

## Hertfordshire County Council

### Direct Payment Frequently Asked Questions for adult Direct Payment users and Personal Assistants (PAs)

The government has issued guidance for Direct Payment users and Personal Assistants which can be found [here](#).

You may also wish to read this document alongside Think Local Act Local's [TLAP's jargon buster](#), a directory of plain English definitions of commonly used words and phrases in health and social care.

For easy read documents about COVID-19 and direct payments please read [Using direct payments during the coronavirus outbreak: guidance for people receiving direct payments and personal assistants \(easy read\)](#).

Below are some FAQs to offer additional clarification and reflect decisions made by Hertfordshire County Council and may differ from the government guidance.

#### I am a Personal Assistant (PA)

Question	Answer
I am a PA and have symptoms of COVID-19, do I still visit my client?	<p>No. Please refer to the NHS 111 coronavirus service for medical advice - this can be found at <a href="https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/">https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/</a>. You must observe the isolation periods, set out within the NHS guidance on <a href="#">Self-isolation and treating coronavirus symptoms</a>. Call 111 if you cannot get help online.</p> <p>Please call Adult Care Services on 0300 123 4042 or Children's Services on 0300 123 4043 and speak to the social care team if you are concerned the direct payment user needs help to source support.</p>
I am a PA and I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, do I need to self-isolate?	<p>The NHS have information on self-isolation periods and treating coronavirus symptoms. Please refer to <a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19)</a> and follow the NHS advice and guidance. Call 111 if you cannot get help online.</p> <p>If you are required to self-isolate and are concerned the person you support will not receive the help, they need please call Adult Care Services on 0300 123 4042 and speak to their social care team.</p>

<p>Do I still visit my client if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or they are self-isolating?</p>	<p>Yes. If a person receives essential care in their home, then PAs should continue to visit.</p> <p>PPE should be worn. There's specific <a href="#">PPE guidance on the Public Health England website</a>. There are a number of circumstances in which it is recommended that <a href="#">wearing the right PPE</a> is needed even if you do not have symptoms. If you normally wear PPE to support someone, this must continue.</p> <p>Footwear covers have not been included as part of PPE guidance for PAs or home care organisations. There is no requirement for paper towels rather than hand towels. Individual hand towels, specific for each PA, can be used and should be washed and replaced frequently.</p>
<p>I am a PA and concerned about how I can work safely during COVID-19, what measures can I take?</p>	<p><a href="#">Appropriate hand hygiene</a>, the correct use of PPE and keeping safe distances where possible will reduce the potential for contamination. A resource for those working in domiciliary care settings is available from the Government; <a href="#">COVID-19: how to work safely in domiciliary care in England</a>. This resource provides information on how PPE can be used to increase safety whilst working in direct payment users' homes.</p> <p>For more information on what PPE to wear and when please refer to the <a href="#">Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) illustrated guide for community and social care settings</a></p>
<p>I am a PA; do I still get paid if I have to shield as I am in the clinically, extremely vulnerable group?</p>	<p>Some people who have certain medical conditions are automatically deemed <a href="#">clinically extremely vulnerable</a>. If the Government have put in place shielding measures and you are defined as clinically, extremely vulnerable then you should continue to be paid during these shielding measures.</p> <p>If you have concerns about the person not being safe or receiving the support, they need please call Adult Care Services on 0300 123 4042 or Children's Services on 0300 123 4043 and speak to their social care team.</p>
<p>I am a PA; do I still get paid if the person I care for <b>has decided</b> they do not need my support as they are isolating?</p>	<p>Yes. Consider if you can support them remotely such as keeping in touch by telephone or video call, shopping or collecting prescriptions. If you have concerns about this decision and feel the person you care for may be at risk, please call their social care team.</p> <p>If you have paid hours unaccounted for, please email <a href="mailto:directpayment@leonardcheshire.org">directpayment@leonardcheshire.org</a> or call 01462 439 000 if you do not have access to email to register for redeployment opportunities.</p>
<p>I am a <u>Self-Employed</u> PA; do I still get paid if the person I care for has decided they do not</p>	<p>Yes, consider if you can support them remotely such as keeping in touch by telephone or video call, shopping or collecting prescriptions. If you have concerns about this decision and feel the person you care for may be at risk, please call their social care team.</p>

