

DIRECT PAYMENTS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1 SEPTEMBER 2023

Welcome to the first edition of our Direct Payments newsletter

This newsletter has been developed together with Newham residents, family members and carers following feedback about receiving more frequent direct payment updates.

It is also an opportunity for direct payment users to share their experiences as well as to find out what is happening locally in Newham.

If you have any questions about your direct payment, or would like to contribute, share a story or request an article for our next newsletter, please email DPteam@newham.gov.uk

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DIRECT PAYMENT

Working together with residents, we have developed a range of useful factsheets that are available to view online, covering topics such as how to find a Personal Assistant and what you can spend your Direct Payment on. These can be found on our website: www.newham.gov.uk/directpayments

We have also created a handy **information guide**, which sets out what you need to know about employing Personal Assistants (PA's) and what your responsibilities will be as an employer.

If you would like to request these documents posted to you in another language, in larger fonts, or in another way to make it more accessible to you, please email DPteam@newham.gov.

If you want to raise a concern because you are worried about an adult at risk of abuse or neglect, please call the 24-hour Safeguarding helpline on 0203 373 0440. In an emergency, please contact 999.



PA TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE!



Do you have a Personal Assistant that would be interested in social care training? Know family members that would benefit from additional learning to support them to look after their loved ones? You can now sign up to our **Grey Matter Learning** platform to access over 130 different courses, ranging from mental health awareness to conflict management, all for free! You can view their website here:
www.greymatterlearning.co.uk/courses

If you would like to sign up to platform, please send an email to DPteam@newham.gov.uk and we will set up your account.



INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYER FUNDING IS NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH SKILLS FOR CARE.

The fund can be used for training to develop you as an employer and/or to develop the skills of your Personal Assistant. Any training must be started by 30th April 2024. The funding can cover the direct costs of training and qualifications, travel and the cost of hiring replacement support whilst your Personal Assistant is attending training.

You can find more information here: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Funding/Individual-Employer-Funding/Individual-Employer-Funding.aspx

If you wish to apply for this funding, and/or have any difficulty in completing the forms, please contact funding@skillsforcare.org.uk or call **0113 241 1275**.

FINANCIAL MONITORING OF YOUR DIRECT PAYMENT

Just a reminder - when managing a direct payment it is important to keep a record of the following paperwork:

- A record of when any staff you employ have worked for you - this may be timesheets or payslips from a company who provide payroll support to you
- All invoices and receipts for expenses - including any from care providers or agencies
- Bank statements from your Direct Payments bank account

This is to enable the Council to see that the money is being spent properly and in line with the activities specified in your support plan. You are advised to keep all this paperwork in one place ready for reviewing by either your social worker or the DP Monitoring Team. If you have any questions about financial monitoring, please email DPteam@newham.gov.uk

GET INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY



Enjoying hobbies, meeting new people and getting involved in the local community can improve your self-confidence and keep you active.

There are groups in Newham for almost everything! Visit www.newham.gov.uk/CNLW and try something new this summer.

If you would like a little support to explore these further or someone to go with for your first session, speak to your local **Community Neighbourhood Link Worker**.

These activities are free of charge so they do not have to be budgeted for out of your direct payment!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION

The Council has recently received queries from residents about how to increase their Direct Payment. We do not make increases to your direct payment as standard and any changes to your support plan will depend on each individual circumstance. Please see below for some further clarification.

- **What do I do if my provider increases their rates?**

We have moved people to a fixed rate for agencies and PA hours. We will review these annually and let you know what the new rate is. We also let most agencies know so they know what they can charge. If you are not on a fixed rate DP or are buying non-hourly services (like a day centre), then let the DP team know so we can liaise with your social work team and consider the options. DP Team contacts details: DPteam@newham.gov.uk or call **020 3373 4061**

- **What do I do if I want to use a more expensive provider/pay my Personal Assistants more?**

In most cases, Newham will not pay more than the DP fixed rate or our contract rates with other providers like day centres etc. If you feel that your needs justify the more expensive charge, contact your social work team or the Access Team to discuss this further. If Newham doesn't agree to the higher rate but you want to go ahead, you can pay the difference to the provider if you wish. This is commonly known as a top up, more information can be found on our website: www.newham.gov.uk/directpayments. You cannot reduce your hours or level of service to have the more expensive service.

- **What do I do if my needs have increased/I need more support?**

Please contact your social work team and ask for a reassessment. If you do not know your social work team, please contact the Access Team on AccesstoAdultsSocialCareTeam@newham.gov.uk or call **0208 430 2000** (option 2)



NEWHAM COST OF LIVING CRISIS RESPONSE

If you or someone you know is worried about money or is struggling right now with their finances, you are not alone. There may be simple steps you can take to cut costs or maximise your income. If you are getting into debt or your mental health is suffering, do not wait to get help. Help is available online at www.newham.gov.uk/council/cost-living-response

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Would you like to help us improve adult services by sharing feedback about your experiences using a direct payment or managing a direct payment?

Do you have questions about your direct payment? Would you like to be part of a Personal Assistant network where you can connect with others and receive updates about opportunities of work in your local community?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions or have other ideas of ways to develop our Direct Payment community, please email to DPteam@newham.gov.uk

specifying your interest in the subject box. We would also love to share stories about you - our residents, in these newsletters and hear about your unique experiences using/managing a direct payment.

If you would like to send in a good news story or share some of the challenges you have come across, please email DPteam@newham.gov.uk so we can include them in the next edition of the newsletter. We hope you found this newsletter useful, our contact details can be found at the end of this document.

CONTACT DETAILS

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