

NEWS & VIEWS



WINTER EDITION 2013



visit us at www.kdc.org.uk

Happy New Year to all our readers

Extra help to keep warm this winter

Did you know that you could get a discount of £130 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme?

To qualify for the discount your supplier must be part of the scheme, and on 21 July 2012, you were either 80 or over and getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit or were under 80 and only getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit. Most major electricity providers are part of the scheme and many are offering the Discount to people on low incomes with a disability or long term illness.

You can check your supplier's criteria on the Consumer Focus website at www.consumerfocus.org.uk.

Contact the Warm Home Discount Scheme Helpline on 0845 603 9439 to apply. This discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

Direct Payments are giving people choices about how they can meet their mental health needs

Are you someone who is receiving mental health services in Knowsley? or perhaps you are a carer or know somebody who needs mental health services and support.

If so, did you know that in most cases, people subject to mental health legislation now enjoy exactly the same rights to Direct Payments as anyone else? Anyone who has been assessed as having eligible needs and a written care plan should be given information and offered the opportunity to discuss how Direct Payments could be used to meet those needs.

Over the past couple of years approximately 45 people who receive mental health services in Knowsley have used Direct Payments, or continue to use Direct Payments, as a means to manage care and support needs and here are some examples of how the money has been spent:

- Setting up self-help groups e.g. the Knowsley Hearing Voices Self-help Group
- Paying for short breaks and respite
- Accessing online shopping/communication
- IT packages and training
- Club memberships and gym passes
- College courses
- Employing a personal assistant to enable a move out of an acute in-patient ward
- Massage and aromatherapy
- Getting out and about and travel expenses

KDC has recently been focussing on promoting Direct Payments for people who receive mental health services and their carers in Knowsley, and we have visited all the drop-in centres facilitated by Making Space to deliver talks about Direct Payments and answer any questions.

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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 for advice and information about any aspect of the scheme.

Andy Gilbert

Independent Living Coordinator
andy.gilbert@kdc.org.uk
Tel: 0151 480 8873



Tom Baker

Independent Living Coordinator
Managed Accounts Officer
tom.baker@kdc.org.uk - Tel: 0151 480 8873



Joanne Morris

Payroll Officer
joanne.morris@kdc.org.uk
Tel: 0151 949 5442



Sandra Windsor

Payroll Coordinator
sandra.windsor@kdc.org.uk
Tel: 0151 949 5442



Martin Neary

Business Support - KMBC
martin.neary@knowsley.gov.uk
Tel: 0151 480 8873



Joyce Duckworth

Manager
joyce.duckworth@kdc.org.uk
Tel: 0151 480 4090



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We have produced a new information pack and a leaflet specifically for people receiving mental health services in Knowsley and we now include a dedicated section on mental health services in all our standard Direct Payments information packs.

In addition, we have produced a separate information pack for all mental health professionals across Knowsley which contains the current guidance on eligibility criteria and how to calculate Direct Payments as well as lots of useful information about ways in which Direct Payments can assist in effectively meeting mental health needs and assisting with recovery plans and social inclusion.

Over the coming weeks, we are making arrangements to visit all the carers support groups across the borough to deliver talks about Direct Payments and answer any questions. We will also be liaising with providers and the professionals in the new assessment and recovery teams, to raise awareness of the different ways in which Direct Payments can benefit individual service users.

If you are interested in finding out more about how Direct Payments could be used to meet your needs contact Andy Gilbert at KDC on 480 8873. Andy can talk to you over the phone, send you our leaflet and other information by post or email, or make arrangements to visit you at home.

Don't forget to visit our website where we have launched a brand new section featuring up to date information and guidance for both users and professionals, go to www.kdc.org.uk or simply 'like' our Facebook page to receive regular updates and news about Direct Payments for people using mental health services and their carers.

The new Direct Payment rate explained

On 1 November 2012, Knowsley Council introduced a simplified standard payment rate for Direct Payments whereby new users of the scheme will receive payments calculated at a single rate of £9 per hour. Based on this, the recommended rate for employing a Personal Assistant is £7.20 per hour.

There are no plans to adjust payments for current recipients of Direct Payments to bring them in line with the new standard rate; however, any increases in support hours agreed as a result of a review, will be paid at the new rate.

Some people who have very complex needs and require specialist care will continue to be funded at a higher than standard rate which will be negotiated and agreed at panel on a case by case basis.

Direct Payments

Here's a list of payment dates for your Direct Payments for the next few months

Date paid into bank	Period covered
18/02/13	18/02/13 to 17/03/13
18/03/13	18/03/13 to 14/04/13
15/04/13	15/04/13 to 12/05/13
13/05/13	13/05/13 to 09/06/13

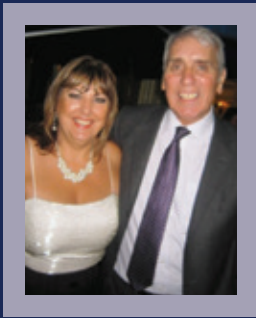


Knowsley Disability Awards 2012

KDC was proud to be nominated for a number of awards at the celebrations for the International Day of People with Disability in December and the evening was a great success. Many of Knowsley's disability groups and organisations were brought under the spotlight and those unsung heroes who work so tirelessly to make a difference were given a chance to be recognised and celebrated.

