

NEWS & VIEWS



SPRING EDITION 2014



Welcome to a bumper edition of our Newsletter for people who use Direct Payments in Knowsley.

We hope you find lots of interesting information, help and advice in this issue. Please remember that if you have a story to share or information to pass on, please get in touch.



An Invitation for you, your family and friends

On Thursday 19 June KDC is hosting a special Summer Afternoon Tea Party to mark National Learning Disability Week. You and your family are invited to come along and join in the fun. We will be unveiling a unique piece of public art, designed and produced by our friends with learning disabilities and of course there will be plenty of tea and cakes.

Staff will be on hand with any information you may need and we will be raising money on the day to help our work to highlight the issue of Disability Hate Crime in Knowsley.

Weather permitting, tables and chairs will be set out on the green in front of our office on Tarbock Road, Huyton. In the event of rain we will be in the Caldwell Centre. We hope to see you there - anytime from 1pm to 4pm.



TIME FOR A BREAK?

Now that the weather is getting warmer, many of you will be thinking about getting away for a weekend or short holiday. Don't forget that Direct Payments can still be used to pay for short-term breaks – despite the cuts. You will need to ask for an assessment from social services – phone the Knowsley Access Team on **443 2600**.

Once you have been assessed as needing a short break (sometimes called respite) you will be able to decide how to spend the money. You may wish to choose to pay to go away to a hotel or stay with friends or a few days in a traditional respite service. You can also choose to buy extra support at home so that your carer can have a break. Remember that carers are entitled to apply for separate funding so that they can have a break away from the person they care for. They should contact the Knowsley Carers Centre on **549 1412** to apply.



You can keep up to date with all the latest news and information via our website.

Visit us at www.kdc.org.uk.



Follow us on twitter.



Make us a friend on Facebook.

Meet the Team

The KDC Direct Payments Team is here to help. We have a wealth of knowledge and experience so please feel free to contact us at any time for advice and information about any aspect of the scheme.

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Goodbye & Good Luck!



We were sad to say goodbye to Diane Thompson who has been leading the work to expand our Direct Payments Peer Support Groups for the past year. Her hard work and commitment has enabled new groups to be established in

Kirkby, Prescott and Halewood and she has organised some excellent workshops covering issues from being a good employer to setting up trusts and making wills.

Diane has secured a fantastic full time position with Rathbones where she will be putting her skills and experience to good use.

Diane has made many friends and helped lots of people while she has been with us and has promised to keep in touch. I'm sure you'll join us all in wishing her every success for the future.



Making choice real for disabled people

independent living fund

Despite the successful challenge to the Government's original decision to close the fund in April 2015, it was announced in March that the Independent Living Fund (ILF) will definitely close in June 2015.

The decision follows the undertaking of a new Equality Impact Assessment which acknowledges the likelihood that ILF users will face a reduction in care and support packages with some disabled people losing all their support if their needs do not fit within local eligibility criteria. Further information for those receiving ILF in Knowsley will be made available early next year - watch this space!

Knowsley Council shares its latest spending review



Knowsley Council

Members of the local Disability Partnership Boards recently received information about plans to reduce the amount of money spent on social care for adults in Knowsley. We heard that because of central Government cuts, Knowsley Council needs to save a total of £30m over the next 3 years. Reductions in spending on adult social care have been kept to a minimum, however, around 10%, or £4,268,000, will be cut from the budget.



This means that more people will be paying towards services, for example paying transport charges and buying their own equipment. Day centre attendance will be limited and there will be very little support to help people get out and about to socialise and be part of their community. The Council will be looking to use more assistive technology to help people stay independent, e.g. Telecare equipment. Charitable agencies like ours will be expected to develop community-led preventative support solutions using volunteers as well as helping people to support each other.

There are trying times ahead and here at KDC, we will be doing our best to help people overcome some of the changes affecting them.

