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www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk

Don't forget to visit our website!

In it, you will find loads of useful information, for prospective and current DP users and professionals. This includes an overview of the DP process, using an Agency for care, Care Agencies, employing someone, payroll companies, keeping records, respite, carers register, support group, Job Shop, carers support, newsletter, FAQ's, useful links, in an emergency. Plus lots of useful downloads and templates including; task based self-assessment form, self assessment form, job application form, sample contract of employment, disciplinary procedures, Labour Relations Agency disciplinary practice and Procedures in Employment booklet, Example of a job description, AND MUCH MORE.

The Demise of Captel



Nina Wheeler, Direct Payment Worker, is based at the West Berkshire Direct Payments office at Greenfield House, Calcot. As some of you may know Nina used this service in order to take and make phone calls in the office. Nina is profoundly deaf in her left ear and severely deaf in her right ear.

Nina said 'I used the Captel phone for about two years. It took me a while to get used to the phone but once I did, I used it a lot

The phone gave me more confidence, and enabled me to be more effective in my job. My role involves a lot of telephone work as we run a support service where various clients, co-workers etc would ring to find out more information about Direct Payments.'

Asked why the Captel phone was important to her Nina said, 'My ability to carry out my job to the best of my ability is severely impaired because I am unable to use a normal phone. The Captel phone was important to me because it enabled me to be in contact with different clients and support groups, be able to receive calls from people searching for information/advice, follow up contacts with people who may be physically disabled and keep in touch with colleagues.'

Nina added 'I was devastated when I first found out that Captel was no longer in service. I was very concerned about how I would be able to carry out my job without the use of the phone. My line manager Pam Champion was very supportive and reassured me that we would sort something else out but it didn't stop me from feeling anxious.'

It took 6 weeks to find alternative equipment. This meant Pam had to make and receive all the phone calls. Nina said 'I felt terrible about this because it felt as though Pam was doing half of my job.' Nina is now using a Screenphone from RNID. She said 'The only difficulty I've had so far is that people who try to phone me don't dial the 18002 number before my work number. Also I find it difficult to have a conversation with the Screenphone because of the Voice/text button which you have to press at the end of each sentence.'

Pam Champion said 'We have received a lot of negative comments regarding the new phone and whilst we have taken these on board and agree that it is not as technologically advanced as the Captel phone, unfortunately, at this stage, there is no viable alternative. The demise of Captel has undermined Nina's confidence in her ability to fulfil her job requirements and has highlighted her disability. The nature of some of the negative comments have only served to add to her distress. Therefore, in the same way as we accommodate the adaptations made for other disabilities, such as those for wheelchair users, I think it is important that we recognise the need to adapt to Nina's disability, be supportive and accept the minor inconvenience caused by the new phone. After all it is better than nothing at all.'

Meet Katherine Hawkes



My name is Katherine Hawkes I am a Social Work Student currently studying at Brunel University West London. I am on a 100 day placement with the Kingsley organisation – two days at Chainreaction and one day at the Direct Payment support service at Greenfields. Whilst at direct payments I have been involved in making home visits and working in the office.

Before my placement I did not know much about how direct payments worked and have been impressed with the benefits that receiving direct payments can bring to the people who use them. Whether it is for peoples' personal care and support or respite the system can empower those that use the service, giving them choice, independence and flexibility. The level of support provided by this organisation is excellent and can guide people through the direct payment process with help at every stage from setting up a direct payment through to ongoing support and advice. This experience has equipped me with the knowledge to promote direct payments in the future.

Direct Payment Support Group

Is open to all including people thinking of using DP. The group will meet on the following dates at the Ormonde Centre, Newbury, College, Monks Lane, Newbury Berkshire. RG14 7TD.

Open to all including people thinking of using DP. The meetings are from 1.30pm – 3pm.

Future meetings:

April 15th
May 13th
(possibly a.m. at Shaw House t.b.c)
June 10th

Transport is available

Further dates will be notified in due course. Or check the Support Group link on our website

www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk



Disability Information in West Berkshire

A website for information on all aspects of disability, the aim being to provide a one stop shop for all people with a disability or people with a connection to disability - carers, families or professionals in the district of West Berkshire.

HELPLINE 01635 552064

11am – 1 pm Weekdays

Answerphone at other times

Visit

www.diwb.org

Information Corner

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY - Constructive Dismissal

If you employ your own staff through Direct Payment you have a duty of care to your employees the same as any other employer. Failure to comply with employment law could mean that you are in breach of your duty of care and result in your staff leaving. This could mean that they have a case against you for constructive dismissal.

Examples of an employer's action which could result in a successful application for compensation include:

- Loss of status, salary or position in unreasonable circumstances
- Harassment, bullying, humiliation or abuse
- Unreasonable amendments to working conditions or contracts
- False, malicious or unsupported accusations
- Unreasonable or excessive discipline
- Victimisation.

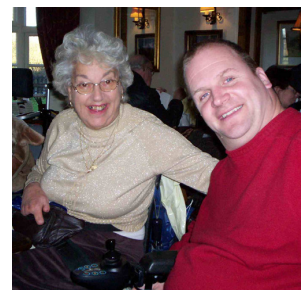
There are a number of organisations that provide free advice on employment issues including ACAS who can be contacted on 08457 47 47 47 or at www.acas.org.uk. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can also help and if you are with Enable Payroll they provide free legal advice as part of their payroll service.

For more information on this or anything else to do with your Direct Payment phone or email us.



Christmas Lunch at The Star in Kingsclere 11th Dec 2007

A jolly good time was had by all, at the Direct Payments Christmas lunch. There was a good turnout with 19 people joining the festivities. Thanks to Pam Williams for helping to organise this event.



If you have any personal experiences we could include in the website or newsletter please contact us, by phoning Pam Champion on 01189 419183 by letter, Direct Payment Service, Greenfield House, High View, Calcot, Reading, RG314XD. or email info@westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk