



What we did and the difference we made



About Getting There

The aim of the Getting There project is to help smaller, user-led providers be more ready for the implementation of Self-directed support, or SDS.

Back in 2011, Outside the Box was aware through its networks and ongoing work that smaller user-led providers have key strengths which have a significant impact in their communities and for their members. However, because they tend to be smaller and more informal their needs are not always considered during major policy changes. This could happen in the development and implementation of SDS, even though many of these groups had been active in making the case for people who use support to have more choices.

Smaller user-led providers bring a lot of valuable strengths:

- Give more choice to people and get to know service users really well.
- Increase the diversity of providers.
- Are often innovative and flexible leading to new approaches and ways of working.
- Use co-production approaches to work with members and deliver services.
- Use participative ways for people to contribute as well as get support - genuinely involve people who would be excluded.
- Good at partnerships and working alongside other organisations, independent SDS advice services and other community groups.
- Flexible, being able to adapt quickly to change.
- Keep things simple - lack of bureaucracy.
- Independent and informal.

But sometimes the way systems are organised can make it more difficult for small user led organisations than for other providers. For example:

- They don't have the resources and structures to take on some of the additional administrative tasks that SDS may bring.
- The way Councils commission services for people makes it difficult for user-led groups to take part, or even to continue.
- Not being as well-known as larger national organisations means they can be overlooked by commissioners and staff.
- Public bodies and policies don't always recognise the impact of the preventative support and community connections that user-led providers give to individuals.

"Being part of Getting There has given those of us who use services a lot more confidence."

What we did

Outside the Box contacted some groups that were already interested in the potential SDS would bring for the people they support and we formed a consortium.

The project began in autumn 2011 with Scottish Government funding and the grant runs to March 2015. When we began the project the SDS legislation was still underway but people expected that the new arrangements would come into effect fairly soon. The whole process was delayed, so we adapted what we did.

Sharing learning and encouraging each other

We started with bringing together a small core group made up of small user led organisations. The purpose was to work together, learn from each other, test out ideas, and to support each other through challenges around self directed support. We then shared the learning and activities with other people and organisations.

The core group developed and changed over the three years. It included user led organisations from both rural and urban areas, from both North and South Scotland and across the Central belt. The user led organisations had a range of backgrounds, memberships and roles. The people they support include older people, people with mental health problems, people living with addictions and people with a range of disabilities.

Learning and networking within the group was a key element. We created opportunities for people to develop useful skills. Volunteers and members then used these to take forward work within the groups, such as speaking at events, leading and facilitating workshops, graphic facilitation and using social media.

Key pieces of work from the core group included papers, discussions, posters and events:

- Brokerage options for SDS paper.
- Explanations on SDS options and how it works paper.
- Getting Ready for SDS - Advice and checklist for user led organisation.
- Producing posters exploring the benefits of user led organisations.
- Taking part in Carr Gomm's Click Go SDS project.
- Attending and then contributing to national SDS events.
- Participating in Scottish Government consultations to develop SDS and contributing to the guidance.
- Participating in the networking and learning between the Scottish Government grant-funded projects.

"The whole process of Getting There was empowering."

Incorporating SDS into local activities

Being part of the Getting There project had an impact on the everyday activities for the user led organisations. The groups began to change the way we did things.

- Producing regular newsletter items on SDS for members and other people in the area.
- Being part of wider discussions in locally about SDS, such as service user reference groups.
- Developing more ways to support people to make the most of SDS, such as Grampian Opportunities developing the Strike Out programme.
- Information sessions to raise awareness of SDS for people with mental health problems, such as the work Stepping Stones did in West Dunbartonshire.
- Developing the role of social media to support activities - using twitter, facebook and social reporting techniques.
- Working with local universities to deliver training sessions to social work students.
- Volunteers taking on new roles such as speaking at conferences, delivering training and planning programmes and services.
- Community connections projects to find out what was available in the community.

Example **Grampian Opportunities and Strike Out**

Grampian Opportunities developed the Strike Out programme, as a way to encourage people to think about what they wanted to achieve in their lives. This helped people have more productive sessions with their care manager for the formal assessments and reviews.

GO talked to people from Outside the Box and from the other groups in Getting There when they were developing their ideas.

