeting heard that some vacancies have been advertised for over one year.

It was agreed that the secretariat take an action to review the Terms of Reference for the Programme Board, given there is now a Steering Group and Sub Groups in place, and a cadence set for future meetings.

PB47 ACTION: Chair of Recruitment Subgroup to issue a note about PA banks in Western Isles and Aberdeenshire with advice on how to set up PA Banks.

PB48 ACTION: Secretariat to update the ToR based on the taking stock session agenda item. It will then be shared with the Steering Group and the Communication & Information Sub Group for review.

The meeting heard from the SDS practice network that they value the discussion provided within this forum as it allows people to hear each other's perspectives. It also shows the value of the PA as part of the social care workforce and she is glad the work of the Board is underway as we need to ensure the consistency and continuity of PA workforce as the use of the PA allows the individual to stay home for longer.

Other comments from the floor included:

- PAs for children are being left out of things that PAs for adults. It is just as complex and we need to create a level playing field.

- A need to work collaboratively as part of a broader recruitment exercise so as to ensure there is profiling of the unique nature of the PA role and avoiding duplication of effort.
- The value of stories, experiential. The impact campaign is excellent as it shows the value.
- The value of the collaborative coming together and having challenging conversations. We need to take this story across the sectors (including amongst other places the meeting heard that this would include the next dementia strategy and carers).
- One PA commented that they were heartened to be involved and that others understood their perspective, and how difficult and isolating the role can be. This forum has given them some encouragement.
- It was noted that the aim is not for PAs to progress into social care worker roles – PA roles are equal to other roles, it is more about choice and clarity of career paths, training and development. PAs have skills which are transferable to different jobs including in other sectors such as mental health, homelessness, drug and alcohol dependency etc. It was noted that the Programme Board needed a diverse membership in order to represent the diversity of PAs.
- Christina summarised this session for the group and based on members' comments, proposed that an area to focus on moving forward will be the diversity of the group to include other specialisms such as mental health, dementia and autism, as well as recruitment of PA's.

PB49 Action Point: Focus for next board meeting – recruitment with an update from the Recruitment Sub Group

PB50 Action Point: SG and Co-Chairs to look into widening the diversity of this membership of Sub Groups to include other specialisms.

PB51 Action point: Secretariat to introduce the SG team leading on the national marketing campaign of adult social care to the Recruitment Sub Group so as to work together to ensure the PA role is promoted.

AOB:

The Chair gave an update that he and Donald (his Co-Chair) had met with a number of groups to communicate the work of the Programme Board and create opportunities for collaboration. These include the SDS Practice Network and Adult Standing Committee of SWS and 3 of their subgroups (LD and autism, ASP, care of elderly) and are to meet MH later next month.

The Co-Chairs have been invited to provide an update in January to the Adult Standing Committee, who agreed to consider how they could support the implementation of our overall objective.

The Co-Chair also told the meeting that, as part of the work to increase knowledge of PA Programme Board to PAs and encourage more to join this work. Donald has met the PA Network Scotland Panel of PAs three of whom indicated they would like to attend the Programme Board. Donald is also leading on the SDS implementation

plan; SDSS is establishing a national brokerage framework which accredits the Information and Support Organisation staff.

As regards the work to broaden the focus in terms of users groups who are entitled to access SDS, but who may not access it as a rule. SDSS has scoped the needs of autistic people in relation to SDS. Initial findings highlight training and eligibility criteria as major obstacles. The team will meet with the Autism team in SG in October to explore this.

PB52 Action Point: Co-Chairs to provide an update in January to the SWS Adult Standing Committee.

PB53 Action Point: SDSS to provide update of any progress regarding SDS and needs of autistic people

Date of Next Meeting

The Co-Chair thanked members for attending and for their contributions to the discussion.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Programme Board would be on 12 January 2023.