



# Your Life Your Choice

care and support designed with you

## Direct Payments update

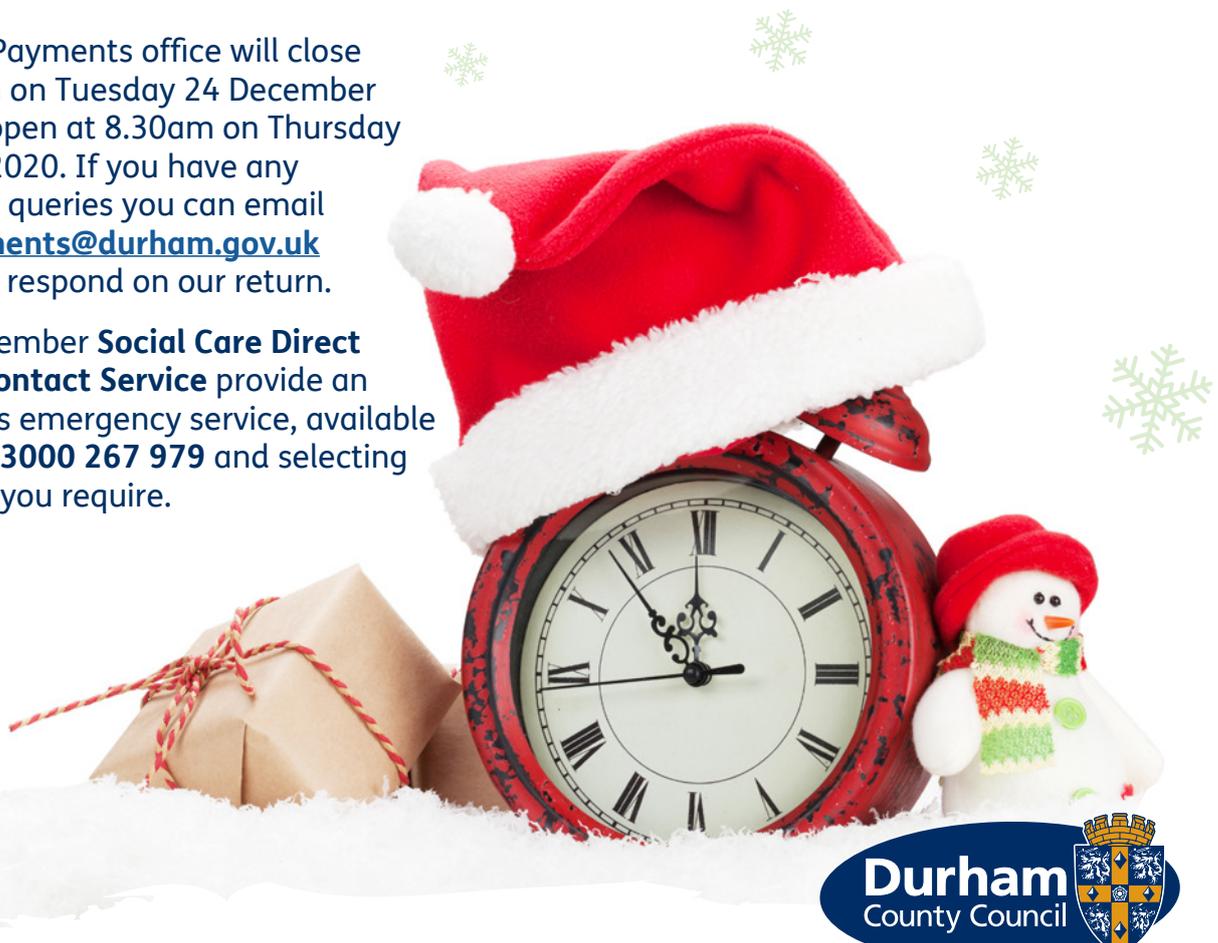
As 2019 draws to a close, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

In this edition, we have included information on our Christmas opening hours, details of an employment workshop and some information on training courses for personal assistants.