Once the programme was working well for their own members, GO asked for volunteers from other groups that were part of Getting There to help check that the approach worked well for people in other places.

Members of GO spoke about Strike Out at the Permission to Dream events that we organised in early 2014. People from across Scotland heard about the training and also started thinking about what they could do to support people at that stage before the formal assessments.

<http://www.gettingtheresds.com/strike-out-project>

“The event was great – welcoming, upbeat, realistic about what is not right, what can change and how it will take time, and positive about what we all can do.”

Example Stepping Stones raising awareness about SDS for people in West Dunbartonshire

Stepping Stones is a member-led group that provides a range of services for hundreds of people in West Dunbartonshire. They shared information about SDS and the benefits it could bring for individual people through updates in their newsletter.

They took the lead in organising a bigger event, working with the Council and other mental health groups and services, alongside Outside the Box and other support from Getting There.

The report from the event was published through Getting There. This was one of the first resources from the whole capacity building programme about how SDS could work for people with mental health problems. The feedback from people in other places was that this helped them think about SDS for people with mental health problems.

The experience of the event in West Dunbartonshire was useful when we began planning the Permission to Dream events.

<http://www.gettingtheresds.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WD-Info-session-on-SDS-and-MH.pdf>

Developing useful resources

We developed a wider learning network to share the materials, ideas and discussions. We supported the network by producing regular updates on activities and learning and by disseminating papers and resources. We also held events to encourage and support wider participation and discussion.

- Permission to Dream in 2014 and 2015.
- SDS for older people: We held an event in Falkirk with over 50 people attending to explore how to make SDS work for older people. <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/makingsdsworkforop-1.pdf>
- Facilitating a discussion on Co-production approaches for people with poor mental health. <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/MH-and-co-production-in-Scotland-1-July-.pdf>
- Exploring approaches to developing and supporting Micro Enterprises.

“Having the information about SDS and encouragement from other people who have a similar outlook helped us look at how we could develop our services. Before, that felt difficult and frightening, especially for members. It turned out to be (mostly) positive and the main thing was that we felt in control. Now we feel much more positive about our future – both for the organisation and for us as individuals.”

Example Permission to Dream

During the year between the Act being passed and SDS coming into effect for everyone we realised that people with mental health problems in many parts of Scotland were getting very little information about how SDS could work for them. We knew that organisations that provided services – big ones as well as smaller user-led groups like us – also were getting anxious.

We approached the other projects in the SDS capacity building programme and asked if they wanted to come together to give people a space to ask questions and hear what has happening in other places.

We had planned to have one event but the interest was so high that we organised 3 events in partnership with more local services and groups led by people with mental health problems. Over 230 people attended three events in Edinburgh, Paisley and Perth to explore how to make SDS work for people with poor mental health. We then shared the presentations and report, to let more people use the materials in their areas: <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/permissiontodreamfullreport.pdf>

We then brought people together again for a follow up event in 2015, so people could share what was happening a year later. <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/march-2015>

“The Getting There publications are great. The posters came at just the right time, when we were all feeling fed up about SDS not delivering what we had hoped. Here were people who were cheerful as well as giving practical suggestions!”

“Finding out what it is like in other places was very helpful.”

Example How groups in Getting There are helping people get ready for assessments

Strike Out is the pre-assessment stage course that Grampian Opportunities developed for people to think about the life they want to lead and the choices they might like to make.

ENeRGI have been working on a SDS project that is about supporting people through the SDS process. The main focus of this work has been around supporting and getting people ready for assessment. They highlighted the ongoing need to provide good support and information to individuals at different stages.

Example Micro enterprises

The Getting There groups highlighted from the beginning that there were difficulties in finding choices for some people. Examples were for people in rural and remote areas, for people in other situations where there are few providers, and for those people who need some support but do not fulfil the eligibility criteria for support and are organising it themselves.

We decided to find out more about the potential of micro enterprises to see if that was an option to offer more choice for both smaller user led organisations, and for individuals, and to identify and fill gaps in services.

We invited people who were interested in exploring the potential to meet up and share ideas, knowledge and gather an understanding of what was happening across Scotland in terms of micro enterprises. Over 50 people have come along to a meeting or have fed in their questions and ideas in other ways

We discovered that micro enterprises can mean at least two things.

