

Managing your Direct Payment during the Coronavirus pandemic

Introduction

We appreciate that this may be a difficult and unsettling time, and we know some people are feeling anxious about making changes to their Direct Payment to help them manage their support. We will do everything we can to support you, while following the government's rules on [social distancing](#), [shielding](#) and [self-isolating](#). If you have any problems managing your support please contact Adult Social Care.

Direct Payments

This information explains the extra support we can give you, and answers lots of the questions people have asked us recently.

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1. How can I use my Direct Payment to make sure my support needs are met?

You can use your Direct Payment flexibly to help you make sure you get the support you need during this pandemic.

Please feel confident to change your support arrangements to make sure you can meet your needs, as long as this follows your support plan.

If your support costs more you can use any surplus in your Direct Payment account, as well as your contingency money.

Please make sure you keep copies of receipts and invoices for any costs to your Direct Payment, and continue to pay your support provider or PA as normal during this time.

Advice on Direct Payments

If you're concerned about whether you have enough money in your account to pay for your support please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team.

Telephone 0114 273 5397.

Email DPUaudits@sheffield.gov.uk.

Advice on managing your support

If you're concerned about managing your support with your PA or support provider, or if you're worried about finding alternative support please, contact social care.

Telephone 0114 273 4567.

Choose option 4 for Children's Services or option 5 for Adult Social Care.

The rest of this document has information on how you can spend money in different ways to meet your support needs, and answers lots of the questions people have asked us recently.

You may have other contractual arrangements with your PA. If these are more favourable then they take precedent over the information in this document.

2. What if I'm self-isolating or shielding?

If you, or a family member you live with, needs to self-isolate due to Coronavirus symptoms, you can continue to pay your PA while they're not supporting you.

If you have symptoms and can't manage without your PAs, and the PA is willing to continue, you'll need to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Up-to-date government advice on PPE: [Personal Protective Equipment](#).

Please contact Disability Sheffield for more information about PPE, and to request PPE. Online information at [Disability Sheffield's website](#). Or you can email CV19@disabilitysheffield.org.uk, or telephone 0114 253 6750.

If your PA doesn't want to continue to provide support whilst you're self-isolating, contact Disability Sheffield for advice. Disability Sheffield has a pool of PAs who may be able to provide short-term support. Or you can contact other support providers for help.

If you need help to arrange alternative support please contact your social care team.

3. What should I do if my support provider cancels?

If your support provider tells you they can't provide their service, use the money in your account flexibly to buy support from another provider. If you can't find support please contact your social care team for help.

If you need less support because a family member is supporting you, please tell the services you use – and continue to pay them.

Please note there are rules on paying family members as your PA or employee, and we only allow this in exceptional circumstances. If you have any questions on this please contact your social care team for advice.

4. What should I do if I employ PAs?

The government classes PAs as Key Workers, so they're eligible for continued childcare during the Coronavirus pandemic. If your PA is being challenged you can give them an authorisation letter. For a template letter contact Disability Sheffield (contact details above).

If your PA is off sick, self-isolating or shielding due to Coronavirus, you can pay them four weeks of full pay, and then Statutory Sick Pay. Government guidance has changed, so you can pay sick pay from day one. If your PA is entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), your payroll provider should apply for this for the PA as a part of their wage. The sick pay payments can be recovered from Statutory Sick Pay. If your PA needs to self-isolate for more than 7 days, they'll need a 'sick note' from NHS 111 online ([get an isolation note](#)), or a letter from their GP.

The government guidance on testing has changed. If your PA, or someone they live with, has symptoms of the virus, that person and anyone in their household can be tested. Get more information from Disability Sheffield's website: [Coronavirus information and support](#).

If your PA is unwell, self-isolating or shielding, you may need alternative support. We understand a replacement will be an additional cost. You can use any surplus in your account, and your contingency money. If you're still concerned about having enough money in your account, please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team for advice (contact details above).

If your PA is well, but doesn't want to come to work. they'll need to take paid holiday or unpaid leave. You can continue to pay PAs with carer responsibilities, or they can choose to take paid holiday or unpaid leave.

We understand you may need to arrange a replacement PA. You can use any surplus in your account, or your contingency money for this. Please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team if you need additional funds to cover these costs. If you need to pay for a taxi for your PA to get to work so that they can avoid using public transport you can do this. It may provide some reassurance for your PA to provide PPE if required, and you can use the money in your account to purchase this.

5. What if I want to reduce or cancel services from my support provider/PA?

You may want to reduce contact with others, and decide to reduce the support you're receiving. You may feel some support is less essential, and you can cope without that support, at least for a short time. Informal carers (like family living in your household) may be able to support you as they're not at work, and you feel confident you could cope if some support was stopped or reduced for a short time.

If you reduce or stop some support you should still pay the support provider if they need you to. This will make sure the provider can start working with you again when you need them.

Please think carefully about how long the current situation might last, and how you'll manage your needs in the medium to long term. If you have cancelled your support for 4 weeks or more, please contact your social care team. They can talk through your options and make sure you're well supported.

For longer-term situations where PAs are willing to work, but you want to cancel or reduce your support, they have a right to a statutory guarantee payment. If this is the case, as an employer, please continue to pay in the short term, unless you have a specific clause in your contract that states otherwise. Another option to consider is requesting your PA take annual leave (once you have given appropriate notice).

