



# **Knowsley Direct Payments Event Conference and Marketplace Report**

In November 2019, KDC designed and delivered the first ever Direct Payments Conference and Market Place event in partnership with Knowsley Council and the Knowsley Engagement Forum. The aim of the event was to raise awareness and work together to make Direct Payments better for everyone.

## **Background and Context**

A key element of KDC's engagement programme for 2018 - 2020 was to focus on co-producing Direct Payment support services. The aim was to move forward with Direct Payments locally and our vision was to create support arrangements that were designed by local people for local people.

Two 'Working Together Sessions' were facilitated in November 2018 and February 2019 with individuals receiving Direct Payments, family members, carers, interested personal assistants, local community organisations and small community groups and social enterprises supporting people who received Direct Payments. Key outputs of these sessions called for:

- **An annual service provider day/information day for carers, parents and people who use social care services**
- **The need to share the good experiences of DP users and imaginative uses of direct payments**

Coincidentally, the Health and Wellbeing Engagement Forum had pledged support in response to community members voicing concerns about the ability for people to access and use Direct Payments in Knowsley easily.

The first Direct Payments Conference in Knowsley was organised in response.

## **Delivering the Direct Payments Conference**

KDC led the planning and structuring of the event in collaboration with HealthWatch Knowsley (Health and Wellbeing Engagement Forum) and Knowsley Council Adult Social Care.

KDC sourced a suitable venue at the Old School House, St John's Road, Huyton, enrolled a number of local support providers to create the market place and designed the agenda and presentations. We undertook promotional activity and awareness raising.

Invitations (with follow up reminders) were distributed to all direct payments users, in all sixty five people attended and there were eight information stands hosted by local providers and community assets.

The conference was structured to include a series of workshops enabling delegates to explore how the end-to-end process for receiving direct payments could be improved, and how individuals, social workers and families could work better together to develop good support plans. Throughout the day, real-life stories were shared with inspirational examples of how direct payments could make a positive difference in people's lives – as well as reduce pressure on statutory services.

The conference enabled people to work together to identify 'What's Working' and 'What's not working'. This exercise built on the previous year's Working Together days, organised and hosted by KDC as part of its Direct Payments Support Services. Importantly the conference provided an opportunity for people to put questions to lead officers from Knowsley Council's Adult Social Care.

## **The Agenda**

- ✓ **Background – what the law says and the local picture in Knowsley**
- ✓ **The end to end process in practise**
- ✓ **Getting the right support**
- ✓ **Working together to make it better**

Jenny Rollinson, Knowsley Council's Head of Adult Social Care, began the conference by telling the audience how Direct Payments were important in supporting people to be more independent and how they could help in finding more creative solutions to meet individual's needs.

Jenny also talked about how Direct Payments were supporting small local businesses and community organisations to grow and flourish. We learned about the new [Knowsley Council Adult Social Care Market Position statement for 2020-2025](#) which was about to be published and more about how the assessment, eligibility and budget setting worked.

Andy Gilbert, Service Manager for the Direct Payments Support Service in Knowsley provided by KDC, gave an overview of the history of Direct Payments dating back to 1996, the changes in legislation, the development of local Direct Payments Support Services and the history of KDC's support locally. Andy described the current picture in Knowsley and talked about what's working well elsewhere in the country. There were around 800 people using Direct Payments in Knowsley.

### **Michael's Story**

Michael is a male in his early sixties with complex medical and health needs. KDC provided information about Direct Payments for Healthcare at the request of the Continuing Healthcare Team (CHC). KDC also provided their newly published (2016) information booklet on Personal Health Budgets.

An indicative budget of just over £500 per week was allocated. Michael was very clear about wanting to be able to spend the budget flexibly and creatively on activities or items that met his agreed health and wellbeing outcomes as stated in his assessment of need. He was also very clear about wanting to remain living at home independently and prevent any admission into long term nursing home care. A Support Plan was completed by Michael with assistance and facilitation from KDC. The plan involved recruiting a Personal Assistant for up to 20 hours per week and a contract with a cleaning agency.

