



Perth and Kinross Education and Children's Services

Self-Directed Support Survey – Feedback August 2020

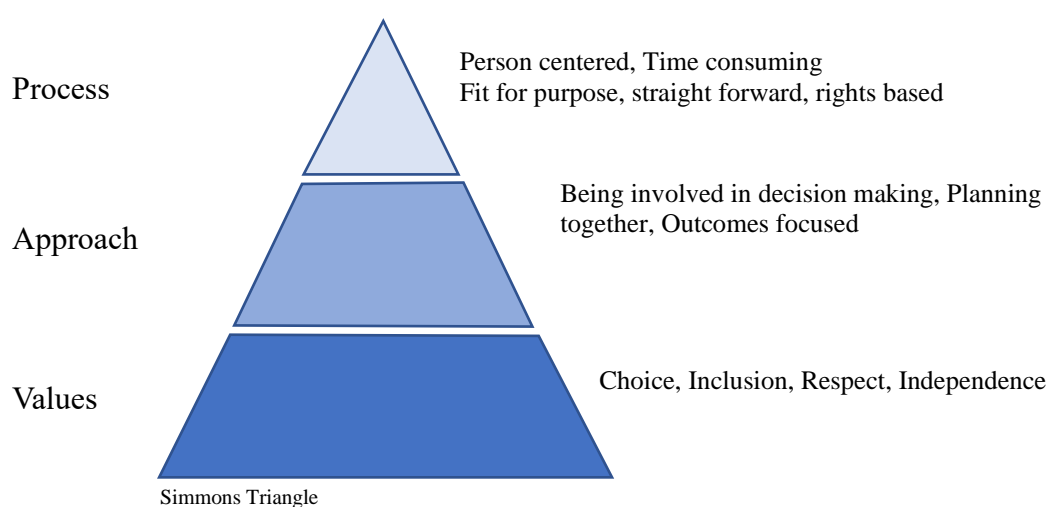
Introduction

A brief survey was circulated to social care practitioners in Education and Children's Services in Perth and Kinross. The survey covered people's understanding and knowledge of the values, approach and local process for Self-Directed Support. The following is a simple explanation of the responses from those who completed the survey. A full set of slides will be discussed on Monday 31st August and will then be shared with the team in Perth and Kinross.

In total there were between 42 and 49 responses to the questions in the survey.

Perth and Kinross are sending out a similar survey to families, the outcome of which will enable them to build a picture of self-directed support practice informed by both practitioners and families. Discussions are already underway about specific support from In Control Scotland to parents and family groups in Perth and Kinross.

Responses to questions about Values, Approach and Process:



Comments from respondents:

Respondents were invited to share their thoughts and comments at the end of each of the three sections of the survey. At the end they were invited to share feedback from families about self-directed support. Here is a sample of the comments made:

Values:

'This is a really difficult question to answer because it's not easy to offer a view about something I'm unclear about. I have an impression that SDS is being offered because there is a government expectation/requirement to do so to promote service user autonomy around the help they need. I believe my LA supports this kind of thinking and the principles around SDS but I have an impression that the system for SDS is very complicated and funding is limited so this has a bearing on its use with families.

Whilst I think PKC are proactive in helping staff providing appropriate support to families using self-directed support, I am not sure that the values and reasons for offering this is always clear to the families themselves. We are told that Self-directed support money can be used for a range of reasons and to be creative in how we explore this with families, supporting them to understand how financial assistance will impact on the service users life for the better. However, my experience is that most families are asking for respite as this is the one thing that helps families to cope on a day to day basis. Certainly; I do not think the wider public are aware what Self-directed support is and the values it underpins

I don't really know much about how our authority is approaching / implementing this.

Given that young people choose to engage with us or not, we have more flexibility in being to work in a partnership with a young person. We aim to give young people the tools to be more in control, safe and we respect their decision, however it is often the case that if they do not engage with us, more formal measures need to be taken that reduce the choices available for the young person. We can be part of a process that gives the illusion of choice but is really directing a young person by the very means of the options given to them.

the Local Authority values are about the safety of children primarily (rightly so) respect and inclusion. It is the role of the Local authority to keep children safe I do believe that they want families, children and young people to participate and be included in the plans about themselves, services they receive and in their local communities.

Approach:

Staff in the Children and Disability team still talk in terms of families being offered hours as opposed to getting a budget. There needs to be a clear process as to what the criteria is for accessing different budgets and there needs to be more people involved in the decision-making process. The processes need to be the same across the service.