If you cancel your PAs, they may be able to work with other employers like contracted care services, care homes, or with other people who need a PA. Disability Sheffield keep a list of available PAs (called the [PA Register](#)). If your PA wants to work additional hours during the pandemic they can use the Register to let people wanting a PA know they're available.

6. What should I do if I need replacement or additional support?

In some situations increased or replacement support will be critical, and you can source and organise this support as needed.

For additional PA hours or a replacement PA check the [PA Register](#). This is a list of available PAs, maintained by Disability Sheffield.

You can also contact other support providers for help.

If your support costs more you can use any surplus in your Direct Payment account, as well as your contingency money.

Please make sure you keep copies of receipts and invoices for any costs to your Direct Payment.

If you're concerned about whether you have enough money in your account to pay for your support please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team.

Telephone 0114 273 5397.

Email DPUaudits@sheffield.gov.uk.

If you're concerned about managing your support with your PA or support provider, or if you're worried about finding alternative support please, contact social care.

Telephone 0114 273 4567.

Choose option 4 for Children's Services or option 5 for Adult Social Care.

7. What should I do if my day centre has closed?

If you were attending a day centre that has temporarily closed because of the pandemic please continue to pay the centre unless you are told otherwise.

If you're safe and well and choose not to attend the day centre, and your day centre doesn't want you to continue paying, you don't need to stop your payments. The Direct Payment Audit Team will adjust this when you next submit financial monitoring.

If your day centre has closed and you need replacement support please use your Direct Payment money to buy alternative support. If you don't have enough Direct Payment money to pay for this short term support, contact the Direct Payment Audit Team for an emergency payment. If you can't find alternative support please contact adult social care who will help you find alternative support.

You may decide to use your Direct Payment to buy resources or equipment such as books or jigsaws because your day service is closed. Please keep records of any additional costs during the pandemic so these can be included in your financial monitoring.

8. What happens if my payroll company is not able to work?

All of the companies we contacted are confident they can continue to provide their services. We'll continue to monitor this. We've also made it clear to the payroll companies that if they agree to support additional people, we'll begin payments as quickly as possible.

If you have any issues with your payroll company please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team.

Telephone 0114 273 5397.

Email DPUaudits@sheffield.gov.uk.

9. What happens if the person managing my Direct Payment account falls ill?

If the person or company that manages your Direct Payment can't do this, we can help you to make sure your PAs and services are paid.

If you have a family member who can help you, this could be an option. Or you could switch to another company that can pay your PAs and services. If you need help to switch contact the Direct Payment Audit Team.

Telephone 0114 273 5397.

Email DPUaudits@sheffield.gov.uk.

10. Do I have to pay my contribution if I've not had support or a service?

There are a few situations when you may find a service has stopped or your support was not provided. Here's what you can do for each of them.

If you're not receiving any support or services, and don't need to continue paying for them.

You don't need to pay your contributions into your Direct Payment account until your support or services start again.

You'll still receive the Council funded part of your Direct Payment. Don't worry, we'll take care of this when you next submit financial monitoring.

If you normally go to a day centre, and you're not having any replacement services, but you've been told to keep paying the centre.

You don't need to pay your contributions into your Direct Payment account until you start attending the day centre again. Use any surplus you have in your account to continue paying the day centre. If you think you may need more money, please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team.

If you normally only receive support from a PA, but you're not receiving support at this time because you've chosen to manage without it.

You still need to pay your PA, and pay your contributions into your Direct Payment account.

If you normally only receive support from a PA, but you're not receiving support at this time because they're not available, and you're not receiving additional support to cover for them.

You don't need to pay your contributions into your Direct Payment account. If you still need to pay your PA use any surplus you have in your account to continue paying them. If you think you may need more money, please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team.

If you think the support you're actually receiving costs less than the contribution you're paying.

Please contact the Direct Payment Audit Team who will check with you what you need to pay.

11. Useful contacts

Direct Payment Audit Team

Telephone 0114 273 5397.

Email DPUaudits@sheffield.gov.uk.

Social Care

Telephone 0114 273 4567.

Choose option 4 for Children's Services, and option 5 for Adult Social Care.

NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group

Telephone 0114 305 1000.

Email: sheCCG.sheffieldCCG@nhs.net.

Mental Health Services

North Sheffield recovery service: Northlands 0114 271 6217.

South Sheffield recovery service: Eastglade 0114 271 6451.

Single Point of Access 0114 226 3636.

Disability Sheffield: Centre for Independent Living

Telephone 0114 253 6750.

Text Only Number 07541 937 169.

Email: CV19@disabilitysheffield.org.uk.

Disability Sheffield PA Register

PAs interested in being redeployed or want additional work: [PA Register](#).

If you need a PA use the [referral form](#).

Government information on Statutory Sick Pay

[Statutory sick pay](#).

Please note Statutory Sick Pay for self-isolation is from day 1 of self-isolation.

Government information on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

[Coronavirus Personal Protective Equipment](#).

Key Worker testing

[Disability Sheffield website](#).

Sheffield City Council Adult Social Care

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Produced May 2020.

Available from our website: www.sheffield.gov.uk/factsheets.