Using a Personal Health Budget, Michael was able to choose the health and wellbeing outcomes he wanted to achieve, in agreement with the healthcare professionals. He knew how much money comprised his personal health budget to cover his healthcare and support needs and with support from KDC was able to create his own support plan. This ensured he was able to choose how his budget was held and managed and he was able to spend the money in ways, and at times, that made sense to him.

This arrangement has worked very well for the Michael, there have been no hospital admissions and no experience of infections. His spouse feels well supported and able to deliver the main care needs. There is a very positive relationship with the PA. This support arrangement is preventing any admission into Nursing Home care. In addition, the PHB has proved cost effective with the actual budget currently amounting to just over £300 per week, significantly lower than the original indicative budget and the cost of Nursing Care provision.

## **Bill's Story**

Bill is a man in his forties. Bill had suffered a stroke which left him with expressive dysphasia and confusion. Bill also suffered with C.O.P.D Hepatitis B and poor eyesight. He has lost sight in his right eye and his peripheral vision had been affected in his left eye since his stroke.

Bill was in hospital when KDC was contacted by the Hospital Discharge Social Work Team seeking a solution for the care plan. Bill was medically fit for discharge, however, there was a problem with making the discharge happen. Due to previous history and hazards recorded on the system, all Care Providers were rejecting requests from the Adult Social Care, Care Arrangements service.

Initial contact and a home visit to provide information and explore choices were immediately arranged by KDC on the same day. This was followed by liaison with the Social Worker in the hospital discharge team and local area Social Work team. A panel decision was made within 2 days and discharge to home took place the following day, thus preventing any further delay in the Hospital discharge and the associated costs involved.

The Direct Payment end-to-end set up was completed in four working days. The support package delivered through the Direct Payment continues to work well delivering good outcomes for Bill and his family.

Although, possibly an exceptional local story and this did involve the employment of a PA already known in Bill's life and someone who was willing and able to provide the care, Bill's story does demonstrate that with positive partnership working, Direct Payments can facilitate quick and effective Hospital to Home discharge.

## **Session One – How Direct Payments work in Knowsley**

Jenny Rollinson led the first session describing the steps to receiving a Direct Payment through first contact with Social Care, Assessment (including Financial assessment), Eligibility for care and support, Support planning (including considering Direct Payments support options) and exceptional circumstances and sign off.

Jenny went on to outline that there were a number of providers who could support people to manage their direct payment and broker their services. If a Direct Payment, then support may be needed to manage this, an assessor would determine whether this is needed, if it is, the Council can fund a managed account, if it is not, you can still have a managed account but the Council will not fund it. If you have a direct payment the flexibility of spend must meet the needs identified in the assessment, and shouldn't just be about a PA or Home Care agency. The direct payment account would be audited, so there would need to be clarity on what has been spent and why.

At the end of the session, people worked in groups having round table conversations and recorded what is working/what is not working and what needs to change?

### **Myth Busters**

#### ***“Direct Payments can only be used for services”***

**Not True** - Direct payments can be used for a range of things, including one off purchases and excursions – there isn't a list of what the money can and cannot be spent on – what matters is that it is legal, and meets the needs that have been identified

#### ***“Once my plan has been signed off I can't spend the money on anything else”***

**Not True** - The way you spend the money can be flexible. You do not need to ask permission to do something different to what was agreed in your plan. Whatever you do should however be legal, and you must be able to evidence how it met the needs identified in the assessment

***“There is an assessment for Direct Payments”***

**Not True** - There is a Care Act assessment that will determine eligibility for care and support. We will work with you to consider ways of meeting those needs, and Direct Payments can be used to purchase a range of goods or services (for example) to meet needs. There isn't a separate assessment for direct payments

***“There is a right to have a Direct Payment”***

**Not True** - A council can refuse a direct payment if it does not wish to provide one, as long as it has legally defensible reasons – which it has to share, so as to enable a person to address them, if they choose.

