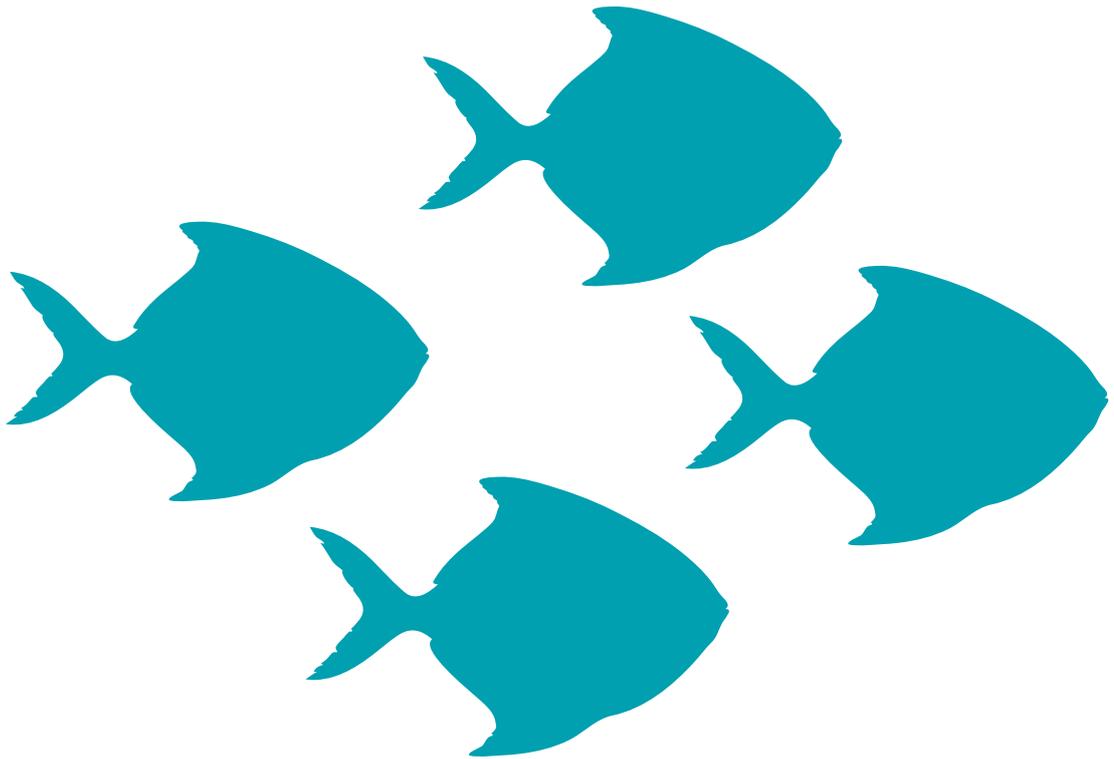


Support in the Right Direction



Measuring the difference Independent Support makes

How to evaluate the difference it makes
for people who need to understand and make
informed decisions about Self-directed Support

Information for organisations providing
Independent Support (and for funders / commissioners)

Working with Evaluation Support Scotland and being in the learning set have been a godsend to me too. I understand outcomes and how to measure and evidence them and it does make reporting easier. The case study templates have been useful.

Mostly I have enjoyed being in a group of people who share my values and vision for more choice and control and a fairer society. It has been good to know that DICE is not alone in facing challenges and great hearing positive stories from other members of the group.

Sue, DICE

Working with Evaluation Support Scotland has helped us develop better systems for ongoing evaluation, and recording and monitoring to feed in to that evaluation.

This means that even though I was off on maternity leave for much of our last reporting period, I was still able, on my return, to access the information I needed to report on what we'd done and the impact we'd had.

Jess, Self Directed Support Scotland

Through this learning set, ESS has helped me to effectively measure the value, and evaluate the impact of our work in developing SDS knowledge and understanding throughout Penumbra.

Lisa, Penumbra

Often evaluation is perceived as a boring necessity but involvement in the working group has really widened my thinking about evaluation in a very positive way.

It has been helpful to explore the range of methods and approaches as well as understand that sometimes we don't get it right and we learn from it.

Anne-Marie, Community Brokerage Network



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Foreword

Self-directed Support (SDS) is new and Independent Support is a developing sector. So it is important to establish a clear understanding of Independent Support outcomes and proportionate ways of evaluating them so we can learn what works in SDS.

That is why, between 2012 and 2015, Evaluation Support Scotland received Scottish Government funding for *Support in the Right Direction*. In this programme we worked with 42 organisations funded to provide Independent Support. Together we identified the outcomes Independent Support can achieve for people and organisations – and how to measure those outcomes.

We have learned a huge amount about proportionate and relevant evaluation in Independent Support and this document distils what we've learned. I hope it will be helpful for organisations providing Independent Support in the future – and those who work with and fund them.

Steven Marwick

Director, [Evaluation Support Scotland](#)



Reporting on outcomes is an important part of understanding the difference the projects are making. As a funder I learned so much more about the projects as they gained evaluation confidence which enabled them to report more clearly and honestly about the challenges.

Elaine Black, Scottish Government

The background to this document

Support in the Right Direction

The Scottish Government wanted to find out more about Independent Support, what role it can play in the successful implementation of Self-directed Support (SDS) and how to evaluate it. The Scottish Government therefore funded a three year programme (2012-15), *Support in the Right Direction*, which was managed by Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) and involved 42 funded organisations.

Working group

A key part of this work involved a group of organisations meeting throughout three years to focus on:

- **Explaining** Independent Support (what is it? What difference does it make?)
- **Measuring** Independent Support (how can it be evaluated?)
- **Demonstrating** what works (what evidence has been generated from evaluating Independent Support?)

This group produced two documents:

› **The value of Independent Support:** intended primarily for funders and commissioners, it explains the different types of Independent Support, what difference Independent Support can make, and what evidence there is for this, including some case studies.

› **Measuring the difference Independent Support makes** (this document): intended primarily to help organisations providing Independent Support evaluate their work but likely also to have value for those who fund or commission Independent Support. Case studies describe projects' experiences of using a range of information collection methods.

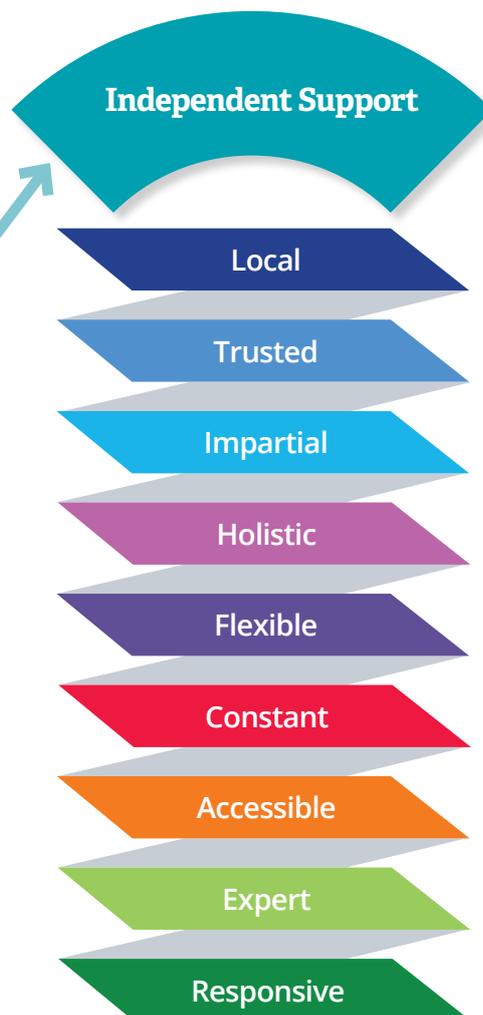
Both documents can be downloaded from:

➤ www.sdsscotland.org.uk/guide-self-directed-support/support-right-direction

What is Independent Support?

