

Adult Services
Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

Date: 8 April 2020

Dear Direct Payment users,

Further to our previous letter we are writing with an update about what Shropshire Council Adult Services are going to do in the coming months to continue to support you. Firstly, we wanted to say we are aware that the outbreak of Covid19 has given you all some major challenges and we would like to thank you for all your flexibility, patience and hard work in such difficult times.

We know that these challenging times put you as individuals, your family and your staff in difficult positions. Both personal assistants and care agency staff continue to work because they care and are dedicated to the work that they do. We are so grateful for the work that everyone is continuing to do to ensure you have essential support. Please will you pass on our thanks and recognition to your personal assistants, as we really do appreciate what they are doing. Thank you.

We also want to thank your family and friends who we recognise are all pulling together to support above and beyond.

Finances

We understand that during this difficult time you may have additional expenses therefore we will look at these flexibly when you next submit your documents to us. Recognising you may not be able to go out, but you instead have employed your PA to support you to engage in some social activities in your home, so you may have altered your support plan to enable you to meet your identified needs in a different way.

If there is a need for further funding for example, if your PA is unwell and you have needed to source an agency worker with higher costs, please make any arrangements that meet your needs using your budget and contact your social worker or social work team if you wish to discuss or need additional funding to meet any extra costs.

Employment

As in our previous letter if you have queries in regard to employment issues we would firstly direct you to your Insurance provider who may be able to give telephone advice or see <https://shropshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care/adult-social-care-and-coronavirus/direct-payments/>

Flexible working

One of the positives with having a Direct Payment is they can be flexible. As day to day life and possibly your support has changed significantly at present, if there are other flexible or creative ways that you can use your Direct Payment to meet your goals please liaise with your social work team.

We have been really astounded at some of the ways that people are adapting, from all the online classes people are taking part in to keep contact with their friends such as singing, line dancing and theatre groups. Personal Assistants and family members now taking part in these classes at home with the person they support. To families now taking up badminton in the back garden, people learning more cooking skills to help family and numerous crafts and painting. Day centre staff are also regularly contacting people and trying to link up via social media.

We would love to hear your stories and possibly share them.

Communication

Our direct payments team are going to have either called or be calling you to discuss how you are managing and any concerns or questions you may currently have. I am sorry if we have not yet called you, it is taking time to call everyone, but please if you have some urgent concerns please call us using the First Point of Contact number 0345 6789044.

PPE

The ongoing situation with acquiring and supply of personal protective equipment known as 'PPE' is a significant challenge to us all at present and you will have seen is a nationwide issue.

We would recommend that you look at Public Health England guidance on this issue, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control> at time of writing they had last updated advice on 05/04/2020.

Some of you will continue to need some PPE such as gloves as part of the standard requirement of the care you receive. We recommend that you continue to try to source PPE from your usual outlets and follow current guidance on use as directed by Public Health England. Those exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 or someone in the household that has received notification of being one of the high risk 'Shielded' should take special note of the recommendation and ensure carers/PA's are wearing the appropriate PPE, which may also include fluid repellent masks, aprons and gloves.

If you are high risk, have exhausted all your current supplies and are struggling to get new deliveries of PPE please contact First Point of Contact 03456789044. We will also try to point you to other supply networks and as last resort we have a very limited number of supplies.

Message from the police

We thought it might be useful to share some information from the police about their current approach to policing the COVID 19 lockdown arrangements in Shropshire. We know some of you are concerned about whether your carers/PA's can support you by accessing the community or with supporting you to go out in the community. As we know, for some people getting exercise is essential to their well-being and for others, a really important way of helping to reduce distress and behaviours that challenge.

A message from Mo Lansdale Superintendent 3378 Mo Lansdale (Shropshire Local Policing Commander)

“Force wide and locally we’re taking a very much engagement focused approach to the new legislation in place and this is the clear message to our officers and staff. They are out and about across the County engaging and speaking with members of the public. So far we have had a really positive approach to this style that we have adopted and where needed we will explain and encourage those in the very small minority who are not adhering to the legislation to listen to our advice.

If the adult with care and support needs is stopped and spoken to by police along with two carers, if they just explain the reason for this then there shouldn’t be any problem. If carers could always be wearing their ID badges, that would also help.

We have not had any cause to date to report for summons or issue any tickets to anyone locally within the County and we are seeing a really good response from the public.”

If you feel there is a need for your Personal Assistant (PA) to have some form of identification, we can send you a standard Shropshire Council headed ID but your PA would also need to have their own ID such as driving licence. Please contact your social work team or FPOC.

Once again thank you, your families and your Personal Assistants in what I appreciate must be a worrying time for you all. Please do not hesitate to contact us on 03456789044. We are continuing to direct people to FPOC in the first instance who have the FAQs and any updates from us – then anything that needs to be passed on comes to the direct payments team.

Yours sincerely



Tanya Miles
Assistant Director of Adult Social Care & Housing