***“If I give up work to provide care full time, I can be paid through a Direct Payment”***

**Not True** - Direct Payments are not an alternative source of income or a benefit. The amount of budget provided, and the number of hours care this can provide is based on need, and a live in family member can only provide care under 'exceptional circumstances'

***“The services I want to purchase are more expensive so my direct payment should be increased”***

**Not True** - The size of the direct payment must be sufficient to meet the care and support needs identified. If the Council can meet your needs in a standard respite placement for example, and it is determined that 4 weeks respite per year is sufficient, then the budget can reflect the cost of a standard respite placement – if you choose to go somewhere more expensive, then you can choose to do so, but you will need to top up the budget

## **Dawn's Story**

Dawn is a young woman with Mental Health Problems and Sensory Impairment who received a Direct Payment for Education and Respite purposes.

The Direct Payment enabled her to access, attend and complete BSL Level 2 at the Merseyside Centre for the Deaf. This increased her confidence and skills for communication in her voluntary work with Everton in the Community, and participation in the E.I.T.C Deaf/Disabled Women's Football team.

Dawn also received a Direct Payment for a one week short break in a caravan in Martin Mere to take place. This was offered as the alternative to meeting assessed need for Respite via a traditional building-based provision.

Dawn described this type of break as a "sanctuary" and "a breather", providing her with some rest and recovery from a period of being unwell and detained in the mental health system.

Feedback from Dawn and her family member was very positive. They reported that receiving the Direct Payment had supported recovery and helped Dawn with her wellbeing.

From a service perspective, we can see that this has been cost effective, with positive outcomes for wellbeing, and increased individual satisfaction with the service system.

Dawn's story is a good example of how creative one-off Direct Payments can broaden choice and extend the 'local offer' from statutory services

## **Session Two – Getting the right support**

Andy Gilbert led the second session talking about having a good plan, identifying support and services to meet need, making choices and feeling more in control.

Andy shared examples of how Direct Payments were being used locally and posed the question to conference about "What is possible?"

At the end of the session, delegates worked in groups having round table conversations, talking about whether people were getting the right support and what could be done differently, and recorded what is working/what is not working and what needed to change?



## The Market Place

The conference heard from a number of local providers who had information stalls around the room. Each provider has a couple of minutes to describe their services and everyone was invited to visit any stalls for further information and conversations over lunch.

### **Sandra's Story**

Sandra was first referred to KDC in 2011, she had become increasingly unwell during the latter stages of her working life with a diagnosis of Bi-Polar Disorder. Her employment contract ended on medical grounds and frequent admissions to the acute inpatient wards ensued. When KDC first met Sandra, she had been detained in the acute inpatient ward at Whiston hospital for 6 months. Following joint working with the Mental Health Recovery Team a support plan for a Direct Payment was designed and agreed by panel for Sandra to employ two close friends who would support her to return to her own home with KDC providing a payroll and managed accounts service alongside information, advice and guidance on employment matters.

More recently, Sandra needed to recruit a new PA for 13 hours per week of her support. KDC provided end-to-end recruitment support, including family members and her Support Worker from the Recovery Team, this helped to ensure a positive outcome.

From this specific experience, and from support generally provided by KDC, Sandra is reporting improved knowledge and understanding of the choices available to her. She describes feeling empowered to make informed choices and decisions about her care, and is able to take greater control over her life. Sandra comments that she feels safe, secure and well supported in her own home.

From the commencement of her Direct Payment in 2011 until last year Sandra had not been re-admitted (detained) to hospital.

At a medication review, her Consultant Psychiatrist commented that it was rare, in his view, for a person with complex Bi-Polar diagnosis not to be admitted at least once a year. He was impressed by the nature of her support arrangement and the positive impact on her well-being. From a financial perspective, the entire cost of the Direct Payment to date, is less than the cost of spending months on the acute in-patient ward.

