1. Background

Between 16 April and the 15 May 2014, social care providers were invited to respond to an online survey. The survey was designed to capture how ready providers feel to deliver self-directed support now that the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 has come into force and its implementation is under way.

34 providers responded to the survey. 23 responses came from voluntary sector providers, 8 responses were from independent providers and there were also responses from 3 organisations that described themselves respectively as a housing association, a charity and an employee-owned company.

2. Summary

The survey suggests that by far most providers have begun a process of organisational change to deliver SDS. However it also suggests that they are at different stages with few providers fully ready and prepared.

Adapting systems around the workforce and finance are significant priorities for providers at this time. The survey suggests many are currently reviewing how they can make these more flexible and responsive in the face of unknown demand from individual purchasers.

Most providers feel they already provide a high standard of personalised and outcomes-focussed support and that this is not a significant priority in their preparation for SDS.

However providers feel that a major barrier to readiness is the lack of clear and transparent plans from local authorities of when and how they will make changes to their procurement, commissioning and financial processes to deliver SDS.

3. Provider readiness

Are providers ready?

All the respondents to this question (30) said they were preparing for SDS.

Around half of the respondents are making changes and around a third described themselves as either ‘almost ready’ or ‘fully ready and prepared’. None described themselves as ‘not ready at all’.

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How ready is your organisation for the implementation of SDS?

- Fully ready and prepared
- Almost ready
- Making changes
- Have a plan for change
- Have a long way to go

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Strategy

Over 70% of respondents (25) reported having some form of organisational strategy or action plan in place for SDS.

Among those that gave further details of their strategies common objectives were:

- developing (or reviewing) outcomes focussed planning and assessment processes and ways of measuring outcomes;
- training staff and raising their awareness of SDS;
- reviewing staff contracts to make them more flexible, and;
- reviewing the organisation’s marketing strategy.

Of the eight respondents that said they did not have a strategy in place, two gave further details. One said they were committed to developing an SDS strategy. The other respondent did not have one in place because they felt prepared for SDS.

Priorities

In responding to the survey, providers described what they considered their current priorities in preparing for SDS. The main theme to emerge was that changes to the workforce are a key priority for providers with over half (18) mentioning it in their response to this question.

The workforce was most often mentioned in terms of:

- training staff in self-directed support and outcomes-focussed planning;
- recruitment (both tailoring recruitment to service-users and recruiting managers to help with the transition), and;
- reviewing existing job roles and introducing flexible contracts for staff.

Another very common view was there is a pressing need to make changes to finance or invoicing systems. Some responses described it as challenging to make their finance processes responsive to a potentially varying number of individual purchasers rather than local authorities.

“Developing new costing structures to cope with unknown demand is challenging.”

It was a priority for a significant number of respondents to have in place information and support to service-users and their families to inform them of the changes and opportunities that SDS can bring. However it was not always clear in these responses if they were referring to marketing to individuals or the provision of information more generally.

Reviewing assessment, support planning and risk assessment process to make them more outcomes-focussed was also a fairly common priority. With some of these respondents mentioning it will be important to fully involve the people they support in this.

One provider responded to this question by saying it was difficult to prioritise because they were unsure if they would make it onto their local authorities approved provider list. The uncertainty of this has made it difficult for them to plan effectively and puts the future sustainability of the organisation in doubt.

What changes have providers had to make?

Most respondents to the survey reported that they already worked with outcomes-based support plans, individual service agreements
and outcomes monitoring systems and had not had to introduce these to prepare for SDS.

Conversely fewer providers said that they already had invoicing and financial systems capable of dealing with budgets under options 1 and 2 or that they had a marketing strategy aimed at individuals. Most respondents said they had introduced this to prepare for SDS, or that they plan to in the near future.

![Graph showing introduction of various systems](image)

### 4. Workforce and leadership

#### Leading change

Providers appear to be taking different approaches to leading change in their organisations with roughly even numbers reporting:

- an individual leading the change (8);
- several people leading the change (10), or;
- a management team leading the change (9).

