A Guide to Self-directed Support

Personalisation Officer
Glasgow Regional Office (CrossReach)
Suite 1/F
Willow House
Kestrel House
Strathclyde Business Park
BELLSHILL
ML4 3PB

T: 01698 464157
M: 07827 231185
susan.mcgregor@crossreach.org.uk
What is Self-Directed Support?
Self-directed support (SDS) is a mechanism or way in which people who get support can choose from a variety of options and gives them as much or as little control over their allocated budget as they choose.

Self-Directed support (SDS) is the Support someone buys or arranges to help them to meet their chosen outcomes.

In 2013, The Scottish Government passed a new law regarding how social care would be delivered and is now known as, The Social Care (Self Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013. The act gives people who have been assessed as needing support, a range of options/choices on how their support is delivered. It’s not just about direct payments, but this act also empowers people who get support to decide how much control and responsibility they want over their own support arrangements and what they want to leave up to the local authority.

The Act itself places a duty on local authorities to offer people four choices on how they might receive their support.

The Options
Once individuals have been assessed as needing support, they should be offered 4 options/choices on how they would like to buy their support. These are the four options/choices:

**Option 1**
If an individual or a family member are able to look after the budget on their own, then the local authority can offer a Direct Payment.
This means that individuals will have complete control over how the budget is spent and can agree with their care manager direct, on how best to use that money to support them. This allows individuals to choose which provider they want to use or employ a personal assistant.

**Option 2**
This option means that individuals can still choose who provides their support and when, but takes the responsibility of holding the money from the individual to the local authority. This means that the local authority will work with individuals to agree a support plan, agree who will give that support, and in turn they will pay the money to the support provider when it is needed. This doesn’t mean it has to be just one provider, it can be as many or as few providers that suits each person best and help to achieve their chosen outcomes.

**Option 3**
This option is where the local authority will arrange the support provider on behalf of the individual, and they will also pay the provider if it is not the local authority providing the support.
This option might be used when a person is not able to make decisions for themselves or if they don’t want to make a choice for themselves.

**Option 4**
This option is when people can choose a mixture of all 3 previous options. That means they might want direct payments for some of the support, and choice in other areas but still have the local authority looking after the financial side of the support.
The local authority will still have some involvement and individuals will still have choice and control over the support they receive.
How Might Organisations Prepare?

There are 7 key points to ensuring your organisation is ready for Self-Directed Support:

1. Assess Readiness:
   Even within organisations, each service is unique in terms of its location, staff group and individuals that you support, so it’s essential that each service looks at how ready they are to change to Self-Directed Support.
   This will also require changes from central supports like HR and finance, so in order to know what needs to change, you need to understand how ready you are to make changes.

2. See People As Assets:
   It’s vitally important that individuals we support are seen as someone who comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience about themselves.
   Each person should be seen as an asset in designing and delivering a service that has them at the forefront with a voice and opinion.

3. Be Prepared To Change:
   Organisations need to be prepared to change and morph into a system where budgets, plans and staffing can be changed very quickly and all the challenges that come as a result. Ideas and approaches need to change to fit into new ways of working to suit individual people.
   We need to be innovative and creative in how we approach the changes and have a staff team prepared, ready and accepting of change.

4. Keep The Lines of Communication Open:
   It’s important to be transparent and keep the lines of communication open between senior management teams, workers and individuals. Where there are challenges, make everyone part of the solution. Keep people up to date with all new information which helps to eliminate speculation and rumours and helps to keep everyone feeling valued.

5. Work In Partnership With People:
   Services need to work in partnership both with the people who buy services but also with communities in order to help stretch budgets and to fit into a personal way of working for that individual.
   Working in partnership assumes that no one person has authority and that the partnership between the person buying the service and the service delivering the support is equal and in doing so demands respect for each other.

6. Support Each Other:
   As an organisation it is important to hold each other up and support different parts of the organisation to come to terms with the changes required. Each party needs to be open, transparent and ready to accept changes brought about by self-directed support and have a focus on strengths.
   Services need to consult with one another and individuals in order to support ideas and gain an understanding of where they are coming from. Change can be challenging and difficult so it’s important to recognise the journey each person is going through and support one another through the process.

7. Have A Plan:
   Each service and organisation needs to have a plan of how they will tackle Self Directed Support and the challenges it might bring. So starting with the person at the centre of everything you do should be the focus of the plan. From here, it is important to look at all the parts of the organisation that might be affected by decisions made at ground level by individuals and how to have a unified approach.
   There will be restrictions and limitations that need to be worked into the plan and if there are a variety of service areas then how do you work that into your plan. When you have all the parts worked out that need to be taken into consideration then you can devise a plan or guidance that can take you forward as an organisation or service, but remember, this too needs to have a focus on the person and change and so it needs to be fluid and interchangeable to meet the changing needs and wishes of each individual.