

**Highland Council – Children and Families**

**COVID-19: Guidance on SDS Option 1 and Option 2**

1. **Context and background**

This guidance is for Local Authority and Health and Social Care Partnership staff who assess, approve and administer social work and social care and support (including carer support), and approve Self-directed Support packages. It is for those working in adult and children’s services, whether those services are managed by the Local Authority or delegated to the Integration Authority It is also for care providers delivering Option 2 and organisations who help people to get the most from their social care support.

It assumes a good understanding of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013: statutory guidance. It should be read in conjunction with the [statutory guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-changes-social-care-assessments/) on emergency [legislation](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/contents/enacted), especially in relation to easement of social work assessment duties during COVID-19.

This guidance is relevant only for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic period.

This guidance sets out a joint position from Scottish Government and COSLA relating to Self-directed Support Options 1 and 2 during COVID-19. It has been co-produced with nationally funded SDS partners and embodies and endorses the key messages articulated in the SDS Collective Call statement (See Appendix 1).

This guidance aims to support local social care systems and services to continue to respond appropriately and flexibly in line with the spirit and expectations of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 to at this time of national crisis, and to deliver coherence across Scotland during the COVID-19 period. It seeks to replicate the provision of the [COSLA Guidance for Commissioners during COVID-19 Response](https://www.cosla.gov.uk/cosla-guidance-commissioners-during-covid-19-response) for SDS Option 3 in the context of Options 1 and 2.

It is critical that social care support is maintained with minimal interruption during this period to ensure the safety, dignity and human rights of people who already have support in place and for those who will need it, taking into account their strengths, family and community assets at this time.

This guidance does not include information on infection control for social care settings. This can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-care/latest/>.

This document relates solely to social care funded by local authorities. The Independent Living Fund (ILF) is a separate national scheme and will produce its own guidance.

This guidance may be read in tandem with accompanying guidance aimed directly at people using Option 1 and Option 2, using a FAQ format to address many of these points (see Appendix 2).

1. **Guiding principles**

In addition to the statutory principles of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013, the following principles underpin this guidance:

* To maintain existing arrangements for care and support
* To maximise flexibility and autonomy for the supported person in meeting agreed outcomes
* To minimise bureaucracy and administrative processes surrounding SDS option 1 and 2 as far as possible
* To ensure Fair Work principles are applied to the Personal Assistant (PA) workforce, PA employers and contracted services
* To maximise and support the capacity of the PA workforce during the pandemic period, retaining PA and provider capacity long term
* To ensure equality of access, choice and control across all Self-directed Support Options
* To support efficient and sustainable use of funding

1. **Maximising flexibility**

Self-directed Support Option 1 (direct payment) and Option 2 offer the most flexible ways for people to meet their assessed needs and personal outcomes under the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 2013 or Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. This flexibility should continue to operate during the period of the pandemic and enable the exploration of creative solutions during this unprecedented period.

Supported people and unpaid carers should have opportunity to discuss using their budgets in new ways to meet their outcomes when workforce or other resources are affected due to sickness, self-isolation or shielding.

There should remain a requirement to demonstrate a clear link between items and services purchased and the personal outcomes identified and agreed in the person’s assessment/care and or support plan, adult carer support plan or young carer statement.

Local authorities should pro-actively communicate their approach to SDS Option 1 and 2 budgets during this period in a clear and transparent way to people using such support. This communication should also be shared with independent support organisations, disabled people’s/older people’s organisations, Carers Centres and other interested parties locally.

Where there are pre-existing concerns about the way a budget has been used or if there are questions raised around the person’s capacity to make decisions, this flexibility may not be appropriate (in accordance with the [Self-directed Support (Direct Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 Section 8.1](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/25/regulation/8/made)). The professional judgement of social workers and related professionals should inform all decision making in such cases.

The flexibility required during this period may result in employment of additional staff, payroll amendments and other associated bureaucracy for Direct Payment employers managing replacement care. Independent support organisations contracted by local authorities to support Direct Payment employers should be funded accordingly to meet this demand.

Individuals who use their support packages to pay for employment support (payroll providers etc) and incur extra costs should be able to use their Direct Payment to cover these costs.

Processes should remain in place to agree support packages for new Option 1 and Option 2 arrangements for those who wish them.

