



National SDS Collaboration

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee Post-Legislative Scrutiny of SDS Act, Phase 2

Evidence Statement

May 2024

Our key messages on SDS implementation:

- The National SDS Collaboration is united in our belief in the values and principles of Self-directed Support.
- We believe the legislation is not the problem, it is continued under-investment in the social care system.
- We recognise the complexity in implementing SDS fully and consistently, but believe it is absolutely worth the investment.
- We recognise the enormous positive impact the legislation has had in the lives of many supported people since it was introduced, and the role of the Independent Living Movement in bringing about this fundamental shift in how social care support is delivered.
- We have a shared understanding of what good looks like: the SDS Standards.
- We believe SDS needs to be central to the delivery of the National Care Service and integrated into the GIRFE practice model – and we need to see the detail of how this will happen.
- We welcome the call for improved data around SDS: we need better collection, analysis and use of the data. We also recognise we need not just measurement data, but data that helps us learn how far we are on the journey to good practice.

Our key messages on the SDS Improvement Plan:

- The Improvement Plan was influenced by wide-ranging consultation, which reflects our current understanding of the priority areas for improving SDS implementation.
- It has been shaped by our growing understanding of implementation science and what is needed to make complex change happen.
- It is in the early stages of delivery of a multi-year plan.
- It gives a focus to the National SDS Collaboration and ensures work across the sector is coordinated, focused and not a duplication of efforts.

Our recommendations:

Resourcing

- We recommend improved investment across the social care system, which has been chronically underfunded. Without a baseline of adequate financial and workforce resources there can be no expectation of improvement in SDS implementation, despite the well-formed SDS Improvement Plan. Investment in the system is a crucial part of the enabling context for SDS to flourish.
- We also recommend focused investment on SDS improvement and have evidence to show where this has made a difference - for example in learning disability services. Where there has been less investment in SDS implementation (for example services for older people), traditional approaches remain.
- We recommend increased investment in Support in the Right Direction organisations, Independent SDS Support Organisations, Disabled People's Organisations, and Centres for Inclusive Living, who play a vital role in SDS implementation.

Policy

- We recommend the Scottish Government recognises the dependencies identified in the Improvement Plan are vital to the success of SDS.
- We recommend that the Scottish Government ensures SDS is understood and reflected in cross-cutting policy areas. It can do this by setting an expectation that the SDS Standards are mapped into every related policy area across adults, children and families, and carers. In particular, all National Care Service developments, The Promise, and Getting It Right For Everyone (GIRFE).
- We recommend the Scottish Government look at the wider enabling context for SDS, particularly training. We want to see quality training in social care and SDS embedded into educational curricula across Scotland, in particular social work. We also want to see improved continuing training for social work and care professionals, including around sensory awareness and inclusive communication.

Practice

- We recommend the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and others across the social care system stop thinking of SDS as something separate from social care - it is how social care support is delivered in Scotland. Improving SDS should be central to the development of the National Care Service.
- We recommend the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and others across the social care system recognise that SDS is not something people get – it's a way of working. On the journey to implementation there has been an increasing focus on the *processes* of putting SDS in place rather than the *values* behind it. When we focus on the values we achieve better outcomes for supported people.
- We recommend the Scottish Government and Local Authorities take action to move away from a care management model towards relationship based practice.