Independent Support is **impartial**, can take many forms and may be provided by different organisations. It does not involve providing direct care or related tasks; rather, it **helps people make informed decisions about Self-directed Support (SDS)**.

With expertise in SDS and a good knowledge of local resources, Independent Support ensures a person-centred approach and responds flexibly to individual circumstances, as well as having a depth of relationship with the person where necessary.



You can find out more about Independent Support by reading the other document in this series: ***The value of Independent Support***, which can be downloaded from www.sdsscotland.org.uk/guide-self-directed-support/support-right-direction

Why should you measure the difference Independent Support makes?

By evaluating your work you can:

- find out what works
- find out what doesn't work
- measure what difference you are making (including things you didn't expect)
- learn how to do what you do (even) better
- give feedback to volunteers and staff
- report to funders, commissioners, your Board, policy makers and the general public

Evaluation can help you identify the value of different types of Independent Support, pin down what constitutes good practice, and share what is learned.

This doesn't mean that you have to spend all your time evaluating, disappearing under a mountain of paperwork and statistics. Instead you should try to integrate your evaluation into your everyday processes. **Evaluation should be valuable, relevant and proportionate.**

Using **straight forward examples** which are specific to Independent Support, this document will lead you through the more technical aspects of self-evaluation:

1. setting your project **outcomes**
2. identifying your **indicators**
3. deciding which **information collection methods** to use

By following this process you will know how to gather the evidence you need to find out what difference you have made, review what you do, further improve your services and write reports on your work.

➤ **Appendix 1 (p32):** contains links to more help with evaluation.

➤ **Appendix 2 (p33):** contains an **Evaluation planning template** you can use (see below).

Project outcome	Indicators	Methods	Who will do this?	When and where will it be done?
the difference you hope to make	what you measure to find out if you've been successful	how you measure your indicators		
is this a short / medium / long term outcome?				
is this a short / medium / long term outcome?				

The workbook: **Why bother involving people in evaluation?** can help you think about different ways to involve the people you work with in evaluation. You can download it from the Resources \ ESS Support Guides section of the ESS website: www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

1. Outcomes: What difference do you hope to make?

Outcomes describe the **difference** or **change** your project intends to make. Setting clear outcomes (and describing how you plan to achieve them) helps you explain to funders and commissioners what you are asking them to pay for.

Project outcomes vs personal outcomes

Thinking about evaluation in relation to Self-directed Support is potentially confusing because of the two different uses of the word 'outcomes':

1. Project outcomes. These days, most statutory and grant funders ask projects to set and report on 'outcomes'. These outcomes refer to the difference or changes the **project** hopes to bring about by delivering its services.

2. Personal outcomes. Someone who is eligible for Self-directed Support will have agreed **health and social care 'outcomes'**.

So, by achieving their **project outcomes**, organisations providing Independent Support enable people to achieve their **personal outcomes**.

Example project outcomes

Here are some **example** Independent Support project outcomes, each of which contributes to the overall aim that people and carers eligible for SDS have **real choice** and **control**.

The difference Independent Support makes for...

...people and carers

Independent Support puts **people at the centre of the process**, meaning that they:

- access clearer information about SDS
- are more aware of the support available to access and manage SDS
- make more informed choices about SDS
- achieve their personal outcomes and live the life they want to live
- are listened to
- are an equal partner
- have increased equality of access to SDS
- gain confidence to demand an increased range of service options
- have maximised opportunities for choice and control
- experiment, make mistakes and find ways to correct them
- contribute to local and national policy development

The provision of Independent Support ensures transparent and impartial information and the removal of conflicts of interest.

...statutory services and care providers

Independent Support is essential to **uphold the rights of individuals** and ensure the **principles and values** underpinning the SDS Act* are upheld. Locally and nationally, it helps statutory services and care providers to:

- increase their capacity to deliver SDS
- access additional information
- provide holistic and person-centred solutions
- build relationships with disengaged / isolated people
- respond more creatively and flexibly to people's needs
- provide earlier interventions, therefore preventing crisis
- learn about and understand best practice
- work effectively together
- ensure local and national policy makers understand the effectiveness and value of Independent Support

*[The Social Care \(Self-directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#)

Outcomes: What difference do you hope to make?

No one project can be expected to achieve all these project outcomes. Good evaluation practice is to select about 4 or 5.

You may also find it helpful to set different **short, medium and long-term outcomes** for your project. For example, people may need to have access to clear information (short-term outcome) before they can have increased equality of access to SDS (medium-term outcome).

These outcomes may not be quite right for you. **Your project is responsible for defining and achieving its own outcomes.** Also keep an eye out for any **unexpected project outcomes**; you might be doing more than you set out to do!

Remember, you are trying to measure the difference that **Independent Support** makes by helping people make informed decisions about how they want to access SDS. This is not the same as measuring the difference that SDS makes!

2. Indicators: What can you measure to find out if you've been successful?

Define indicators for your project outcomes

You can measure your project outcomes by using **indicators**. Indicators give you an idea of what it might look like if you achieve a project outcome.

Imagine one of the project outcomes you have set is:

People and carers are more aware of the support available to access and manage SDS

Ask yourself: What would tell you about people's level of awareness of the support your project is able to offer? What would be happening that isn't happening now? What would have stopped happening? What might people be able to do, or do differently, as a result?

In other words, what **indicators** could you measure (before, during and after you provide your service) to learn to what extent you have achieved this project outcome?

Possible indicators for this project outcome might be:

- referral numbers
- the level of ongoing contact people have with your project
- how often your project gives out information about other SDS support services
- people know where they can go to get help with accessing and managing SDS
- people know what help they could access to manage their budget

You might find it easier to write some indicators from the person's point of view, eg:

- *"I know where to go to get help with accessing and managing SDS."*
- *"I know where I can get help with managing my budget."*

Common sense, your own experience and **consulting the people you support** will help you come up with a list of possible indicators for each project outcome. The same indicator may give you evidence for more than one project outcome.

Once you have identified a list of possible indicators **then you can choose which indicators to collect information about on a regular basis**. You don't have to measure all the indicators for each project outcome, but having **evidence of change for more than one indicator** helps you to be even more certain that you are achieving that outcome.

For example you may decide to measure those which:

- are most likely to happen
- are easy to measure
- can be measured more than once to show change
- are recognisable to the people you work with

Keep the other indicators in mind, however, you might come across evidence for them by chance!

Indicators: What can you measure to find out if you've been successful?