Autism and Aspergers-drop-in support for adults

The Autism and Asperger Union is a social group for adults with autism or Asperger syndrome living in **Knowsley, St Helens, Widnes, Warrington, Ormskirk, Skelmersdale, Runcorn or Wigan**. The group helps people to make friends, improve social skills, secure employment and live independently.

Their next meeting takes place on Tuesday 20 May between 6.30pm and 9pm at

*The Drop-in Lounge,
Millennium House,
Bickerstaffe Street,
St.Helens, WA10 1HJ.*

All welcome. For further info contact **David O'Keefe** on **07972 390 189** or **autismunion@gmail.com**



On 29 April 2014, the DWP announced that the expansion of the full Universal Credit benefit to the rest of the north west of England will start in June. Knowsley is one of twelve councils at the forefront of the work for more Jobcentres to gradually come online each week until the whole region is covered.



Universal Credit is already helping thousands of claimants to get an easier single benefit payment which stays with them as they move into work - rather than the current mixture of six different 'in' and 'out' of work benefits.

If you receive any of the following benefits:

- **Income Support**
- **Income based Job Seekers Allowance**
- **Employment & Support Allowance**
- **Housing benefit**
- **Child Tax Credits**
- **Working Tax Credit**

- then your claims will be combined into one amount and paid as Universal Credit at the end of each month. You will be expected to make and manage your claims on-line, pay your rent directly to your landlord and budget your household income month by month. Your Jobcentre adviser will be on hand to help.

KDC is 'gearing up' for Personal Health Budgets



In the last edition of our newsletter, we told you about new regulations to enable people to receive Direct Payments to purchase their healthcare needs.

NHS England has launched a programme for the voluntary and community sector to help them 'gear up' for personal health budgets so they have the knowledge, capacity and expertise to inform their local communities about personal health budgets.

We are delighted to tell you that following our successful bid, KDC has been selected as one of only 28 organisations across the country to take part.

From April 2014, people eligible for NHS continuing healthcare will have the 'right to ask' their clinical commissioning group (CCG) for a personal health budget and from October 2014, they will have the 'right to have' one. However most people don't know what a personal health budget is, let alone that they will soon be entitled to have one.

We know from recent evaluation of personal health budgets that they can help give people a better quality of life, better health outcomes and help keep them out of hospital. KDC's involvement in the programme will ensure that as many people as possible in Knowsley are aware of personal health budgets, know how to get one, and importantly know what they can expect from the NHS.

Over the next few months we will be taking part in a national development programme of learning and sharing with others and we will be developing detailed information and helpful guidance about personal health budgets for Knowsley residents. Look out for further updates in future newsletters. If you think you could benefit from a personal health budget, please contact Andy Gilbert here at **KDC** on **480 8873**.



SNOWDON MOUNTAIN CHALLENGE

RAISING MONEY FOR A VERY IMPORTANT CAUSE

A Big **THANK YOU** to all those who took part in our Snowdon Mountain Challenge on Saturday 10 May.

The turnout was tremendous and even though we had to turn back because of the poor weather conditions, money already raised from sponsorships and donations has exceeded all expectations. The money will be used by KDC to help stamp out disability hate crime in Knowsley.

Nearly 9 out of 10 people with a learning disability had been victims of hate incidents or crime according to Mencap's 'Living in Fear' study. Even so, we know that incidents of hate crime often go unreported so we are keen to raise awareness about what people should do if they feel they have been victimised because of their disability - how and where to report and what support they can expect to receive. We will also be running events and conferences across Knowsley to promote disability hate crime awareness and we are planning sessions in schools to help children and young people understand the profound effect that hate crime can have on a disabled person's life.

Special thanks go out to Mike Berry from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and Graham Beardsmore, Merseyside Police who led the walk.

If you would like to support our work, please contact Joyce Greaves on **480 4090**. To donate to our Stop Disability Hate Crime Fund, simply text **KDCS01** to **70070**.





Support for you...