1. **Employing family members**

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 outlines that PA employers may employ family members where this is deemed appropriate, under exceptional circumstances. Local authorities should consider the test of exceptional circumstance to be met during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, there may be increased reliance on family members, particularly when PA employers or PAs themselves are shielding or self-isolating. Family members may be the only people available who can provide support on a temporary basis and be a necessary adjunct to the social care workforce at this time.

Family members may be able and willing to provide care and supports in an unpaid capacity. However, in other cases, consideration to employ family members on a temporary basis should be given, for example if family members lose income as a result of taking on a caring role during the pandemic period. Decisions should be taken on a case by case basis, taking account of the family member’s health, their capacity to provide the required care, and other welfare and wellbeing factors.

Consideration should be given to all such requests during the pandemic period where safeguarding and undue influence is not a concern. The professional judgement of social workers and relevant professionals should inform all decision making in relation to appropriateness of employing a family member. Where there are current or historic Adult Support and Protection concerns involving in the individuals or family members who have been identified as prospective PA’s, then they should not be employed as a PA.

The PA employer should ensure that there is a clear procedure for the original PA to resume their role when self-isolation or shielding ends, and that the family member employed to provide backfill understands this arrangement is temporary.

If the family member is acting as Power of Attorney or Guardian and managing a direct payment, it is prohibited under the Direct Payment regulations for them to be employed as a PA.

1. **Reassuring supported people and unpaid carers that unavoidable changes to their care or support as a result of COVID-19 are temporary**

If it has not been possible to continue to provide the same support due to unavoidable factors, people should be reassured that any changes to their care and or support plans as a result of COVID-19 will be temporary. Full provision should be resumed as soon as practicable.

People’s needs may change due to COVID-19, in which case a reassessment with their full involvement will be required when it is practical to do so (in line with the easement of social work assessment duties within [emergency legislation](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-changes-social-care-assessments/)).

1. **Ensuring fairness and equity for the PA workforce**

PAs should have access to any entitlements and support that other social care workers have, including Fair Work practices and access to support as essential key workers. A letter from Scottish Government and COSLA confirming their key worker status can be found [here.](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19---key-workers-definition-and-status-letter-from-cabinet-secretary-and-cosla/)

Where proof of identity is perceived to be an issue, the employer, the local authority or an advice organisation can write a letter as proof of their employment. A template letter can be found in Appendix 2 and can be adapted to suit local circumstances.

Option 1 support packages must enable the PA employer to pay at least the Real Living Wage (£9.30 per hour) from 1st April 2020 as per the joint SG – COSLA letter *Fair Work and the Living Wage in Adult Social Care* 10th April 2020.

Option 2 budgets should also enable the commitments of the above letter.

1. **Maximising the capacity of the PA workforce**

The PA workforce is of critical importance to social care and is regarded to be a key part of the social care workforce. PAs currently make up around 5% of the social care workforce and retaining them throughout and beyond this period is a priority.

Where a PA employer is shielding or self-isolating, tasks that do not involve entering the house such as shopping and collecting medication can still be undertaken. Local authority budgets should allow for PA employers to pay PAs in this position their normal rate, in line with the COSLA Commissioning guidance for Option 3.

Where a PA has been asked by their employer not to provide support during this period, it may be possible for the PA to work for another supported person or agency. This will require the employer’s and potentially the insurance company’s consent, depending on their contract, and will entail clarity on where employer responsibilities such as health and safety are located.

Where there is agreement, the PA may be retained on full pay by their original employer, and:

* The PA may agree to work in a volunteer capacity for a new employer
* The PA may work for another PA employer for a temporary period
* PAs may take a temporary contract with a provider organisation which is commissioned by the local authority or privately funded
* The PA may undertake other work generally

Any changes at this time should be in line with the terms and conditions in the existing PA employer/employee contract.

1. **When a PA is Shielding or in a high-risk group**

Shielding refers to a specific group of people at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19). More information can be found at [https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-COVID-19/coronavirus-COVID-19-shielding](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-shielding). People in this group will have received a letter from their GP which requires them to stay inside for 12 weeks and minimise all contact.

NHS Inform also recognises that there are groups of people at increased risk yet who do not fall within the criteria for shielding: [https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/) This group may choose to voluntarily self-isolate during the pandemic period.