Example indicators

Here is a list of possible indicators for the Independent Support project outcomes suggested in this document. **Remember these are just examples.**

Project outcome	Possible indicators
<p>People and carers...</p> <p>...access clearer information about SDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ people can say what SDS means for them ■ SDS materials are available in a variety of formats and appropriate languages ■ accessible SDS materials are available ■ "I know who to ask if I need help understanding SDS" <p style="text-align: right;">etc...</p>
<p>...are more aware of the support available to access and manage SDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ referral numbers ■ the level of ongoing contact people have with your project ■ how often your project gives out information about other SDS support services ■ "I know where to get help with accessing and managing SDS" ■ "I know where I can get help with managing my budget" <p style="text-align: right;">etc...</p>
<p>...make more informed choices about SDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ people can say what SDS means for them ■ "I am confident I am choosing the best SDS option for me" ■ "I know I can change my support if I want to" ■ people use the range of SDS options <p style="text-align: right;">etc...</p>
<p>...achieve their personal outcomes and live the life they want to live</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "I can do what I want to do when I want to do it" ■ "I can spend my money as I want with limited restrictions" ■ "My life is as good as it can be" ■ people achieve the SDS goals they have set for themselves <p style="text-align: right;">etc...</p>
<p>...are listened to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ people express their preferences ■ "My preferences have been taken into account" ■ "As a carer I feel able to support (or make) decisions" ■ professionals attend reviews when invited ■ "My ideas have been acted on" ■ people's services are changed in response to their opinions <p style="text-align: right;">etc...</p>
<p>...are an equal partner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "I am actively involved in planning my support package" ■ "I can review my support when I want" ■ "I feel able to turn down suggestions I don't like" <p style="text-align: right;">etc...</p>

Indicators: What can you measure to find out if you've been successful?

Project outcome	Possible indicators
<p>People and carers...</p> <p>...have increased equality of access to SDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ people with different support requirements access the full range of SDS options ■ there are no inexplicable differences between services accessed by people with similar requirements <p>etc...</p>
<p>...gain confidence to demand an increased range of service options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "I am actively involved in planning my support package" ■ people's support packages have changed since the introduction of SDS ■ "I can review my support when I want" ■ there is a range of different models of service provision ■ "My suggestions / new ideas have been acted on" <p>etc...</p>
<p>...have maximised opportunities for choice and control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "I am actively involved in deciding what I want to achieve" ■ "I am actively involved in planning my support" ■ "I can review my support when I want" ■ people use a range of SDS options to have the life they want ■ "I can do what I want to do when I want to do it" ■ there is a range of different models of service provision ■ "I can spend my money as I want with limited restrictions" <p>etc...</p>
<p>...experiment, make mistakes and find ways to correct them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "I can review my support when I want" ■ "If I want I can change who delivers my support" ■ "I can spend my money as I want with limited restrictions" <p>etc...</p>
<p>...contribute to local and national policy development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the number of people who respond to policy consultations as a result of contact with Independent Support projects <p>etc...</p>

Project outcome	Possible indicators
<p>Statutory services and independent care providers are helped to...</p> <p>...increase their capacity to deliver SDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ social workers ask Independent Support projects to conduct assessments ■ the length of time it takes people to negotiate the process <p>etc...</p>

Indicators: What can you measure to find out if you've been successful?

Project outcome	Possible indicators
<p>Statutory services and independent care providers are helped to...</p> <p>...access additional information about people's situations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ social workers and independent care providers understand people's needs ■ support packages are tailored to suit people's needs ■ people feel their needs are met <p>etc...</p>
<p>...provide holistic and person-centred solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ support packages are tailored to suit people's needs ■ support packages use a wide range of services and community amenities ■ the number of different solutions accessed by people in similar situations <p>etc...</p>
<p>...build relationships with disengaged / isolated people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the number of people statutory services and independent care providers find it hard to reach ■ the number of people who don't want to have contact with statutory services or independent care providers ■ the number of disengaged / isolated people who have (re)built connections with statutory services <p>etc...</p>
<p>...respond more creatively and flexibly to people's needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ support packages are tailored to suit people's needs ■ support packages make use of a wide range of services and community amenities ■ reviews result in changes to people's support packages <p>etc...</p>
<p>...provide earlier interventions, therefore preventing crisis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the number of people who find themselves in crisis ■ the length of time between crises for people ■ the degree to which prevention is taken into account during assessments and reviews <p>etc...</p>
<p>...learn about and understand best practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Independent Support projects' level of input into best practice guidance ■ the quality of practice ■ the number of practice changes implemented by statutory services on the basis of suggestions by Independent Support projects <p>etc...</p>
<p>...work effectively together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the number of examples of statutory services, independent care providers and Independent Support projects working well together <p>etc...</p>
<p>...ensure local and national policy makers know more about the value of Independent Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the degree to which local and national policy makers understand the value of SDS and Independent Support ■ the extent to which SDS and Independent Support are referenced in local and national policy documents <p>etc...</p>

3. Methods: How do you measure your indicators?

The third step in planning how to evaluate your work is to decide how to **collect information about your chosen indicators** in order to **measure the difference** you have made. Usually this involves collecting information **more than once** so you can see the degree of **change over time**.

Some traditional methods for collecting information include:

- questionnaires
- interviews
- case notes
- service statistics

You can also use more **creative methods**. You can find out more by downloading the **ESS Support Guide 2.3: Visual Approaches** from the resources section of the ESS website: **www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk**.

When choosing methods, ask yourself whether they **suit the people who will have to use them** and **the situation they will be used in**. For example, questionnaires are not easily accessible for people with low literacy levels or visual impairments, and they can also be boring for people to complete. Each method has strengths and weaknesses.

Which methods for which indicators?

Here is a list of different collection methods which might be appropriate for some of the indicators suggested in the previous section.

Example indicator	Possible information collection methods
<p>The level of ongoing contact people have with your project</p> <p>A possible indicator for project outcome: <i>People and carers are more aware of the support available to access and manage SDS</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ statistics:<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ records of contact and type of contact■ service take up■ contact from other professionals■ referrals (including statutory and private)■ project case load■ questionnaire
<p>"I am confident I am choosing the best SDS option for me"</p> <p>A possible indicator for project outcome: <i>People and carers make more informed choices about SDS</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ notes from conversations■ questionnaire■ social media■ focus groups■ records of enquiries■ interviews■ observation

Methods: How do you measure your indicators?

Example indicator

People use the range of SDS options

A possible indicator for project outcome: *People and carers make more informed choices about SDS*

Possible information collection methods

- assessments
- service agreements
- case notes
- support plan reviews
- diaries / communication books
- direct feedback from client / other family members / professionals
- uptake of services (including community, paid/unpaid)
- interviews
- questionnaires
- focus groups

There is a range of different models of service provision

A possible indicator for project outcomes: *People and carers gain confidence to demand an increased range of service options* and: *People and carers have maximised opportunities for choice and control*

- regional & national statistics
- community mapping
- observation
- review of annual reports
- anecdotal evidence
- case studies
- topics discussed in social networks
- formal/informal feedback from commissioners

SDS materials are available in a variety of formats and appropriate languages

A possible indicator for project outcome: *People and carers access clearer information about SDS*

- national statistics
- community mapping
- information from support organisations
- information from service providers
- observation
- signposting
- who uses which services
- questionnaires

Professionals attend reviews when invited

A possible indicator for project outcome: *People and carers are listened to*

- case notes
- observation
- minutes
- complaints
- anecdotal evidence

You can read about working group members' experiences of using different methods in the **case studies** at the end of this document ([p15](#)).