Our friendly Direct Payments peer support groups are here to help make life easier for you. Meetings are held in Kirkby and Huyton and offer a chance to share your experience and get hints and tips from other users – all over a nice cup of tea. Topics discussed in recent meetings include:

How to find a good PA at short notice

What the new Care Bill means for us

How to get funding for respite and short breaks

If you use Direct Payments and would like to talk to other users about making the most of your money in these challenging times, why not come along to one of our meetings. Here are the details:

Wednesdays 1pm - 21st May, 2nd July, 13th August

The Caldwell Centre, Tarbock Road, Huyton L36 0SD

Tuesdays 1pm - 27th May, 29th July 30th September

Changing Lives - (Formerly Platform 51) 101-105
Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby L32 8SA

Local Social Groups...

For those of you who live in Prescot, you might be interested in joining the Prescot Caring Companions Social Group. They meet every Monday evening **7.30pm (till late)** at **Prescot Guild Hall, St Helens Rd, Prescot, L34 6HW**. If you are a carer 'or cared for' and fancy taking a bit of time out to meet new people, there's a warm welcome.

The Kirkby Caring Companions Social Group meets every Thursday evening from 7.30pm at the **R.A.F.A Club, Broad Lane Kirkby L32 6QG**.

Contact the Knowsley Carers Centre on **549 1412** if you would like to join either of these groups.

New on-line help to calculate benefits and tax credits

The DWP is improving its support for self service customers who want to find out what benefits and tax credits they might be able to get.

Their 'Benefits Adviser' and 'Better Off Calculator' systems have now been switched off. Instead GOV.UK visitors are being signposted to high quality, independent, online Benefit Calculators.

You can use a Benefits Calculator to find out what benefits you could get and how to claim. You can answer questions anonymously. You will need accurate information about your savings, earnings, existing benefits and pensions, outgoings e.g. rent, mortgage, childcare and your local housing allowance limit.

Please see following link:

www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators

Free training for your PAs

Knowsley has published its new training prospectus for people who work in social care and now is a good time to think about booking courses which will benefit you and your PAs. Sessions on offer include:

- Moving and handling of people
- Infection control and prevention
- Medication management
- Basic first aid
- Food safety
- Dementia awareness

For full details, including dates, venues and how to book, visit our website.

Go to www.kdc.org.uk and simply click on the **Red** 'Direct Payments' button and follow the link to '*Free Training for Personal Assistants*' on the right-hand side of the page.



Free Training for You...

Don't forget that our very helpful Direct Payments Information Sessions take place on the last Tuesday of every month.

Starting at 2pm, they cover all aspects of the scheme and are open to anyone who feels their knowledge and understanding needs refreshing.

No need to reserve a place - simply turn up. Here are the next few dates:

27 May | **24 June**

29 July | **26 August**

Knowsley Active Challenge 2014



Teams from KDC will again be taking part in this year's Knowsley Active Challenge and we will be supporting groups of people with disabilities to complete the 3K walking event.

The fun takes place on Tuesday 10th June. We hope to use the day to promote awareness and raise money to fund our work to help stamp out disability hate crime in Knowsley.

If you wish to make a donation you can text **KDCS01** to **70070** to donate as little as £1 and as much as £10. Alternatively, you can visit our website at www.kdc.org.uk/ and click on the **Blue** 'donate to KDC' button. Thanks for your support for this important cause.

Concessions for Carers and People with Disabilities



At KDC we have been discussing concessions for carers and people with disabilities. We think you may be interested in a new website called

Euan's Guide

Euan MacDonald, Founder, says 'Euan's Guide' features disabled access reviews from disabled people and their friends and families.



