

# Direct Payment Review

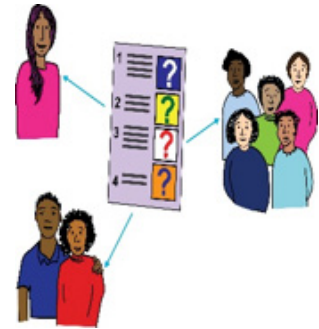
## Hammersmith & Fulham

### 2017-18



# Direct Payments Review

Hammersmith and Fulham Council asked Ruils to look at the Direct Payment service: They wanted to do this to see how it could work better



**Direct payment:** this is money that goes to people so that they can pay for their care and support needs. People can choose how to spend this money to meet their needs.

Ruils is a user led organisation run by disabled people with experience of giving Direct Payment Support.



## Introduction to the Direct Payments Review

Hammersmith and Fulham aims to be the most accessible and inclusive borough. A borough where Disabled **residents** lead in planning, changing and running the services they need and want.



**Residents:** in this document this means people living in Hammersmith and Fulham.

After 2014, using what Disabled people told us, we became one of the few councils in the country not to **charge for home care**. We also agreed to make sure there was money for the Independent Living Fund when it seemed the government might get rid of it.



**Charge for home care:** this is when people have to pay money towards their support/care.

We set up an **Independent** Disabled People's Commission to plan out how we should work to meet our bigger goals. The Commission was made up of local residents of different ages, who see themselves as Disabled people, this can be called self-identifying as Disabled people.

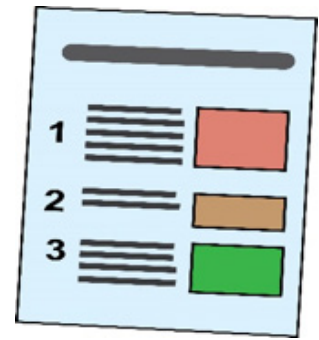


**Independent:** here, this means that an organisation that is separate from the Council and can make its own decisions. It can also be a piece of work that is done, and it means that the council does not affect what comes out of the work.

We also asked Ruils, a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO), to carry out an independent review of the Council's Direct Payments system which has been around for a long time. Disabled people told us that this wasn't working well enough.



I'm grateful to Ruils for their powerful **recommendations**, which add too those made by the Commission. The Council agrees to put both reports into practice. We will do this using our new **flexibility** as we move on from sharing services in three boroughs.



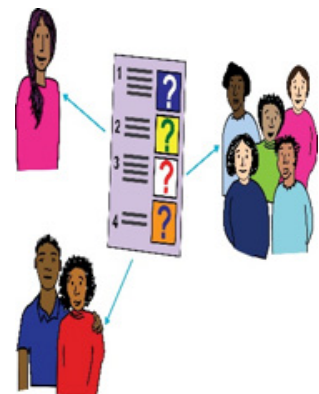
**Recommendations:** these are the things that an organisation or person think should happen to make things better.

**Flexibility:** here this means when things can be changed to meet the needs of the borough and its residents.

We will make Direct Payments better by working with the residents who use Direct Payments and the organisations that work with and for these people.



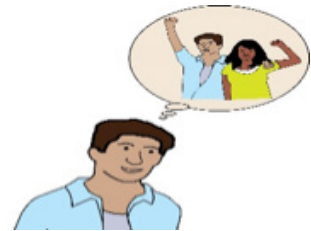
Going further, in the place of the Personalisation Strategy used across the three boroughs we will bring in a **co-produced** Independent Living **Strategy** in Hammersmith and Fulham for Disabled residents of all ages. This is so that they can live their lives in the way they choose.



**Co-produce:** this means people being part of the services that they use, working together with the organisations that run services in an equal way, from the very beginning.

**Strategy:** this means a plan.

Co-production will be at the heart of how we work in the future – nothing about Disabled People without Disabled People.



Our aim is for Disabled residents and Disabled People's Organisations to work together with councillors and council officers across every department. They will do this to plan, design and review policy decisions and services that affect their lives and get rid of the barriers they face.



Making this happen will be exciting, challenging and very good for everyone who is a part of it.



## What we did:

- Surveys were sent to 450 local people using Direct Payments.
- We did interviews with:
  - Direct Payment council staff for example social workers
  - People who use Direct Payments
  - People who work in voluntary organisations



## What we found from the survey:

98 people who use Direct Payments filled in the survey.

- Most people, who use Direct Payments, pay for a Personal Assistant.
  - 42% felt that they were supported to find a Personal Assistant
  - 21% felt that they were not supported at all
- 56% of people felt that they were a part of writing their support plan. However there were some people who did not feel that they were a part of writing their support plan and did not know what a support plan was.
- The time it took to set up a Direct Payment was between 4-6 weeks and 6 months.
- 91% of the people who filled in the survey said that they understand their responsibilities as a **Direct Payment employer**. Whilst 6%, felt they needed more support.



**Direct Payment employer:** this is a person who uses their direct payments to pay for someone to work for them to meet their care and support needs.

- Most of the people that replied to the survey felt that they had the support they needed to manage their Personal Assistants.



However, they did feel that since Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability (now Action on Disability) lost the **contract** for the work, there seemed to be no support for help.



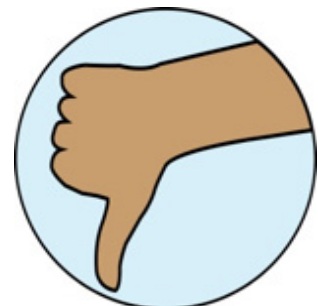
**Contract:** this means a signed agreement to run a service.

- 81% of people who replied to the survey felt well supported in dealing with the money side of their Direct Payments. The people that needed support got it from a number of different organisations. For example, Pay Packet, Barrie Bookkeeping, **accountants** and family members.



**Accountant:** this person keeps information about money coming in and going out, and makes sure that the information is kept in the right way.

- People said that communication from the Local Authority was on and off. They only got information on how to keep information about money or when changes were made to the amount of money they would get.



- Many people also felt that it was difficult to speak to someone at the council if they weren't sure about something.



- Over 60% of people getting Direct Payments wanted more access to information and advice on Direct Payments.



- 88% of people said they felt happy and in control of their Direct Payments. 11% felt they needed more support or wanted a review.



- Some people were not sure on what they could use their Direct Payments for, which made them feel worried about spending their Direct Payments.



- 53% of people said they were able to manage their Direct Payments. There were others that found things confusing, such as:



- Paperwork, this means filling in forms, writing letters or emails and sending information

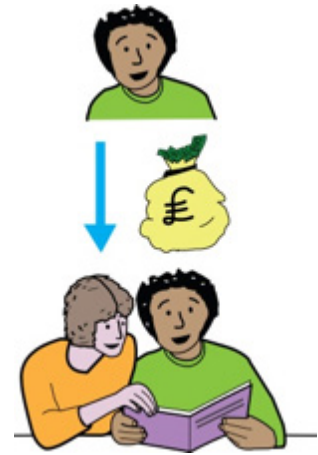


- Pensions, here this means the money paid to a company so that when a person stops working when they get to a certain age they get money each month





- Employing a personal assistant, this means giving a personal assistant work and paying them for it

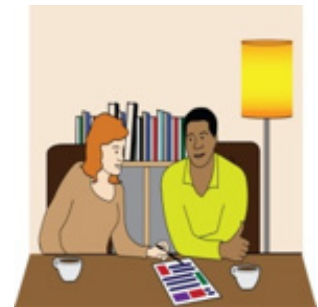


- What they can spend their Direct Payments on

- Most of the people who replied to the survey said that having Direct Payments had made a big difference to their lives. It had given them more choice and control over their care and support meaning that they could be more independent.



- A number of people said how much better it was to employ a personal assistant than having support from an agency.



- They said that getting support from an agency was not good because they did not always come when they were meant to and they did not understand people's needs.



- People also felt less stressed when using Direct Payments to meet their needs.



## What we found from the interviews:

- People said in general that there was very little Direct Payment support when setting up. They said there was almost no support after that.



- People said that they felt angry and upset about there not being support. They also found it very difficult to get in touch with anyone that could help.



- An important number of council staff felt that Direct Payments were too difficult and took too much time. They could not give the amount of support people needed to get the most out of Direct Payments.



- People from voluntary organisations said that they were worried about there not being any guides or support since the Local Authority took over.



- Only some Adult Social Care staff know about Direct Payments. Not many staff feel like they know enough to support someone to start using Direct Payments.



- Training for council staff is not always happening and is not always good.



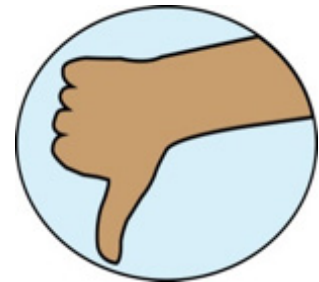
- Some social workers make decisions about who can use Direct Payments without the Disabled person taking part in the decision.



- Some social workers are not sure about their responsibilities and how to pass on information. This is why they would rather give a person a Local Authority package.



- Many of the council staff felt that the way people think about Direct Payments and the support that people can get, could not get any worse.



- People said very clearly that nothing would change unless social workers were pushing for Direct Payments to be used.



- Many council staff felt that change needs to come from the top down for anything to really happen.



- Some council staff felt that social workers and the finance team do not work together.



- Many said that issues were not pointed out and were left until they were crisis situations.



- Voluntary organisations said that council staff were no longer passing people on to the Direct Payment Peer Support Group. Numbers in this group have gone down a lot.
- Voluntary organisations said that social workers were not always doing reviews each year.
- People using Direct Payments felt that it was not clear what they could use their Direct Payments for.



Some people also felt that Direct Payments were not **flexible** enough. Social workers also felt that they were not sure about what Direct Payments could be spent on.



**Flexible:** Here this means that Direct Payments cannot be used to buy enough different things that meet each person's needs.

- Many people felt that Direct Payments was more about saving money than making sure people had person centred support.
- People found that money was taken back without talking to them first.



Council staff have not been able to do **monitoring** of how Direct Payments are used as they have not had the staff to do it. This has meant that in some cases people have not spent their Direct Payments in the right way.



**Monitoring:** this means keeping a check on how something is going.

## What we recommended: this means what we think should happen to make things better

- The council should get information from people living in the area using Direct Payments and the organisations that work with them when the council does reviews and takes on new ways of working.
- Information on Direct Payments should be written with the people using Direct Payments and should be easy to access and easy to understand. People should be able to read it online and as a document in different formats such as large print or Easy Read.



- The council should make sure that it meets the Care Act. The council should make sure it co-produces important ways of working and policies. This will be helped by the council making sure that all information is accessible and easy to get and understand.



- The council should work with local user-led organisations and people who use Direct Payments to set up an Independent Living Service. This service should be run by a user-led organisation.



This service should have a help desk that people can use with staff that have skills and experience in Direct Payments, how it is used and how people can be supported.



- An important part of the Independent Living Support Service should be to give information and advice as well as training to social workers and other staff.



- A clear plan should be written for each person using Direct Payments. This should be written with the person using Direct Payments and should have information about:



- The person's journey to getting Direct Payments
- Important information and needs of the person
- The things that staff need to do for the person
- When these things need to be done by



This will make sure that Direct Payments are set up more quickly and in a better way.



- There should be a plan of change put in place in the Adult Social Care Team. This should give social workers the power to have good conversations with people thinking about using Direct Payments, seeing the person as the most important part of this decision.



- The Adult Social Care Team should agree to see support planning as a very important part of their work.



To make this happen they should have training on how people's needs, what comes out of their work and how services are run all links together.



The council pays for an organisation to come and check how they are doing to make sure that what we recommend is put into place.



**ruils**

working together for independent living