1. Something that a person can do for themselves - setting up a project/idea
2. A way to deliver services, activities or community activities in a small scale localised way.

The consensus from the discussions is that this is one thing with different aspects but each has it's own issues, benefits and problems. For some people micro enterprises could be a way of delivering personal outcomes.

What we have found is that although micro enterprises will not work for everyone this is a good way of extending choice, options and availability.

- It can spread limited and highly valued resources in a better way.
- Small community-based solutions are often cheaper and sustainable.
- It creates support that is preventative, including for people who do not meet eligibility criteria
- It is about building and using community links, so people are less isolated and gain more social contacts.
- It can also extend the customer base for businesses and organisations.

We have also talked about how existing services can build a 'micro enterprise approach' in to the way they work. One idea is to turn a building-based service into an Enterprise Hub, as a base for independent micro enterprises of both types.

The notes from each meeting have been shared on the Getting There website, along with sources for people who want more information or to follow up the contacts they have made. <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/micro-enterprises/>

Advice and support for user-led groups

We also offered advice and support to other user-led groups on ways they can adapt and develop their services. We have given advice to user-led groups that support:

- People with addictions.
- People affected by homelessness.
- People with dementia.
- People with brain injuries.
- People with long term conditions that will get significantly more disabling.
- Older people.
- People with mental health problems.
- People with learning disabilities.
- People in touch with the criminal justice system.

Resources for user led providers

We wanted to be able to develop, and share easily, accessible resources for organisations and people created a website for Getting There <http://www.gettingtheresds.com> On the website we have resources for user led organisations and for people who use services.

The core group identified a gap in the experiences of people with mental health issues using SDS. We worked with NDTi (National Development Team for Inclusion) to develop resources based upon experiences in other places, so people in Scotland can use what has worked well and avoid the difficulties. <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/work-with-ndti>

We also shared examples of SDS resources from other organisations. <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/other-organisations-resources>

“It changed the relationship with the Mental Health services in a good way. We knew more about SDS than they did. Getting some of the workers along to the Permission to Dream events has been very positive, as they came back and shared what they had heard with colleagues.”

“The main impact of Getting There was that we didn’t feel so alone.”

What we are learning about working with self directed support

These are some of the things we have learned during the course of Getting There.

About SDS

Self directed support is a new way of thinking and working as well as of delivering and receiving services. This is a major change for both individuals who get support and for people who provide services.

We think self-directed support has the potential to offer choice and control to individuals about how they want to live their lives and the things they to achieve. We would like to see this actually happening for more people.

We know that for many people this is the first time choice and control has been offered in their lives. This aspect of self directed support is very important but many people need help, support and permission to do this. It is a very different way of living and involves taking responsibility.

People who get support need time to learn and understand about new ways of accessing support and exploring options.

We also think that overall very little creativity or choice is being shown so far about how and when self-directed support is used. For example, we came across situations where people only hear about two options for SDS: a direct payment or the Council managing the money. There are also situations where people feel they are losing services they know, such as when they hear that day services are closing without alternatives being in place. There is a need to develop alternative provision, raise awareness of options and use some good local stories to demonstrate how this approach can make life better for people.

In many areas, we think there is still not enough good quality accessible information available for people.

We think there is a still a gap in many places between what people would like to help them to live their lives and the services that are being offered.

Preparing for SDS

Preparing people and services for assessment is really important. Pre-assessment courses and opportunities to prepare and think about choices and plans are really useful for people wanting to achieve outcomes and live good active lives.

“We wouldn’t have been able to engage with the Council without the information and support we got from Getting There.”

Sharing real life stories and examples of how other people have done things or approached them captures the imagination and really helps people understand new ways of doing things.

It's hard for providers to develop new systems when people in their area are not yet ready. Some local authorities have been slower to implement SDS than others, and this has continued since the Act came into effect. This has caused difficulties for some user led organisations because the local authority has not wanted or been ready to engage with them in developing new services and activities and in producing information.

Support for people who are not eligible for SDS

We know that there are people who do need some help and support with things in their lives but they do not fit the eligibility criteria for self-directed support.

Many of the user-led providers that we have met through Getting There are providing activities that can be used by people who are not getting other services and who know or expect that they will not meet the eligibility criteria set by their council. These are activities such as gardening groups that keep people well and prevent people getting into a crisis or needing more services. It is a big worry for the groups and their members when they still do not know if the councils will continue to give grants and other – often low cost – support that enable these activities to continue.