## **Lunch**

During lunch all the recordings from the group sessions were collated in preparation for 'Session Three – Designing the Future' we identified five outcomes for the group work to focus on;

1. Everybody has possession of their support plan
2. Easy to find/employ a Personal Assistant
3. The process of being assessed to receiving a Direct Payment is faster
4. Everybody with a package of support knows the value of their budget and how it spent to meet their needs
5. Information about different support and services in Knowsley is widely available and not just online

## **Session Three – Designing the Future**

Session Three was led by Joyce Greaves, Chief Executive Officer at KDC, Adam Duerden, Whole Life Commissioning Team Knowsley Council and Christine McDonald, Healthwatch Knowsley

The conference heard about the importance of coproduction.

Coproduction is service providers, commissioners, and people and families working together to plan, deliver, and check support. Coproduction is not just asking what people think. In Coproduction everyone brings their own different knowledge and skills and everyone is equal.

### **Nick's Story**

Nick shared his experiences about receiving a Personal Budget from Knowsley Council. Nick is a parent of a disabled child.

Nick was very positive about having Direct Payments and the support he received. Whilst there have been many frustrations along the way, especially during his son's transition from Children's services to Adults, overall, the budget worked well, enabling creativity and flexibility, positive outcomes, increased satisfaction and considered to be cost effective.

## Plenary Session

### Burning Questions, discussion points and next steps

Paul Davies, Assistant Director of Adult Care Services led the plenary and alongside Andy Gilbert and Jenny Rollinson, discussions and responses to some burning questions:

#### ***“Why are there no Social Workers here today?”***

- Paul apologised and expressed disappointment that none had attended.
- Jenny Rollinson agreed to undertake work on engaging frontline staff more
- Paul outlined that Social Workers already get mandatory training on Direct Payments

#### ***“How can client contributions charges be so high for some people – when income increases by only few pennies?”***

- Paul Davies agreed the financial assessment team would need to be on hand to explain how they assess
- Jenny Rollinson advised if anyone felt they are not correct then they should go back to assessor and say so
- KMBC to share Charging Policy
- KMBC to share Guidance document on Disability Related Expenditure

#### ***“Where will my daughter be housed using respite payment in the event of the unexpected? Will I have to wait until something happens? Why not plan ahead rather than wait until the situation is upon us?”***

- Professional advice needed – KDC to run their planning for the future information workshops again
- Families who are able can set up a ‘Trust Circle’
- KMBC (Paul Davies) to run workshops about Trust Circles at the Carer’s Centre

***“Why is there a long delay in being assessed to receiving DP?”***

- KMBC would require specific examples of delayed accounts to be able to investigate

***“Can direct payments be separated between PA and respite?”***

- KDC to help with providing specific examples for the Council to look at

***“Can respite hours be used for anything else rather than going away to stay somewhere?”***

- More clarification on the Council’s guidance around respite payments is needed, including how the client contribution towards respite is worked out

**Closing the Conference – Next Steps**

A number of actions were taken away, including a commitment to ensure that all social workers were fully trained and confident in Direct Payments, and to share guidance on how the Knowsley’s social care charging policy operates in relation to disability-related expenditure.

Paul Davies closed the day by pledging to address the challenges and make sure that Direct Payments become the default solution for people in Knowsley. Paul promised that we would work together to host another Conference at which social workers and other Knowsley Council people would be present where we could further debate the burning issues, so that the Council could improve the processes and ensure that Knowsley’s Direct Payment Scheme was coproduced by the people who will use it.

A date had been agreed as Friday 27 March 2020 at Prescott Town Hall for the follow-up conference and KDC would be seeking to engage with partners and people who use direct payments to co-design and co-produce the event.

**Andy Gilbert**  
**Service Manager, Direct Payments Support Service**  
**Knowsley Disability Concern**  
**29 January 2020**