Evaluation checklist

Working through this **checklist** can help you make sure that your **evaluation will be valuable, relevant and proportionate**.

✓ Planning

- Why** you are collecting this information? How will you use it?
- How much is your / the project's perspective **influencing** the questions you ask and the case studies you choose? Have you allowed space for people to say the **unexpected**?
- Have you **planned** your evaluation? Did you start with setting your project outcomes, then identifying possible indicators and finally choosing which information collection methods to use? (**The template in Appendix 2, p33, may help.**)
- How are you going to store and analyse the information you gather? Do you need a database or will a simple **spreadsheet** be more appropriate?
- Does everyone know what elements of evaluation they are **responsible** for, including: designing methods, collecting and recording information, analysing data, writing reports?
- How much **time** and what **resources** are needed to collate and analyse the information you will receive? Have you included this in your project planning?
- Is **evaluation embedded** in your organisation's culture? Is it in the induction process for new staff? Is evaluation progress a standing item in your team meetings? Do you offer training? Do people know where to find your evaluation plan and tools?

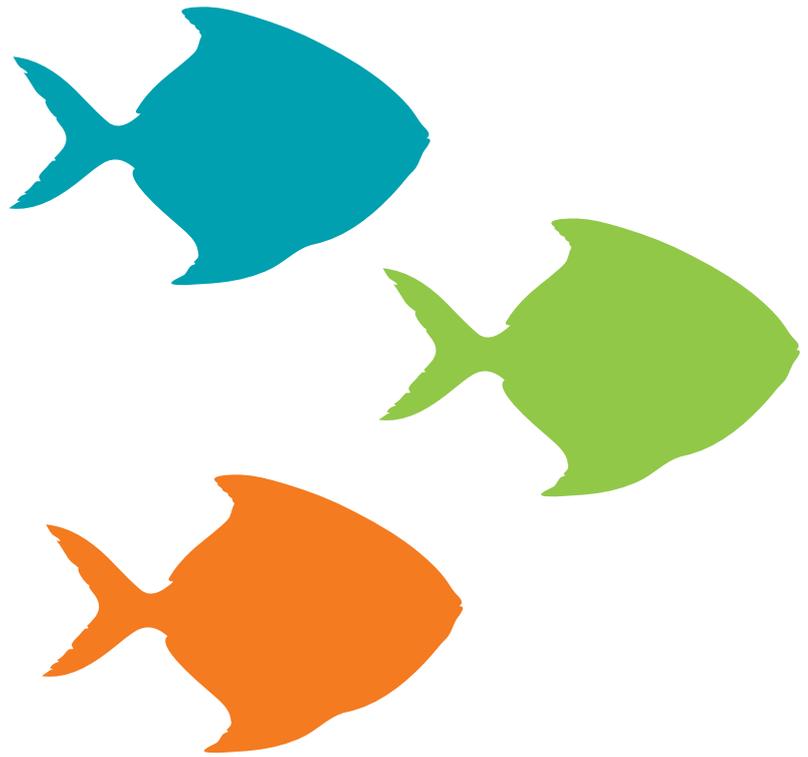
Remember – evaluation should be useful and should help you get (even) better at what you do!

✓ The people you work with

- Will your evaluation methods add an **extra burden** on the people you work with? Have you made evaluation a part of your day-to-day work as far as possible?
- Have you considered **individuals' capacity** to give you full information? Do you also need to seek information from others (eg carers)?
- Have you made it easy for respondents to give you **honest feedback**? Can people give feedback anonymously? Could you collaborate with another project and carry out some 'external' evaluation for each other?
- Can you also use the information you gather as a **development tool** for the people you support or as a way to **celebrate success**?

✓ Methods

- Are you aware of the limitations of the methods you are using? Do you need to use **more than one information collection method**?
- Are you able to gather information from **more than one source**?
- Can you collect both **baseline** and **follow-up** data? How likely you are to have **ongoing contact** with people?
- Have you **tested** your methods? Can you ask someone outside your project to comment before you use them?
- Are your chosen methods gathering the **right kind of information**? Do you need to **tweak** them?
- Can you **share data** with other organisations and/or local authorities for comparison?
- Do you need an element of **external evaluation** as well as self-evaluation in order to satisfy your funder / the Care Inspectorate?



Case studies

Experience of using different methods

Each member of the working group chose a different information collection method to try out. Their experiences, including why they chose the method, what they did and their top tips follow.

Questionnaires and standard assessment forms

Why we chose this method

- it didn't require any more time / effort from our clients
- to capture additional information from other people in clients' lives
- to gather both quantitative and qualitative data

What we did

- adapted our paperwork to include prompts to remind us to collect evidence of progress towards our project outcomes
- included six questions to be answered using a scale of 1 to 5
- planned to use this scale several times with each person

Top tips

- agree your project outcomes before developing your forms
- one size will not fit all; include an 'unexpected outcomes' section
- think about how you are going to analyse your evidence in advance and set time aside

Who we are

The Scottish Government funded Borders Independent Advocacy Service (BIAS) (a small organisation) to set up a dedicated advocacy service to promote SDS and provide information and support for people accessing SDS. As SDS is a long process we were keen not to use a method of evaluation which would add any more time requirement from our clients. In addition, our clients have a range of abilities so we also wanted to capture information from significant others in their lives, eg family members and professionals.

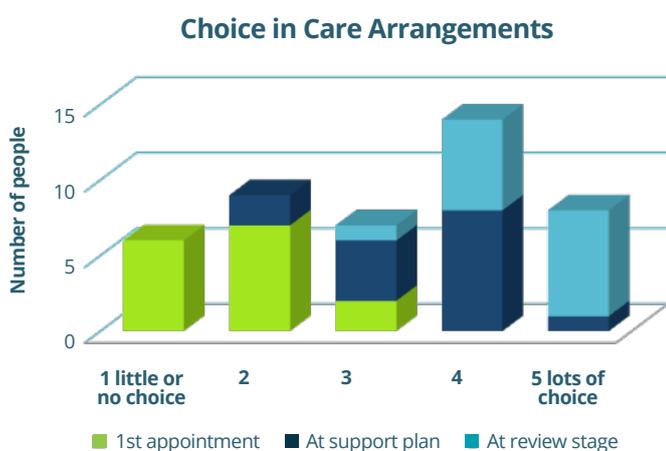
What we did

Our project outcomes focus on **increased choice and control** and **being more able to make change happen**. We wanted to gather both quantitative and qualitative information to help us evaluate these outcomes so we created a **standard assessment form**. We don't ask clients to complete this form on their own but we have it with us in our client files to prompt us to keep evaluating our clients' journeys through the SDS process.

Using a simple scale from 1 to 5 (1 being poor or low, 5 being good or a lot) we record how our clients are feeling in relation to the following six questions:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ■ How much do you feel you know about SDS? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ How much control do you have with your current care arrangements? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ How much choice do you have with your current care arrangements? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Are you able to make changes to your care arrangements? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ How is the quality of your life in respect of your care arrangements? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Are you confident independent advocacy could help you with SDS? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

We use this scale throughout the SDS process; eg at first appointment, at support plan stage and again at review stage. This lets us capture **quantitative** data to evidence the value of advocacy throughout the SDS process. For example, we can see whether people feel more aware of the choices available to them at the review stage than they did at assessment.



