

Direct Payments

Direct Payments E-Newsletter – March 2022

In this update you will receive the payment schedule for 2022/23.

Contents

1. Facebook
2. Employment updates
3. Personal Assistants wage rates
4. Government National Living/Minimum Wage changes
5. Annual leave
6. Recruitment
7. DP Card reminders

1. Facebook

The Direct Payments Team has a Facebook page. We use this page to communicate information to you such as changes in employment law and training opportunities for those who employ Personal Assistants. Those who employ can also use this page to share any good employment practices that you have, which you feel other employers could benefit from, and communicate with other employers about their experiences. We will also share some information that may apply to those using an agency such as our payment schedule and any general Direct Payments updates.

To join, search on Facebook for 'Durham County Council Direct Payments' and then click 'Add'. You will be asked three questions to confirm your identity so we can ensure this is a closed group only for those receiving Direct Payments in Durham.

2. Employment updates

Employ with Confidence workshop – provided by Fish Insurance

Fish Insurance are providing an 'Employ with confidence' workshop March 22nd 10.00-11.30am. This will be a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams and links will be sent out prior to the meeting for you to be able to join.

Below are some of the areas they cover in the workshop

- How to be a good employer
- The importance of insurance when employing a PA

- Statutory employment rights
- Handling conflicts
- Health and Safety

To book your place email directpayments@durham.gov.uk or call 03000 268 200. The course is aimed at employers.

3. Personal Assistants wage rates

The maximum rate payable to an employee has been agreed to be increased to £10.50 per hour, except for in exceptional circumstances. If you want to discuss a wage increase for your PAs or if you require any amendment to terms and conditions templates, please email the Direct Payments Team on directpayments@durham.gov.uk.

4. Government National Living/Minimum Wage changes

From 1st April 2022 the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates will increase. The current rate for those over 23 years old, will increase from £8.91 to £9.50 per hour. For more information on the increase in rates, visit the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

As paying the National Minimum Wage is a legal requirement, we will request payroll providers identify any employment cases paying below the new rates from 1st April, and these will be increased automatically where required.

If you require additional funding to meet any increase, please contact the Direct Payments Team in the usual way. Updated terms and conditions of employment forms can also be provided.

5. Annual leave

As it is nearing the end of the financial year, please ensure that you have arranged for your PAs to take their statutory annual leave entitlement. This leave must be taken by 31st March 2022. Leave can be agreed by you to be carried forward in exceptional circumstances but cannot be paid as a bonus and must be taken. Contingencies should be in place to allow for annual leave.

6. Recruitment

Recruitment of care staff remains a challenge regionally and nationally. We have contracted with UKCIL again to support Direct Payments employers with recruitment of PAs.

The UKCIL platform has functionality to shortlist applicants, interview and arrange contracts of employment for any new starters. The Direct Payments Team can provide you with advice and support around placing adverts on your behalf. More information about what UKCIL provide can be found [here](#).

Invoices for the cost of an annual UKCIL subscription should be paid for out of your Direct Payments budget.

Subscriptions will automatically renew after one year, but renewal invoices should only be paid if the service is still being used and you are actively seeking new or additional PAs.

There are also readily available PA's who are looking for work in the area, available on [Locate - Personal Assistants](#) (for adults) and [Families Information Service](#) (for children), and also via payroll provider Accountability's PA register, which is available by contacting them on 0191 492 1222.

7. DP Card reminders

Your DP Card will expire after two years but you will be issued with a new card from EML prior to expiry.

It is important that you activate your new card immediately as payments cannot be made until a card has been activated. Account numbers and sort codes will remain the same, and any existing payees, recurring payments and account balance will automatically transfer to your new card upon activation.

Please ensure you always keep your DP Card in a safe place. The 16-digit card number is required to register for online use of the EML website and also to reset your password using the 'Forgot your password' link.

It is also very important that you notify us immediately of any change of address for the cardholder.

Unsubscribe

If you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list please email us at the following: directpayments@durham.gov.uk.

 03000 268200

 directpayments@durham.gov.uk

 www.durham.gov.uk/directpayments