As before, I don't know much about SDS yet but imagine that with good support and risk assessment it could open the door to more creative and inclusive support for families.

it gives the client something for them only. in our case a special time with their carer to go out and do things try new experiences time away from family to build their own identity

I don't have a vast amount of experience in this area, but one common experience is that it is very difficult to put support in place which is going to last long or be effective long term. My view is that there is not enough continuity in keyworkers, particularly during the transition years of ages 16 to 19 and the move from child to adult services.

Process:

Our "clients" are the ones with the answers. Our job is to support and know that the decisions are being made in mind with the families and young people we work with. Every family is going to be different so don't treat them all the same.

I feel the process for application for SDS funds from a worker on behalf of a young person/client is adequate however, I feel it is the workers' responsibility to provide suggestions and thoughts to young people/parents/ carers as to how SDS money would best suit their needs as they often do not know where to start. I feel if a way to bridge this gap were found, this would provide better outcomes young people/ families or carers.

*More providers for option 2 or 3 - choice
More availability of personal assistants
Consideration of transport issues in rural areas*

resources available to meet the needs of more complex and difficult cases

Simplified forms and easy for families to understand

I know you asked for one but I am giving you three Transparency re how decisions are made; Child's plans should incorporate self-directed support plans; Better outcome focused assessments

Feedback from families:

"Varies - Direct payment works well for those with consistent personal assistant. Works well when they can use their budget flexibly - especially when no P.A available. Many don't want all the responsibility of being an employer - paperwork etc - for just a few hours per week. Processes such as holiday pay, lockdown payment etc can be confusing. Some young people have a very good relationship with their personal assistant/support worker".

"The families/children have been pleasantly surprised and happy that social work is able to fund something that they need or want. I only have one family currently using this support and they have found the support of SDS invaluable"

“Most families have been really positive about the support they get. I think that there is a lack of understanding that they could use their budget in alternative ways to getting care. However, for most families we work with short periods of respite is what they want”.

Notes re Strategy Review

In Control Scotland were asked to review a draft of the SDS strategy shared with them in March 2020 prior to the coronavirus pandemic. A number of points are raised by In Control Scotland:

- Overall the strategy makes good sense and the values and principles are clear.
- Some of the graphics about the what we are doing about SDS now require some more explanation
- When it gets to the flow charts on the last few pages, it would be helpful to have greater clarity in particular in the 'How will we know?' section, by setting some more specific and measurable indicators of change that enable progress to be reviewed and demonstrated more easily. These could be on the baseline of information in current surveys and include both numbers and views of practitioners and families.

Recommendations for further involvement

A key aspect of further implementation is establishing wider **shared and consistent knowledge of self-directed support**, its principles and how they can be common across all of the offer from children's social care, and the approach / process. There are wide variations in the survey results from clear knowledge and understanding to a simple lack of any knowledge.

Issues around funding, flexible use, a continued reference to hours of support and concerns about lack of funding continue. Some of these issues can be addressed as part of training tackling a wider understanding and knowledge of SDS, however issues around flexibility will need tackling through amending guidance and supervision, i.e. managers championing flexible use and supporting individual workers in taking this forward.

The results of the parent/family survey will provide a wider understanding of the issues around SDS in Perth and Kinross; this will provide specific recommendations that are not covered here. These recommendations simply tackle issues across the workforce about embedding a solid foundation of SDS Principles and a consistent proportional approach and process followed by all social care practitioners.

Recommendations for further involvement include:

1. Training is developed that covers the principles of SDS, illustrates SDS through case study and sets out the consistent application of these principles to all areas of social care work in Perth and Kinross, i.e. 'this is how we work in Perth and Kinross'

In Control Scotland would offer to develop this training, review before delivery with key local representatives from children's services and deliver in a series of 2 or 3 sets of workshops. Each workshop would last a maximum of 1 ½ hours and be co-facilitated by two members of the In Control Scotland team. The training would be interactive and depending on the 'platform' could use breakout/discussion rooms and graphic facilitation alongside a set of slides circulated prior to the training to all participants.

2. Work is undertaken to map out a proportional approach to the SDS process that sets out clearly how consistent application of principles, a child and family centred approach and a process that transparently allocates funding when appropriate (clearly linked to the Perth and Kinross draft SDS Strategy). In Control Scotland has an extensive library of examples of work, guidance on allocation systems and a network of people tackling similar issues in Scotland and elsewhere and can provide evidence as and when needed.

In Control Scotland could offer representation in a working group, acting as an 'independent expert/critical friend' able to provide external challenge and knowledge to support this work. In Control Scotland would offer to review any draft resources produced.

3. Potential support to families directly in thinking and planning and in developing some 'demonstration work' where there is impetus for change

*In Control Scotland
August 2020*

Please refer to the attached presentation: Appendix 5b – Staff Consultation Survey Results