

Ref	Activities	Ref	Actions	Target Achievement Date	Reference To Separate Project Plan	Associated Risks (see Risk Log for detail on Med and High Risks) Low, Medium, High	Lead Person(S)	Supported by/Additional Resources Required	Progress Notes	Status - (Completed, In Progress, Not Started)	Reference to National SDS Improvement Plan 2023-2027	Reference Internal Audit	Reference to SDS Framework Standards
1	The SDS Guidance Direct Payment guidance and financial monitoring procedures should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis	1.1	Guidance was reviewed in April 2022. There is a requirement for an in-depth review of the SDS policy and the Direct Payment guidance needs to be undertaken to embed the SDS Standards and updated Statutory Guidance.	Sep-23	N/A	Low				Not started	2.1 Improve SDS Practice Resources	5.01	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
2	Annual financial reviews should be undertaken in line with the direct payment financial monitoring procedures	2.1	To concentrate on those accounts that are due to have 3 month annual reviews to ensure an early health check has been carried out		N/A	High	Service Manager		Three month reviews are being prioritised by the SDS team	In progress	4.3.2.3 Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend (including improving processes and approaches to approving personal budgets)	5.02	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
		2.2	Review staffing resources to ensure ability to clear outstanding reviews	Aug-23	N/A	High	Service Manager	Additional posts to dedicate addressing financial reviews	Delegated Authority report has been authorised for the recruitment of up to 4 posts on a temporary basis until March 2024 to action the outstanding reviews. Vacancy Management Form completed and portal updated to recruit using reclaimed monies.	In progress		5.02	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
		2.3	Closing reviews to be undertaken as a further priority to ensure surplus funds are reclaimed timeously		N/A	High	Service Manager		Reviews prioritised in the team within the given capacity and prioritisation of workload	In progress		5.02	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
3	Consideration should be given to the routine production of reports from the CareFirst system which can be used to detail financial reviews falling due and allow management to prioritise workloads accordingly. The requirement of manual spreadsheets should be minimised wherever possible to ensure information reference points come direct from the Care First system	3.1	All 3 month, annual and closing reviews need to be recorded on CareFirst and allocated to the relevant SDS Coordinator	Apr-23	N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer	Information Systems team support required	Complete	Complete		5.03	
		3.2	Reports to be generated weekly from the CareFirst system from the records created within	Apr-23	N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer	Information Systems team support required	Complete, reports are being sent, admin from the team sends out individual reports from the master to each SDS Coordinator, highlighting those overdue and those due that month.	Complete		5.03	
4	A risk based approach should be initiated by management to prioritise outstanding financial reviews and work through the backlog in an order which makes the best use of limited resources	4.1	SDS Coordinators to prioritise the reviews which are undertaken	Apr-23	N/A	High	SDS & Carers Officer	Support from Audit	Reviews have been prioritised, including closing reviews, unmanaged accounts, and those who are due 3 month reviews. Reviews are also prioritised where the team are made aware of discrepancies within accounts	Complete		5.04	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
5	A reminder should be issued to service users, and approved payroll providers where applicable, to inform the Authority when funds in excess of the contingency amount are held. This may assist in the prioritisation of early financial reviews and highlight issues for further investigation	5.1	Payroll providers contacted 6 monthly to remind them of the need to advise the SDS team of surplus funds in accounts, or where accounts are considerably under their permitted contingency	Feb-23	N/A	High	SDS & Carers Officer		Reminders were sent February 2023 and further reminder scheduled for August 2023	Completed and on-going		5.05	
		5.2	Individuals to be contacted to remind them of the need to monitor their DP balance, and advise the SDS team should there be excess funds	Feb-23	N/A	High	SDS & Carers Officer		Reminders were sent February 2023 and further reminder scheduled for August 2023. The reminder in August will also include the need to monitor PA annual leave (where applicable) to ensure compliance with employment law.	Completed and on-going		5.05	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
6	A review should be undertaken of all Service Users in regard to the current balances held within their SDS bank account. Action should then be taken to recover excess funds	6.1	Bank balances for all DP bank accounts to be obtained		N/A	High	SDS & Carers Officer		Bank balances have now been obtained for approximately 90% of all accounts. Reviews are being further prioritised where a significant surplus or low balance is found	In progress		5.06	
		6.2	Bank accounts with a surplus identified need to be prioritised for review to reclaim funds and to also ascertain the reason for the build up. To liaise with Social Worker where applicable in relation to the build up with the level of Direct Payment reduced if no longer required at the current level		N/A	High	SDS & Carers Officer		Delegated Authority report has been authorised for the recruitment of up to 4 posts on a temporary basis until March 2024 to action the outstanding reviews. Vacancy Management Form completed and portal updated. To recruit using reclaimed monies	In progress		5.06	