If a PA who does not fall into either the Shielding or the ‘High Risk’ groups as defined on NHS Inform is concerned for their health and chooses not to work, then the PA Employer could consider the use of annual or unpaid leave. The furlough scheme or equivalent is unlikely to encompass this group.

PA employers should be made aware of the potential consequences for their support if they make a PA redundant.

1. **When a PA is self-isolating**

Where a PA self-isolates due to having symptoms of COVID-19 or because they are living with someone that has symptoms, the [Fair Work and the Living Wage letter](file:///C:/Users/u204487/Downloads/Fair+work+in+social+care+-+Letter+from+Cabinet+Secretary+and+Councillor+Currie+-+10+April+2020.pdf) sets out our expectations.

Where Statutory Sick Pay is specified in the employment contract, the UK government guidance applies. This can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-COVID-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-COVID-19#staying-at-home-if-you-or-someone-in-your-household-has-symptoms-of-coronavirus-COVID-19-on-site](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19#staying-at-home-if-you-or-someone-in-your-household-has-symptoms-of-coronavirus-covid-19-on-site)

## Specific advice relating to PA’s and Statutory Sick Pay can be found in the section *Statutory sick pay (SSP) for PAs* at [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-COVID-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget), although many of the other aspects covered will not necessarily apply in Scotland.

The PA employer may need to ask the local authority for additional funding for replacement care and supports for the duration of the PA’s period of self-isolation where contingency arrangements are exhausted.

**10. Furlough**

### The UK Government is responsible for the development and administration of the [Furlough scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-could-be-covered-by-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme.). Information specific to PAs and furlough can be found in the section *What is the government’s expectation on furloughing of PAs?*

at [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-COVID-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget), although many of the other aspects covered will not necessarily apply in Scotland.

**11. Contingency Planning**

Contingency planning for support and use of budgets should be in place for all direct payment packages. In accordance with good practice ([UK Guidance on Contingency Planning – COVID-19)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments), these existing contingency plans should be reviewed for their relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Consideration should be given to contingency planning for those with Option 2 packages.

Consideration of the person’s and wider family’s general welfare, health and wellbeing should also be taken into account in contingency planning. The supported person and carers’ views are paramount in developing this plan.

**12. Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Employers should refer to the [national guidance](https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings/) when determining what PPE is appropriate to wear and how it should be disposed of, in accordance with their duties to ensure a safe workplace.

Where a PA Employer is unable to access PPE through their usual routes, they or a representative should contact the Social Care PPE Support Centre on 0300 303 3020. The Support Hub will provide information about where to access PPE locally.

Local processes for provision of PPE for PAs is available in Appendix 3 of this document. NB: If a PA collects the PPE, they will need an identification document (see Appendix 4 for example letter).

**13. Ensuring parity across all SDS Options**

Commitment has been made to provide funding for additional costs incurred as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic via local mobilisation plans. This applies across all SDS Options, including where flexibility in the use of Option 1 and Option 2 support packages incurs additional costs.

The recently updated COSLA COVID –19 Guidance for Commissioners for is clear that where services are contracted under SDS option 3, payments for support to providers should continue in line with requirements contained in all care and support plans, where possible, even where there is staff absence or the person’s support hours, or group activities are reduced, unless the authority is able to utilise the hours elsewhere. In the spirit of fairness and equity, this should also apply to those providers and agencies under Option 2. Payment for support should continue to the usual schedule, and banking of hours should be considered as an option (in discussion with the provider), taking into account projected capacity to do so post-COVID.

The longer-term sustainability of the care sector is an important consideration when making alternative arrangements. Providers are experiencing exceptional financial pressures during this time. Where providers are not able to provide group supports, alternatives should be explored using technologies to bring people together or providing individual support.

Some providers may not expect payment at this time, for example, for gym membership or season ticket for sporting activities. In this circumstance, alternatives to achieving the person’s original outcomes should be explored. Local authority funding for such activities should not stop unless this has been mutually agreed with the person being supported.

Where local authorities have concerns about overpayment, these should be reconciled following the COVID-19 period. To ensure reconciliation is done accurately and transparently, providers and direct payment recipients should keep a record of decisions made, (e.g. deployment of staff, additional costs incurred) with a transparent and clear link to individual care plans. All unspent funds in Direct Payment accounts should be returned to the local authority in the usual way.

