



Your Life Your Choice

care and support designed with you



Direct Payments update

As 2015 draws to an end, the Direct Payments Service would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In this edition we give you details of our holiday opening hours, our planned office move and lots of important information if you employ your own staff.

With this edition we've also included an information flyer about our Equipment Advice Service that we hope you will find useful.

Don't forget if there is something you would like us to feature in the next issue please contact us on 03000 268 200 or email directpayments@durham.gov.uk

Holiday opening hours

The Direct Payments office will be closed over the holiday period, closing from noon on Thursday 24 December 2015 and re-opening on Monday 4 January 2016. If you need to contact us you can email us or call us and leave a message on our answerphone and we will pick it up on our return.

Please remember Social Care Direct and First Contact provide an out of hours EMERGENCY service, available by calling **03000 26 79 79**.

Office move

The Direct Payments team will be moving offices in the New Year. Our telephone number and email address will remain the same. We will send you details of our new address once details are confirmed.

Paid annual leave for your staff

Please ensure that your staff take all of their paid annual leave entitlement by 31/03/2016.

National living wage

The Government will introduce a compulsory minimum wage for all staff over 25 years of age in April 2016. Initially, it will be set at £7.20 an hour, with a target of it reaching more than £9.00 an hour by 2020.

For more information visit www.gov.uk and search for nlw.





Employers who have overnight care/sleepovers

There have been updates to legislation around employees being paid minimum wage. If an employee is required to sleepover at the place of work they should be paid at minimum wage rates. It may be possible to pay a lower rate for sleepovers, if the daytime hourly rate exceeds minimum wage by a sufficient amount ie if the average hourly rate for all hours worked (standard and sleepover) meets the minimum wage. If you think you may be affected by this we suggest you seek advice from the legal company connected to your insurance.

Fish Insurance – Peninsula –
0844 892 2772

Premier Insurance – MSL –
0161 603 2167

Please have your insurance policy number available when you call.

The Direct Payments team will be contacting those who access Direct Payments who pay a fixed 'overnight' or 'sleepover' rate that is lower than minimum wage. It may be necessary to rethink how you can use your budget to continue to meet your needs or in some cases it may be necessary to approach your social worker to see if a revised budget amount is available.



If you employ your own staff

If you are an employer it is important to remember that before timesheets are sent to the payroll company they must be checked and agreed by both yourself as the employer and by your employee. By both parties signing the timesheets it confirms that the hours on the timesheets are agreed as correct. Please remember as the employer it is important that you keep a copy of your employee records. This may also be helpful if your employees have an employment query in the future.

Training sessions

Mark Bates LTD (previously Premier Care Insurance) delivered two workshops on Employment and Pensions for Employers in October. The day was very successful and those who attended said they found the information really useful. We hope to run these sessions again in the New Year.

Please contact us if you are interested in attending or to give us your suggestions for future workshops that may be useful for you.

Audit reminder

Remember to keep your invoices from any agency/organisation that you use and any related receipts. You will be asked to send these in to us when your review or audit is due. Even if you pay by Standing Order you are entitled to an invoice or regular statement so you can check you are paying for the hours you received.



Using a Direct Payments Card



Mr M has Direct Payments to pay for his care package. Until recently he managed his Direct Payments using a separate bank account but after speaking to a member of the Direct Payments team he decided to change to a Direct Payments Card.

He found the process to change to a Direct Payments Card quick and simple. Mr M said **“I’ve had no problems using a Direct Payments Card and there are lots of advantages, it’s easy to use and audit and is a safe and secure way to pay for my care. I would recommend a Direct Payments Card to everyone”**.

If you are interested in changing to a Direct Payments Card or just want to find out more email us on directpayments@durham.gov.uk or call **03000 268 200**.

Stay well this winter

Winter can be challenging on the health of those with long-term conditions but there a number of things which can help prepare against the cold weather. Protect against flu by getting the flu vaccination, people with long-term health conditions can receive this free from their GP or pharmacist. It is important to keep warm in winter – both inside and outdoors, so if possible keep homes heated to at least 18°C (65°F) and at the first sign of illness, seek immediate advice and help from your pharmacist.

If you need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 or visit www.nhs.uk. The Stay Well This Winter campaign can help you and your family prepare for winter. Visit www.nhs.uk/staywell for more information.

Need help **locating** care and support?

locate

Care and support in County Durham



This free online resource provides information to help you make plans now and in the future.

www.durhamlocate.org.uk

Durham
County Council



Adult abuse

Every day vulnerable adults in County Durham suffer ill treatment in many different forms including physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse and financial abuse. We know this happens and we also understand that many instances of abuse are not reported.

Durham County Council's Social Care Direct (Tel. **03000 26 79 79**) is the single point of contact for reporting abuse or seeking advice. If you see or hear something that concerns you and you suspect that abuse may be happening, or someone tells you they have been abused call Social Care Direct. If the person is in immediate danger call 999 straight away before calling Social Care Direct.



Social Care Direct
03000 26 79 79

Children and Young People's Network

If you are a parent or carer of someone under 25 years old with a special educational need or disability you can register them with the Children and Young People's Network. Once registered you can access a free e-newsletter with information on activities and short breaks. For more information or to register on the network please visit: www.durham.gov.uk/cypn

Children and
Young People's
Network

Looking after someone?

If you look after someone who can't manage without your help you are a carer.

There are thousands of unpaid carers in County Durham, if you're one of them; Durham County Carers Support has a range of information, support and advice to help you.

Find out more at www.durhamcarers.info or call Durham County Carers Support on **0300 005 12 13** or Family Action - The Bridge Young Carer's Service on **0191 383 2520**.



To find out more

For more information about Direct Payments you can contact the Direct Payments team on **03000 268 200**.

You can access detailed information about Direct Payments by visiting www.durham.gov.uk/directpayments

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.



Braille



Audio



Large print

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03000 268 200