7	In compliance with established procedures, one-off direct payments should be subject to a financial monitoring review 3 months (or in limited circumstances at another interval) after the funding has been distributed to confirm its appropriate usage	7.1	Financial reviews for one off purchases to be reviewed within 3 months of the funds being paid		N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer		Reviews for one off purchases are in progress and being addressed	In progress		5.07	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend

		7.2	Financial reviews for purchases like short breaks through out the year or SDS Carer Payments to be reviewed 12 months after the payment is made		N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer		Reviews for one off annual purchases like short breaks. SDS Carer payments are being progressed and brought up to date. Those where an on going payment is also being made are being addressed simultaneously	In progress		5.07	
8	The service should comply with the monitoring requirements detailed within an agreement between the council and service user for the purchase and adaptation of a mini van	8.1	Family to be contacted to provide further evidence of compliance with the agreement	Aug-23	N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer/ SW Team Manager		Evidence obtained as far as possible, due to the age of the vehicle, the first service or MOT has not yet being undertaken. Recommendations are the service follows up again after 1st September when MOT is due and once the first service has been carried out at 12,000 miles. Recommended annual follow ups to evidence continued compliance. Evidence of V5, fully comp insurance seen, (cover until March 2024)	In progress		5.08	
		8.2	Social Work to be contacted to arrange a joint visit to see sight of the vehicle and ensure it meets the agreed specification and being used for the agreed outcome	Aug-23	N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer/ SW Team Manager		Social Worker allocated and joint visit with SDS Coordinator scheduled 3rd August 2023.	In progress		5.08	
		8.3	Financial review to be carried out on the remainder of the On-going DP package	Aug-23	N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer		SDS Coordinator progressing	In progress		5.08	
9	Closing financial reviews of SDS Care Packages should be undertaken in accordance with the agreed procedures. Evidence should be retained of any expenditure out with the agreed support plan and of the full discussions held and decisions made by Social Workers regarding retrospective authorisation	9.1	Reviews to be undertaken as a further priority to ensure surplus funds are reclaimed timeously		N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer		Delegated Authority report has been authorised for the recruitment of up to 4 posts on a temporary basis until March 2024 to action the outstanding reviews. Vacancy Management Form completed and portal updated to recruit using reclaimed monies	In progress		5.09	
		9.2	Where additional retrospective funds are approved, these need to be recorded on CareFirst		N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer		In the current process for the SDS Coordinators and recorded where applicable	In progress		5.09	
		9.3	Current policy and procedure needs to be reviewed in line with the national SDS Framework of Standards, in particular Standard 12, flexible budgets		N/A	Medium	SDS & Carers Officer		Scheduled in line with Action 1.1	Due Sep	4.3.2.3 Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend (including improving processes and approaches to approving personal budgets)	5.09	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
10	Care and support plans should be reviewed annually to ensure the agreed care is being provided and continues to meet service user's needs	10.1	Social Work teams to review care and support packages on an annual basis across all options of SDS		Social Work Plan	High	CSWO		Being addressed within a separate overarching plan for Social Work	In progress		5.10	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
11	All Social Workers should be reminded of the requirement to inform the SDS Team of any amendment to a Support Plan that will have a financial change to a service user's care package	11.1	SDS Team send a reminder email to all Social Work teams as a reminder that any new, amend or end to a Direct Payment needs to be sent as a referral on CareFirst to the SDS Team	Jan-23	N/A	High	SDS & Carers Officer		Complete, a reminder was being sent 6 monthly, the team now do this every three months, with the latter being sent May 2023. this also includes a reminder for option 2 tri part agreements to be addressed in the same manner	Complete and on-going		5.11	Standard 12: Access to Budgets & Flexibility of Spend
12	Consideration should be given to the development of appropriate performance measures to be reported to service management on a regular basis. Given the current backlog of reviews and consequences of Direct Payment accounts not being scrutinised on a timely schedule, it may be beneficial for performance information to be made available for management to identify any resourcing issues arising and access risks involved	12.1	SDS & Carers Officer to discuss with Senior Management the concerns and capacity within the team to address the required actions	May-23	N/A	Low	SDS & Carers Officer		SDS & Carers Officer presented a 3 Minute Brief to SMT 31st May requesting additional support to address the outstanding reviews. Approved following discussion with Head of Service for up to 4 posts be recruited to on a temporary basis until March 2024. A further discussion will take place with the Head of Service January 2024 to monitor progress and develop a clear plan moving forward. DAR signed, Job description moved through HR, VMF completed for posts to be advertised on MJS	In progress		5.12	
		12.2	Monthly meetings to be arranged with Audit, Service Manager and SDS & Carers Officer to monitor progress	Feb-23	N/A	Low	Service Manager		Actioned, monthly meetings are in the diary	Complete and on-going		5.12	
		12.3	Weekly team meetings to be held to discuss the CareFirst reports, note progress and escalate any concerns to the Service Manager	Apr-23	N/A	Low	SDS & Carers Officer		Actioned, added to the agenda for weekly team meetings	Complete and on-going		5.12	