It is acknowledged that local authorities may have made local arrangements with providers with regards to reconciling funds, and this guidance is not intended to cut across those arrangements.

Due to demand pressures across the whole system, it may be proportionate for the supported person to consider the use of alternative SDS Options to best meet their needs for a temporary period. For example, where an Option 3 provider cannot meet the needs of a supported person, the person may be offered the opportunity to take a direct payment under Option 1 or to choose an alternative provider under Option 2. In line with the easement of social work assessment duties within [emergency legislation](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-changes-social-care-assessments/) during COVID-19, this will not necessarily require a full review.

There may be practical challenges at a local level with the implementation of an alternative option as Local Authorities continue to adapt to current circumstances. We expect that these will continue to be worked through.

A model contract for Option 2 has been developed by CCPS to meet all legal requirements and can be either used as it is or developed further to suit local circumstances. It is available [here](http://supportmesupportyou.org/search-guidance/option-2/template-contract/).

1. **Highland Contact**

If there are any questions or issues arising from this Guidance, direct contact should be made with Greg Maclachlan – [greg.maclachlan@highland.gov.uk](mailto:greg.maclachlan@highland.gov.uk). Due to pressures on Highland Council IT systems at this time, emails should not be copied to anyone else.

NB: Guidance has been adapted from COSLA Guidance for Direct Payments, May 2020

Document is Version control and you should ensure you are using the latest version of the document which is available at [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

**Author: Greg Maclachlan**

**Date: 05/05/2020**

**Appendix 1 - SDS Collective Call to Action during COVID-19**

The Self-Directed Support (SDS) Collective consists of people using social care services, unpaid carers and SDS advocacy, support and campaigning organisations.

Our aim is to work together to promote improved practice in the development of self-directed support throughout Scotland.

During these unprecedented times the SDS Collective acknowledges the challenges that we as a society face. We believe it is vital that we work collectively to find solutions that will help get us through these tough times.

Our key messages during COVID-19

✓ The values and principles of self-directed support are embedded in human

rights and these must be recognised.

✓ The fundamental starting point is that people must continue to access the

support that they need to assist them in staying as safe and as well as

possible.

✓ All people who are directing their own support must be given clear, consistent

and appropriate information on the measures taken to ensure their health and

well-being.

✓ Personal Assistant employers and unpaid carers must have equity of access

to appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and the training to use it.

Adequate, clear information on the process to access PPE must be made

available to all who require it.

✓ A ‘one size fits all’ approach is not appropriate. Flexibility is crucial at this vital time and must be actively encouraged. Personal assistant employers must be trusted to manage their budgets and to take good and autonomous care of their direct payment.

✓ Health and social care partnerships and local authorities must give people,

especially those managing direct payments, clear guidance, support and

reassurance that they will support the necessary flexibility, choice, control and

use of resources without fear of repercussion.

✓ Everyone has the right to be made aware of local and national SDS

independent support and information services to access support in order to

develop contingency plans.

This vision requires courage, leadership, consistency and collaboration

between all parties and a significant shift away from a ‘top-down’ approach to

one where power can truly be transferred to citizens.

How to get in touch (including access to independent support and information

organisations).

Via email- sdscollectivescotland@gmail.com

Facebook and Twitter- #SDSCollective

**Appendix 2: Self Directed Support FAQs**

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**Highland Council**

**COVID-19 Self Directed Support (SDS) FAQs**

**Last updated: 28th April 2020**

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.

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 from the Highland Council.

Below are links to National and local guidance followed by some answers to questions you may have. If your question is not answered here, please contact your worker for further discussion.

**National & Local sources of guidance**

* The **Department of Health and Social Care** publishes updated UK data on COVID-19 every day at 2.00pm until further notice. [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-COVID-19-information-for-the-public](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/](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/](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 but is relevant to home care.