We were delighted that KDC's former Manager, Chris Roderick, won the Lifelong Achievement Award. Chris was instrumental in developing KDC into the organisation we see today and has always been a fierce champion for local disabled and disadvantaged people.

Chris is pictured with Joyce Duckworth who took over the reins at KDC 2 years ago when he retired.



Support for you



The members of your Direct Payments Peer Support Group came together in December and over tea and mince pies looked at a range of issues for users of the scheme.

A presentation was delivered by 'ITCH' which stands for I.T. Can Help. ITCH is a network of volunteers who offer free computer assistance to local disabled people. They can diagnose and fix most computer related problems, e.g. install and set up hardware, software, internet, email and accessibility settings. There followed a lively conversation about how disabled people can access the right support to use computers and make the most of the web and other technology. It was agreed for KDC to identify and publish details of all of those organisations that can offer such help locally, so look out for more information on our website and in the next edition of this newsletter. In the meantime, 'ITCH' is offering free sessions on Saturdays here at KDC to enable people to learn the basics of using a computer. If you are interested, freephone (and textphone): 0800 269545 or email: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

The Group looked at the latest FACT Sheet produced by KDC to help people understand more about Knowsley's Direct Payments scheme. FACT Sheet No. 6 is about the Managed Account Service which KDC delivers to people who are unable to manage the administration of their Direct Payments for themselves. You can read more about this service on Page 4.

The Group heard about the Council's plans to re-tender the Direct Payments Support Service that KDC currently provides under a contract which expires at the end of March. The rules around contracts mean that KMBC has no alternative but to re-commission the service through a formal tendering process and KDC is busy putting all its efforts into submitting a robust bid to make sure that we successfully retain the contract.

Finally, the Group debated about how to expand and attract more members so that there could be a number of smaller groups in each district representing their local communities. We have secured some funding to employ a part-time project worker to help develop the Group and have as many people as possible involved. The next meeting in Huyton is on Wednesday 23 January at 1pm at the Caldwell Centre and you can just come along or ring 480 4090 to find out what's happening in your area.





Have you sent your Tax and NI payment in?

Just a reminder to those of you who have not yet sent us your cheque for tax and national insurance contributions due to HMRC, for the period ending 31 December 2012. This could have been easily missed over the Christmas period so act now or you could face a penalty.



Keeping our records up to date

The new 'Real Time Information (RTI)' rules introduced by HMRC mean that it is essential that all payroll information we keep for your PAs is 100% accurate. Personal information for all employed people will form part of the online returns we will be making from April. If the details provided do not match with the information held on file by HMRC, then the returns will be rejected. Please make sure you let us know of any changes in your PA's details, for example if they get married or move house. Contact Joanne or Sandra on 949 5442 to update our files.

Payroll dates for your diary

Payslip sent out	Payment date	Period worked
28/11/12	03/12/12	05/11/12 to 02/12/12
18/12/12	31/12/12	03/12/12 to 30/12/12
23/01/13	28/01/13	31/12/12 to 27/01/13
19/02/13	25/02/13	28/01/13 to 24/02/13

PLEASED TO MEET YOU

Ron Rotheram is a Public Member Councillor for Knowsley and here, he tells us about his experience using Direct Payments.



"I hear three voices - a female soothing voice, a nasty voice and one that's quite neutral. I never told anyone until as recently as October 2009 when I was ill in hospital. My therapist recommended that I join the St Helens Hearing Voices group, and soon after I started running a self-help group in Knowsley.

It's been a great success. Every member of the group has a unique story to tell and we all draw strength from coming together to have a chat over a cuppa, share coping strategies, discuss medication and plan days out.

Through Direct Payments we have pooled our money to attend workshops and national conferences and we're completely independent from the Trust.

I've gone from hearing voices 24 hours a day to only every now and again. Geraldine, my wife of 16 years, and our two smashing grandkids mean everything to me. I'm a lucky man."

You can find out more about the Knowsley Hearing Voices Group - contact Ron on 07907 333323.

The KDC Direct Payments Managed Accounts Service

If you are unable to manage your Direct Payments yourself and you do not have anyone close to you who can help, then you can get the extra support you need from KDC. The Managed Accounts Service takes away all of the tasks involved but leaves the responsibility, choice and control with you, the Direct Payments recipient. Once you have been assessed and approved for the service, we will arrange a home visit to discuss the details with you and sign a Letter of Engagement which sets out our joint responsibilities. We will then commence the service, which covers:

- Setting up a dedicated bank account in your name
- Receiving all your direct payments and making sure they are correct
- Paying your PA wages, your care agency fees and any other bills
- Paying all amounts due to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Keeping a record of all the income received and payments made
- Providing you with a statement showing all transactions
- Dealing with the Council's audit and inspection checks

The cost of the service is funded out of your Direct Payments and is collected automatically. If you think this service is for you, ask your social worker at the time of your support-planning meeting, or contact the Knowsley Access Team (KAT) on 443 2600 and explain why you need a Managed Account Service.