<p>need my support as they are isolating?</p>	<p>To express an interest in additional work, please email <a href="mailto:directpayment@leonardcheshire.org">directpayment@leonardcheshire.org</a> or call 01462 439 000 to register on our PA Register.</p>
<p>I am a <u>Self-Employed</u> PA; do I still get paid if the person I care for has decided they no longer need my support?</p>	<p>No, you may be able to claim a grant if you're getting less work or no work because of COVID, you might be able to <u>claim a grant through the coronavirus Self-employment Income Support Scheme</u>.</p> <p>Other financial support if you're getting less work or no work because of COVID, you can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>apply online for Universal Credit</u></li> <li>• <u>apply for New Style Employment and Support Allowance</u>, if you have a disability or health condition that affects how much you can work</li> </ul> <p>If they are concerned and unsure about you returning to support them due to COVID or you are concerned they are not receiving the help they need, please call 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children) to talk to their social care team.</p>
<p>Can PAs be tested for COVID-19?</p>	<p>Yes, as essential workers, you must apply for priority testing through GOV.UK by following the guidance on testing for essential workers or clicking on this link; <a href="#">Arrange a test for a PA</a></p> <p>If you are not able to travel to get a test, you can <a href="#">order a test</a> delivered to your door which are now available through GOV.UK.</p> <p>For more information, please check here: <a href="http://www.hcpa.info/covid-19/">www.hcpa.info/covid-19/</a> or call the Provider Hub on 01707 708108 if you are unsure.</p>
<p>Can I receive the winter flu vaccination?</p>	<p>All PAs are eligible for a free flu vaccination from their GP or a local community pharmacy.</p> <p>The Government have published <a href="#">guidance for free flu vaccination</a> specifically for direct payment users and PAs to help PAs access this vaccination. PAs can receive the proof of free entitlement which can be found within the <a href="#">guidance for free flu vaccination</a>.</p> <p>This process is in place for the winter flu vaccination only. There will be further guidance issued in relation to any COVID-19 vaccination.</p>
<p>I am a PA and feel my mental health is under pressure</p>	<p><a href="#">Our Frontline</a> offers round-the-clock one-to-one support, by call or text, from trained volunteers, plus resources, tips and ideas to look after your mental health.</p>

	<p><b>Keeping in touch via video apps:</b> The Evening Standard has produced a list of eight video messaging apps to download if you are self-isolating. <a href="#">Watch the videos.</a></p> <p><b>MARCH network</b> A network supporting mental health during these unique times. <a href="#">Find out more.</a></p> <p>The <a href="#">Every Mind Matters</a> website offers advice and practical steps that you can take to support your wellbeing and manage your mental health during this pandemic. If you, or someone you care for, are experiencing a mental health crisis, we urge you to <a href="#">make contact with a local health professional</a> immediately.</p>
<p>I am a PA, what training is available to me during this time?</p>	<p>Skills for Care have identified essential training to support PA's in their role through digital solutions. The training is available as three individual packages of learning, rapid induction programme (aimed at new staff), refresher training (aimed at existing staff) and a volunteer programme. <a href="#">Read more.</a></p> <p>Health Education England (HEE) e-LfH has created an e-learning programme in response to COVID which is free to access, without logging in, for the health and care workforce. This can be found by following this link: <a href="#">Access the course.</a></p>
<p>I am a PA and I wish to resign, what do I do?</p>	<p>Leonard Cheshire can advise you on the terms and conditions of your contract. Please email <a href="mailto:directpayment@leonardcheshire.org">directpayment@leonardcheshire.org</a> or call 01462 439 000.</p>

## **I am a Direct Payment User**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
<p>I receive a Direct Payment to pay for my care, should I continue to pay my PA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If they have to go into an isolation period?</li> </ul>	<p>Yes. Please continue to pay your employed PA subject to the hours they support you in their contract of employment for any isolation or shielding periods.</p> <p>If you need to arrange alternative care during the isolation or shielding period or you do not have enough money in your direct payment account to pay for replacement care, please call 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children) and talk to your social care team.</p>

