



ENABLE Glasgow – Members’ Briefing

Self Directed Support in Glasgow – What You Need to Know

Glasgow City Council Social Work Services Department (which provides funding for support for most people with learning disability in Glasgow) has decided to change the way it provides this funding. The new system will be based on a system of Self Directed Support (SDS). Eventually this system will apply to almost everyone who uses social care services, and the change will have a profound effect on many people with learning disabilities and their carers.

This leaflet will explain how the new system works, and will hopefully answer some of the questions that carers and service users have. We’re sure there will be questions you may have that aren’t answered here. Please get in touch with us if this is the case.

Most people who have asked us for help are just about to fill in their Self Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ). If you are in this position, go directly to Sections 4 and 5 on this leaflet for more information. The most important points to remember in filling in the SEQ are:

- Get help or advice.**
- State your full range of special needs on the form.**
- Take your time, and keep a copy of your form if you can.**

1. What is Self Directed Support?

In the SDS system, each service user has an individual budget allocated to them which they use to ‘buy’ a package of support they need. This will cover things like supported living, day services, transport, respite care, or any other support funded by the Council.

Service users and their carers will have quite a lot of freedom about what kind of support they choose, and on who they choose to buy it from. Some people choose to hold their budget themselves and pay for their support directly. In other cases, the Council will continue to hold the money, but the person can still have choice over what they do with their budget.

Sometimes SDS is called Personalization, Individual Budgets, or In Control, but the basic principles are the same. In this leaflet we'll be calling it Self Directed Support (or SDS for short).

2. This sounds good – what's the problem?

For many people, SDS will be a good thing. They may get more choice about the support they get, and on how they wish to spend their money. They may be able to spend this money better than the Council can.

However, there are a number of potential problems, and many carers and service users are worried about these. The main problem is that Glasgow City Council, like many other local authorities in Scotland, has much less money to spend on support than they used to have, and have said they will be cutting many people's support budgets. **Many people are worried that their SDS budget won't be enough to buy the support they need, or enough to cover the support they get already.** Some people have already had their budgets cut.

Carers and service users have also reported a number of other problems with the new system. Some of these are:

- If people need to change their support, there isn't time to do this properly.
- The system seems complicated.
- I can sometimes be hard to find someone to help service users and carers complete forms.
- Some people don't want to be responsible for holding their own budgets, or will not be able to do this for themselves.
- People don't know what is available for them to choose from.

3. How does the SDS system in Glasgow work?

There are five main stages to the process:

Firstly, the person fills in a **Self Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ)**. This is a 'tick box'-type form that asks about various aspects of the support a person needs, and about the support they may already get from family carers. Based on the responses on this form the person is allocated a certain number of points. There is also a space on the form for people to write any 'additional comments' they have.

Secondly, the person's SEQ goes to a **Resource Allocation Group (RAG)** which looks at the number of points the person has, and awards an **Indicative Budget (IB)** for the person concerned. The IB is the amount that the Council estimates that the person needs to pay for their support.

Thirdly, if the person's Indicative Budget is significantly lower or higher than the money they already get, their case is referred to the **Risk Enablement Group (REG)**. This group is made up of social work staff, who will decide if the person's budget needs to be made higher or lower. Not everyone's case will be referred to the REG.

Fourthly, when the budget is agreed, an **Outcome-Based Support Plan (OBSP)** will be drawn up, which is a longer document detailing how the person's support will be provided, and who will do this. The person themselves, their carer if they have one, their service provider, and their Social Work Care Manager should all be involved in this.

Fifthly, if the person's support will change a lot as a result of their OBSP, a **Transition Plan** will be put in place to manage their transfer to their new support package. Again, not everyone will go through this stage – only those whose support packages are changing a lot.

4. What do I need to think about when I'm filling in the Self Evaluation Questionnaire?

Our view is that relatively few people with learning disability will be able to complete the SEQ entirely on their own, and that even carers should think carefully about the responses they make. The SEQ looks quite simple on the face of it, but some people have reported that it is difficult to fit their particular circumstances to the questions on the form. It is important to remember some general principles when filling it in. These are:

- If you are not sure how to fill in the form, **get help**.
- Remember to state the **full range** of the person's special needs – remember, the budget they will be allocated is based on the answers you give on this form.
- Anyone supporting the person to fill in the form should be someone that knows their particular circumstances best.
- If you are a carer, make sure you're involved in filling in the form – ask for extra time to do this if you need it.
- Take your time filling in the form – remember it's an important document.
- **Keep a copy.**

5. What questions on the SEQ are the most important?

It's important that when filling in the form you use all the questions to reflect the person's full range of needs. However, **pay particular attention to the questions that deal with managing risk, and managing personal care**, as these will be particularly important in deciding what the person's support package will be. Also, **pay particular attention to Question 10 on the form**, which deals with how much support the person gets from family and friends. If it is stated that they get a great deal of support from

family and friends, their points total will be reduced significantly – therefore, be sure that you (or the person you're filling in the form for) really gets this support.

