

Advice Specific to adults in receipt of SDS residing in the Highland Council area

COVID-19 Self Directed Support (SDS) Option 1 Direct Payment and FAQs

Issue Date: 13th April 2020

Introduction

This document is intended to address queries which have been raised by Direct Payment (DP) recipients / representatives in the Highlands regarding issues associated with COVID-19. It has been prepared by partners with an interest in the promotion of SDS across the Highlands.

As you will be aware, this is a constantly changing environment and the information below should be considered current, as at the date of issue. It is our intention to update these FAQs on a regular basis to ensure a timely flow of information and to ensure consistency of message within the Highlands.

The general principles adopted in preparing this document are that:

- where there is national guidance, you will be signposted or referred to this information in order to ensure and promote a nationally consistent approach and to minimise any further confusion at this already challenging time;
- we will provide clear and identified points of contact for easy access to information or decisions, as quickly as possible to ensure any delays or barriers are removed quickly, to minimise any impact or interruption to adult social care services;

The key areas of national guidance are summarised here:

- The **Department of Health and Social Care** publishes updated UK data on Coronavirus (COVID-19) every day at 2.00pm until further notice.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>
- After 2.00pm daily, the **Scottish Government** publish an update on the situation in Scotland.
<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- **NHS Inform**
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>
- **Health Protection Scotland (General)**
<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>

- **Scottish Government COVID-19 clinical guidance for social care settings:**
 - Updated Scottish Government Clinical Nursing Home and Residential Care Residents clinical guidance (02/04/20) – building on HPS advice, this guide provides more detailed clinical advice around the steps to put in place for managing the safety and wellbeing of staff and residents in adult residential care settings
[Hyperlink](#)
- **Cosla Commissioning Guidance**
<https://www.cosla.gov.uk/cosla-guidance-commissioners-during-covid-19-response>
- **Care Inspectorate**
<https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/coronavirus-professionals>
- **NHS Highland**
<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/Pages/welcome.aspx>

Cashflow

NHS Highland has confirmed that payments to all SDS Direct Payment recipients will continue payable in advance as per agreed payment calendar on a 4 weekly basis as it did prior to COVID19.

The contact email address for any payment queries in relation to SDS Direct Payments is:
[***High-UHB.SelfDirectedSupportHighland@nhs.net***](mailto:High-UHB.SelfDirectedSupportHighland@nhs.net)

SDS Direct Payment FAQs

Some specific questions have also been received. As this is an unusual environment and can change on regular basis the questions have been answered using links to websites which will be updated on a regular basis. These questions and the NHSH response are as detailed below:

1. What do I pay my PA / Carer if unwell or self isolating due to symptoms of COVID19?
 - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> - then scroll down to Employment and financial support section
2. What do I pay my PA / Carer who is Self-isolating without symptoms of COVID19?
 - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> - then scroll down to Employment and financial support section

3. What do I pay my PA / Carer when Client/family member chooses to suspend all non-essential care?
 - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> - then scroll down to Employment and financial support section
 - PA / Carers can continue to provide support to clients by getting shopping, prescriptions, etc.
 - PA /Carers could also look into possibility of voluntary / paid alternatives in their community

4. What do I do if someone in my household has symptoms?
 - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
 - *If anyone in the employer's household has symptoms it would be appropriate to request COVID 19 PPE for personal assistants. The current PPE guidance as recommended by the recent (02 April 2020) HPS guidance for social care settings (meaning gloves, aprons and face masks), to ensure you are following it for the appropriate use of PPE: [Hyperlink](#)*
 - *If the PA / Carer is vulnerable due to health issues (pregnant, asthma etc.) they should not continue to work.*

5. What do I do about cover in absence of PA / Carer?
 - Where your attempts to make alternative arrangements have been entirely exhausted you should contact your local Single Point of Access (SPOA) - <https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/Services/ASC/Pages/SinglePointofAccess.aspx>
 - NHS Highland will be working to their eligibility criteria - please refer to Appendix 1 herewith

