

Appendix 8 Copy of the Frequently Asked Questions

Questions and Answers

Q&A

About plans to change the way the Council works out how much to pay for Direct Payments if they are used to employ Personal Assistants



Here are some questions and answers that might help you understand more about Direct Payments.

Question 1 – What is a Direct payment?



A Direct Payment is funding (money) that is paid to you (or to someone acting on your behalf) by the council. This is used to arrange your own social care support that an assessment says you need.



This is things like homecare support for personal care needs, alternatives to day care or a lots of other things your assessment might say you need.



Question 2 - What is a Personal Budget?

A Personal Budget is the sum of money that the council agrees to pay someone to meet their social care needs. The money is usually paid through a Direct Payment.



Question 3 – What is NASS?

NASS is short for Northamptonshire Adult Social Services. It is the part of the council that supports adults with social care needs.



Question 4 - What is PBSS?

PBSS is short for Personal Budget Support Service. It is the part of the council that can help people to manage their Direct Payment. The team used to be based at the Centre for Independent Living.



Question 5 - What if I change the number of Personal Assistants I have or change the number of hours my Personal Assistant works?

If the council:

- uses a general calculator to work out the



- gross hourly rate that people are paid
- or has two different gross hourly rates called standard and enhanced
 - or does not make any changes

The gross hourly rate will be enough to cope with any changes to Personal Assistants (called PA for short). The council does not need to know about the changes unless there are any big problems with the amount of money you get.

If the council uses an individual calculator it will need to know about any changes to the number of PA. This is because the gross hourly rate might change.

Question 6 - What if I can't recruit a PA because I need them to have special skills, like someone who uses British Sign



Language?

PBSS can help you to write job descriptions, advertise and support you to interview, get work references and organise police checks.

We are asking people to say what they think about how much most PA are paid to get the right ones.

If you cannot get PA, even with the help of PBSS, a care manager or social worker will talk to you and look at the best way to make sure you get the support you need.

This might mean, that we change how much your PA is paid because they need special skills or see if there are other ways to meet your needs. These changes might only be for a short time.

Question 7 – What if my PA is ill and does not work for a long time, so I need another PA to support me?



If you do not have another PA that can cover when your PA is ill you will need to speak to a care manager or social worker in NASS. They will help work out another way you can be supported.



Question 8 - What if I don't want to use PBSS to do the payroll or pay the Employers Pension for my PA?

It is your choice if you want to do the payroll and pay the Employers Pension contribution yourself or use another company to do it. If you choose to do this you will get money for it in your Direct Payment but you will not get any more than it costs PBSS to do the payroll. The amount might go up each year if the costs go up.

You will have to tell the council about any Employers Pension contributions you pay so your Personal Budget is right. You will only get money to cover the minimum pension contribution. If you pay more it will come out of your own pocket.

Question 9 – Have you looked at how much is paid and what is paid for in other areas?

The council looked at some other councils to



see how much they pay and what they pay for in Direct Payments. The amounts are very different because of the cost of living and how much people earn at work. They also include different things. So there is no easy way to see if there is a standard amount to work out how much and what to pay for.



Question 10 – What will you do if I need PA with very special skills and need to pay them more or I do not get enough Direct Payment to pay for all the things I need?

We are asking people what they think about what we pay to most people most of the time. But if someone needs PA with very special skills to support them or have lots of other needs they can talk to a care manager or social worker. They will help to think of ways that these extra needs can be met and this might be paying PA a bit more. This might only be for a short time.



Question 11 – How much money does the council claim back each year from people who get too much in their Direct Payment?

In the last 3 years the council had to claim back more than £5 million. Some of this is because people don't need the Direct Payment anymore and some is because people didn't spend all the money they had.

Question 12 – Will the council save money if it makes changes?



If the council goes ahead with the changes it wants to make it will cost more money for a while. But the council thinks it will be a fair way to pay everyone. In time the changes might save a small amount of money as some people will not be paid more than they need and the council will not spend so much time on doing some things like charging people for payslips.

Question 13 - If a care manager or social worker wants me to move to any of the new rates and I don't want to what can I do?

If the council decides to move people that already get a Direct Payment onto the new



rate nothing will happen until you have had the chance to talk about it. If you can show a care manager or social worker that you need your Direct Payment to stay the same to meet all of your real costs and you do not have lots of spare money in your Direct Payment it might stay the same. Or if the new rate is higher you might be asked to move to it.

If you cannot show why your Direct Payment should stay the same, you may be asked to move to a lower rate on the banded calculator. If you disagree with this you can ask for the decision to change through an appeal process. Your Direct Payment will stay the same until the end of the appeal process.

Question 14 – How much will be paid for PA that sleep in?



The rules about how PA need to be paid when they “sleep in” have changed. They must now be paid the National Living Wage or more. There is not a special sleep in payment in the Direct Payment. The gross hourly rate in the Direct Payment covers any hours that PA sleep in.

If you are not sure that this is being paid

please speak to the Care Management Team.



Question 15 - What if my Direct Payment is used to pay for other things, not just my PA?

The council has no plans to change the way it pays for other things in the Direct Payment like agency support or respite care or day services.

Question 16 - What about costs for training?



If you employ PA you must make sure they get the right training to do their job.

You can book your PA on to courses that are run by any organisation including the council and you can claim back the costs of training, travel and replacement PA wages from Skills for Care.

More information about this can be found [here](#)

Information about courses from the council can be found [here](#)

Or you can ask PBSS to tell you about other training courses.