

# Adults' Health and Care

## Direct payment newsletter



18 June 2026

## New look web pages for adult social care in Hampshire

Updates are being made to our [adult social care web pages](#) on the Hampshire County Council website. These pages have consistently provided valuable information about our services to a diverse range of audiences, including individuals who use our services, carers, residents, professionals, providers, partners and those who want to learn more about what we do.

Last year, these web pages received over one million visits. Despite the high number of visits and the wealth of information available, our contact centre continues to experience significant demand. We recognise the need to enhance our self-service options, enabling those who prefer to find information online to do so easily and efficiently, thereby improving their overall experience.

Navigating adult social care information can be complex. So, the refreshed web pages have been designed to take the user through a journey. Improvements include:

- Audience-specific routes to information with more clarity about our services and where other organisations can help.
- Better signposting to information and services on the Connect to Support Hampshire website.
- More detailed information upfront, enabling users to make a good referral if they need to.

By refreshing our web pages, we aim to significantly enhance user experience, ensuring that new designs have the user in mind. This approach will not only make it easier for users to access information but also reduce the demand on our contact centre, allowing us to better serve everyone.

We will closely monitor the impact and effectiveness of these changes over the coming weeks. We would love to hear what you think. Please share your thoughts by emailing [connectsupport@hants.gov.uk](mailto:connectsupport@hants.gov.uk).

[VISIT THE WEBSITE](#)

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## Reflections on the Take a Break scheme with a Direct Payment

Adam\* was a carer for his father for several years, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and vascular dementia, and has shared his story of using Direct Payments for the Take a Break scheme.

"Initially, care was companionship and ensuring Dad's safety. I could leave him for a few hours, but not overnight or to allow a holiday. In August 2024, his needs significantly increased following shingles, Covid and pneumonia. Pneumonia resulted in hospitalisation. Dad experienced delirium, impacting his dementia. On discharge, Dad required 24/7 care, a possible prostate cancer diagnosis and frequent toilet visits – 30 or 40 times a night. I slept on his bedroom floor for three months until he was fitted with a catheter, allowing us both to get some sleep. Due to Dad's increased needs and my inability to leave the house, a referral was made to Adults' Health and Care. After a Carer's Assessment, I was eligible for Take a Break and chose a Direct Payment."

### **Why Direct Payments?**

"I chose Direct Payments having found a care agency that Dad and I liked. I wanted weekly respite and consistency of care for Dad. The agency guaranteed a small team of carers who would regularly work with Dad at agreed times. Although they were more expensive than the Take a Break funding allowed, the additional top-up cost was worth the peace of mind to find an agency able to meet our needs."

### **What I was able to do?**

"My back pain was aggravated by my caring responsibilities. I visited a physiotherapist or chiropractor, which enabled me to care for Dad without being in so much pain. It also allowed me to conduct research for my PhD, knowing Dad was safe, and attend governance responsibilities face-to-face rather than virtually. I could also plan hospital appointments around my respite time.

Thank you, it made such a difference."

\* Name changed for privacy.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

## Making payroll work for you: practical tips for Personal Assistant (PA) employers

Managing payroll might not be the most exciting part of organising your support, but with a few helpful habits and systems in place, it doesn't have to become a chore. Whether you're a seasoned employer or just getting started, here are some useful tips to help keep things running smoothly and stress free.

### **Track hours worked – your way**

It's important to keep a regular log of your PA's hours – and how you do it is completely up to you. Whether you prefer jotting notes in a diary, using a wall calendar, logging hours in a spreadsheet, or simply emailing yourself, the key is consistency. Try to update it daily or weekly – memory fades quickly and accurate records will save you time when submitting timesheets or updating fixed hours.

### **Don't lose track of annual leave**

All employees are entitled to up to 5.6 weeks of paid annual leave (including bank holidays). For most people using Direct Payments, the holiday year runs from April to March, to match budget allocations.

Depending on the contract of employment with your PA, annual leave may be calculated in days or hours. As we approach the warmer months and the summer holidays, it's especially important to track when your PA takes time off – not only for planning cover but to ensure they're getting the break they're entitled to.

Some payroll providers offer holiday tracking support at no extra cost, so it's always worth asking.

