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Support and Information Organisations
(By Email)



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Dear Colleague,

National Strategy for Self-directed Support in Scotland: Building the capacity of Support and Information Organisations -“Support in the Right Direction” Fund

The National Strategy for Self-directed Support (SDS) was launched in November 2010. The national programme of work includes:

- transformation funding and associated activity across Scotland’s councils;
- investment and activity to build the capacity of the workforce;
- investment and activity to build the capacity of providers, and;
- investment and activity to build the capacity of independent support and information

A total of £7.5 m over four years has already been allocated to build the capacity of independent support, information and advocacy organisations across Scotland. This funding is due to come to an end in March 2015.

The Scottish Government is making additional funding available over the next three years of the support and information programme. A total of £8.4m will be available, £2.8m in 2015/16, £2.8m in 2016/17 and £2.8m in 2017/18. Funding awarded is subject to Parliamentary approval of the draft budgets during the term of the award.

This letter therefore invites proposals for innovative projects which will help to develop and improve support and information services to individuals

Background:

The SDS strategy sets out a vision for support organisations that are able to offer high quality, accessible advice and support to enable people to make genuine individual choices, and to effectively promote Self-directed Support and independent living. User and/or Carer led advice and support has a key role in this and whilst all Local Authority areas provide some sort of support, the nature of this varies considerably. In-house and outsourced models of differing kinds are currently available in Scotland.

A growth in the capacity of independent support is required to meet the increase in both direct payments and in emerging SDS options such as Individual Service Funds, and to assist individuals during their entire “pathway” through support.

There is clear evidence of the need for independent support and councils already fund some activity. There is also a need to continue to build activity in a way that is genuinely inclusive of all client groups, including carers and to ensure that services are designed in a way that can respond to local changes.

The primary purpose of this new funding is to address any gaps in provision and to continue to support activity that will build the capacity of independent support and information services. It can be accessed by organisations undertaking new forms of support or by previously funded organisations seeking to extend their capacity into new support activity.

Funding will be allocated to meet the strategy recommendations to enable organisations to improve the availability of independent support that is suitable for everyone (especially within groups where uptake of SDS has been low) and tailored to enhance individual outcomes. We are keen that the programme of support includes evaluation of the approaches taken, to inform future local commissioning strategies for the development of efficient and sustainable activity in this area. A significant proportion of the overall funding will be to support small and emergent user led and /or carer led support and information services as this is a key priority for Ministers and the SDS strategy.

The programme is being targeted at a local level but that does not preclude national organisations working together or with local organisations to provide support at a local level. Bids from consortia for approaches and/or new models that aim to improve inclusion of a wider range of client groups are particularly encouraged. Innovation and sustainability beyond the life of the funding are vital aspects and may be demonstrated by partnership working between organisations, and with Councils. It will be important to collect robust evidence that can inform an evaluation of this approach to support organisation activity, and that models of support can be effectively self-sustaining in the longer term.

The total funding pot available for each of the three years will be £2.8m subject to Parliamentary approval. Proposals should therefore be based on a realistic level of resources to contribute to the overall programme.

The Scottish Government Self-directed Support Policy Team will be contract managing the new SDS Support in the Right Direction Fund however, administration of project funds and the monitoring and evaluation of progress will be outsourced and the responsibility of a third party to be appointed before the 1st April 2015.

Developing and submitting our bid

- **Annex A provides a “Guide to submitting your bids”. Please read and consider this before you develop your bid/s. In particular, please read and consider the criteria which will be used to assess the bids.**
- **Annex B provides further information to guide your bid/s**
- **Annex C contains a template to be used for submitting proposals**
- **All bids should be submitted to Calum Drummond at calum.drummond@scotland.gsi.gov.uk no later than Friday 9th January 2015**

We will aim to assess bids and allocate funding by the end of February 2015.

Please contact Elaine Black, or Calum Drummond (see Grant Application Form for contact details) if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely

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