This chart (using example data) shows how we can represent our findings.

However the chart does not tell the whole story as:

- we may only be involved in part of the SDS process with any one individual
- it would not necessarily help us identify all areas of our work

We also need to capture detailed **qualitative** evidence to give depth to the **quantitative** data.

Our form is designed to prompt us to collect evidence of progress towards outcomes from all our contact with clients, for example: anecdotally in meetings, in e-mails from clients, their families and professionals.

We feel strongly that indicators for each client are likely to be different, so we have included prompts rather than a definitive list:

- **Do people have increased control regarding care arrangements?**
 People are able to control how, what, when and who provides their service.
 People have control and make decisions on their support.
 People make demands for themselves regarding support arrangements.
 People can achieve their outcomes.
- **Do people have more choice in their support arrangements?**
 People have time to consider a variety of options.
 People speak to a range of support providers.
 People are able to accept or decline support.
 People have flexible support.
- **Are people more able to make change happen?**
 People are confident to demand something different.
 People have improved social networks.
 People are able to have future plans.
 People understand and can take responsibility for their lives.
- **Have people improved the quality of their lives?**
 People feel happier.
 People can be creative about their support package.
 People have improved social relationships.
 People are free to live the independent life they want.
- **Any unexpected outcomes?**
- **Any issues/barriers identified?**

We also use case notes regularly in reflective practice, reviewing our work with colleagues (using a critical friend approach) and challenge ourselves to evidence that we are not being subjective. This helps us keep things as simple as possible and is incorporated into our normal working practice rather than adding to our workload.

We discovered:

- We already had a significant amount of evidence in our case files; however we did not capture it in one place or think of it in terms of project outcomes.
- It is essential to have structured time set aside to look at project outcomes and how to record evidence. An hour here or there is not enough.
- We knew that all parts of our forms might not be relevant to all our clients, but didn't want to change the template too soon. We should also keep checking whether all the questions are needed. If we won't use the data we shouldn't collect it.
- We are learning how to gather and disseminate what we learn. We report to the Scottish Government every six months, but we also summarise information to share with the local authority, service providers, our own steering group and others. We are producing quality reports based on evidence.
- It is possible that our early findings may be skewed as our initial caseload may not prove to be typical. We will monitor this over time.
- Evaluation enables us to become more effective practitioners and subsequently provide a better service.

Additional learning after using this method for about a year

- This form of assessment does not allow for a short period of advocacy support. For some people we simply provide information, or are only involved at one stage of the SDS process. This type of evaluation has not been particularly helpful in these situations, however we know the advocacy provided has still been important to the person.
- There are some gaps in the statistical information we have been collecting. For example, it does not differentiate between a client who has had a long, complex journey through the SDS process, and someone who has been able to progress more quickly. We need to be able to highlight the implications of timescales for individuals.
- Analysis is a manual process and time-consuming.

Although we are always likely to need to collect quantitative statistics, **qualitative feedback provides the most powerful and valuable data** for us; for example, quotes from individuals, professionals or family members.

Using pre-existing outcomes measures



Why we chose this method

- our organisation has developed and uses a personal outcomes measurement tool: Individual Recovery Outcomes Counter (I.ROC)
- as this tool is already used throughout our organisation it is an efficient method of gathering evaluation data without imposing an extra burden on service users

What we did

- collated data from our internal databases about a specific service user who was using SDS
- gathered additional, more specific, information by using a follow-up interview with the person
- used both these sources of data to build an individual case study

Top tips

- a pre-existing, routinely used outcomes measure is likely to provide some, but not all, of the information you need (check against your project outcomes and indicators)
- using supplementary questionnaires or interviews will provide a much more complete picture
- a good database is crucial for accessing routinely collected data

Who we are

Penumbra is a leading Scottish voluntary organisation working in the field of mental health. Penumbra has implemented an outcomes based approach, using a variety of tools including the Individual Recovery Outcomes Counter (I.ROC): a quarterly facilitated self-assessment used throughout Penumbra's services.

I felt this questionnaire was pertinent to my progress or evaluation of how I see myself.

Supported person

This method captures information on medium term outcomes for individuals including:

- improved physical and mental health
- improved quality of life
- people are more likely to achieve their personal outcomes

What we did

Data gathered routinely by staff using outcomes tools was collected from internal databases and collated to give an overall picture of the outcomes for a specific person and the progress they had made.

Successes

This information collection method is already well embedded in Penumbra, and allows useful quantitative and qualitative information to be collected. Scores are easy to analyse, and comments and supporting documents are easily linked to this data. For Penumbra, using routinely collected personal outcomes data has proved to be an efficient way of gathering evidence of progress towards the achievement of project outcomes.

Learning

Drawing on evidence gathered through pre-existing measures (rather than using an additional evaluation method) avoids adding an extra burden for both supported people and staff. When used to build an individual case study, however, it is necessary to include a follow-up interview or questionnaire to capture more specific information.



Individual discussions with prompting questions

Why we chose this method

- to find out if we'd helped people learn how to get help with SDS
- to measure this through individuals' and carers' understanding of what SDS means for them
- to integrate evaluation into our routine work

What we did

- devised a series of prompting questions
- undertook a series of discussions with a family in their home
- recorded what had been discussed and decided

Top tips

- keep the conversation focussed on the person and the topic
- use straight forward language and avoid jargon
- consider whether using visual materials as prompts might be helpful

Who we are

Inclusion works with adults, young adults, children and families in West Central Scotland. The people we work with all have a learning and/or physical disability and live in their own homes or with their family.

What we wanted to achieve

We wanted to measure whether the people we worked with are **more aware of the support available** to access and manage SDS. Our indicator for this was carers' **understanding of what SDS meant for them**. We decided that **individual discussions with prompting questions** would give us the best data.

What we did

We undertook a series of interviews with a family in their home – adding up to more than five hours in total. The Project Manager went to meet them to discuss SDS for their child who was in transition and in receipt of a Direct Payment.

The family had not been using their current allocation and did not understand personal outcomes or support plans. They had no concept of SDS or the impact it could have. They felt that whatever they had suggested in the past had been refused.

The first meeting involved introductions and finding out about the family, what they were expecting and how much they knew about SDS.

At the following meetings we gave them information on the four SDS options, answered their questions, and suggested activities and alternatives where they felt there were barriers. Taking them through a support planning exercise enabled them to identify the personal outcomes they and their child wanted.

Examples of the kind of prompting questions we used are:

- How much do you know about SDS?
- What would you like to do that you don't do just now?
- Who do you think could help you?
- What do you want to change?

After each visit staff **recorded** what had been discussed. Ultimately this showed the path the family had taken from the first to the last meeting.

How it went

This particular information collection method worked well as we were able to gather data at each interview and could measure change through their responses and participation.

It was clear that the family's understanding of SDS (very limited at first contact) increased significantly. In time they felt able to make informed decisions about their child's support plan using Option 1 (where they receive a direct payment to purchase support themselves). They identified specific personal outcomes, came up with ideas, and developed a plan. As the mother said, **"I get it"**.

Conclusion

This proved to be a relaxed way to collect information. It was a natural part of the process and, therefore, not threatening to the participants. It didn't create too much additional work for staff.