6. Can a family member be employed to cover sickness or self-isolation of PA / Carer's?
 - NHS Highland has a policy in place regarding the employment of family members to provide care via SDS Direct Payment.
 - Any requests received regarding this would be looked at on a individual basis during the period of COVID19

7. What do I do if PA / Carer is unable to work due to school closures?
 - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> - then scroll down to Employment and financial support section

8. What if my PA / Carer is a self-employed worker?
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

9. ID for PAs / Carers? PAs and Carers will not necessarily have ID cards or SSSC registration cards they can show as evidence of key worker status. As an employer you may wish to provide a Personal Assistant with a signed letter to confirm their role. A template copy of such a letter is available from Community Contacts (email becsbarker@carrgomm.org or via the online form available at www.carrgomm.org/community-contacts).
10. Payroll – will my payroll provider continue to provide a service?
- You will need to check with your Payroll Provider if there are any new arrangements in place in relation to providing information for payroll calculation during COVID19.
11. What is process for new SDS Direct Payment clients?
- The process to set up all new Direct Payments will follow agreed NHS Highland business processes and procedures.

Impartial support, information and advice for SDS

Is available from Community Contacts who provide a service funded by the Scottish Government across the whole of Highland. Please contact the team by:

1. Email- becsbarker@carrgomm.org
2. Using the online form at www.carrgomm.org/community-contacts
3. Phone- 01546 886273 to be put in touch with a locally based Specialist Project Worker.

Need/Risk	Critical Need/ Risk	Substantial Need/Risk	Moderate Need/Risk	Low Need/Risk
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The person has significant disability and/ or health problems which cause immediate risk. ●Threat of harm, danger or loss of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The person has disability and/ or health problems which cause significant threat to health, safety or independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The person has some health problems/ diagnosis indicating some risk to independence. ●The person has potential to maintain health and wellbeing with support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The person can maintain health and wellbeing with minimal support. ●The person can make informed choices about maintaining their own health and wellbeing.
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The person displays unpredictable behaviours/symptoms which will cause harm to self or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The person may present s predictable behaviours/symptoms that may cause harm to self or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The person can have presenting infrequent behaviours/symptoms that may present risk to self or others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The person can maintain health and wellbeing with minimal support and there is low risk to self or others.

Need/Risk	Critical Need/ Risk	Substantial Need/Risk	Moderate Need/Risk	Low Need/Risk
Personal Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person is unable to manage the most vital personal care or domestic tasks, causing harm or major risk to independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person is unable to manage many aspects of personal care or domestic tasks, causing harm or significant risk to independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person is unable to do some aspects of personal care, with or without prompting, indicating some risk to independence. The person would benefit from intervention that will prevent the need/risk escalating to critical or substantial risk/need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person has difficulty in one or two aspects of personal care and/or domestic routines indicating little risk to independence.
Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person has experienced serious abuse, neglect or harm has occurred or is strongly suspected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person has experienced abuse, neglect or harm has occurred or is strongly suspected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to vulnerabilities there may be potential risks of abuse/ harm. The person would benefit from intervention that will prevent the need/risk escalating to critical or substantial risk/need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventative measures are in place including information to minimise potential risk of abuse to the person.

Need/Risk	Critical Need/ Risk	Substantial Need/Risk	Moderate Need/Risk	Low Need/Risk
Decision Making Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person has extensive / complete loss of choice and control over vital aspects of daily life/ home environment causing major harm or danger to self or others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The person has substantial loss of choice and control managing daily life/home environment causing a significant risk of harm or danger to self or others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person is able to manage some aspects of daily life home environment, leaving some risk to independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person is able to maintain their daily life home environment with no or minimal support.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person's home environment does not enable the person or their carer to manage risk safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person's environment means that they are at risk of admission to hospital, or that there are substantial risks in them returning/remaining at home. Carers require a safe environment to support the individual. 	<p>The person's environment has risks which are manageable to prevent escalation to sustainable need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The person's environment enables them to engage in active and independent living.