The goal of 'Euan's Guide' is to provide a friendly, honest and empowering alternative to hours of web searching and phone calls and most importantly remove the 'fear of the unknown' when visiting a venue for the first time.' Euan hopes that people will help by sending him your reviews or even just staying in touch and mentioning us to your friends and family or anyone else you think might be interested. Please also encourage venues that you visit to list on the site -

www.euansguide.com

In the meantime, here is some information about a few popular local venues:



The National Wildflower Centre

Visitors are very welcome to bring a carer to assist them **FREE** – please ask when you arrive or call in advance - **0151 738 1913**



Speke Hall

Owned by the National Trust, the admission policy admits the necessary companion, or carer, of a disabled visitor free of charge, on request, while the normal membership, or admission fee, applies to the disabled visitor.

Their 'Access for All Admit One Card' can be applied for and allows a carer free entry to support a person with a disability to any National Trust property. Phone **0844 800 4799**



Knowsley Leisure Centres

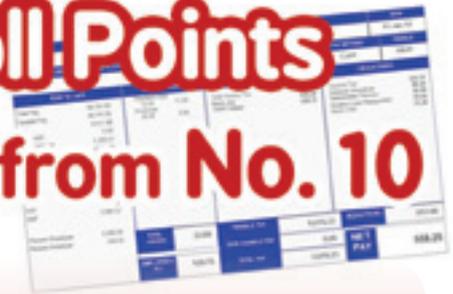
You need to check at each venue, but carers should receive free entry when supporting a disabled person as long as they are not personally taking part in an activity. For further advice, phone **0151 443 2200**.





Payroll Points

Letter from No. 10



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Many of you will have received a letter from '10 Downing Street' in which David Cameron talks about how employers can get a £2,000 rebate of National Insurance contributions by applying for the new Employment Allowance.

We are sorry to say that this scheme does not apply to people who employ anyone to work in their own home, e.g. gardeners, nannies, cleaners and of course carers. This means that if you employ a Personal Assistant you are not eligible for the saving.

Frequently asked questions



We've been looking at the problems that people often seek our help for and have compiled a list of answers to some of the most common questions.

What happens about Tax and National Insurance contributions?

Deductions for your PA's Tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) are shown on the pay slips. Because you pay the 'Net Pay' after deductions, the money for the tax and NICs remains in your Direct Payment bank account. Every three months, we will send you a statement with the total tax and NI deducted plus the NI you have to pay as an employer. You can then make the payment to HMRC from your Direct Payments bank account. Information on the different ways you can pay is provided on the statement we send you.

Annual Leave entitlement for PAs

By law, all people employed in the UK are entitled to a minimum paid annual leave allowance equivalent to 5.6 weeks per year. This means that if someone works 10 hours a week they will be allowed to take holidays amounting to 56 hours over the year. There is money within the Direct Payment hourly rate you receive from the Council to pay for someone to cover the hours when someone goes on holiday. For more details, visit our website or ask for the FACT Sheet we've produced. If you need further help, contact us on 949 5442.

My PA is off sick. Should they get Statutory Sick Pay? (SSP)

PA's may be entitled to SSP providing they meet the qualifying conditions, i.e. they have been ill for at least 4 days in a row (including non-working days) and they earn at least £109 (before tax) per week. There is a FACT Sheet available with more details.

Why are there 2 payslips?

One is for you to give your PA and the other is for the PA to sign (to say they have received their wages) for you to keep for the Council's audit and inspection records.

When does my Direct Payments money go in the bank and when do I pay my PA?

The Council arranges for Direct Payments funds to be credited to your bank account every four weeks (usually on a Monday). You should pay your PA's wages every four weeks on the Monday after. Here's the list of dates for the next six months:

Date paid into bank

9 June 2014

7 July 2014

4 August 2014

1 September 2014

30 September 2014

Wages Pay Date

16 June 2014

14 July 2014

11 August 2014

8 September 2014

6 October 2014

HAVE YOUR SAY

**Do you have any questions about any aspect of direct payments?
Have you had an experience – good or bad - which you would like to share?
Is there anything you need to know more about?**

If the answer is yes, then contact us here at KDC and we can include your views in our next edition. Contact Joyce on **480 4090** or email her at joyce.greaves@kdc.org.uk