#### Preparing the workforce

The survey suggests that in preparing the workforce providers are focussing on staff training with most respondents reporting that they were training staff in the values and principles of SDS (21), in outcomes-based support planning (22) and in delivering personalised support (24).

Significant numbers (18) of respondents also said they were involving service users in the recruitment and matching of support workers. Fewer (12) said they were also involving service users in developing job descriptions, staff rotas and other workforce issues.

And a smaller number (between 9 and 11) of respondents said they were also developing a workforce strategy, appointing SDS champions in the workforce or receiving specialist training.

#### How the workforce is changing

The most common change in the workforce, reported by over half of respondents was that they had begun matching their staff to service users so that as well as having the relevant skills, the support worker shares some common interests with the person they support.

A significant number (11) reported that staff contracts are changing with increases in part-time and flexible contracts. Fewer respondents reported increases in temporary contracts (4) and zero-hours contracts (5).

Perhaps a potential cause for concern was that around only a quarter of respondents
reported that staff feel ‘positive and motivated’ about SDS or ‘supported and empowered to help people meet their outcomes’.

Only four respondents said that there were no changes to the workforce brought on by SDS.

5. Barriers and facilitators

External barriers

The survey suggested some external barriers that might be hampering providers’ efforts to prepare for SDS and asked respondents to select which they thought applied to their organisation.

Most respondents (between 19 and 21) agreed that the following were significant external barriers

- The local authority hasn't implemented SDS yet.
- The way services are commissioned and procured.
- Reducing budgets for support.
- Lack of funding / cuts
- Downward pressure on budgets.

A significant number of respondents also agreed these were external barriers to their readiness to deliver SDS:

- Services being retendered (12).
- The way services are registered and inspected (15).

In the additional comments section two providers mentioned that more specifically it was local authorities approach to commissioning and procurement which most obstructed their preparations for SDS.

Similarly this respondent felt that local authorities were not making any changes to their existing systems and processes, forcing providers to work around them.

“[Local authorities] still have an outputs driven, hourly cost culture that promotes more of the same... all risks with developing more flexible services under option 2 are entirely left with providers.”

Two providers cited an inconsistency of understanding and awareness of SDS at social work as a significant barrier.

Internal barriers

When asked about internal barriers to change, over half of the responses identified these four themes:

- Changing organisational culture.
- Changing systems and processes.
- Redesigning traditional services.
- Service-user engagement with SDS.

Interestingly only 4 providers reported that they found it ‘difficult to provide outcomes focussed support’ suggesting providers do not see this as a barrier to be overcome.

One thing that would make a difference

Of the 21 respondents to this question a significant majority (14) pointed to the relationship with the local authority as the one thing that would make the most difference. Of these most respondents wished to see greater transparency of local authority implementation plans. Several responses more specifically mentioned clarity over local authority commissioning plans as the most important factor affecting their readiness.

Making changes to their own finance systems was identified by two providers as making the biggest difference to their organisation.

Practice sharing and staff training were also identified in a couple of responses as the most important thing at this stage.
Other comments

The organisations taking the survey were asked if they had any other comments, a few respondents took the time to underline that their organisation’s future success was not guaranteed and referred to the ‘uncertain times’ ahead.

“SDS will be a big cultural change to developing, delivering and managing packages, however with no idea of how many customers this will be for it is very difficult to justify investing in the workforce and organisational changes really needed to successfully embrace SDS.”

Next steps

Provider Guide

Providers and Personalisation (P&P) have funding to produce national guidance which will focus on the changes providers need to make in response to SDS implementation and which will provide examples of social care providers adapting their systems and services to offer personalised support to people, helping them to live more independent lives.

The survey findings give us valuable information on what providers’ priorities are and in what areas they may benefit most from practical advice or case study examples. The project’s advisory group will consider the analysis report’s findings as part of their discussions around the provider guide.

About P&P

P&P is a four year policy and practice change programme supporting providers to prepare for, and showcase good practice in the journey to Self-directed Support. P&P is open to all third sector care and support providers.

More about P&P
http://www.ccpscotland.org/providers-and-personalisation

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