

Self-Directed Support and Dementia

What is Self-Directed Support?

Self-Directed Support is about people making informed choices about their support and having as much control over it as they want.

Self-Directed Support is also about offering people flexibility so they can use their support in the ways and, at the times, that suit them best.

In the past, if someone needed support they had to have a social work assessment and were then offered what was available for them at the time, like home care or day services. People did not get much say about their support.

People should have much more of a say in the support they receive, this is known as Self-Directed Support.

On the 1 April 2014, a law was passed to ensure people had access to Self-Directed Support. In accordance with this law, Councils have a duty to:

- provide good information to people about Self-Directed Support
- support people to make informed decisions
- include people during their assessment and while making a plan for their support
- offer people the 'four options' of Self-Directed Support so they can choose how much control they want to have.

What are the benefits of Self-Directed Support for people living with dementia and carers?

People living with dementia and carers can choose the option that suits their life and needs best. You can choose the option that gives you the level of control and responsibility that you are happy with. No matter which option you choose, you get to have your say and what you say should be listened to.

Every person living with dementia is an individual, what they want in their lives and the type of support they require is unique too. Self-Directed Support gives people living with dementia and carers the chance to have more of a say and work with professionals to plan the right support for them.

How do I access Self-Directed Support?

If you are interested in Self-Directed Support, you can get in touch with the social work department of your local Council. If you already receive support, you can ask your social worker about Self-Directed Support.

Assessment

If you are not getting any support at the moment, you or someone on your behalf can make a referral to your local social work department. A social worker (or another professional) will then work with you to make an assessment of your needs and ask you about the things that matter to you. The assessment will find out what the Council can do to help you.

If you are eligible for support, you must be offered the four options – listed below.

Planning

You and the professional working with you will work on a support plan together. Other people can be involved in the planning too, like family, friends or support organisations. The plan will say how support will help you meet your personal outcomes.

Personal outcomes are the things you want to achieve in your life. They are the things that can happen as a result of your support, like getting out in your community or staying in touch with friends.

When your plan is finished you should feel like it belongs to you and that you got to have as much say in it as you wanted. The final plan should be agreed by everyone.

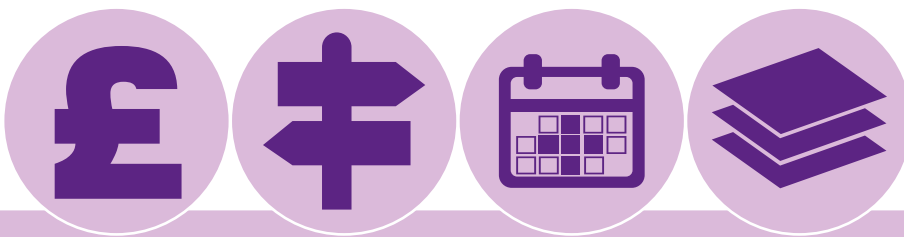
Support

The support option that you have chosen will begin and after some time there will be a review of how your support is helping you meet your outcomes.

Information, advice and support

There are lots of ways of accessing more information about Self-Directed Support and lots of support is available if you do decide to take more control.

You can get support from your local centre for inclusive living, advocacy service, peer support network or brokerage service. The professional you are working with should tell you how to get in touch with these organisations.



The Four Options

The Council must offer the four options to everyone they are going to provide support to. This includes people living with dementia.

The four options are:

- 1. The Council gives you funds to organise and pay for the support of your choice. This is called a Direct Payment.**
- 2. The Council or a service provider handles the money but you decide what it is used for**
- 3. You allow the Council to arrange your support**
- 4. Any combination of options 1, 2, or 3**

Frequently asked questions

“I’ve been told Self-Directed Support is not for people living with dementia, it’s too complex.”

The legislation is clear that Self-Directed Support is for anyone who is eligible for support, including people living with dementia. Self-Directed Support can appear to be complex because it is still new. There are four options available so that you can choose how much responsibility you take. You can choose the option that makes sense to you and gives you as much choice and control as you want.

“Will getting Self-Directed Support affect my benefits?”

Self-Directed Support is not a welfare benefit and is not seen as income. Getting Self-Directed Support should have no impact on receiving benefits.

“Do I have to pay towards my care and support with Self-Direct Support?”

Yes, it is likely that you will need to pay a contribution towards your support. It is becoming more common that Councils are now charging people for their support. The financial contribution you need to make should be explained to you and if you have questions about it you should ask your social worker about this.

“What about capacity and decision making?”

The Self-Directed Support guidance is clear that lacking capacity is not a reason to exclude people from Self-Directed Support. In fact, it says that people who lack capacity will have less chance to exercise choice and control if they do not have Self-Directed Support. It is important to think about which option is best in these circumstances. If a person with dementia does not have capacity only a Guardian or Power of Attorney can get Self-Directed Support on their behalf.

It is important to remember that even where someone is deemed to lack capacity, they can still make some decisions and will have strong preferences and opinions. People should be included in decisions about their lives and support and given the opportunity to have their say.

“Can carers get Self-Directed Support?”

Yes. Carers need to get an assessment and found to be eligible for support. But if you are, then you should be offered the four options of Self-Directed Support.

More information

Have a look at the following websites for more information about Self-Directed Support:

- The Scottish Government’s Self-Directed Support website - www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk
- Taking Charge video about Self-Directed Support and people living with dementia - www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzYtBq_og_g
- Guidance about Self-Directed Support for individuals and carers - www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk/document-library/guidance/practice-guides
- Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network - www.spaen.co.uk
- Self-Directed Support Scotland - www.sdsscotland.org.uk
- SDS Scotland Portal - search for local independent support www.sdsinfo.org.uk/search

If you would like more information on Self-Directed Support call the free 24 hour, Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Helpline on 0808 808 3000.