



**Adults and Communities**  
**Working Groups – You Said, We did**

**Direct Payments**

**May – June 2016**

	<b>You Said</b>	<b>We Did</b>
<b>1</b>	<p>Adults and Communities should complete staff training sessions with social care staff to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the Independent Living Fund (ILF) transition process</li> <li>• How to monitor direct payments</li> <li>• Information to support direct payment users with common issues</li> <li>• How to promote direct payments to people they work with</li> <li>• Writing support plans in a way that will support DP monitoring.</li> </ul>	<p>Training is currently being designed and will be delivered for staff towards the end of the year.</p> <p>Training will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to discuss the benefits of Direct Payments</li> <li>• Effective monitoring of direct payments</li> <li>• Common issues with Direct Payments and how to direct people to support</li> <li>• Effective support planning for people receiving Direct Payments</li> </ul> <p>The Independent Living Fund (ILF) has not been included in the new training as this process is now complete. I</p> <p>Any ILF queries can be directed to the Direct Payments team</p>
<b>2</b>	<p>The direct payments helpline was a good source of specialised information to support people before issues escalate, this service should be restarted.</p>	<p>Over the next two months we will be reviewing the contact numbers for the team so that it is easier for people to contact us.</p> <p>We have restarted the Direct Payment email address and queries can now be emailed to:</p> <p><a href="mailto:Direct.payments@barnet.gov.uk">Direct.payments@barnet.gov.uk</a></p>

3	The information given out at the start of the direct payments process needs to be clearer.	<p>We have written a factsheet to hand out to new direct payments users, which the working group has agreed is useful.</p> <p>We are developing a welcome letter to be sent to new users so that people have clear information about use of direct payments and how monitoring will take place.</p>
4	There should be more flexibility when returning receipts to be monitored, this should be reflective of the variety of ways in which people pay for care.	<p>As we are delivering a service with public funds we need to be accountable for where all money is spent.</p> <p>Although we will endeavour to be as flexible as possible we will continue to ensure that all direct payments are spent in accordance with individual support plans.</p>
5	The direct payments monitoring paperwork is not easy to use and should be simplified so that it works for both staff and direct payments users.	We will review the reconciliation form with suggested updates from the working group.
6	People who have showed that they are using their money to meet their outcomes and have regularly returned receipts should not be monitored as regularly as those who have not complied with the process.	A new monitoring policy will be implemented from September 2016 which will mean people who continuously send in the right information will be reviewed only once a year and can stop sending in regular returns.
7	Vary the dates that different groups have to send in their returns so everyone does not send them in at the same time which will make monitoring easier for staff.	There is already a different return date based on surname however this will be under further review in September.
8	There should be a peer to peer network where direct payments users can support each other	At the current time this is not part of the review however we may look in the future at the possibility of using external services to deliver this.
9	<p>There should be information sessions run by experts for people who use direct payments on subjects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax and national insurance</li> <li>• Self-employed assistants</li> <li>• Pension contributions</li> </ul>	We will work with local providers to find out what they can offer in terms of information and advice. We can also try and expand this to training.

10	Develop YouTube videos giving guidance how to complete key direct payments tasks so that people can watch them in their own time.	Over the next 12 months we will develop how to guides and we will work with people who receive direct payments to develop YouTube Videos
11	Information needs to be available in a variety of printed material and online so that it is accessible as possible	<p>The information on the Adults and Communities webpages is currently being updated to ensure it is accurate.</p> <p>We have printed a factsheet to be given to people who use direct payments to help give out information</p> <p>We will be developing a welcome letter and a twice yearly newsletter to keep people updated on any changes</p>
12	Direct payments could be promoted at community events so that more people become more aware.	We will share our factsheet at engagement events and we will also support the social care teams to promote the benefits of using direct payments when discussing support options
13	Develop a twice yearly newsletter that goes out to people who receive direct payments to keep people updated on new information and changes to procedures or laws	We will be working on developing a twice yearly newsletter which will update people who use direct payments on the changes to systems and the law. We will send out the first edition at the end of 2016
14	Have available case studies on how using direct payments has changed people's lives and publish these as part of the information so that people can see the difference they make.	<p>There are already case studies of people using their case studies effectively available on the Barnet Website.</p> <p>We will gather more stories and publicise these through the twice yearly newsletter</p>
15	Update the direct payments contract to include specific information on things that Direct Payments cannot be spent on to make this really clear.	<p>Due to the flexibility of direct payments it is not possible to be this specific in the contract.</p> <p>All direct payments should only be spent in line with your agreed support plan.</p>

<b>16</b>	There should be a hub like design where people can come to get information and advice about their direct payments and that if there is an issue that this can be linked directly back to social care staff.	We will link up with the current assessment hubs project to ensure Direct Payments are part of the information and advice offer.
<b>17</b>	The group agreed that the draft text of the factsheet was helpful and that it should be published.	This will be printed and distributed to front line staff to use with service users.