

# Scottish Government changes law relating to care packages

The Scottish Government has passed legislation which will dramatically alter the shape of social care in Scotland and the law comes into force today.

The Self-directed Support Act places duties on local authorities in Scotland to offer people who are assessed as needing social care the option of designing their own care package.

This could mean receiving a direct payment which they can use, for example, to employ their own support workers. They might choose to have the council hold the funds, while the individual decides how it is spent. Finally, they could opt for the council to arrange the support package for them. They can also choose a mix of all three options.

Around 100,000 people in Scotland are assessed for care in Scotland every year. Previously, only a relatively small number have been offered the chance to self-direct their own support. The Act gives everyone assessed as needing support the right to have these options.

Michael Matheson, Minister for Public Health, will launch the Act and meet service users in Edinburgh today.

Mr Matheson said: "The Self-directed Support Act is about empowering people to be able to take control of their own lives. Having a care package designed by someone else works for some people, but not others. We want to give everyone the ability to choose care that works for them.

"Direct payments have been around for a number of years, but although some care users have benefited from it, it's never quite become a mainstream option. This Act is about shifting

up through the gears and making Self-directed Support a choice which anyone can have.

“Of course, not everyone will want, or feel able to design their own care. They can continue to have their package arranged if that’s what’s best for them. Others might feel a little overwhelmed by the new options open to them, so we’ve made sure there are a range of support options available for people to help them make the best decisions.”

To accompany the Act, the Minister also launched a suite of guidance, including best practice guidance for users, carers and practitioners.

The Scottish Government has invested in a number of organisations and projects nationally to build the capacity of independent support and information which will help to support individuals to make choices using Self-directed Support.

Today’s launch event is being arranged by [Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living](#) (LCiL), which has been supporting disabled people across Lothian for 20 years, and helps people to access Self-directed Support options.