

How Are We Doing With Option Two / Individual Service Funds?

What was this project about?

In Control Scotland asked a researcher called Lou Close to work on this project. Lou spoke to 6 Health and Social Care Partnerships about option two of self-directed support. Option two is sometimes called an individual service fund.



Option two means that people using social care have lots of control over their support, but they ask an organisation to manage this for them. Sometimes this is the Health and Social Care Partnership, and sometimes it is a support provider.



The 6 Health and Social Care Partnerships we spoke to were Aberdeenshire, East Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Highland, and Scottish Borders.



We had read lots of stories of how disabled people and their families had used option two, but could not find any stories of how it really worked for Health and Social Care Partnerships. We wanted to do some research to be able to share the things that were working well, as well as the things that they were finding difficult.



We spoke to lots of people in the Health and Social Care Partnerships, like social workers, support providers, and people involved in arranging services.

What did we find out?



We found out that there were some big differences across the Health and Social Care Partnerships. This means that people in different areas of the country can have different experiences of option two.



We found out that sometimes there are rules or systems that make things difficult for support providers to manage option two for people.



We found out that sometimes people did not have as much choice and control as they should when using option two.



We found out that the way that senior staff talk about self-directed support is really important. Having strong leadership is a good thing, and this means there are better services for disabled people and their families.



We found out that there are some very good examples of social workers being creative for disabled people through option two. This meant that disabled people had a better life.



We made 6 recommendations. A recommendation means a change we think would make a difference to the lives of disabled people.

What were the recommendations?



1. Everyone should agree on what option two is, across the whole country. This means the Scottish Government should make it clear. We think that would make things fairer to people in different areas.



2. Support plans should be written so that they have the person at the centre. This means not just thinking about how many hours of support people need. They should think about other activities that help disabled people live a good life.



3. It should be easier for support providers to manage option two for disabled people.



4. There should be an agreement about which organisations can manage option two for a person. We think this works best when it is separate from the Health and Social Care Partnership.



5. There should be changes to the way support is bought by councils, to make sure people have more choice and control.



6. Social workers should be able to make decisions without having to go through lots of managers. We think this would make things faster, and more person centred.