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*Hello everybody,*

My name is David Stirland and I have been asked to write a little piece about the Community Care Direct Payment Service User /Support Group.

*I have been a user of Community Care Direct Payments for the last 5 years; I am also a Service User Representative at West Berkshire Council and a volunteer for the Kingsley Organisation who run the West Berkshire Direct Payment Service. The Direct Payment support group was set up with the intention of supporting people who are on Direct Payments or thinking of going onto Direct Payments.*

*The group consists of about 7 to 10 people who meet every 4 weeks. At any one of these meetings you can come along and ask any question you may have. Hopefully one of the people here will have had experience in dealing with what ever the question be and be able to answer your question or forward you onto somebody who can help. If you are thinking of changing to Direct Payments or just want to talk to individuals who are already using Direct Payments successfully then the group maybe able to put your mind further at rest.*

*David Stirland.*

## Anniversary of the Launch of [www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk](http://www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk)

It is now a year since the launch of the website and it has enjoyed considerable success and an amazing amount of 'unique hits' (people visiting the website) The Kingsley Organization in Partnership with West Berkshire Council to provide a service called Community Care Direct Payments (CCDP) and continues to develop the service and the website for CCDP users in West Berkshire and any other interested parties.

The purpose of Direct Payments is to give recipients control and the flexibility to look beyond the 'off the peg' services and create and manage their own personal care package which has been tailored by them to suit their individual needs.

Joe Mooney, Executive Councilor for Community Care in West Berkshire said, "CCDP provides a direct route to independence for some people and provides the opportunity for recipients to have complete control over the care they receive. The website will offers an easily accessible way for people who are interested in taking up this option to find out more about it."



### Support Group Christmas Party



Direct Payment users who attend the support group meetings enjoyed a Christmas lunch at The Star, Kingsclere in December. Pictured above and right are a herd of VERY happy reindeer (probably due to the cheap job lot of antlers Nina got at Tescos!) A great time was had by all, and we look forward to next year – what will we be, Santa's little helpers? Time and budget will tell.....



## 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  
The meetings are from 1.30pm – 3pm.

### Future meetings:

20 February 2007

20 March 2007

17 April 2007

15 May 2007

12 June 2007

Further dates will be notified in due course  
If you are interested in coming along to find out more, please 'phone 01189 419183



Would you trust THESE women?

Ooh-aar Jim lad, Pam and Nina at the Kingsley Christmas do!

## An Overview of Direct Payments

A 'Direct Payment' is payment paid directly to you so that you can organise your own services such as:

- Support to live in your own home
- Support to access education
- Somewhere different for respite

### How can Direct Payment help you?

- **Choice**

At the moment Social Services choose who provides your services. Through Direct payment you can choose the agency or people that you prefer.

- **Flexibility**

You are in control so you decide which support is best for you and when you have it.

- **Independence**

Through having choice and flexibility you are in control so you gain independence.

### How do we work?

By visiting you at home  
By telephone calls  
By email (If you have a computer!)

### How does it work?

If you decide Direct Payment is for you West Berkshire Council will give you the money that they would have used to provide your care for you. You can spend the money how you wish provided you meet your assessed community care needs. It is not extra income to spend on other things.

### What does the Support Service do?

We provide support individually tailored to your needs as and when you need it. This may include providing information and advice when you are first considering Direct Payment

### Support through the set up process

Help to find the right care/support for you whether that be through an agency or by employing your own staff

### On-going individual support as needed

There is a monthly support group where you can exchange information and advice with other people using or considering using Direct Payments.

We have a great team of two fulltime workers, two part time and four volunteers as well as a proactive Service User group and a website, all there to help you have more control over your life by making your own choices about the services you need.

## Conference

The West Berkshire Direct Payment Service held a conference at Newbury Rugby Club on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

The conference was for Community Care Direct Payment users, prospective users and professionals who were interested in understanding more about CCDP and how they can be used. Professionals made interesting presentations and three DP users shared their experiences, which together with a delicious lunch made for an informative, interesting and enjoyable day.



### 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. It provides up to date information, links, news and a message board and discussion forum

Visit

[www.diwb.org](http://www.diwb.org)

## Who's Who

### Pam Champion, Project Manager



Pam came in to post on 6 September 2004 having been employed by the Kingsley Organisation to develop a support service for Community Care Direct Payment users following the pilot of a one-day a week service. She previously specialised in child protection and anti social behaviour and, although had worked with people with disabilities, this project was a new challenge to her and has been a great learning experience. Pam says 'Everybody involved in the development of the project has been enthusiastic and supportive, and together we have developed a service to be proud of.

