



# The Horse's Mouth

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

January 2008

## From the Chief Executive

Richard Pitman, our Chief Executive is not available to write his piece this issue, because his wife has just given birth to twins. Richard's achievements since his road accident in his early twenties have been exceptional, but this must be the proudest achievement for him and his wife. The staff and trustees of Compass Disability Services (who manage the support service) wanted to say a public 'CONGRATULATIONS'!



## Peer Support Launched

Our contract with Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living is now up and running and they have formed a small group of experienced Direct Payment users who are able to provide support to new and less confident DP users. The group is meeting monthly to ensure they stay up to date with any new developments. All new DP users will be made aware of this service by our Direct Payment Advisors but, even if you have been on Direct Payments for some time, you might appreciate a chat with someone who has been through it all themselves and knows exactly where you are coming from. If you do, please contact us and we will ask the peer support group to contact you.



**Call us if you would like support from another Direct Payment user**

**The copy deadline for the March issue is  
Thursday 22 February**

## Payroll Pieces

<b>Information check</b>	<b>Online filing incentive</b>	<b>Using the online incentive</b>
<p>A few months ago Pam sent out schedules to all payroll users to check that the references and other details held here were correct. This was because we had found some inaccuracies in the information we took over from the last service providers. Most people have returned theirs, but if you have not yet please could you do so. This will help with the year end returns and make sure there are fewer problems when these are filed with the tax office.</p>	<p>If you have not yet heard from the tax office about the cash incentive for filing last years end of year return on line, you will not be alone. In some cases there are problems with the tax office records of year end returns, which only come to light when the return is chased. In these cases we need to contact the tax office on your behalf to sort it out, because only we have the confirmation receipts. Please let Pam know if you need her to chase up your online incentive.</p>	<p>Once approved you can use the online incentive to cover your monthly payments due to the tax office. We can give you a form to keep track of this if you contact us. If your tax payments are small it will take you a long time to recover the incentive, so you can ask the tax office to send you a cheque. Wiltshire County Council have said that this money must be paid in to your Direct Payment bank account and used to purchase the things agreed in your care package.</p>

## News from Other Organisations

### **Fund offers new lease of life for older people**

A new venture aimed at improving the lives of older people in Wiltshire has been launched. The Lease of Life scheme has been set up to provide small grants to groups that promote an active lifestyle for older people aimed at enhancing their physical, social or mental wellbeing. Wiltshire County Council is working with Wiltshire and Swindon Activity and Sports Partnership (WASP) and Help the Aged, to offer individual grants of up to £300 per year. The first round of applications will be considered on 31 January 2008 and the deadline for applications is noon 30 January. To request an application pack or get further details please contact Katherine Dew at the County Council on 01722 432318 or 07836 341372.

### **Fish Insurance changes**

Anyone employing their own PA will be aware that they need employers' liability insurance, and most will be receiving this from Fish Insurance, paid for by the County Council. We have just heard that Fish have introduced a new 'Independent Living' policy and the old 'Personal Accident Employment Protection' policies will not be renewable when the current policies cease. There are two levels of cover under the new policy, basic and full. The basic cover is similar to the old style policy, but does not include personal accident insurance. The full cover includes several aspects of cover that have not previously been available, such as tribunal legal fees. More details of the cover under each type of policy can be found on the specific Fish website [www.independentliving\\_insurance.co.uk](http://www.independentliving_insurance.co.uk), or by phoning Fish on 01772 724442. Wiltshire County Council are currently deciding whether they will fund basic or full cover are contacting Fish to ensure that you are covered whilst this decision is made. Advice on the best cover for you is also available from our office or Direct Payment Advisors.

## Individualised Budgets

When the Government announced, on 10 December, the 'new' programme that will revolutionise social care, most of us will have realised that they were talking about individualised budgets and that it wasn't so new an idea. For the last two years there have been pilots happening across the country to see how effective these are at giving people more independence and control over their care. The pilots are due to report next year, but the Government has decided they are a good idea and have announced an injection of money into local councils, which will be ring-fenced to make sure it is used to develop individualised budgets.

As most of you will know, Wiltshire County Council had already started work on their individualised budget pilot and written to Direct Payment users to offer them the chance to take part. We understand that 18 people have taken up this offer and it is hoped that the people will be receiving their budgets from April 2008.

So:

### **What are individual budgets?**

An individual budget is a sum of money allocated to an individual who is assessed as needing personal care.

### **What is the Difference between Individual Budgets and Direct Payments?**

A direct payment is a cash payment for social care from the local authority instead of services. An individual budget can cover more than personal social care, for example access to work, and can be a cash payment, or arranged services, or a combination of both.

Initial conversations with Wiltshire County Council suggest that the restrictions on individualised budgets will be less than we have been used to with Direct Payments and the money will be able to be spent in any way that meets the care plan (provided it is legal!). This should have a really positive effect on the quality of some people's lives.

As the project in Wiltshire develops we will be able to report on this, hopefully with some positive examples.

## Contract Monitoring

You will be aware that Wiltshire Direct Payment Support Service have a contract with Wiltshire County Council to deliver support services to Direct Payment and Independent Living Fund users. We have just had our contract monitoring meeting, which was very positive and included discussions about increasing the uptake of Direct Payments. As a result the Councils internal procedures are to be reviewed in the new year in order to simplify them for both Council staff and potential Direct Payment users. WDPSS will be involved in this process and are keen to feed into the process any comments from existing users. If you feel the process of getting onto Direct Payments could have been made easier for you please get in touch with Alison so that she can feed in your comments.

## Direct Payment Talks

Do you belong to a group whose members could benefit from a talk on Direct Payments?

We want to make sure that everyone has the knowledge of Direct Payments to enable them to decide whether they should have one or not.

As readers will know, Direct Payments can enable you to have more choice and control over how your care support is delivered.

Our Development Worker, Alison Mawhood, is keen to visit organisations and groups of people who might be eligible for Direct Payments, to explain to them what a Direct Payment is, who might be eligible, and how they could go about getting one. If you would like Alison to come to your group please contact using the contacts at the end of this newsletter.

## DP User's Corner

This space is for DP users to give to 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.

## Have you seen our new website?

Our website has recently been updated and is hopefully a lot more user friendly. Please check it out on:

<http://www.selfdirectedcare.org.uk/>

and give us some feedback. Is it easy for you to read? Does it contain all the information you need? What's missing? What doesn't need to be there? Alison will be updating the website at least once a month to make it as useful for you as possible and would be really pleased to hear from you.

From this website you can also access the main Compass Disability Services website, to see what we get up to outside Wiltshire.

We would like to send this letter by email to as many people as possible. This will save both paper and postage and is much better for the environment. If you would like to receive it electronically, please let Alison or Pavla have your email address.

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

## Contact Us

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## Fancy yourself as a biographer?

We want some examples from Wiltshire people of how they have used Direct Payments, Independent Living Fund or Individualised Budgets to improve their lives. If you have a positive story to tell and would like to be on our website please contact Alison at our head office. If you wish, she can change your name and any other personal details so you can not be recognised.

## You can now email your returns!

The Adult Services Finance Team have asked us to let everyone know that your financial returns can now be sent to them by email at this address:

[DACSDirectPayments@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:DACSDirectPayments@wiltshire.gov.uk).

If you wish to do this you can download the form from our website or contact us to get a copy of the form on disk.

## Cash payments

We have also been asked to remind you that you can not draw cash from your Direct Payment account, unless you have prior agreement from the finance team.

Managed by Compass Disability Services