### **Set payroll reminders**

Life is busy and payroll deadlines can creep up unnoticed. Missing a submission date can cause delays or issues with pay. Check if your payroll provider offers reminder services via email or text. Alternatively, set recurring phone reminders, mark your calendar or ask your smart speaker to give you a nudge when deadlines are coming up.

### **Store payroll information securely**

As an employer, you're legally responsible for protecting your PA's personal information. Keep timesheets, payslips, and other documents stored safely – ideally in a secure place that only you can access.

If you use Hampshire County Council's Virtual Wallet (the preferred method for managing Direct Payments), much of this paperwork is stored safely online in one easy-to-access location. It's a secure and convenient option that can help you stay organised.

You can find out more about the Virtual Wallet at: [www.myvirtualwallet.co.uk](http://www.myvirtualwallet.co.uk).

## **Direct Payment User Group**

We encourage anybody who would like more information around Direct Payments to come along and talk to other users and take part in more specific conversations around different topics. Current topics include insurance (presentation by Mark Bates), financial assessment, contingency planning, information and guidance. If you have other ideas for topics, or you are interested in joining the group to receive up-to-date information about what is happening when, please email [rachel.harrison3@btopenworld.com](mailto:rachel.harrison3@btopenworld.com) or [join our Facebook group](#).

Future virtual meeting dates are:

- Friday 27 June at 2pm
- Wednesday 30 July at 2pm
- Friday 8 August at 2pm
- Wednesday 10 September at 2pm
- Friday 19 September at 2pm

## **A refreshed Connect to Support Hampshire website!**



We have recently updated [Connect to Support Hampshire](#). The website is aimed at helping you stay independent for longer by providing you with resources to look after yourself, stay safe and connected with your local community.

Improvements include:

- **A modern design:** enjoy a fresh, contemporary look.
- **Improved navigation:** enhanced homepage navigation, including popular search and information topics. Search using **key words**, not multiple words, or sentences. The search bar will give you some suggestions as you type.
- **An expanded local [Community Directory](#):** Our directory for low-cost and no-cost community groups and activities now covers 63 towns and villages across Hampshire, up from the 13 we had before. And we've introduced a new Younger Adults category
- **[Marketplace Directory](#)** – paid for services such as podiatrists, financial advisers, handypersons, gardeners and more.
- **[Home Care Directory](#)** – home care and nursing care agencies covering Hampshire.
- **[Care Home Directory](#)** – care homes and nursing homes in Hampshire.
- The ability to translate everything into a number of different languages using **Google Translate** (in the top banner on the website).

EXPLORE THE WEBSITE

## Have your say! [Connect to Support Hampshire survey](#)

[Connect to Support Hampshire](#) has evolved significantly since it was first launched in 2017, thanks to the valuable feedback we've received over the years. Whether you're a regular visitor or an occasional user, your opinion is crucial to us. Please take a moment to participate in our brief survey and help us continue to improve. Feel free to share with others.

The survey closes on Monday 30 June 2025.

HAVE YOUR SAY

## Personal Budget Policy

We've updated our Personal Budget Policy, so here are the key points:

- Greater clarity over what is included in a personal budget statement (Article 3.1) and the legislation behind it (Article 4.1).
- Clearer definitions of costs that are excluded from a personal budget, in particular, any costs that arise from the provision of community equipment and/or intermediate care (Article 5.1).

[READ MORE](#)

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### Hampshire PA Finder website

The Hampshire PA Finder is a free service working to connect people seeking a Personal Assistant in Care with people who are, or want to be, Personal Assistants in Care. You will find lots of useful information on the site about being an employer or being a Personal Assistant in Care.

We'd love to know what you think of the website, so please send your feedback to [pafinder@hants.gov.uk](mailto:pafinder@hants.gov.uk).

### The Direct Payment Support Service

Our Direct Payment Support Service (DPSS) is available to help Direct Payment recipients, operational staff and providers. The team has three full-time members of staff and can support you with a range of Direct Payment related queries. If you need some advice about Direct Payments, contact the team at [DPsupportservice@hants.gov.uk](mailto:DPsupportservice@hants.gov.uk) for support.

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