

Key messages

# Self-directed support

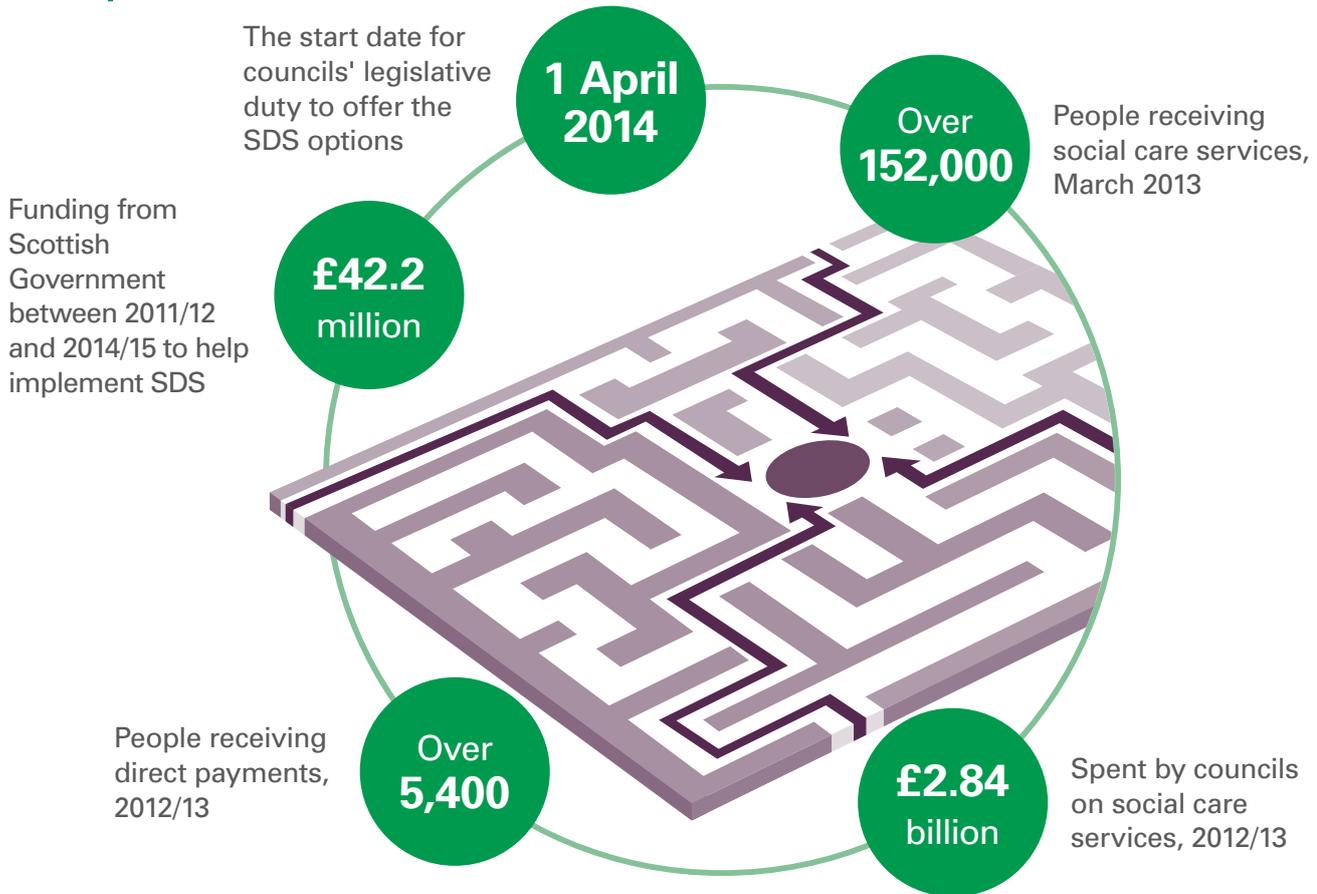


 ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

 AUDITOR GENERAL

Prepared by Audit Scotland  
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## Key facts



### What's this report about?

Self-directed support (SDS) is a major change to the way people with social care needs are supported. SDS is based on the human rights principles of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy for all. This means that people should be equal partners with relevant professionals in determining their social care needs and controlling how their needs are met.

