

Community Contacts: Project Summary and Plan

October 2018 - March 2024



Funded by



Our planned outcomes for Argyll & Bute - October 2018 to end of March 2024

- People and carers are better prepared, confident to engage and contribute meaningfully to social care assessments and reviews.
- People and carers feel more informed, listened to, less stressed.
- People and carers can creatively and flexibly plan to achieve personal outcomes including accessing community assets.
- People and carers have increased skills so are better able to manage social care packages.
- People and carers have increased knowledge and understanding of self-directed support principles and options for social care.

Community Contacts Argyll & Bute

Community Contacts has been offering independent support, information and advice on Self Directed Support (SDS) in Argyll & Bute since October 2013. The project was awarded further funding under Support in The Right Direction (SiRD) for the continuation and development of independent support for SDS between April 2024 and March 2027.

Community Contacts provides service delivery to four distinct localities of Argyll & Bute:

- Mid Argyll, Kintyre, Islay and Jura
- Bute and Cowal
- Oban, Lorn and the Isles
- Helensburgh and Lomond

This means that the Community Contacts Argyll & Bute team works with disperse communities across large geographical areas.

Community Contacts Argyll & Bute Team currently consists of:

- Four part-time Specialist Community Project Workers, all home based with responsibility for the 4 localities.
- A part-time Community Project Manager.
- Senior management support.
- Total number of hours of service each week is 99.5 hours/ 2.6 FTE.

Range of activity to offer independent support, information and advice on SDS:

- Helping people to understand the SDS process locally; to both understand their rights but to appreciate the limitations of SDS and public resources.
- Tailored support to understand legislation and the rights and responsibilities this brings.
- Offering one-to-one support to people and carers to develop personal outcomes plans and help to access support services.
- Linking people to make community connections and to develop personal networks (including those not eligible for formal social care resources).
- Providing support to understand the process and ongoing management of a direct payment, and to make connections with other services for more intensive support, when this is needed.
- Assistance to understand Option Two responsibilities and functions.
- Working with partners to share SDS information and knowledge e.g., with advocacy and carers' organisations; with locality based HSCP integrated teams and with both adults and Children and Families' leadership teams.

- Facilitating peer support opportunities with those with an interest in SDS, often in partnership with other organisations e.g., Alzheimer Scotland and carer support services.

Due to the geography and resourcing constraints, Community Contacts continues to offer as much assistance remotely as possible.

Relationships and joint working

Community Contacts, has positive relationships with cross-sector partners, and receives referrals from Argyll and Bute HSCP and other Council teams, third sector organisations, provider organisations, personal assistants as well as self-referrals.

Susan's story

Community Contacts Specialist Project Worker, Rachel was introduced to Susan at North Argyll Carers Centre. Susan is a retired nurse and has been providing extensive support for her parents in recent years. Susan found the peer support available via the Carers Centre was invaluable and had 'kept her going' in her role as carer.

When Rachel spoke with Susan, Susan shared insight into her earlier bad experiences of contact with social workers because of being a parent to a disabled child. Due to this, Susan was reluctant to explore the potential of SDS for her parents and in her role as a carer. Susan said she was coping as she employed someone privately to help with caring responsibilities.

Rachel spent time over a cup of coffee with Susan having an outcome focused conversation. Susan agreed to take some information with her on SDS and on Rachel's role with Community Contacts.

Two weeks later, Susan called Rachel; she had been reflecting on their conversation and on the information she had taken away. She concluded that there would be 'no harm' in requesting an SDS assessment for the family and asked Rachel for her help. Rachel contacted the Social Work Department who promptly visited the family, conducted an assessment and offered an SDS budget to help meet everyone's needs.

Susan reported back that she was appreciative of Rachel's gentle approach; her respect, the initial time she gave to her and the space to reach her own decision. Rachel also reflected and noted the power of sharing information and kindness at the right time; how this approach and the information shared enabled Susan to determine her next steps thus upholding her rights. The duration of this support was only over three weeks and was highly effective for Susan. Rachel also reported that this piece of work felt very rewarding and successful and fitted with SiRD Outcome 1.

National work 2023-2024

Community Contacts continues to work with national partners and organisations based in other local authority areas, to influence change and promote good practice. Recent examples include:

- Membership of the Scottish Government's Personal Assistant Programme Board.
- Contributed to the update of the SDS Statutory Guidance (2022) and the subsequent National SDS Improvement plan alongside Scottish Government, CoSLA, Social Work Scotland, SDS Scotland and InControl Scotland.
- Chaired the review and subsequent publishing of the revised national Framework of SDS Standards.
- Working with SDS and legal partners to update and rewrite the Scottish Personal Assistants Employers'/Personal Assistants' Handbook as an online and printable resource.
- Opened up sessions for partners and citizens to feed into the National Care Service Consultation.
- Practice learning with other Scottish Government funded projects offering independent support, information, and advice on SDS.
- Chair of Self directed Support Scotland, the national membership organisation for those connected with SDS professionally and national delivery partner for Scottish Government.

Our demographics and referral points

From October 2023 to March 2024, we offered 'casework' (more intensive work) to these numbers of people and families:

Total (with a focus on the primary supported person)	Existing cases	New cases
127	48	79

In same period, we supported the following numbers of people and their carers:

Total (including carers requiring a high degree of support in their own right)	Cared for person	Carers
222	127	95

During this time, we supported the following number of people eligible/not eligible for SDS or awaiting assessment completion:

Total (with a focus on the primary supported person)	Eligible for SDS	Not eligible for SDS	Pre- assessment or waiting for assessment	Don't know
127	11	4	4	8

In this period, the number of people accessing each SDS option was:

Total	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Don't know
111	75	1	10	23	2

Our demographics (based on casework figures) were:

Number of people (with a focus on the primary supported person)	Age
41	Between 0 and 17 years
34	Between 18 and 64 years
39	65 years or older
13	Don't know

Number of people (with a focus on the primary supported person)	Access Route
62	Local Authority
0	Schools
45	Another third sector organisation
0	Referral by personal assistant
13	Self-referrals and referrals made by friends or families
0	Advertising (web, in paper, or outreach)
7	Don't know

Number of young people supported making the transition to adult life	9
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Number of people	Condition(s)
1	Addictions
33	Asperger's or Autism
0	Blind or visual impairment
2	Carers of people living with a condition
2	Carers accessing support for their own personal outcomes
0	Deaf or hearing impairment
10	Dementia
8	Learning disability
11	Learning and physical disability
15	Long-term condition – including chronic pain, neurological conditions and terminal illness
10	Mental ill-health
16	Physical disability
11	Problems connected with ageing
8	Don't know

Total number of people given 'light-touch' advice and information (in addition to our casework).

911



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SC 236436 Scottish charity: SC 033491**

**National and Registered Office:
Space, 11 Harewood Road, Edinburgh
EH16 4NT**

**www.carrgomm.org
communitycontactsab@carrgomm.org**