6. Can I or my carer go along to the Resource Allocation Group which decides my Indicative Budget?

The RAG is made up of Council officials, and service users and carers will not normally be part of this. However you can and should ask what your Indicative Budget is, and how much this is different from the cost of your existing support package.

7. My Indicative Budget is much lower than the cost of my existing services – what should I do?

Sometimes it is still possible to get a good service which suits the person on a reduced budget. However, if you think your budget is too low, it is important to pay particular attention to the Support Plan which is drawn up for you.

A service user or carer can ask for their case to be referred to the Risk Enablement Group. The Council doesn't have to agree to this, but you can still ask. ENABLE Glasgow have been working hard to make sure that when a case is referred to the REG, the REG makes sure that the views of the service user and carer are taken into account in reviewing the Indicative Budget. Ask your Care Manager for your views to be made known.

8. Will I or my carer be involved in drawing up the Outcome-Based Support Plan or the Transitional Plan if I need one?

Everyone who is significant in the lives of the person concerned should be involved in drawing up both of these Plans – ask your Care Manager or your support provider for more details.

9. I (or the person I care for) already gets their support from a support provider agency like ENABLE. What should I do?

If this is the case it's almost certain that an SEQ has already been submitted for the person concerned, and an Outcome Based Support Plan drawn up. If you are a carer and still play a significant part in the life of the person concerned, ask to be involved in the process if you haven't been already. Ask to be kept informed about any changes in the person's support **before** these are put in place. If you are a carer, ask how these changes will affect you.

10. I am interested in holding my own budget and administering this myself, or having someone help me with this. What should I do?

Ask your care manager about this. Relatively few people have taken this option so far, and it may take the Council some time to set up the system. Also, you should think about what you have to do in order to administer this money. Some organisations, such as Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, can help with this. If you chose to take this option, or to administer a budget for someone else, you will need to satisfy the Council that you are using the money properly.

11. If I am holding a budget for someone I care for, do I have to become a legal Welfare and Financial Guardian?

In most cases where the Individual Budget is relatively high, people wishing to administer funds for someone else are being asked by the Council to become a legally appointed Welfare and/or Financial Guardian. The process for this is quite complicated, but many parents and carers have done it, and ENABLE can give more advice if you are considering this.

12. I have no-one to help me hold my own budget, or I am a carer and don't want the responsibility of this? What should I do?

At the moment, in most cases the Council will continue to hold the person's budget and administer this on their behalf. Arrangements for paying for the person's services will be made directly between the Council and whoever is providing the service. However, when SDS is being run properly, the person should still be able to have a choice on the services they receive, even when the Council is paying for these directly.

13. I've got no idea what services to choose. Where can I go for help?

As the SDS system becomes more well established, it is anticipated that organisations will be formed that can give people impartial advice on which services may be right for them. There is also a network of Local Area Coordinators in Glasgow, who can help service users find services which are right for them. ENABLE Glasgow can give more advice on this, as can many other provider groups. It may also be a good idea to become part of a service user or carer group through which you can learn from the experiences of people who are in a similar position.

14. What kind of things can I use my individual budget to pay for?

Glasgow is aiming to make its SDS system as flexible as possible in order to give people as much choice as possible. However, there are some things you can't use your budget for. The rules on this are still being drawn up, and ENABLE Glasgow can put you in touch with the people who should know the latest position on this. Also, it's important to remember that the budget you are allocated has to pay for **all** the support you require.

15. I don't have a Social Work Care Manager, or my Care Manager doesn't know me very well? Who can help me with this?

If you are going through the process you should be allocated an appropriate Care Manager. Get in touch with your local Social Work Area Team if you haven't been allocated a Care Manager. Also, if your Care Manager is helping you with this, make sure that he or she knows the person properly, and make sure you are involved in all decisions that affect you or the person you care for.

16. What happens if my needs change in the future?

Your Outcome Based Support Plan should be reviewed every year, although in practice this sometimes takes a bit longer. Your package can also be reviewed quicker than this if your circumstances or needs change significantly. If this is the case, don't wait around – get help quickly

We realise that this leaflet won't answer all your questions, and that the system can change from time to time - keep on eye on our newsletter and website for news on the latest position.

www.enableglasgow.org.uk