<p>- If they are clinically, extremely vulnerable and been advised to shield?</p>	
<p>I am in the clinically extremely vulnerable group should I receive support from my PA?</p>	<p>It is important that you continue to receive the care and support you need to help you stay safe and well. <u>Appropriate hand hygiene</u>, the correct use of PPE and keeping safe distances where possible will reduce the potential for contamination.</p> <p>You can access a range of NHS services from home, including ordering repeat prescriptions or contacting your health professional through an online consultation. To find out more, visit <u>NHS Health at Home</u> or download the <u>NHS App</u>.</p>
<p>Where can I access Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for my PA(s)?</p>	<p>The Government has made PPE free of charge to Direct Payment Holders until March 2021. Free PPE only covers additional PPE your PA(s) needs due to Covid, and not the usual PPE that you may have been using before Covid. You should attempt to buy any usual non-covid related PPE equipment through your regular supplier.</p> <p>Please order your Covid PPE online at <a href="https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ppepa">https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ppepa</a> If you do not have access to the internet, you can call Leonard Cheshire, on <b>01462 439000</b> who will fill in the form for you.</p> <p>If your care includes an aerosol generating procedure (AGP), for example suctioning airways if you have a tracheostomy, you will need specialist PPE. If you think you receive care with an AGP, please contact Leonard Cheshire on <b>01462 439000</b> to discuss your PPE needs further.</p> <p>Any problems with delivery of ordered items please email: <a href="mailto:PPEInfo@Hertfordshire.gov.uk">PPEInfo@Hertfordshire.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>How do I make my home a safe place for a PA to work in?</p>	<p>There are certain steps you can take to promote a safe home for yourself and workplace for your PA including cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, washing hands with soap regularly and having a hand sanitiser available.</p> <p>For more information on creating a safe place during COVID, please access <a href="#">Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak - a short guide (PDF)</a> and <a href="#">PAs returning to work &amp; safety of individual employers who have been shielding</a></p> <p>If you feel a risk assessment would help assess risk and promote safety, then there is a useful template available from the Health and Safety Executive: <a href="#">What to include in your COVID-19 risk assessment (PDF) - Portable Document Format</a></p>

<p>My PA is not practising social distancing in their personal life, what can I do?</p>	<p>You should discuss this with your PA. You should keep a record of your discussion and what has been agreed between you both. If your PA continues to refuse to practice social distancing in line with government advice, it might be appropriate to take disciplinary action. If you require support about employer and/or employee rights and terms and conditions of the PA's contract, please contact Leonard Cheshire on <a href="mailto:directpayment@leonardcheshire.org">directpayment@leonardcheshire.org</a> or call 01462 439 000</p> <p>It is important that all involved in your care and support understand the importance of social distancing. There's an increased risk on both you, and them, if they do not do this.</p>
<p>My PA does not want to come to work because they cannot practice social distancing while providing care, what can I do?</p>	<p>You should speak with your PA about their concerns and explain to them what has been put in place to support you both safely, in line with guidance.</p> <p>However, there are some tasks where social distancing will not be possible, for example if your PA is providing personal care. In these circumstances, it is important that your PA wears the required PPE and follows the additional infection control procedures that are in place and highlighted within this document. Doing this can help to reduce fears.</p> <p>Support is available to help you decide on the best course of action based on your circumstances. Please call your social care team on 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children).</p>
<p>Will my direct payment be reviewed during COVID?</p>	<p>Reviews will be completed during the pandemic. Records should be kept as normal so they are available when the next review takes place. As is normal practice, you should keep hold of any receipts or evidence that shows how the direct payment has been used.</p> <p>If you are concerned that the amount allocated to you within your direct payment is not enough, or is too much, you should speak to your social care team by calling 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children).</p>
<p>Should I continue to pay my Client Contribution if my usual support services have ceased?</p>	<p>Please contact 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children) for information on this.</p>
<p>I want to stop my direct payment, what should I do?</p>	<p>Please call 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children) to talk to your social care team who will explore this further and ensure you are getting the right amount of help to meet your care and support needs.</p>

## **Activities Funded by a Direct Payment**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
My regular community activity has stopped running, can I use my Direct Payment for something else?	<p>Yes. Please take every opportunity to use your money as creatively and flexibly as you can to support your needs and outcomes identified in your care and support plan. As in normal times, please keep any receipts as evidence of your spend. <a href="#">See examples of how direct payments have been used more flexibly during this time in the full government guidance.</a></p> <p>If you want further information on how to stay safe whilst accessing your community, the Government has provided <a href="#">guidelines on staying safe outside your home</a></p> <p>If you are unsure what you can spend your direct payment on call your social care team for advice: 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children).</p>
I am a provider and we have had to stop our regular activities because of COVID-19 guidelines. Can we still get Direct Payment funding?	<p>Please try and diversify your current offer to include online and remote support for your clients and continue to invoice them as normal.</p> <p>For any issues or general advice, please contact your contract manager/commissioner in Adult Care Services on 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children).</p>
Should I continue to pay my Client Contribution if my usual support services have ceased?	<p>Please contact 0300 123 4042 (Adults) or 0300 123 4043 (Children) for information on this.</p>