

## **DIRECT PAYMENTS POLICY – CONSULTATION SUMMARY – PUBLIC VERSION**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Croydon Council is committed to helping residents and carers who need social services support in being independent and able to live at home. One of the ways the Council does this is through Direct Payments.
- 1.2 The Council is about to make changes to its Direct Payments policy for adults who are supported through its Adults Social Services. This document sets out the Council's proposed new policy and seeks comments from Croydon residents and people and organisations who work with residents who receive care and support from the Council.
- 1.3 This document summarises the proposed changes with a focus on the key issues. A complete and detailed version of the proposed policy can be found on the consultation pages of the Council's website.

### **2. What is a Direct Payment?**

- 2.1 A Direct Payment is a payment of money from the Council to either the resident needing care and support, or to someone else acting on their behalf. The Direct Payment is to pay for the cost of arranging all or part of the support. The Council will make a direct payment instead of arranging or providing any services itself, if a resident wishes so. This ensures that any person can take full control over their own care and choose how they want to receive their care and support and who provides it.

### **3. What is the Council changing?**

- 3.1 At the moment only a small number of people take up Direct Payments even though by doing so they can become more independent and have greater choice over their care and support.
- 3.2 Some residents tell us that they want to have the independence and choice that a Direct Payment will give them but the way the Council provides Direct Payments now means that you have to take on lots of extra responsibilities, extra paperwork and handle money.
- 3.3 Some residents with disabilities want to use a Direct Payment to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) who will give them care and support, but are unable to find such a person in Croydon.
- 3.4 The Council wants to support many more people into independence by making having a Direct Payment simpler and by giving residents more support to manage Direct Payments and to recruit and employ Personal Assistants to help them. The key changes will be:

- **Increasing choice** – The new policy will be clearer, giving residents more flexibility and advice about how and where they can spend their Direct Payments
- **Helping residents to find the right care and support** – A new directory of services will help people find the services they want and need with the ability to order these services
- **Reduced red tape** – A new Direct Payments accounts system will be used so that people can manage their direct payments and book and pay for services online, without having to fill in lots of paperwork and keep receipts
- **Helping residents to find and employ Personal Assistants** – Many people who choose Direct Payments want to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) who can help them in their care and support. The Council is setting up a new agency that will be dedicated to helping residents recruit PAs and support them being an employer
- **Increasing take up** – The Council is committed to delivering independence and personalisation for residents who need social services. We believe that by simplifying the system more residents will make Direct Payments their first choice

#### 4. What can Direct Payments be spent on?

**4.1** Direct payments may only be spent on the care and support needs that the Council has agreed to fund and set out in a residents Care and Support Plan. Depending on someone's circumstances they can be spent on help and support with:

- Eating and drinking
- Washing
- Going to the toilet
- Maintaining a home environment
- Staying safe at home
- Friends and family networks
- Getting out and about inc. running errands, going to the shops or to medical appointments, etc
- Caring responsibilities
- Support to take medication
- Support to manage finances
- Respite and short breaks

Direct payments cannot be spent on:

- Anything illegal
- Anything that will harm a person's health, safety or wellbeing
- Paying for anything related to regular day to day living expenditure e.g. food, drink, fast food takeaways, etc.
- Purchase of alcohol, tobacco or gambling
- Paying for anything that other Council services or statutory organisations provide, for example the NHS
- Paying any rent or household bills e.g. gas, electricity
- Permanent residential or nursing care
- Paying for services directly from the Council, except in special circumstances
- If someone receives a Direct Payment through a Council provided pre-paid debit card they are not permitted to use cashback facilities

## 5. What is the purpose of this consultation?

5.1 Through this consultation the Council wants to enable Croydon residents and people and organisations who work with residents who receive care and support from the Council to:

- Comment on the proposed new policy
- Identify any gaps in the proposed policy and processes
- Make suggestions to help improve the proposed policy and processes

## 6. What the Council is consulting on

6.1 The Council wants to give residents who use care and support services as much choice and control over their care as possible by promoting the take up of Direct Payments. Please let us know what you think of our plans.

A) **Encouraging all residents who can to take up a Direct Payment** – The new policy will encourage all people who require care and support to help them live at home to have a Direct Payment – with other arrangements for people who are unable to use Direct Payments or who choose not to have a Direct Payment.

- Do you agree with this approach?
- Please say why
- Please tell us what you think needs to be in place to help residents choose and use a Direct Payment?

B) **Direct Payments on-line** – We plan to put in place a system that helps residents manage their Direct Payments and choose and book their services online. There will be alternative arrangements for people who cannot or do not want to go online.

- Do you agree with this approach?
- Please say why
- Please tell us what support you think people will need to be able to choose to go online for their Direct Payments?

C) **Carers payments for people who administer a Direct Payment for another person** – Some people with a Direct Payment get help from another person, often a family member or friend, to manage their Direct Payment. We are proposing that where someone administers a Direct Payment for someone else they can receive a one-off support payment for offering this support.

- Do you agree with this approach?
- Please say why
- If you agree with this proposal, what do you think the value of this one-off payment should be?