

NEWS & VIEWS



AUTUMN EDITION 2011

DIRECT PAYMENTS
Knowsley Disability Concern

Knowsley introduces revised Charging Policy for care services

Like every other Council in the country, Knowsley is compelled to recover a contribution from its residents towards the social care services they receive. The way in which the charges have been calculated has changed very little since 2003 and Knowsley's policy has been quite generous compared to the rest of the country. However, from April this year, the Council introduced a new Fairer Charging Policy which sees charges brought into line with our neighbouring authorities.

KDC has received an overwhelming response from service users who are being asked for the first time to make a contribution (some of which are quite significant) as a result of the new policy. We thought it would be helpful to set out some key facts.

Summary of changes in the way in which charges are calculated:

30% of income DLA disregarded - Old Policy
10% of DLA income disregarded - New Policy
100% of savings credit disregarded - Old Policy
Savings Credit of £5.75 per week disregarded - New Policy
Maximum weekly charge - £150 - Old Policy
Maximum Weekly charge - £200 - New Policy
Couples assessed together - Old Policy
Couples assessed as single people - New Policy

Who does it affect?

Anyone who receives care services will be expected to make a contribution towards the costs. This means that if you have a personal budget (usually taken as a Direct Payment) or receive services provided by the Council then you will be financially assessed to see how much you will have to pay.

Some people will be entitled to free services because their income is low. There are also some people who will be exempt from making contributions and include people who:

- Suffer from Creuzfeldt Jacob Disease
- Are subject to Section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983
- Are under 18 years of age
- Receive services defined as continuing health care

When will the new charges come into effect?

The new policy has been introduced from 1 April 2011 and will apply to new users of care services immediately. For those

people already receiving services at that time, the new rate of contributions will come into effect from 3 October 2011. Over the past six months, the Council's Fairer Charging Team have been working hard to ensure that all people will have had a financial assessment and been notified about how much they will have to pay. You will receive a letter confirming the charge you will need to pay in writing.

How will the contributions be collected?

Contributions can be collected by standing order direct from your bank account. Some people pay by cheque or use a Post Office swipe card. Importantly, for people who receive a Direct Payment, the assessed contribution is deducted from the amount of the Direct Payment and the recipient makes up the difference by paying the amount of the contribution into their Direct Payment bank account. This is a new arrangement brought in from October, see the article on Page 2.

Remember:

- The financial assessment should be carried out in your own home and you are entitled to have someone with you - a carer or relative, say - if you feel you need to.
- If you have not had a financial assessment in your own home, you are entitled to ask for one.
- You should make sure that you provide the assessor with details of all of your income and savings as well as your housing or mortgage costs and the costs of any disability related expenditure
- If your disability-related expenses are more than 10% of your DLA income, then this additional expenditure should also be disregarded. Disability related expenditure can be anything from additional laundry or heating costs to the extra money needed for transport.
- If your financial circumstances change, a new financial assessment should be undertaken.
- If you are unhappy with the amount you have been assessed to pay, or if you need further advice, there is a leaflet available which includes guidance on how you can dispute the decision.

For more information contact:

**The Benefits Service/Specialist Income Team
Municipal Buildings, Kirkby, Knowsley, L32 1TX
Phone: 0151 443 4234 Email: benefits@knowsley.gov.uk**

Or you can call into any One Stop Shop. You can also seek help from any Citizen's Advice Bureau.



Meet the Team

We are please to introduce our new Payroll Coordinator, Sandra Windsor (no relation). She will be working alongside Joanne and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the team.



Sandra Windsor
a welcome addition
to the team

Sadly, we will be saying goodbye and good luck to Jayne Kinsella, later this month as she leaves for pastures new.

As a long-serving Independent Living Coordinator within KDC's Direct Payments team, Jayne has played a critical role in enabling the service to develop and grow. She will be greatly missed. Jayne says "It's time for me to tell you I will be leaving at the end of October. It feels quite surreal for me to be saying a very heartfelt goodbye to all of you after nine and a half years! I've had such a marvellous time and take with me so many wonderful memories. I can truly say I've met some amazing people in Knowsley and would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for this, it has been the best experience I could ever have".

