



The Horse's Mouth

A NEWSLETTER FOR USERS OF
DIRECT PAYMENTS AND INDEPENDENT
LIVING FUND

April 2008

From the Chief Executive

I do hope that everyone had an enjoyable Easter. Now that it is over, we are almost into April and a new financial year for Wiltshire County Council. New DP rates are shown inside, do contact us if you need some assistance as a result.

One exciting development that the new financial year brings is the Individualised Budget pilot. Approximately 20 people have joined this pilot to try out Individualised Budgets as a means of providing for their care needs, and we are pleased to be involved. The aim of the pilot is to identify the problems and establish workable systems before bringing in Individualised Budgets as a mainstream option for everyone. It is hoped that they will have more flexibility and less restriction and record keeping than Direct Payments. It is an exciting time for those on the pilot. One of our Direct Payment Advisors, Louise Thorpe, has taken on the role of IB pilot support worker (in addition to her usual DP work) and she has already started to make some visits. If you are part of the IB pilot scheme and would like to meet Louise, or need her support at any time, please contact the office and we will arrange for her to contact you.

Richard Pitman, Chief Executive

P A Register

The P A Register has now been launched on our website. Adverts for Personal Assistants to register on the website will shortly appear in all local press.

To search for a PA the register, go to www.selfdirectedcare.org.uk/wdpss/Direct_Payments_in_Wiltshire.htm and follow the appropriate links. At present there are not many potential PAs on the register but we hope that numbers will quickly grow to a level that will be useful to local people who are using self directed care.

It is possible for people to register if they are only available for a few hours a week, so if your PA is looking for extra work, please tell them about the register.

Peer Support

Don't forget the new Peer Support Service, which was launched earlier this year. Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living now have a team of experienced Direct Payment and Independent Living Fund users waiting to give any new or struggling users the benefits of their experience. If you are having any problems and feel it would help to have support from someone who has already been there, do contact our office and we will pass on a referral.

**The copy deadline for the June issue is
Monday 19th May**

Payroll Pieces

Tax Year End

It's here again! Anyone who runs a wages scheme for their PAs, registered with the tax office for tax and NI deductions, needs to send their year end return (P35) to the tax office by 19 May. If you use our payroll scheme, we will complete this for you, and all but two of our payroll service users have agreed that we can submit this electronically, so you need take no further action.

We will forward you copies of what has been submitted in due course. Many of you will receive a P35 from the tax office for completion. You do not need to send this to us. We can produce them on our computer. Please just file them with your Direct Payment records, in case they are ever required. If you have any queries please contact Pam.

Forms P46

When a new employee starts you need to send to us a new employee starter form, available from our office. You also need to send in a P45, which the employee will give you, from their last employer. If they do not have one of these they need to fill in a P46 so that we can get a tax code for them. When you send this to us, please put your name on it also.

News from Other Organisations

Social Care Workforce needs to increase

Skills for Care calculate that the adult social care workforce could double to 2.5 million by 2025 to meet the needs of millions of people who use services.

The State of the Adult Social Care Workforce report states that if all who want direct payments receive them or have support care provided on a highly personalised basis then the total workforce would need to increase from the present 1.39 million to 2.5 million.

Are you finding it more difficult to find PAs than it used to be? Let us know.

Independent Living Strategy

During July 2006, the Independent Living Review was set up to develop a five-year strategy for independent living.

The aim of the strategy is that:

Disabled people (including older disabled people) who need support to go about their daily lives will have greater choice and control over how support is provided

Disabled people (including older disabled people) will have greater access to housing, education, employment, leisure and transport opportunities and to participation in family and community life.

The Strategy sets out a five-year plan that seeks to realise the Government's aim that all disabled people (including older disabled people) should be able to live autonomous lives, and to have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people. It takes a life course approach, from young people in transition to adulthood and including older people.

It has been developed in partnership with disabled people to ensure it reflects people's knowledge and real life experiences of the barriers to independent living and can be found on the following website: www.officefordisability.gov.uk/independent/strategy.asp where your views are requested.