[Hyperlink](https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings/)

* **COSLA Commissioning Guidance**

[https://www.cosla.gov.uk/cosla-guidance-commissioners-during-COVID-19-response](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>
* **Highland Council**

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/>

**SDS Direct Payment FAQs**

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

1. What do I pay my PA / Carer if unwell or self isolating due to symptoms of COVID19 if he/she has a contract of employment dating before March 2020?
   * <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 if he/she has a contract of employment dating before March 2020?
   * <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. The website can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe).
   * If the PA / Carer is vulnerable due to underlying health issues or she is pregnant they should not continue to work, and you should have a conversation with your worker about possible temporary alternatives.
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 worker. If you are unsure how to contact your worker or are unable to access their contact details, please phone the Highland Council helpline on COVID-19 on **0300 303 1362** and they will be able to assist you.

1. Can a family member be employed to cover sickness or self-isolation of PA / Carer’s?
   * Highland Council has a policy in place not supporting the employment of family members to provide care via SDS Direct Payment.
   * However, any requests received would be looked at on an individual basis during the period of COVID-19 by the chair of the SDS panel for a temporary decision to be made.
   * What do I do if I do not agree with the decision taken by the SDS chair? You can ask for an appeal to be heard. The SDS chair will outline how you can appeal in his letter confirming the decision.
2. 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
3. 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](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme)
4. 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. Your local independent support organisation: <https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/> or SPAEN: <https://www.spaen.co.uk/> or the Personal Assistant Network: <http://www.panetworkscotland.org.uk/> may also be able to provide a letter of confirmation if the employer cannot.
5. Payroll – will my payroll provider continue to provide a service?

* Youwill 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.

1. What is the process for new SDS Direct Payment clients?
   * The process to set up all new Direct Payments will follow established Highland Council business processes.
2. Where do I get PPE for my PA?

* Please contact your worker to discuss your PPE requirements.

As mentioned earlier, this is a constantly changing environment therefore you are advised to always check for the most up to date version of this guidance online: [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

**Greg Maclachlan**

**Temporary Care and Learning Manager North (Health & Social Work)**

**Chair of the SDS panel.**

**Appendix 3: PPE Guidance for Highland**



**Highland Council Guidance**

**COVID-19 - Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Self-Directed Support**

This Guidance relates to families using direct payment element of SDS to purchase Personal Assistants (PAs) and provision of PPE.

[Health Protection Scotland](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe) states that employers have a responsibility to ensure appropriate PPE is provided to services providing social and community care during COVID-19. For families employing Personal Assistants through SDS, the Scottish Government has provided updated Guidance (27/04/2020) for this provision.

1. Where Direct Payment recipients/personal assistants are unable to access PPE through usual routes, then they should contact the NHS National Services Scotland Social Care PPE Support Centre on 0300 303 3020, and the team will point them towards their local hub.
2. Hub will triage each request from personal assistants and where criteria is met arrange collection of PPE supplies from HUB. Hub will triage asking following questions:

* What is the availability via usual supplier?
* What level of supply does the recipient have (is this less than 7 days)?
* Is the need for supplies urgent (Less than 24 hours supply remaining)?
* Is the cared for person shielded?

1. Advice and guidance on use of PPE is provided to direct payment recipients using the following link: [https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-ppe-for-personal-assistants/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-ppe-for-personal-assistants/)
2. Where the direct payment recipient qualifies (as per triage) for supplies via the Hub:

* Collection time from the Hub is agreed
* Where personal assistant is unable to collect, supplies may be sent out by Hub staff
* Where delivery is urgent, delivery will be met via a delivery slot

1. If there are any questions or issues arising from this Guidance, direct contact should be made with Greg Maclachlan – [greg.maclachlan@highland.gov.uk](mailto:greg.maclachlan@highland.gov.uk). Due to pressures on Highland Council IT systems at this time, emails should not be copied to anyone else.

**Appendix 4. Model Letter Proving Personal Assistant Identification**

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Personal Assistant/Social Carer Identification**

I certify that …………………………………… is a Personal Assistant who is employed by me to provide critical care and support.

Please accept this letter as confirmation of key worker status as notified by the UK Government as part of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health and Social Care response\*.

If you have any questions about the use of this letter, please contact Personal Assistants Network Scotland on 01563 522551 or [info@panetworkscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@panetworkscotland.org.uk)

Contact Details (address and contact number of employer):

Signed ………………………………………….. Dated …………………

**Self-Directed Support Direct Payment Funded Employer**

**\* Health and Social Care Critical Workers**

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers. More information can be found here: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision)

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