



The Horse's Mouth

A NEWSLETTER FOR USERS OF
DIRECT PAYMENTS, INDEPENDENT
LIVING FUND OR THOSE WHO SELF- FUND

January 2007

From the Chief Executive

Thank you to all those of you who responded to our user satisfaction survey. The results were extremely positive and some are reproduced overleaf. However, we still wish to respond to the few negative comments made. One area of concern for some people was the late arrival of payslips. We have therefore changed our postage policy and payslips will now be sent by first class post. We are also conducting a survey of the length of time postal deliveries take to arrive and if we find too many instances of first class not arriving the next day we will be contacting the Post Office. Thank you for your support in this.

The other area noted for improvement was the newsletter. Unfortunately the cost of colour production, which would no doubt make it more enjoyable to read for many, would eat into the budget and mean that money would have to be diverted away from service delivery. However, one reader suggested that the newsletter would be more interesting if it had contributions from other DP users. We agree, so please send in any comments you have about direct payments, how it has affected your life, how easy you find it to manage the direct payment etc. We'd love to include them in future issues of 'The Horse's Mouth'.

Best Wishes

Richard Pitman, Chief Executive

WCIL Newsletter

Whenever the release of the WCIL newsletter is shortly before ours, we are happy to include it in our mailing. Their newsletter talks about the direct payments payroll and we would just like to add to that article our confirmation that the payroll service is seen as a central part of our service. Approximately half of DP users in Wiltshire use the service. We will not be removing it and have never intended to.

Self-employed Status

Revenue and Customs now have a checklist 'tool' on their website to help people decide on their employment status. Don't forget our advice is that a PA will very rarely be seen as self employed.

Request from Pam

If you send payroll papers in to Pam please include your name, so that she knows who the employer is as well as the employee.

If you would like this newsletter in any other format, please tell us.

**Copy Deadline for the
April Issue is
16 March 2007**

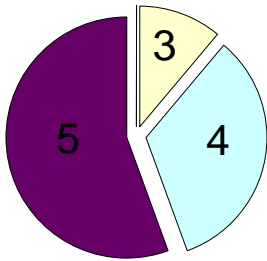
Satisfaction Survey Results

These pie charts show the results of some of the questions answered by the 69 people who responded.

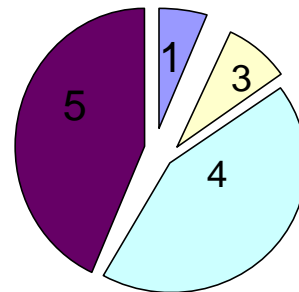
Answers were graded 1 to 5, 1 being bad, 5 being good.

Thank you to everyone who took part by completing the questionnaire. Your responses will be fed into the development of the service.

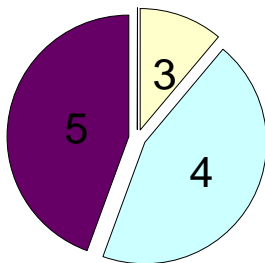
Are you happy with the level of support received?



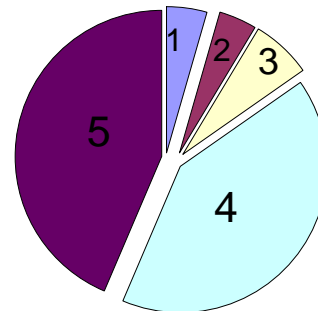
If someone had to return your call, did they do so within a reasonable time?



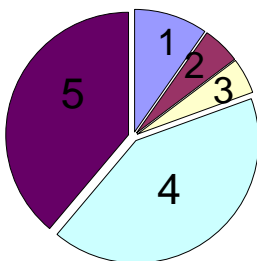
How happy are you with your ability to contact your advisor when you need to?



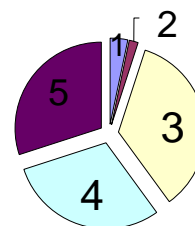
Did you find it easy to obtain the contact details when phoning the office?



Have your payslips arrived on time?



Do you feel that you have been given sufficient opportunity to comment on the service?