Training for Personal Assistants

One of the effects of Direct Payments and other forms of the personalisation agenda is that the service user (if they become an employer) becomes responsible for any training requirements for their PA. This can have benefits, as you can train your PA to your way of doing things. However, there is a cost implication. WDPSS are happy to support any Direct Payment users to find suitable training courses and the funding for these courses. Two organisations, 'Train to Gain' and 'Skills for Care' can be helpful. We are also hoping, with support from Wiltshire County Council, to look into the provision of affordable courses on regularly requested topics. Watch this space! Meanwhile please contact us if you require support with meeting your training requirements, and do not forget the small scriptographic booklets we have available, which provide very basic training opportunities for a cost of only £2. For more information contact Alison in the office or speak to your Direct Payment Advisor.

Thank you

Thank you to the Health Advocacy Partnership who, instead of sending Christmas cards this year, made donations to charity, and thank you to the service user who suggested Compass Disability Services as worthy recipients. This was seen as a real vote of confidence in the service we provide. The £25 received will be put to good use.

New minimum wage rates from October

The adult National Minimum Wage (for people aged 21 and over) is to rise from £5.52 to £5.73 per hour from October 2008. There will also be increases from £4.60 to £4.77 per hour for 18-21 year olds, and from £3.40 to £3.53 per hour for 16-17 year olds. You should consider this in your budgeting.

50% off care qualification

Care NVQs at Level 3 with City of Bristol College. The College has access to funding to offer this qualification at half price - now only £346. Designed for care staff at supervisory level, the college's Health and Social Care NVQ 3 ensures that staff are working to national standards and offering high levels of care.

The limited offer continues until the end of April. Contact 0117 312 5020 or partnersinbusiness@cityofbristol.ac.uk or visit the website: www.pib.cityofbristol.ac.uk

South West Personal Assistant Guide

Skills for Care South West and Care Learning have produced a guide for people on direct payments who wish to employ a personal assistant.

This guide is designed to give some tips and ideas on how to go about recruiting a personal assistant. It includes the things that people on direct payments need to consider and where they can find out more information. It highlights most of the legal requirements an individual would need to consider as an employer.

The guide is available via www.skillsforcaresw.org.uk or www.carelearning.org.uk

New Direct Payment Rates

From 1 April Direct Payment rates will increase as follows. Respite Care and overnight rates will also increase. If you require assistance with reworking your budget as a result, please let us know.

	From		To
PA rate	£12.75	→	£13.20
Domiciliary care rate	£15.00	→	£16.35
New lower PA rate	£11.05	→	£11.45
Parent enabler rate	£9.00	→	£9.30

DP User's Corner

This space is for DP users to give or ask for advice from one another. If you have any difficulties in managing your Direct Payment, or have found any great solutions, share them with others. If anyone wants an entry here please let Alison know through the contacts below.

WCC Finance Returns

I have been asked to confirm the current WCC DP Finance Team filing requirements, as some people have been confused. The team require the completed finance return for each period, together with the bank statement for the same period. You do not need to send in expenditure receipts, though these should be retained in case they are requested in the future.

Don't miss this important opportunity to shape your public sector services

We have been asked to promote the following **consultation events** on the 'Development of a Commissioning Strategy and Plan for People with Physical Impairment Living in Wiltshire'

The events will be led by Geraldine Bentley and will be held as follows:

Monday 7th April 2008

Conference Room, Bridge House, Stallard Street, Trowbridge

Tuesday 8th April 2008

The White Room, Salisbury Art Centre, Salisbury

Wednesday 9th April 2008

Wessex Room, The Corn Exchange, Devizes

From 10.00 am to 1.00 pm at all venues, followed by lunch
Travelling costs will be reimbursed.

If you wish to attend please contact Geraldine Bentley at
Voluntary Action West Wilts, Bridge House, Stallard Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9AE
or phone 01225 767993 for a booking form.

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