



getting
there

Information Session on Self Directed Support for people with poor mental health in West Dunbartonshire

Report from the event
25 November 2013

About the event

The purpose of the event was to share information about self directed support for people with poor mental health. We wanted to find out about what is happening in West Dunbartonshire and in other places too.

The information session was organised by members of the West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Forum, Stepping Stones and Outside the Box. The event was partly funded by the Getting There project which is funded by the Scottish Government to support the implementation of self directed support.

It was aimed at people with mental health problems, their carers and support agencies who live, or provide services, in West Dunbartonshire.

58 people came to the event.

We started by listening to three speakers.

- [Anne Connor, Outside the Box](#) - gave an outline of self directed support.
- [Jacquie Cassels, West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership](#) - talked about what work is being done to introduce self directed support in West Dunbartonshire.
- [Rich Watts, National Development Team for Inclusion](#) - gave some examples of how self directed support had worked well in other places.

We also discussed the issues between ourselves and asked a panel a set of questions.

[Scott Rorison Lomond and Argyle Advocacy Service](#) also took part on the question and answer panel.

We want to thank everyone who helped with the planning and on the day, and everyone who took part.



Information Session on Self Directed Support

What is self directed support

Self-directed support – SDS – is the phrase used to describe the range of ways for someone to organise social care services and other support.

From 1st April 2014 there are 4 ways someone can get support when all or part of it is paid for by the Council.

A Direct Payment (Option 1) is when you get the money and you organise the support yourself.

An individual budget (Option 2) is when you can spread and move around resources between different services in the same way as a direct payment, but the Council organises it all and handles the financial side. Sometimes this is called a Personal Budget.

The Council can organise the care for you (Option 3). They have arrangements with a small number of care providers to deliver support to anyone in the area who needs it.

You can have a combination of a direct payment, an individual budget and the Council organising the care (Option 4).

Some points to remember:

- You should still have a say in the details of what care you get whatever option you chose for organising it.
- You should also have care that is based on your personal circumstances and what you want no matter who pays for it.
- All the options have their advantages and all have limitations. It's about finding the one that is best for you at that time.
- This is only social care and support. It is not health care.
- If you are already receiving social care services, it will change gradually after April 2014 when your care is reviewed by the Council. You will be involved in these discussions.
- You also have the right to get independent advice to help with this.

Self directed support in West Dunbartonshire

The organisation responsible for ensuring self directed support is offered to people in West Dunbartonshire from April 2014 is the Community Health and Care Partnership (WDCHCP). To get ready for this we have been working in partnership with Royal National Institute of Blind People - RNIB, Carers Trust, and Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service to test out how it would work with some people who already receive care and support services.

We wanted to:

- Increase awareness of SDS with everyone, especially people that use or provide services.
- Make sure people who use services have a say in how they work locally.
- Strengthen and support organisations that provide services locally.
- To explore best practice examples from across Scotland.

There is still a lot of work to be done to get things ready for self directed support. Over the next few months WDCHCP will also be:

- Looking at how we do things now.
- Looking at our financial systems to make sure that they will work for the SDS.
- Working with our staff, raising awareness, thinking about how we can do things differently.
- Sharing information and learning with other local authority areas.
- Involving people who use services, carers and support organisations as much as possible so self directed support works for everyone.

What do we know from other places

Where self directed support has already been introduced people have spent their money on many different things such as:

- Leisure activities, meeting people, holidays and breaks.
- Help with everyday tasks.
- Going to the Gym and doing exercises.
- Using and buying computers.
- Therapeutic services.
- Getting out and about.
- Learning new skills.
- Volunteering.

We found out that self directed support works especially well for fluctuating conditions like mental health because:

- Its flexible.
- It can be tailored to meet your own outcomes.
- You can plan for when you need more help and for when you need less.

This is what we said

Once we had heard from the speakers we spent some time talking and listening to each other.

We would like more information

“We need good information to make informed choices”

“Not enough people who we support know about self directed support”

“We need properly trained staff who will be able to give people accurate information and help people”

“I’m still confused - I need more information about this”

We are concerned about vulnerable people

“Informed choices are good but what about vulnerable people”

“Dealing with the most vulnerable is so important. I hope they don’t get lost in all this”

“I’m concerned that people with mental health issues will not pass the eligibility criteria”

“It all sounds scary - I don’t want it to be scary”

We would like to know more about service providers

“We need controls in place for providers - perhaps a ratings system operated by the council”

“There are lots of small service providers out there - how do you find out about them all?”

“We need information on all the different service providers”

“Perhaps we could have approved providers or some sort of ratings scheme”

“It would help to know what the current service costs”

We like the idea of working together

“Pooling of money for shared activities sounds really good”

“People in shared accommodation in West Dunbartonshire already pool their money to share services – so we know it works”

“Some families already pool their budget because children want to achieve the same things so it makes sense”

We like the idea of self directed support for people with poor mental health

“It’s a big change from assessment to thinking about outcomes I want to work towards, that’s a big thing”

“I like the idea that self directed support is flexible, because that could be good for people with fluctuating conditions - don’t always need it but sometimes you may need more support”

“More flexible support and a greater choice would be just fabulous. I hope we can do that here”

Getting help to make choices is important

“Independent help and advice is going to be needed”

“Think I’m going to need some help with the paperwork and making choices”

“It just shows how important advocacy and advice services are going to be to help people negotiate their way around SDS”

We need more information so we can tell other people

“I’m a bit concerned about how I tell other people about self directed support”

“I’m concerned about how people will find out about this”

“We need to know the practicalities of how it will work for people”

“It sounds like there will be no limits on what you choose to do but that can’t be right can it?”

“I hope services are not being cut because self directed support will need proper funding to make a difference to people”

Many people are worried about changes to benefits

“People may get anxious about having to pay for services or having to ask about self directed support”

“Making sure that people understand how self directed support fits with benefits and all the changes going on there is very important”

What we do next?

We will share the report locally with people, service providers and their users.

West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership will use it as part of their planning for self directed support for people with mental health issues.

We will share the report with people in other areas too, as part of the overall development of self directed support and to make it work well for people with mental health problems.

People at the event said

“People would like more information and more opportunities to speak to people about self directed support”

“We need more information that is easy to understand for everyone”

“Clear straightforward information would be really helpful”

“More events like this are needed so we can talk to people and get the facts”

“It would be helpful to have another event next year to clarify the details”

“People at the event also said they would like to know more about what will happen locally”

Further information and keeping in touch

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Outside the Box

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West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership

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