One limitation, however, is that it would be difficult to use it to measure change in cases where there was only one meeting with someone.



Event evaluation wheel

Why we chose this method

- to gather a baseline of why people came to the event which could be compared with what they got from the day
- to gather people's views and opinions immediately after the session
- because it would be quick and fun to complete

What we did

- asked everyone on arrival to indicate what they hoped to get from the day
- used sticky dots on an evaluation wheel for people to tell us to what degree five different outcomes had been achieved

Top tips

- keep it simple
- have someone available to remind people to participate and to explain the method

Who we are

Direct Inclusive Collaborative Enterprise (DICE) is a small, independent, disabled peoples' organisation whose vision is that everyone who wants to will be able to direct the support they need so they can live the life of their choice with dignity and as equal citizens.

DICE launch, August 1st, Cairndale Hotel, Dumfries

What we wanted to achieve

We hoped the launch would:

- promote personalisation, SDS and DICE
- make DICE more visible and known as an organisation which can help people access and manage their support
- generate enthusiasm for the future of SDS and celebrate what has been achieved so far

We also wanted people to understand the role of Independent Support in a national and local context and to show that we do not work in

isolation. We work closely with Self Directed Support Scotland and believe **collaboration is the key to successful SDS implementation**. We wanted to give people an idea of the range of resources available in Dumfries and Galloway. Finally, we wanted to give something back to those who have supported us.

What difference did it make?

Our evaluation showed that, after the event, delegates:

- were more informed about SDS
- had more idea of what they can do with SDS and the resources available
- had more understanding of what DICE can offer
- were more enthusiastic about putting SDS into practice
- had enjoyed themselves and would remember the event

How did we measure the difference it made?

When guests arrived they put a coloured dice into the cup that best described the reason they came:

- blue dice were for people who had used DICE
- yellow for those who might use us in the future
- white for everyone else

This was intended to give us a rough baseline for analysing responses on the evaluation wheel at the end of the day. For example, the number of people who came because they wanted to learn more about SDS could be measured against how many people indicated they had learned more.

I know you and your small team put an **incredible amount of effort** into the launch event and hope that locally you continue to be supported and that there is now a **greater understanding** of DICE.

Karen, Community Catalysts



It was **relaxed** and **motivational** – dare I say **‘inspirational’**. On a day to day basis I often get worn down with what feels like the huge task we have to implement SDS and it is coming to events such as yours that motivates me to just keep going because we know it’s the right thing to do. **Keep up the good work**, we’ll get there in the end!

Julie Sheehan, Personalised Approaches Lead Officer

The evaluation wheel (kindly made by people at Community Payback) is split into five sections, one for each outcome. The board has been designed so the outcomes can be exchanged for others if required next time. The yellow spokes are raised and taper towards the edge so people can feel how far along they wish to put their dot.

We asked people to put a sticky dot on the wheel for each of the five outcomes. The nearer the outside edge they put their dot, the further they had travelled thanks to the event.

Sections of the wheel:

- **What’s it about?** refers to our project outcome: ‘People will have more understanding of Self-directed Support’.
- **What does DICE do?** refers to ‘People will have more understanding of what DICE offers’.
- **Yes! I want to do it!** refers to ‘People will be more enthusiastic about putting SDS into practice’.
- **Today was good!** refers to ‘People will enjoy the day’.
- **What can I do?** refers to ‘People have more idea of the range of resources available in Dumfries and Galloway’.

The results showed that a lot of people got some way towards achieving the outcomes we had hoped for. **Film footage** and **photos** also show that people appreciated the event. People still talk about it!

Analysis

We got some useful information. The reasons people came to the launch were:

- 13 people wanted to learn more about DICE
- 14 people wanted to tell others what they have to offer
- 24 people wanted to support DICE including 10 people who have used DICE
- 9 people wanted to find out about SDS including 3 people who might use DICE in future
- 13 wanted to have fun and meet people

Difficulties with the method

I didn’t take into account how complicated and fiddly it would be to explain to everyone. I was the only one who could do it and I wasn’t able to man the evaluation table all the time so people slipped through the net or did it their own way!

Baseline:

- some folk did not take part
- some put more than one dice in a cup
- the colour coding got mixed up!

Evaluation wheel:

- we didn’t end up with a full picture as some people left without using it
- it looks like three people did not think the day was good, or did they put their dots on when no-one was there to explain?
- the colour coding got mixed up which means we can’t make a correlation between information on the wheel and the reasons people came

Writing a case study

Why we chose this method

- it would allow us to gather a rounded picture of the impact of our work
- our clients might not feel able to give us honest feedback in a telephone / face-to-face interview
- online surveys are not suitable due to low levels of computer use among our clients and poor internet connections

What we did

- reviewed current and historical cases
- chose a case which would provide a representative story of our work
- engaged with the whole family in order to establish permission as the client had dementia

Top tips

- get approval from the people involved – offer to anonymise the case study
- tell the whole story: what worked, what didn't and lessons learned
- back up your story with evidence such as quotes
- allow enough time to reflect on your case study and refine it

Who we are

Tagasa Uibhist is the only registered charity that provides free support from trained staff for carers, people with dementia and vulnerable people living in their own homes throughout the Uists. We offer a number of services including transport, homecare, residential care, SDS support and payroll services.

We wanted to evaluate how SDS has been implemented in the Western Isles and whether we helped service users to: **maximise their opportunities for choice and control**, and **make more informed choices about SDS**.

What we did

We discussed the possibility of doing a door-to-door (or telephone) survey to gather service users' views on the value of our SDS service. We were concerned that as most of our service users are elderly, are unfailingly polite, and have Gaelic as their first language (factors we had already identified as barriers to SDS penetration), the survey results could be tainted by being unduly positive.

An online survey was also rejected as there is such poor internet connectivity and low uptake that we would have a very low response rate. Facebook, Twitter and e-mail surveys were also dismissed for the same reasons.

We concluded that it would be better to look at anecdotal evidence. **We therefore chose to evaluate our Independent Support using a case study.**

Finding 'the case'

We looked at the existing and closed cases we had to date. There were a few which could have been useful, but for which we did not have and could not get explicit permission. We were therefore left with two possible cases. The case we used was of value because Tagasa had worked on it for so long; knew the family and the service user well, and had successfully resolved an apparently difficult situation. It is representative of our case load and we have taken learning pointers from this case on a number of occasions.



The case

Mary had been diagnosed with dementia and developed mobility issues. She and her family did not want her to go into residential care away from her lifelong home, family and friends. They were not sure what the final solution would look like but they were confident that Mary would do better in familiar surroundings. Tagsa was able to help the family employ a live-in Personal Assistant and manage the payroll.

Challenges

Writing a case study about a person with dementia was difficult. I had to engage with the whole family to get full permission. One of the biggest challenges was to put into words the journey that Tagsa, Mary and her family travelled together to ensure **increased choice and control over her SDS**. Also, a case study only provides evidence of the value of Independent Support for one service user.

What we learned

The evaluation process has **immersed** us in **reflecting** on how we have done things, and whether our approach has stopped us from thinking outside the box.