PA Training

Over the last few months WDPSS has been working on ways for you to access training for employed PA's and on the funding to pay for this training. Funding sources dry up and reopen in different places so often that it's almost impossible to give you details of what's currently available. We therefore suggest that if you have a training need for your PA you contact us and we will try to find a solution that fits your needs and budget, and remember – you are the best person to train your PA to meet your needs. If you would like support or advice on this please ask.

At present we can tell you about the following:

Short Courses (one day or half day) are available in a range of subjects including Health and Safety, Moving and Handling, Administering Medicines, Confusion and Dementia, Protection of Vulnerable Adults, First Aid, Food Hygiene and many others. If you have a need, ask us and we may be able to set up a course.

For these courses we will normally need to put together a group of interested people before the course can be run, so please tell us what courses your PA may like to do and we will start to do this. As a result there may be a time delay before the course can be run. Unfortunately there will also be a cost of £250 for these courses, which your Direct Payment monies will probably not stretch to, but funding may be available (see below).

New Common Induction Standards training is a four day induction course for new PA's and we have been told that funding is now available for this through the Learning and Skills Council in Wiltshire. Each employer will need to apply separately, but we do have forms for this and can support you with their completion. Please contact Alison in the office if you wish to follow this up.

NVQ Programmes are also available in Wiltshire and can be funded through Train to Gain, although the NVQ training funds have mostly been used up for this financial year. More will be available from April however.

Funding for training

Carers are eligible for funded training, providing they are:

- 19 years old or older
- Have a contract of employment
- Do not already have a level 2 qualification, or 5 GCSEs (or equivalent) at Grades A - C, or qualifications higher than these
- Are working in England
- Are a British Citizen or EU national with legal right to work here (the provider will check any queries arising in this area).

For anywhere in the South West, the employer should register their interest in accessing funding, for eligible staff, by calling 08456 047 047 (Train to Gain). The brokers who will deal with your request have been briefed that Direct Payment Users may be calling. Unfortunately WDPSS can not access this service on your behalf, but if you require support in accessing it, please contact us and one of our Direct Payment Advisers will help.

All of the above is correct at this time, but has changed so many times in recent months that things could change again. However, please be assured that we are here to help you through the minefield and will do so on an individual basis as need arises.

Training booklets

Small booklets for PA training will shortly be available from SAIN on the following topics:

Kitchen Safety

Moving People Safely,

Assisting a Wheelchair User,

Using Hoists,

Home Safety,

First Aid,

Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls,

Preventing Food Contamination

These booklets will cost less than £2 to buy and can be paid for out of your Direct Payment.

Please contact the office if you wish to request one.

Payroll Pieces

End of year Returns (P35's)

Most DP users who operate a PAYE scheme will have had an end of year return (or form P35) sent to them by the Revenue. This must be back with the Inland Revenue by 19 May. It relates to the year to 5 April 2007 and can not therefore be completed until after then.

Everyone who uses our payroll service should put the form in a safe place for now, as you will need it in April. Pam will be producing a computerised P35 by mid April for everyone. This will be sent to you with full instructions of what to do next. If anyone is at all uncertain please phone Alison or Pam in the office and they will be happy to help. If you have a regular DPA, they will also be able to advise.

Online Filing

Following letters received from the Revenue and Customs office, many people have asked us about filing their end of year returns online (via the internet). The payroll service is not equipped to do this for you at present. However, if you wish to benefit from the cash incentive from the Inland Revenue, anyone who has internet access can file the figures Pam provides them with online themselves. If you find this difficult then the Direct Payment Advisors can visit you to help you with online filing. If you require assistance, please either contact your usual advisor or the office, who will put someone in touch with you.

WCC Direct Payment Returns

Many of you will have received a letter from the Wiltshire County Council Direct Payments Finance Team telling you that you need now only send your returns into them on a quarterly basis. The returns themselves are also being simplified. For many this will reduce the amount of work you have to do to account for how you are spending your Direct Payment, and for some of the simpler cases where WDPSS advisors do your bookkeeping, it means that the advisor will only need to visit quarterly. However, we would just like to be clear that, where the nature of the work done by WDPSS means that leaving visits for three months would complicate matters or mean that other support is not given, the advisors will still be able to visit you to provide required support, whether this is monthly or more or less often.

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