I'm sure you will join with us all here at KDC to wish Jayne every success in her new job.



Jayne Kinsella
a fond farewell

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Care charges to be deducted from Direct Payments

Knowsley Council has introduced another important change under its new Fairer Charging Policy, which affects the way the Council collects contributions from service users.

Most people in Knowsley who receive care services from the Council will be (or will about to be) making a contribution towards the costs of those services. The new policy introduces a new process for people who receive Direct Payments. From October 2011, the Council will deduct the value of the assessed contribution from the amount of the Direct Payment and the recipient will simply pay the equivalent amount into their Direct Payments bank account instead of paying the contribution directly to the Council.

All Direct Payments recipients will have received a letter setting out the details of the policy changes and explaining what they need to do. If you have any problems, contact Andy Gilbert, the Council's Development Officer for Self-Directed Support, based at KDC, on 0151 480 8873.

Boom in numbers of personal assistants (PAs).

A report by National Skills Academy for Social Care shows that the number of PAs working in England increased by 35% between 2009 and 2010. There are now more than 92,000 PA posts meaning that they now account for one-fifth of jobs in adult social care. The numbers demonstrate that more and more people are developing their own care packages as part of the national drive towards personalisation. Here in Knowsley, around 600 people are employed as PAs and this number is set to rise as the take up of the Council's Direct Payments scheme increases.



Payment dates for your Direct Payments

Here's a list of the dates for the rest of this year:

Date paid into bank	Period covered
05/09/11	05/09/11 to 02/10/11
03/10/11	03/10/11 to 30/10/11
31/10/11	31/10/11 to 27/11/11
28/11/11	28/11/11 to 25/12/11
26/12/11	26/12/11 to 22/01/11

FREE Training for your PA's

We are excited to announce that there is now free training available in Knowsley for anyone employed as a Personal Assistant.

There is a wide range of courses on offer but some subjects that could be of interest to you include:

- Moving and Handling of people
- Basic First Aid
- Infection Control & Prevention
- Food Safety
- Medication Management
- Dementia Awareness
- Managing Epilepsy

If your PA is interested in accessing any of the above courses, or if you want to find out more about other training on offer, please contact Dot Murphy at the Knowsley Training and Conference Centre on 0151 443 3577 or email her at dot.murphy@knowsley.gov.uk

If your PA is interested in gaining a recognised qualification, then they may be interested to know that they can undertake an apprenticeship scheme where they can gain a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care.

Places are fully funded by the Skills Funding Agency - so there is no financial cost to you or your PA - all that is required is commitment and dedication to complete the award. For more information, contact Sharon or Denise on 0151 336 6900 or email: team@dhassociates.co.uk

FREE Training for you

A reminder that the KDC training sessions for users of the Direct Payments scheme are held on the last Tuesday of every month at the Centre for Independent Living in Huyton. The next one takes place on Tuesday 25 October at 9.30am. To book a place ring 0151 480 8873.

Social Care Survey says that Personal Budgets work

A personal budget is money that is available to someone who needs support. The money comes from their local authority social services and is allocated to the individual to spend on help and support to meet their assessed eligible needs and agreed outcomes.

Individuals can choose to take their personal budget as a direct payment, let councils commission the goods and services they choose or a combination of both.

A recent national survey of over 2,000 people reveals that for a majority, personal budgets have a positive impact on people's lives, meaning they are supported with dignity and respect, stay independent, in control of their support and get that support when they need it.

Undertaken for The Think Local, Act Personal Partnership by In Control and the Centre for Disability Research at Lancaster University, it is the biggest survey of service users and carers in England to date and also found that

- Personal budgets work better for older people than you might expect and direct payments work just as well for older people as everyone else.
- The processes used for delivering personal budgets are more difficult than they need to be and that impacts badly on carers and on personal budget recipients.
- More work needs to be done to make direct payments more accessible generally but especially to older people.
- There is a need to simplify and clarify the rules and regulations surrounding personal budgets.

The current Coalition government has said it is committed to ensuring personal budgets are available to all recipients of ongoing state funded social care by 2013 as a response to rising public expectations of choice and quality and increasing demand.

