

# Short breaks update

## Direct Payments



### What is the Process?

- The child and/or family's needs are first assessed by a Social Worker or Social work Resource Officer (SWRO) from the Specialist Community Disability Service.
- As well as completing an Assessment of Need, they will also make an assessment as to whether the parent/carer or young person is willing and able to administer direct payments, with appropriate support being provided.
- The Social Worker / SWRO will then present a request to a Resource Panel of Managers and service providers who will decide whether Direct Payments are the most appropriate option to meet the need and how the funds should be allocated.
- Once agreed, the Direct Payments Administrator will contact the parents to explain how the process works and complete a 'Letter of Agreement' which is then sent to the parent / carer and this needs to be signed and returned. This Letter of Agreement outlines the agreed package of Direct payments.
- A Direct Payments Advisor will then visit the family to explain in detail their responsibilities as an employer and will continue to give on-going support and advice as required.

### Direct Payments Can be Spent on Employing a Personal Assistant (PA)

- To take the young person/child into the community to access an activity, support inclusion, going to a club etc.
- To work with the child directly within the home, to give parents and siblings a break.
- To stay overnight to give respite to parents.
- Or a registered childminder or child home carer (for children aged under 8).

### Direct Payments Can Also be Spent On

- Using an approved agency to provide direct care to meet your child / family's needs.
- After school clubs and holiday play schemes for your disabled child / short breaks.
- Residential overnight breaks for your disabled child.
- By agreement with the Head of Service, any service which meets the family's assessed need for a short break.

For the 2024 summer holiday it has been agreed that a family may request additional Direct Payments if their PA is supporting their child at a short break/holiday club in order that their original allocation of hours may be fulfilled. If, however, the DP

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account is in surplus please contact your social worker to discuss how this will be managed.

If a child would like to attend a short break / holiday club and that provision is unable to offer the support that the children needs, for example if they need 1:1 support and they don't have their own PA, or their PA is unable to support, then the Local Authority will ask Happiest at Home or Bleep 360 to provide support. These will be considered on an individual basis to ensure that the child / young person can access provisions that meet their needs.

### **Direct Payments Can Not be Spent On**

- Employing someone without a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or someone subject to a drug or alcohol treatment requirement, youth rehabilitation order or released on licence.
- Permanent residential accommodation, though they can be used for occasional short breaks, if the local authority agrees.

If a parent / carer would like additional Direct Payments for school holiday provision, or they want to change the purpose of their direct payments, they will need to contact their social worker / SWRO to discuss this and the reasons for this request. The social worker / SWRO will then seek approval from the Head of Service.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process.**

All PAs will need to have a Brighton and Hove DBS. However,

1. If they do not have a DBS at all they will need to complete the DBS application and provide original documents for verification by the Direct Payments administrator and will not be able to start work as the PA until this the certificate has been returned. This process is currently taken approximately 3 – 4 months, from when the DBS has been submitted to the DBS office.
2. If they already have a DBS and signed up to the Update Service, we can verify their DBS through this service within a few days and they are able to immediately start work.
3. If they already have a DBS and are not signed up the Update Service, the Direct Payments administrator will need to see the original DBS certificate and then risk assess this with the proposed PA. This will be reviewed by the Head of Service and would then be approved by the parent (employer of the PA). This process will take approximately 1 week to complete. Once we have the approval of the parent the PA can immediately start working.

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Consideration is being given to moving to the online DBS verification service, as we are aware that feedback provided to the Local Authority by parents and carers is that the current process can be cumbersome and not without its difficulties.

### **Rates of Pay**

Not all PAs will get the same rate of pay due to the package of care and employment costs that come along side this. For example, if a PA is working 3 hours a week, they may not meet the threshold to pay tax and national insurance, however a PA who is working 12 hours a week may have to pay tax and national insurance.

Currently we provide the following rates of pay for PAs.

£13.60 weekday rate

£14.70 weekend rate

£65 for an overnight 10pm – 6am.

As part of our on-going review of processes the Local Authority is exploring how we might support parents, and PAs, more effectively.

Lorraine Hughes

Head of Service Specialist Community Disability Service 0 – 24.

[Lorraine.hughes@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.hughes@brighton-hove.gov.uk)