SDS aims to improve the impact that care and support has on people's lives by helping them to choose and control what type of social care services they get, when and where they get them, and who provides them. Social care services include supporting people to live their daily lives and helping them with basic personal care like washing, dressing and eating. The support may be intended to help someone become more independent, or to keep in touch with friends or activities they enjoy. This means they are not limited to choosing from existing services such as day centres, respite care or home care, but may still choose them if that will best meet their needs.

As well as changes for people who need support, SDS brings significant challenges for councils and third and private sector social care providers. In 2010,

the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) published an SDS strategy. They expect the strategy to take until 2020 to be fully implemented because of the scale of the changes required for everyone involved. In January 2013, the Scottish Parliament passed the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013. The Act places a duty on councils, from April 2014, to offer people newly assessed as needing social care a wider range of options for choosing and controlling their support. People receiving support before April 2014 should be offered these options the next time their council reviews their needs with them.

This report examines what progress councils and the Scottish Government have made in implementing SDS. It looks at how well councils have planned to deliver the SDS strategy and legislation. We reported on progress at this relatively early stage of implementation so that we could highlight examples of good practice, identify significant financial and organisational risks and make recommendations that would help future implementation of this ten year strategy. The report is relevant to councils and NHS boards as they establish new partnership arrangements for health and social care.

## Key messages

- 1 Councils still have a substantial amount of work to do to fully implement SDS. Some have made slower progress than others and they will have to implement the cultural and practical changes more quickly over the next few years. Councils need effective leadership from senior managers and councillors and continued support from the Scottish Government through detailed guidance and regular communication on how implementation is progressing across the country.
- 2 Councils have adopted different methods of allocating the money they spend on social care to support individuals. There are risks and advantages with each model. Regardless of the approach taken, councils should manage the risks carefully without unnecessarily limiting people's choice and control over their support.
- 3 Social care professionals have welcomed SDS because it has the potential to improve support for people who need it. SDS will work best if councils make sure that people can choose from a range of different services and support. Councils should work more closely with people who need support, and with their carers, providers and local communities to develop the choices that will improve people's lives.

## Key recommendations

### Councils should:

- ensure that they have a clear plan and effective arrangements for managing the risks to successfully implementing SDS. They should monitor the risks regularly, and keep councillors and senior managers informed of progress
- plan how they will allocate money to pay for support for everyone who is eligible as demand for services increases. They should have plans for how and when to stop spending money on existing services if too few people choose to use them, and plans to develop and invest in new forms of support for people with social care needs

- assess and report on the short and long-term risks and benefits of the way they have chosen to allocate money to support individuals. They should monitor and report on budgets and spending on social care services. They should also take action to lessen the risks of over-spending, which might mean that they are unable to provide support for everyone who needs it
- work more closely with people who need support, their carers and families, providers and communities to involve them in planning, agreeing and implementing SDS strategies. They should discuss with people what SDS may mean for them and help them to think creatively about what services would have the most positive impact on their lives
- work more closely with people who need support, their carers and families, third and private sector providers, local businesses and communities to develop a strategy for what social care services and support will be available to people in the future. They should take account of the various challenges faced by different communities, for example those living in rural areas or areas of high deprivation.

### The Scottish Government should:

- have a strategy to measure and report on:
  - what councils have achieved with Scottish Government transformation funding
  - the progress of SDS implementation
  - the impact of SDS on people who need support
- engage and maintain contact with COSLA, the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) and other key national partners to:
  - identify guidance and other activities that would help with some of the challenging areas of implementation, including any issues that arise after April 2014 and guidance on the practical issues relating to option 2 of SDS ([paragraph 31, main report](#))(PDF) 
  - coordinate development of guidance and sharing good practice
  - support councils and other partners as they learn more about what works well and develop their approaches to SDS.

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This report is available in PDF and RTF formats, along with a podcast summary at:

[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

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Audit Scotland, 110 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4LH  
T: 0131 625 1500 E: [info@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@audit-scotland.gov.uk)  
[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

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