

Self Management Fund

How longer term funding supports sustainable self management?



October 2021

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Introduction

The ALLIANCE administers funding on behalf of the Scottish Government to the third sector and community based organisations across Scotland to develop self management activities. Since 2009, the ALLIANCE has granted over £20 million and has funded 325 projects across Scotland. There are currently 72 live projects that are in receipt of a grant from the Self Management Fund (SMF).

The Self Management Fund was created by the Scottish Government in response to recommendations made in the 'Gaun Yersel: the Self Management Strategy for Scotland'.¹ It was set up to support development of co-produced and person centred self management activity. Learning from the experience of people living with long term conditions and their unpaid carers is central to the ethos of the Fund.

In 2016, the ALLIANCE funded nine projects for five years in the **Transforming Self Management** in Scotland round of the Self Management Fund. The aim of this longer term funding for the SMF was to impact these organisations' abilities to effect sustainable change to deliver supported self management to people in Scotland living with long term conditions.



¹ <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ALLIANCE-SM-Gaun-Yersel-Strategy-2008.pdf>

The funded projects were:

Aberdeen Foyer:

Aberdeen Foyer's 'Impact Project' aimed to continue delivering, developing and expanding their successful self management project enabling individuals living with long term mental health conditions to move from a state of isolation to one where they are living their life well and on their own terms. The organisation aspired to use previous learning to shape the future of 'Impact' and to influence service delivery to embed self management approaches across Grampian.

Action for M.E.:

By the development of a strong, sustainable peer mentoring network, Action for M.E.'s 'Mentor M.E.: Peer Support Network' project aimed to support and empower people with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and their unpaid carers living in Scotland to manage their condition effectively, in line with individual circumstances whilst living their lives as fully as possible.

COPE Scotland:

COPE Scotland's 'This is My Choice, Things Can Change' project aimed to support and improve self management by supporting people within the Drumchapel area of Glasgow at an individual, community and organisational level. By engaging with local planning structures, the project intended to transform people's experiences of using health, social care and related services to enable individuals to have more control in developments moving forward.

Grampian Opportunities:

Grampian Opportunities' 'Moving Forward Together Project' aimed to build on the groundwork from the 'Moving Forward Project' which facilitates access to information, peer support and condition management approaches to inspire and motivate disabled people and people with long term conditions to move forward in their lives, with the objective to work with people to plan, manage and deliver services at places where resources do not exist yet, as well as to support individuals to make the best use of existing activities.

Highland Third Sector Interface (LGOWIT):

As part of their project 'Let's Get On With It Together (LGOWIT) Phase 2', Highland Third Sector Interface aimed to expand their network of education and support for people with a long term condition around self management and peer support, and compliment around Phase 1 with a dual regional and local focus in the Highland region.

MS Centre Mid Argyll:

Multiple Sclerosis Centre Mid Argyll received a five-year funding to work towards becoming a centre of excellence in long term condition self management, to link in with digital portals and health and wellbeing resources, to enhance connectivity with people and their communities and services, and to support people to live independently by offering telehealth services, boosting self esteem, understanding of own condition and establishing peer support, and to break down remaining barriers to improve integrated working with health and social care and potential future partners in Kintyre.

Networking Key Services (NKS):

As part of their project, Networking Key Services (NKS) aimed to develop their self management project further, with the hope to apply innovative ideas to tailor support for the South Asian communities in Edinburgh. To adopt a holistic approach, the three aspects NKS focused on was to build capacity among workers and volunteers, to provide one-to-one support for people with long term health conditions and to support carers.

Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH):

RAMH developed a comprehensive self management project which included work with peer volunteers, skills matching and exchange, a focus on partnership working and overall promotion of self management.

Versus Arthritis:

Versus Arthritis' 'Joint Potential Project' aimed to support young people living with arthritis to self manage and be better supported by their rheumatologists. The engagements aimed to equip young people with the skills and techniques that would enable them to confidently manage their condition and manage transition in their lives, and, therefore, feel less isolated by their condition and have an established network of peer support.