Managing a direct payment can be hard work, however, people who have been using them for a while say the change to their life in terms of independence far outweighs the extra responsibility. Because it can be daunting to move from council provided services to arranging your own, the right support makes the process more manageable and more likely to be successful. Therefore, working in partnership with West Berkshire Council, who grant fund the project, a comprehensive service providing individually tailored support, is now available to all people using direct payment in West Berkshire.'

### Nina Wheeler, Direct Payment Worker



Nina started working for Kingsley Organisation as a Direct Payment Support worker on the 2 June 2005. Nina says 'Since I started working for Kingsley I feel I achieved a great deal. I have a disability, deafness, and in the past I have found working life difficult i.e. some people are difficult to lip read and following a conversation with more than one person can be very difficult. I have also not been able to use the telephone. However, I have had the right support, guidance and encouragement from my line manager – Pam Champion who had the office made fully accessible for my disability including a Captel phone.

I thoroughly enjoy my position as a Direct Payment Support worker. I support clients by helping set up their direct payments, providing information and advice on Direct Payment, and helping with employing carers/support workers.

I perform my role in a number of different ways including interacting with the client, care managers and other professionals. This may be in person, or by telephone and email. I have, on average four home visits a week and have taken on 34 new Direct Payment users since I started.

Kingsley Organisation are the first organisation that I have worked for who have made the job fully accessible for me and they are still continuing to make it more accessible by looking into a note-taker for conferences, meetings etc. Since I have started working for Kingsley, I feel I have more confidence, not only in my job, but also about speaking up about my deafness. I am not nearly so embarrassed about my disability.'

### Trevor Dobson, Webmaster [www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk](http://www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk)



Trevor says he couldn't possibly find so many interesting things to write about himself as have the illustrious ladies above. Having said that he has very much enjoyed creating and developing the website and all that entails. He is also webmaster of diwb.org (see panel on left) and tries to be proactive on many disability issues.

## We're on the Move!

We are currently considering moving to larger premises so that all our team can have office space if they would prefer. We also have a range of accessible equipment that we would like to make available to volunteers and Direct Payment users. We would be grateful for any offers of office space, bearing in mind that we are a charity and have limited funding.

Contact Pam  
on 0118 9419183 or  
[pamc@kingsleycentre.org.uk](mailto:pamc@kingsleycentre.org.uk)  
if you can help.

## 'Direct Payments – Making it Happen'

Following on from the success of last years conference another conference is being planned for 25 April this year. Like last years it will look at Direct Payments mainly from a service user point of view but will include contributions from professionals. Keep an eye on our website and the local press for more information or contact the Direct Payment service to register an interest in attending or taking part.

0118 9419183 or  
[pamc@kingsleycentre.org.uk](mailto:pamc@kingsleycentre.org.uk)

## The Disability Equality Duty for public sector bodies

December 4<sup>th</sup> 2006 saw the implementation of another part of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), notably the Disability Equality Duty for public sector bodies. This new legal duty will mean that all public bodies will need to actively look at ways of ensuring that disabled people are treated equally. A similar duty was introduced on race equality a couple of years ago.

This new law requires organisations across the public sector (including hospitals, local and central government, schools and colleges) to be proactive in ensuring that disabled people are treated fairly. However, this duty is not necessarily about changes to buildings or adjustments for individuals, it's all about including equality for disabled people into the culture of public authorities in practical and demonstrated ways.

This means including disabled people and disability equality into everything from the outset, rather than focusing on individualised responses to specific disabled people as we have become familiar with in other parts of the DDA. To some extent this has been the greatest failing of the Act as it brings all the responsibility on the individual to prove they have been denied 'reasonable access' to a service.

Now the basic requirement for a public authority when carrying out their functions is that they should give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in proportion to its relevance and do the following:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

As part of this requirement all public authorities covered by the specific duties must:

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme (including within it an Action Plan)
- Involve disabled people in producing the Scheme and Action Plan
- Demonstrate they have taken actions in the Scheme and achieved appropriate outcomes
- Report on progress
- Review and revise the Scheme

However, it is worth noting that all of the above will not produce the outcomes the duty was set out to achieve unless; disabled people themselves get organised at a local level and monitor the various public bodies relevant to them. It may be necessary for them to use the powers allowed them under the duty, which could ultimately mean seeking a Judicial Review if such a body was failing to meet its duty under this legislation.

**It is good to see that West Berkshire Council (WBC) have taken their obligation under the duty seriously and their Disability Equality Scheme (DES) was produced with much input from local disabled people and disability groups. WBC is to set up and support financially an independent scrutiny board made up of local disabled people representing all the various strands of disability to monitor their DES. It is believed that this is the first such scrutiny board to be set up in the UK.**

*Mick Hutchins Direct Payment user and Volunteer*