Need/Risk	Critical Need/ Risk	Substantial Need/Risk	Moderate Need/Risk	Low Need/Risk
Carer Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The carer has major health difficulties, caused by the impact of their caring role, which pose a risk of harm to themselves or others. ●The carer relationship has collapsed and there is a need for immediate care and support. ●The carer has more than one caring responsibility for individuals with high needs ●There is no carer support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The person has essential personal care and support needs that are being met by a carer whose own health and wellbeing are at significant risk. ●The carer relationship is at risk of collapse and the person needs care and support ●The carer has more than one caring responsibility ●There is no carer support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The carer is able to manage some aspects of caring/ family/ domestic roles. Potential risk identified to increase in own unmet needs. ●The carer relationship is strained and unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term. ● ● There is no carer support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The carer able to manage most aspects; has difficulty managing one or two aspects of their caring/ domestic role but with low risk. ●The person has a robust support network ●A carer is not required.

Like most authorities in Scotland NHS Highland is moving towards implementing an Eligibility Criteria to support consistent and equitable decision making around which individuals and carers needs require the support of health and social care services.

We will work in accordance with The National Eligibility Framework set out by the Scottish Government. The Framework categorises a people's and/or carers needs in terms of risk. Carers can refer to informal or formal carers.

Critical Risk: Indicates that there are major risks to an individual's independent living or health and well-being and likely to call for the immediate or imminent provision of health and social care services.

Substantial Risk: Indicates that there are significant risks to an individual's independence or health and well being and likely to call for the immediate or imminent provision of health and social care services.

Moderate Risk: Indicates that there are some risks to an individual's independence or health and well being. These may call for the provision of some health and social care services managed and prioritised on an ongoing basis or they may simply be manageable over the foreseeable future without service provision, with appropriate arrangements for review.

Low Risk: Indicates that there may be some quality of life issues, but low risks to an individual's independence or health and well being with very limited, if any, requirement for the provision of health and social care services. Health and Social care teams will not provide direct services to those assessed as having low need. Signposting to alternative support or advice and appropriate arrangements will be with the option to self refer in should a person's needs change.

A consistent criterion across Health and Social Care will support equitable decision making around the provision of services by:

- Ensuring the individual/carer and/or referrer has an understanding of their pathway and whether or not they would be eligible for services.
- To ensure individuals with low risk needs are signposted to resources at the earliest opportunity.
- Consistent implementation of eligibility criteria at SPOA should reduce the number of inappropriate referrals being placed on waiting lists and raising expectations.

North Highland Adult Health and Social Care – Eligibility Criteria**Supporting Guidance**

- Eligibility criteria should prioritise immediate and longer-term critical consequences for independence and well-being ahead of needs with substantial consequences. Similarly, needs that have substantial consequences should be placed before needs with moderate consequences and so on.
- Assessment is often most effective when conducted as an iterative and ongoing process rather than a one-off event.
- Health & Social Care services work with individuals to explore their presenting needs and identify what outcomes they would like to be able to achieve in terms of independence and/or well-being in both the immediate and longer term.
- In these definitions, the risks do not refer only to an individual's current independence, health and wellbeing, but also to the risk that she or he may not be able to gain these outcomes without support.
- Low-level needs may not always equate to low-level services nor will complex or critical needs always require complex, costly services in response. A flexible approach required which considers how support will sustain independence and well-being in the longer-term.
- People who access specialist services (such as people with mental health needs or people with learning disabilities) should receive an assessment of eligibility for support, like any other individuals seeking support. These groups should be supported by both health and social care teams, so that all their needs are appropriately addressed.
- Risk criteria do not discriminate between people's needs on the basis of age, geographical location, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexuality or any other basis. They focus entirely on risk to independent living and wellbeing.
- If the needs of particular groups of people are not adequately taken into account, this may also have an adverse effect on carers and the wider support network.

