



What does SDS look like in practice?

A service user's perspective

Health in Mind interviewed a service user who recently started using option 2. Here's what the experience was like:

'I'd heard about SDS before, but my Social Worker put me forward for it and she did most of the work on my behalf setting it up. My Social Worker was great in helping me, she gave me lots of information too but ... I already had a care plan set up.'

'Health in Mind worked very quickly to set up my service, which was a very positive thing.'

'To use SDS via this route, you need to be familiar and used to dealing with bank accounts as you are dealing with money. I had to set up a corporate account to use SDS. If I'd not had any experiences of paying for things over the phone using a bank card, I'd have been lost. I don't have internet access; payments had to be over the phone.'

'I was given some leaflets on the Funding Independence Team, who have a helpline for those needing support with their direct payments. My SDS payments began at the start of the financial year, but there were problems in obtaining the card for my new bank account. I'd be worried that if others had the same problem, and didn't have the support of a professional that would be very difficult and people could be left in a position where they had no support if they couldn't make payments. I felt this highlighted the importance of having a professional there to help me (Health in Mind Service Manager). I was no longer on my own with the problem and I couldn't recommend not having that kind of support to anticipate such difficulties.'

'I feel things are more likely to be like this if you access support via a charity, rather than a private company. Charities are more helpful as they are not money driven.'

'People can access a minimum of 2 hours support, for me this is enough due to my health condition, and it has taken me a few months to build up to this level of support as for me it is a long time to be out doing things. The support I get is to have someone there to go with to get out and I find this very helpful.'