

Direct Payments COVID 19: Sustaining the Direct Payments community by working together.

Contingency arrangements

If you find your Personal Assistant is unable to meet your agreed outcomes, you may think about employing family during this time. There are normally some restrictions on doing this, but the council have agreed during the COVID 19 period these restrictions will not apply in most cases. You must speak with your social care team before starting this process but where possible we will make this happen. To ensure you are doing this correctly, we would advise you contact Penderels Trust to receive the correct employment advice. You must also ensure the person is set up on the payroll service at The Rowan Organisation.

Furlough payments

The Government's HMRC scheme for furlough payments does not apply to Direct Payment employers and their Personal Assistants. The council will continue to pay your agreed Direct Payment amount to enable you to pay your Personal Assistant

Personal assistants are classed as key workers.

If you are considering laying off your Personal Assistant, you must seek advice first from your insurance company and/ or Penderels Trust.

Arranging your support in different ways

Prior to government restrictions, you may have been arranging support to get out and about in the community with your Personal Assistant or the provider of your choice. Whilst you are unable to get out and about it is important you protect your wellbeing. Try thinking about how they can continue to support you in a different way for the time being. For example, they may be able to collect your shopping or prescriptions. They could telephone you; video-call you or set up a WhatsApp group to check in with you and have a chat. You could play online games and undertake interactive exercise. Think about your support being provided in a different way during this time.

Retaining your relationship with your employee, the Personal Assistant

If you are in a situation where the Personal Assistant is unable to provide support, it is important you stay in touch with them. Check in with them from time to time. Ensure they have access to the correct advice and guidance regarding COVID 19. You will want them to support you in the future when we have got through this period.

Your Direct Payment and personal contribution

The council will continue to pay your agreed Direct Payments during this period as normal. It is still important that whilst you are not using some of the support to continue to pay your agreed contribution towards this. This will ensure you can continue to look after and pay your Personal Assistant(s) and providers.

Providers with whom you have arrangements

It is important that as a community we all maintain our relationship with Direct Payments providers. It is important you and your provider discuss your arrangements during this time. Some providers will continue to invoice for the services they have been contracted by you to provide. You may agree an amount that you will pay based on the amount you receive from the council, if there is no support they can provide or you require during this time. Even though they may not be able to deliver some or all your support, we would advise that you pay the invoice agreed with them. The council are continuing to pay your Direct Payments to enable you to do this. This will ensure the providers are able to survive during this period and return to normal once this period passes and things return to normal.

Please discuss with the provider ways they can support you in return during this period. Talk about how they could support you in a different way for the time being.

Contact details:

If you would like to discuss how to sustain your Direct Payment during this period or you require support to have these conversations, please contact the **Independent Living Team** on **01926 413908**.

The Rowan Organisation

- Tel. 02476 322860
- Website: <http://www.therowan.org/>

Penderels Trust

- Tel. 024 7651 1611
- Website: <http://www.penderelstrust.org.uk/>