

Direct Payment Fact Sheet

Paying for short term breaks (respite)

Did you know that direct payments can be used to pay for short term breaks (sometimes called respite care)? Knowsley Council will consider making direct payments for short-term breaks usually where the carer resides in the same household as the cared-for.

What is the definition of a short term break?

A short term break is defined as time away from normal day to day living - going somewhere or doing something that helps you keep well. This could mean time for a carer to have a break from caring for their relative. It could also mean time for the cared-for to have time away from their carer. For example, it could include overnight support within your home to allow your carer(s) to take a break. It could include overnight support to enable you to get away and visit other places or stay with friends.

Knowsley Carers have agreed together that a break from caring is different for each person and can change over time and circumstances. They say that it is time away from the physical, practical and emotional part of caring. This can be anything from 1 hour to several weeks to give time to rest, or a chance to experience new things. A break can be any activity that gives time away from their caring responsibilities, in any location that they choose. This can be time for themselves, with the person they care for, with family or friends.

What are direct payments for short term breaks?

The aim of Knowsley's direct payment scheme in relation to short term breaks is to increase choice and flexibility when arranging, paying for and taking short term breaks. It is not a method of paying for holidays – although in many instances, taking a short-term break could feel the same as taking a holiday.

You do not have to be in receipt of direct payments to qualify for entitlement to a direct payment specifically for short breaks.

How do I get a direct payment for a short term break?

If you think you or a relative has a need for a short break you should mention it to your social worker at your annual review.

If you have not had an annual review or do not have a social worker, contact the Knowsley Access Team on 443 2600 and ask for an 'Assessment for Short Breaks'.

A social worker will be assigned and they will arrange a visit. This could take up to 6 weeks, so if you think your case is urgent, you must tell them when you first ring up. At the visit the social worker will carry out an assessment to work out if you are entitled to receive a direct payment for short term breaks.

How much money can I expect to receive?

Once the social worker has confirmed that you are entitled to a direct payment for short term breaks, they will identify the amount of time you need for short breaks over a 12 month period. They will then calculate the amount of money you will need based on the reasonable equivalent of the cost of Knowsley MBC providing respite services locally. You can put your own money towards the agreed amount to increase the funds if you wish.

Will I need to make a contribution towards the payment?

Short term breaks are no different to other services provided by the council and you will be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of the payment for our short breaks.

There is a schedule of rates for this, depending upon your age. The rates for 2014 are:

- Under 25 years £64.80 per week
- Over 25 years £79.85 per week
- Over 60 years £123.95 per week

Your weekly contribution will be deducted from the direct payment before you receive it, so you will need to top-up the money you receive from your personal finances.

How do I receive the money?

The calculated costs of your short term breaks will be paid as a lump sum for the year. This will be paid into your direct payments bank account, net of any client contribution you have to make (see above). If you do not already receive direct payments, KDC can help you open a dedicated bank account. You will then be able to plan how to use the money to pay for your short breaks over a 12 month period.

What can I spend the money on?

Generally you will be able to choose to purchase the care and support that will meet the assessed need for short breaks, such as:

- a placement in a residential/respite establishment outside of Knowsley
- support within the home to allow a break for a carer
- support away from the home, such as in a hotel or with friends

If wish to have a mixture of traditionally arranged services and direct payments for your short breaks, this can be arranged.

Are there any items that I can't use the money for?

Knowsley is keen to encourage flexibility within the use of direct payments for short breaks, however, the following is a list of items that direct payments **cannot** be used to pay for:

- Alcohol and/or cigarettes
- Food (unless detailed as part of hotel or B&B accommodation)
- Clothes
- Toiletries or holiday supplies such as camera film, post cards, batteries etc.)
- Souvenirs
- Boarding kennel costs
- Duty-free goods
- Gifts
- Personal items
- Phone calls

In addition, long term residential and nursing care cannot be purchased using direct payments.

If I received a direct payment for short term breaks last year, will I automatically receive it again this year?

No. Payments are not automatically renewed each year. You will need a review with a social worker to confirm that you continue to need short breaks. They will then arrange the direct payment for you for another year.

Do I need to keep any records for the expenditure associated with short breaks?

Yes. You will need to retain copies of your bank statements and any invoices and receipts for the care, support and accommodation you have purchased.

Remember, if you are unsure, have any queries or need additional support; please contact the Direct Payments Team here at KDC.

Telephone: 0151 480 8873

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