The approaches and principles that underpin SDS are also relevant to people who are arranging their own support. We are concerned that they seem to be forgotten and often do not even have access to information about making choices and finding the right support. We have used our networks to share information about supports that are available in our areas.

One response to this from user led groups has been to develop our contacts with mainstream services and activities.

SDS, creating new types of support and impact for people getting support

Involving people who use services in the development of services and activities is very effective for lots of reasons, and user-led providers need to highlight their contribution and expertise.

- It helps tailor services and activities to the things that people want and value.
- It is a way of identifying gaps in provision. It can sometimes make the delivery of services cheaper.
- It also means that service users are not passive recipients of services but also have opportunities to offer their skills, knowledge and experience.

“There were times when we got angry about the way people who get support were not getting information about what would happen to our services, long delays for assessments, or losing what support they had. It was good to have people who understood what it was like for us and where we could just offload.”

Our experiences are that older people and people with poor mental health particularly benefit from this involvement. This approach is often called co-production and it is a key part of current national policies and strategies. But many smaller groups are not as well linked in to these discussions and can under sell what they do.

Working with other user led organisations, service users, service providers and people who commission services can result in creative solutions to service provision and extend the range and choice of provision. This is another example of a co-productive way of working. But for it to work effectively, SDS commissioning strategies will need systems that enable smaller organisations with limited resources to contribute.

Strong links with community activities can fill gaps and offer local solutions. In many communities there are local activities and services organised and run by community members. They cover a wide range of activities and tend to respond to local issues and circumstances such as gardening, drawing, lunch clubs, and walking groups. Many user-led providers are taking the initiative and building this into the things they do.

Example Community Connections

Community Connections is a project set up by Grampian Opportunities in response to learning more about SDS and in particular the need to find out what's going on in different communities that would be of help and interest to people to achieve the things that are important in their lives. The role of the community connectors is to research what activities, facilities, services and events are happening in a local area. They also work with local groups to help them become welcoming and friendly to new people participating.

Example Lunch club and social activities in Ballantrae

BRICC offers support services to older people in their homes, in rural South Ayrshire. They asked members what was important in their lives and what things could help them. Many of the members said they felt isolated and had difficulty getting out to see people. As a response to this, BRICC set up a weekly lunch club with soup, sandwiches, cake and chat for its members. A volunteer driver picks people up and takes them home afterwards, often driving over 80 miles to cover the remote area.

We have realised that many user-led groups are micro providers. Micro providers are a very diverse group. They can identify gaps in service provision and can deliver small scale local responses to the things that people value and have said that they would like such as the Fife shopping and support service and tailor made slippers. Many micro-providers are already based within the community, and some people are using the support they get through SDS to develop micro services, activities and products for other people. We hope that Councils will look at what micro providers can contribute to making SDS work well for more people.

Our experience is that partnerships are essential for SDS to develop. No-one has all the answers - so we need to work with other people and organisations to share experiences, ideas and resources. An important part of this is the resources and ideas role of user-led providers in being part of this.

What shall we take forward?

Over the three years of the Getting There project things have changed. The SDS legislation has been in place for a year and the integration of health and social care is underway. There are some things that we would like to take forward once Getting There is completed in March 2015.

The Getting There Website has been a useful resource that benefits small user led providers and will continue to be hosted by Outside the Box.

We will continue to:

- Work in partnership with other organisations because it is effective and brings results and share resources and expertise.
- Support work and organisations that focus on encouraging people with mental health issues to get the most out of SDS.
- Support and encourage the development of micro enterprises for people using SDS and as an innovative way to fill gaps in services and activities locally.
- Support and encourage volunteering for individuals. Everyone has something to contribute and many people want to participate and lead good active lives.
- Support and encourage service user input that builds confidence, knowledge and understanding and shares resources and expertise from a range of perspectives.
- Seek co-productive ways of working that bring benefits to people and small user led organisations.

Contact

Outside the Box
Unit 23, 150 Brand St
Glasgow
G51 1DH

0141 419 0451

admin@otbds.org
www.gettingtheresds.com

www.otbds.org