Gathering learning from the accounts of the nine funded projects, this report highlights the most important areas in which having this unique long term secured funding enhanced the sustainability of self management practice and delivery, and, therefore, positively supported individuals' lives. The long term funding enhanced sustainability of self management practices and administration in four ways:



The data and the method of analysis

Every project funded through the Transforming Self Management in Scotland round submitted half-yearly accounts throughout the five years, in which they detailed their aims and objectives, their achievements and challenges. All reports submitted to date by the nine projects were subjected to a thematic qualitative analysis to understand emerging themes and patterns. During the analysis, several themes have emerged, which then were further arranged into the final main themes; time, trust, delivery and scope.

Findings: How does longer term funding help to sustain self management

There were four main areas in which having secured, long term funding enhanced the sustainability of self management practice and delivery, and, therefore positively supported both the operation of organisations and individuals' lives. These areas are time, trust, scope and delivery.

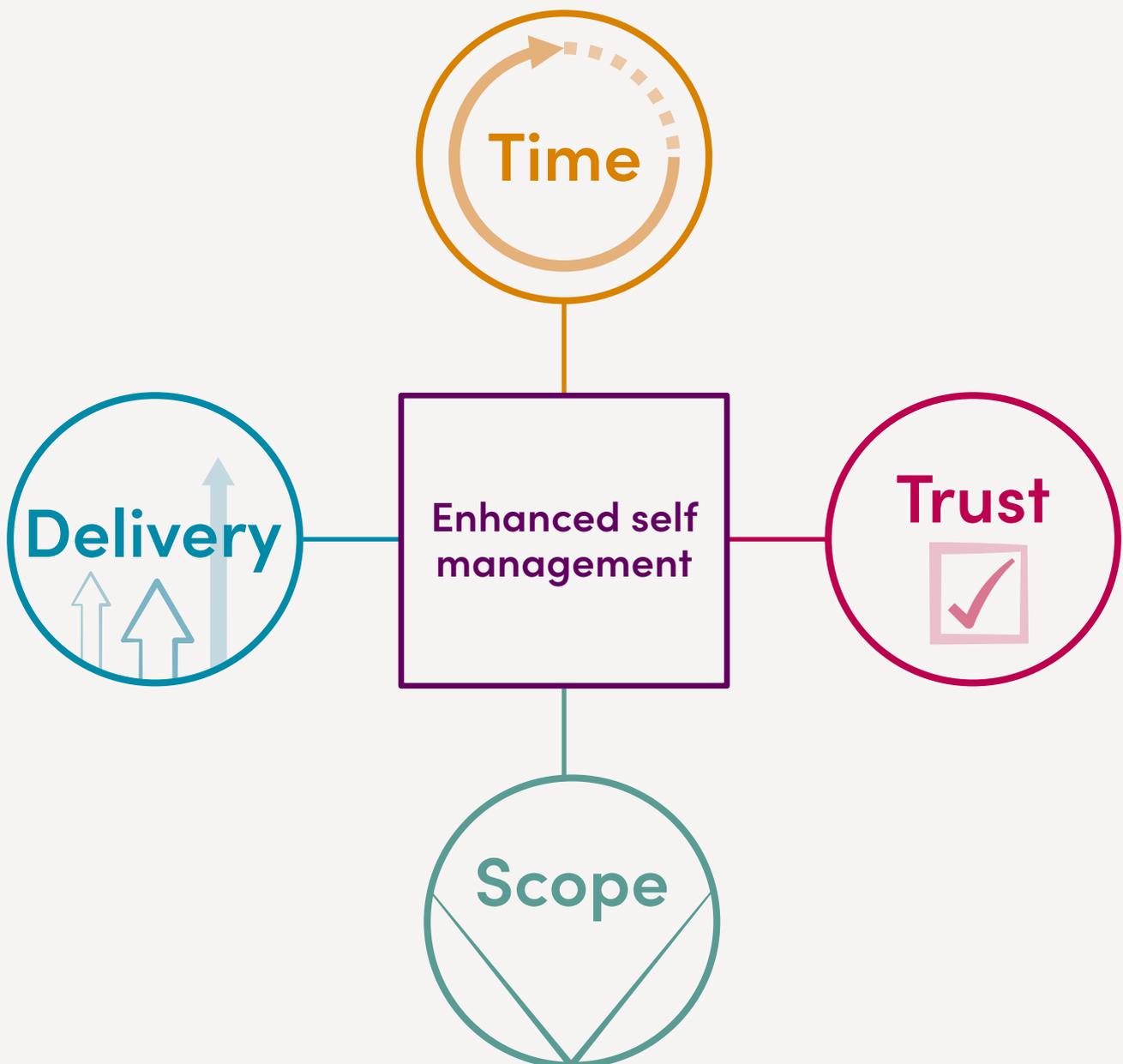


Diagram: Four main areas contributing to enhanced sustainability in self management engagements