We now ask ourselves the following questions:

- Are we doing things this way just because we always have, or is there a better way to do it?
- What does the service user want/need?
- Have we checked that they are not just agreeing to everything through politeness?
- Are we encouraging them enough to challenge us to make SDS work for them?

Our advice on writing a case study

Look at how others write case studies as you might get some very creative ideas. Also, if you have an idea that could make your case study better, write it down, think it over and then go back to it and use it; often your idea matures if you leave it for a day or so.

Survey for professionals

Why we chose this method

- to allow people to give anonymous feedback
- it is quick to complete
- we knew everyone we wanted to contact (professionals) would have internet access

What we did

- thought about what information we wanted to gather in relation to our project outcomes
- created and tested a SurveyMonkey® questionnaire
- considered who the final report was for and how the information would be shared
- sent the survey to all our contacts with a deadline for completion

Top tips

- make sure you have clear project outcomes before you start
- match your questions to the indicators you have identified for these project outcomes
- consult Managers/Team Leaders in the other organisation(s) and inform them of your plans

Who we are

We are a user-led support organisation offering services to clients managing their own care, usually through a Direct Payment (DP). The main services we offer are a comprehensive payroll service, safe recruitment, ongoing employer support and a third party banking facility. We set up a survey to send out to professionals we work with in our local authority in order to measure our indicators.

Project outcomes

- improved equality of access to SDS and more people getting the right information
- increased collaborative working
- improved understanding of SDS by professionals and effectiveness of independent support to clients and checking if our services are perceived as useful to other professionals
- professionals better understand the services that independent organisations offer to clients
- increase confidence of professionals in offering the SDS options

Indicators

- care managers tell their clients about the support available from the local support organisation
- staff in the local authority will know where to go for help and advice
- professionals will tell us if our services are useful to them and if having an active support organisation increases their confidence in offering DPs to clients
- care managers will tell us if we have an impact on their work



What we did

We decided to use **SurveyMonkey®** as this can be anonymous and is quick for people to complete. We thought about the information we required and how to make sure we asked the right questions. We also thought about which questions people could bypass and which ones must be answered.

We collected e-mail addresses of the majority of the Social Care professionals we work with. We put the questionnaire together and shared it with the Social Work SDS Lead Officer. A couple of questions were tweaked at this stage. We ran a test on SurveyMonkey® to make sure it worked. We then e-mailed all the social work team leaders explaining what we were proposing and attached a copy of the questionnaire.

The survey was then e-mailed to the individuals with a deadline for completion.

Two weeks later we e-mailed a reminder to catch those who were off work when the original e-mail was sent out. We hoped this would increase the number of responses.

Once all the replies had been collated through SurveyMonkey® the findings could be reported and shared.

It is important to think about who will **receive** the final report and how the information will be shared at all stages in the process. We plan to visit all the **locality team** meetings to give them **feedback**.

We received a couple of responses where we weren't sure who the person was referring to in their comments, but overall the process was positive and we probably wouldn't do anything differently if we were doing it again. We received the type of information we were looking for.

Member survey

Why we chose this method

- to try a new way of getting feedback from our members
- it would be quick to do and had no additional cost
- to encourage our members to give more honest feedback

What we did

- took time to think about what type of information we hoped to collect and the right questions to ask
- used the free version of SurveyMonkey® to set up a short questionnaire
- circulated the survey to our members using our e-bulletin

Top tips

- allow enough time to prepare the survey and collate results
- set aside time to encourage people to participate - it may take longer than you expect to get responses
- include plenty of free-text fields to ensure people can give meaningful feedback

Who we are

Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) is a national membership organisation actively promoting Independent Living by supporting, working with and championing the aims of SDS disabled people's organisations.

What we wanted to achieve

We wanted to look at new ways of getting feedback from members on our support and services, and so decided to try running a membership survey. We chose this method because we thought it would be relatively quick to do, and had no additional cost attached. We also hoped it would enable our members

to give more honest feedback than some other methods by providing anonymity. The aim was to get the views of members on the degree to which we were achieving our project outcomes by measuring their associated indicators.

Project outcomes

- By 2015 disabled people and individuals in receipt of care/support have access to a number of new support services developed in co-production between them and local authorities through intensive support from SDSS
- SDS disabled people's organisations are better recognised and valued by SDS stakeholders (disabled people, local authorities and health boards, Scottish Government, service providers, carers' organisations) which call on their unique knowledge and expertise to progress their SDS plans.

Indicators

- what members feel about the work SDSS does
- how useful our materials are
- how much SDSS members know about and are interested in the SDS strategy and if/how SDSS is helping with this
- how well SDSS members are engaging with local authorities



We got a lot of very useful responses, with those who completed the survey making good use of the free-text fields to expand on their answers. However, we had quite a low uptake, with only a fifth of members having completed the survey after three weeks and two requests to participate.

What we did

We started by setting up a survey, using SurveyMonkey®, with a small number of questions, covering the topics on the previous page, plus a few more. This was then circulated by e-bulletin to our membership.

What we learnt

There were a number of issues at the initial stage, in terms of getting to grips with the SurveyMonkey® technology. I also had some concerns that, without using the subscription service, the survey didn't look very professional, so we might reconsider that in the future.

It took quite a long time to decide on the right questions to ask in order to get the information we were looking for. Through the responses, it was clear that most of the questions worked well, although there was one question (about the website) that seemed to confuse people, so we would re-word that in the future.

We found the survey gave us **useful information** in terms of showing us that we are **on the right track** in our work with members, and **helping us understand** what they specifically value about SDSS.

It also highlighted key issues for members in terms of the SDS agenda and we were able to feed these back to Scottish Government in the hope of informing future work.

Social media

Why we chose this method

- to find out how our use of social media is helping people become more aware of the support and information available around SDS
- to learn about our project's reach
- to help us increase our Twitter skills

What we did

- planned to choose a period of time, send some Tweets, track responses received and analyse the process and responses using a thematic approach
- Tweeted one message and analysed the replies, Retweets and comments after 24 hours

Top tips

- remember you won't know why people have engaged with your social media pages unless they leave comments
- if you include a link in your Tweet, check how many visits it typically gets before you Tweet so you can be sure how much difference using social media has made
- pick a period in time and then analyse the activity during that time – otherwise it can become an enormous task

Who we are

The Community Brokerage Network (CBN) provides a range of support to people who have been allocated an individual budget to help them have as much control as they wish, get the most out of their money and achieve creative support solutions. Brokers can help people put together support plans, negotiate the best possible deal with providers, source flexible solutions and undertake a variety of other tasks around facilitating support as needed by the individual.

The plan

The plan was to use the CBN Facebook and Twitter accounts which had recently been set up, pick a snapshot in time, send out some information in messages, track responses received and then do some analysis on the process and responses using a thematic approach. We chose Twitter because we wanted to know how well our use of social media is helping people become **more aware of the support and information available around SDS**. Also, as Twitter was a fairly new medium for us it would help us get better at using it. The snapshot in time was really just plucked from thin air on the basis we needed a start and finish time and opted for those dates. There was no other scientific reason!

Analysis involved grouping together common themes that were apparent in the responses.

The immediate challenges

Before it really got off the ground the plan needed a rethink based on some of the challenges that quickly emerged.