### Christmas opening times

The Direct Payments office will close at 12.45pm on Tuesday 24 December and will reopen at 8.30am on Thursday 2 January 2020. If you have any non-urgent queries you can email [directpayments@durham.gov.uk](mailto:directpayments@durham.gov.uk) and we will respond on our return.

Please remember **Social Care Direct** and **First Contact Service** provide an out of hours emergency service, available by calling **03000 267 979** and selecting the service you require.





## Disclosure and Barring Service - Change of practice



On 1 November 2019 changes were made to our DBS practice **for adults\***. We are sending out a factsheet to adults who receive Direct Payments and are employers. You should receive this in the coming months.

If you have any questions about the factsheet, please telephone us on **03000 268 200**.

Durham County Council recommend that you carry out a DBS check on employees prior to employment. Social workers will no longer complete a risk assessment if you choose to not to have a DBS completed, as the employer it is your responsibility to consider the risk of an employee starting work without a completed DBS check.

We advise that checks are renewed every 5 years, however, we will no longer be contacting employers or employees to advise when a DBS is due to be renewed. It will now be the responsibility of the employer to contact us to arrange a renewal.

**\*These changes only apply if the service user is over 18.**

## NHS Free Flu Vaccination

We're reminding those who are [eligible](#) for the NHS free flu vaccination to take up the offer to stay well this winter. There are a number of things you can do to prepare against the cold weather:

- Ask your GP if you are eligible for a free flu vaccine.
- At the first sign of a cough or cold, get immediate advice from your pharmacist before it gets more serious.
- Speak to your pharmacist about medicines you should have in stock over winter.
- Pick up prescription medications before the Christmas holidays start, as many GPs and pharmacies will close over this period.
- It is important to keep warm in winter, so heat your home to at least 18°C, if you can. You might prefer your living room to be slightly warmer.
- If you need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Visit [durham.gov.uk/warmandwell](http://durham.gov.uk/warmandwell) for information and advice on how to stay warm and safe this winter.



## Personal assistant registers



Personal assistants looking for employment can change their availability on a number of websites. Durham County Council have two registers that you may find useful if you are wanting to employ a personal assistant. These are:

Locate - a DCC website for adults receiving Direct Payments  
[www.durhamlocate.org.uk](http://www.durhamlocate.org.uk)

Families Information Service - a DCC website for children receiving Direct Payments  
[www.countydurhamfamilies.info](http://www.countydurhamfamilies.info)

Payroll company Accountability also have their own personal assistant register, for more information contact Accountability directly on **0191 492 1222**.

If your personal assistant is looking for additional work, please share this information with them.

**Please note the personal assistants listed on these registers have not been vetted and you should follow the normal employment process including interview, correct application paper work, DBS checks and references.**

## Personal assistant training



Personal assistants and anyone who is interested in becoming a personal assistant can now access

training through Durham County Council's new County Durham Care Academy. The Personal Assistant Induction Training is a free two-day course which covers:

- **emergency first aid**
- **safeguarding**
- **infection control**
- **food hygiene**

There are a number of courses held throughout the year in various locations across County Durham. You can keep up to date with future courses by visiting [www.durham.gov.uk/careacademy](http://www.durham.gov.uk/careacademy)

We also offer a range of online courses and can apply for funding for appropriate training courses, to find out more, contact the County Durham Care Academy on **03000 266 155** or email [careacademy@durham.gov.uk](mailto:careacademy@durham.gov.uk)

## Contact us

For more information about Direct Payments contact the Direct Payments team at

✉ [directpayments@durham.gov.uk](mailto:directpayments@durham.gov.uk)

☎ **03000 268 200**

📍 **Direct Payments, Room G 83/88, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UG**

🌐 [www.durham.gov.uk/directpayments](http://www.durham.gov.uk/directpayments)

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Audio



Large print

[directpayments@durham.gov.uk](mailto:directpayments@durham.gov.uk)

**03000 268 200**