Here in Knowsley, more than 500 people have a personal budget, usually taken as a Direct Payment and KDC is working closely with the Council to simplify the process and provide the help and advice to ensure that the government's target is reached. We want you to tell us what's working and what's not working so that we can develop the Direct Payments scheme to make it easier for everyone in Knowsley to have a personal budget. Contact me, Joyce Duckworth on 0151 480 4090 or email me at joyce.duckworth@kdc.org.uk.

For more information and to download the full survey results, log onto www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk

Notice Board

Look to the Future

Major transition event for pupils with severe or moderate learning disabilities and physical disabilities on 12 October between 1.30 and 6.30 pm at the new Knowsley Leisure and Cultural Park, Longview Drive, Huyton. Contact Ray Rooney on 0151 443 2102.

Carers Rights Day - 2nd December

Knowsley's new Carers Strategy will be launched at a special event in the Huyton Suite on Friday 2nd December. The event runs from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm. To book a place, contact Pat Drohan, the Council's lead for Older people and Carers on 244 3377.

Hardest Hit Campaign

On 22 October disabled people, their families and friends will take to the streets to protest against Government cuts to disability benefits and services. There is rally to be held in Albert Square outside Manchester Town Hall between 2 and 3 pm. To register your interest email: northwest@hardesthit.org.uk.



Payroll Points

Your PA's holiday entitlement explained

In the UK, the statutory paid annual leave entitlement is 5.6 weeks. This means that your PA must take at least four weeks' paid holiday – in addition to bank holidays - for every full year they work.

To calculate how much annual leave your employee is entitled to, multiply the hours worked per week by 5.6. For example, if your PA works 10 hours per week, then they should have 56 hours paid holiday during the course of a year. You will need to keep track of the annual leave taken but if you need any help with keeping a record, contact Joanne or Sandra.

The amount you receive for your Direct Payment includes a calculation for paid annual leave for your employee i.e. there should always be sufficient funds to pay for another person to cover for them when they go off. Remember, as a good employer, you should be encouraging your PA to take the annual leave to which they are entitled.

PS Don't forget to let us know when your PA goes on holiday

Inland Revenue Payments

Just a quick reminder to send us your cheque for the tax and national insurance money due to HM Revenue and Customs for the period to 5 October 2011 if you haven't already done so. Thanks.

Payroll Dates for your Diary

Payslip sent out	Payment date	Period worked
05/10/11	10/10/11	12/09/11 to 09/10/11
02/11/11	07/11/11	10/10/11 to 06/11/11
30/11/11	05/12/11	07/11/11 to 04/12/11
14/12/11	05/01/12	05/12/11 to 01/01/12

(Note: payslips will be sent early for Christmas)

And Finally

If you have any comments or queries or would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter, please let us know by emailing

direct.payments@kdc.org.uk

We've had to pack a lot into this issue and we think the size of the print maybe too small. What do you think? Let us know - ring 480 4090.



OVER TO YOU

My name is Lisa Simpson, I have been employing personal assistants for nearly 13 years, and within that time, my career has changed immensely. I am a Choreographer/Workshop leader with cerebral palsy and no verbal communication. I choreograph using the Simpson board, an inexpensive but priceless tool that enables other disabled individuals like myself to create dance pieces. Last year I set up a social enterprise along with two business partners, called Simpson Board Enterprises Ltd; teaching people how to use the Simpson Board as I strongly believe there could be more prospective choreographers with no, or limited verbal who haven't been given the opportunity to realise their true potential.

My career has a major impact on my personal assistants because I work all over the country so it relies heavily on them to be able to drive long distances. Also, with the nature of my line of work, different opportunities come up where I need to pursue them, sometimes they might clash with my PAs' rota, but I have very co-operative staff who work with me to negotiate a way around it because at the end of the day it's my career and my PAs completely understand that.

PS the guy in the picture is Stephen Banning, my business partner



Direct Payments Peer Support Group

The first meeting of the newly formed support group has taken place and invitations will be going out to all users of the Direct Payments scheme to take part in future sessions. The group is aiming to involve as many people as possible to share knowledge, discuss issues, advise on service improvements and, critically, represent users' views and concerns on changes in Council policy.