Some key difficulties were:

- the amount of activity on Twitter made it difficult and time consuming to track everything which became a resource issue
- the way Twitter and Facebook were linked, i.e. if you put a message on Twitter it automatically went on to Facebook running the risk of double counting
- four people were Tweeting on the same Twitter account on behalf of CBN with no way of identifying who said what

While some of the key issues could be resolved it would take time, disrupt the way CBN was using social media and as this was just an exploratory exercise the scope was too large at this stage. The scope was reduced and a new plan explored.

The new plan

After some discussion the new plan that emerged was to:

- pick a day and time; again it was plucked from thin air!
- agree a single message to be posted onto Twitter (remembering this would also show up on the Facebook page)
- ignore Facebook and only focus on Twitter responses for the purpose of the exercise
- follow the 'journey' of the message for an agreed period of time
- gather responses
- draw together and analyse what was found

What we did

- we posted a message on Twitter saying that brokerage support had helped a young man, Lewis Drummond, fulfil his incredible hidden musical talent, as illustrated in his [YouTube video](#)
- followed the 'journey' of the message on Twitter for 24 hours
- counted replies and comments
- analysed the responses

What we didn't do - but should have!

Taken a note of the number of YouTube video hits immediately prior to the comment being posted and again at the end of 24 hours. This might have helped to see if there was an increase that could be attributed to the posting. If there was an increase, however, it could not be assumed it was as a direct result of the posting. It would merely be suggestive.



Lewis Drummond

What we found

- The message was Tweeted to CBN's 117 Twitter followers
- The message was retweeted by three CBN followers
- These followers had the following number of followers:
 1. LM - 136
 2. LMC - 3322
 3. HS - 298
- A total of 3,873 people could therefore have potentially seen the original Tweet posted and the video on YouTube
- There were two comments made on the Tweet by two of the three CBN followers
- Both comments were positive i.e. "Awesome" and "Excellent"
- By the end of the 24 hours CBN had four new followers

Some analysis/discussion

It is clear that Twitter has the capacity for reaching large numbers of people but that will depend on the number of followers you have, and the number of followers that your followers have, and so on.

The more the message is retweeted the greater the number of people who will see the message or who have the chance of seeing the message.

The amount of activity overall on Twitter means that it is likely the window for your message being seen is a short one.

More people retweeted the post than commented on it. Other people retweeting your post suggests they have some connection with what you have posted. It cannot always be assumed this is positive.

Conclusion

As this was a very brief and focused analysis of social media in a snapshot of time, we cannot really draw conclusions but there is clearly potential to develop this approach for evaluation purposes.

Appendix 1: More help with evaluation

You can find free information and resources about evaluation on the Evaluation Support Scotland website: www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk. There is a range of Support Guides which you can download from the Resources page.

You may find the following guides particularly relevant to the topics covered in this document:

ESS Support Guide 1.1: Clarifying your aims, outcomes and activities

- This guide is a basic introduction. It helps you work out what your outcomes are and how to write them. It clarifies the connection between what you do (your services and activities) and the impact you are trying to make (your project outcomes). It introduces the Weaver's Triangle (otherwise known as the CES Planning Triangle).

ESS Support Guide 2.1: Developing and using indicators

- This guide explains ways to develop and use indicators to help you measure your project outcomes.

ESS Support Guide 2.2: Using interviews and questionnaires to evaluate your project

- This guide covers some of the more traditional approaches to collecting information for your evaluation: questionnaires, interviews and group interviews (focus groups) and gives advice on how to use them.

ESS Support Guide 2.3: Visual approaches

- This guide covers some visual approaches you can use to collect information for evaluation: relationship maps, service use maps, lifelines, body maps and evaluation wheels.

ESS Support Guide 2.4: Using technology to evaluate your work

- This guide covers some ways you can use technology to collect information for evaluation: video, digital photographs and audio recording.

ESS Support Guide 3.4: Using qualitative information for evaluation

- This guide will help you to think through how you can make use of qualitative information in evaluation. It looks at what qualitative information you might already be collecting, how you might analyse that information and how you might use it alongside quantitative information to report on your activities and project outcomes.

If you are interested in **changing how you involve the people you support in evaluation** (above and beyond seeking their feedback), you may find the following workbook helpful: **Why bother involving people in evaluation?** You can download it from the resources section of the ESS website: www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

You can download the PDF version of this document *Measuring the difference Independent Support makes* from the SDSS website: www.sdsscotland.org.uk/supportinrightdirection.php.

Appendix 2: Evaluation planning template

Project outcome	Indicators	Methods	Who will do this?	When and where will it be done?
the difference you hope to make	what you measure to find out if you've been successful	how you measure your indicators		
is this a short / medium / long term outcome?				
is this a short / medium / long term outcome?				

Appendix 3: Contributors

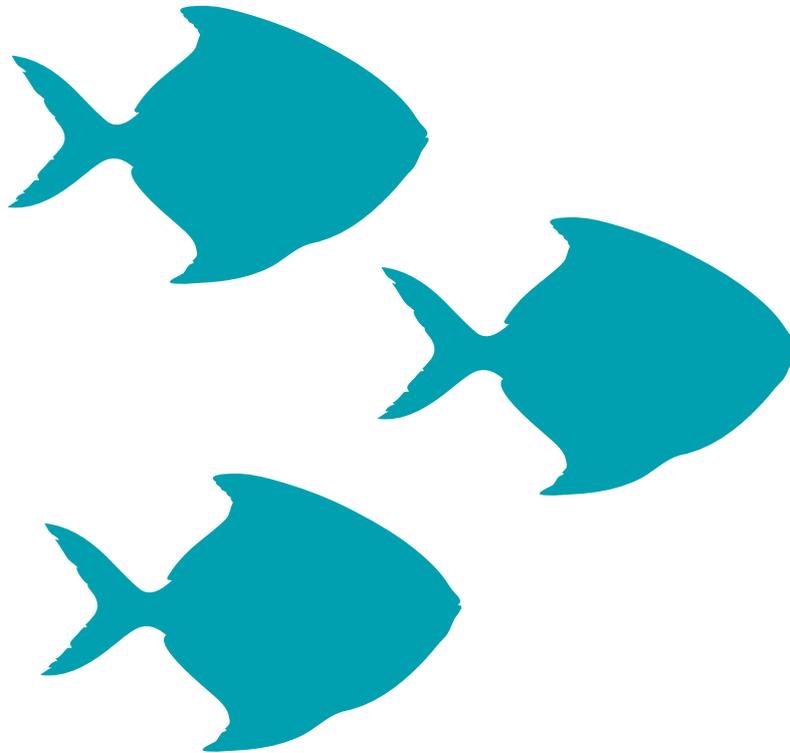
The following organisations helped Evaluation Support Scotland to develop this document:

- [Borders Independent Advocacy Service](#)
- [Community Brokerage Network](#)
- [Direct Inclusive Collaborative Enterprise](#)
- [Encompass](#)
- [Glasgow Simon Community](#)
- [Inclusion](#)
- [Penumbra](#)
- [Scottish Government](#)
- [Self Directed Support Scotland](#)
- [Tagsa Uibhist](#)

Thanks also to everyone who took the time to comment on various drafts and versions of this document.

Download this document and the related publication,
The value of Independent Support, at:

www.sdsscotland.org.uk/guide-self-directed-support/support-right-direction



2015



Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) works with third sector organisations and funders so that they can measure and report on their impact.

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