Time

Having longer term funding as opposed to the more usual one to two years has brought several benefits. Knowing that funding is available for five years allowed organisations to better expand, to further embed and to create even more sustainable self management engagements. For example, across a wider geographical and socio-economic reach, while simultaneously building up meaningful connections at both individual and community levels as a result of the longer time available.

Having more time allowed projects to respond to challenges in a reflective way. When issues arose, organisations had the capacity to evaluate the best strategy of action and to change course as required to respond to demands and opportunities. This resulted in even better opportunities for participants to self manage and helped projects to adapt and continue delivering services when, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Trust

Longer, secure funding supported projects to drive a sustained change in attitudes and culture, which in turn allowed individuals to learn more about self management. Projects were able to support people to build up extended engagements and deeper trust not only towards the organisations they received support from but towards themselves, as well as to gain acceptance that they are in the driving seat and can have control through self management.

Scope

Due to the characteristics of the Self Management Transforming Fund, organisations offered a wider variety of support as part of their projects. This meant even more diverse self management courses and opportunities and, therefore, a better chance for individuals to find engagements that would suit them.

The earlier mentioned geographical and socio-economic expansion of projects brought self management to previously unreached communities and allowed individuals to feel better able to self manage on their terms.

Continuation of delivery

Across all the nine projects, people's individual stories expressed joy at having had engagements that they could rely on an ongoing basis. This peace of mind extended to the organisations as well, as, having secure long term funding, they did not need to worry about otherwise annually reoccurring issues such as how they would be able to support individuals should they not secure funding for the year to come.

Having consistency also allowed people to explore their skills and, for example, take on elements of delivery to improve and expand the projects run, enhancing its sustainability and reach, taking self management to people not involved before.

Conclusion

The Self Management Fund has been administered by the ALLIANCE on behalf of the Scottish Government for 12 years with projects' lengths varying from a few months to several years.

Long term secure funding of the third sector can contribute to enhancing self management by having the ability to make project activity more sustainable by, for example, allowing more time to develop the project engagements and to respond to challenges, by supporting improved trust in organisations as well as within individuals in themselves to being in the driving seat, by having a consistent and reliable delivery of courses, and by reaching a larger scope of individuals both geographically and socio-economically.

It is clear from the above results that there is a strong need and a well-founded reason to fund more projects for longer periods of time in the future to enhance the sustainability of self management across Scotland.



About the ALLIANCE

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. We have a growing membership of over 3,000 national and local third sector organisations, associates in the statutory and private sectors, disabled people, people living with long term conditions and unpaid carers. Many NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Medical Practices, Third Sector Interfaces, Libraries and Access Panels are also members. The ALLIANCE is a strategic partner of the Scottish Government and has close working relationships, several of which are underpinned by Memorandum of Understanding, with many national NHS Boards, academic institutions and key organisations spanning health, social care, housing and digital technology.

Our vision is for a Scotland where people of all ages who are disabled or living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers, have a strong voice and enjoy their right to live well, as equal and active citizens, free from discrimination, with support and services that put them at the centre.

The ALLIANCE has three core aims; we seek to:

- Ensure people are at the centre, that their voices, expertise and rights drive policy and sit at the heart of design, delivery and improvement of support and services.
- Support transformational change, towards approaches that work with individual and community assets, helping people to stay well, supporting human rights, self management, co-production and independent living.
- Champion and support the third sector as a vital strategic and delivery partner and foster better cross-sector understanding and partnership.



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people at the centre



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The ALLIANCE is supported by a grant from the Scottish Government.

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