

WINNING

IT UP!



- **Choice**

- **Freedom**



Disabled young people speak their minds...

- **Independence**

- **Direct**

**Payments and
Personal
Assistants**

- **find out
more
inside...**

It could be you!

Direct Payments >>>

– what's the deal?

Hello! Do you get to do the things you like best in life?

Do you think you have enough freedom and choices?

Is it easy to go out with your friends, or even have mates at all?

There is a new system for disabled young people over 16 called Direct Payments which could help you 'live it up'. This magazine tells you all about it.

Now meet some of the team who put the magazine together:



Maresa



Katie



Tina



Tom



Shabaaz



Lucy

Direct Payments is a way of putting control into your own hands, so that you are the boss and you pay for support. If this feels scary,

don't worry. There are lots of people and organisations that can help you with this and these are listed on the back cover.

Maresa interviews Shabaaz about Direct Payments:



Fact file

Name: Maresa MacKeith

Age: Nearly 18

Lives: Nottingham

Interests: Reading and changing the world



Fact file

Name: Shabaaz Mohammed

Age: 21

Lives: Manchester

Interests: I love going to watch the football, going to the cinema and above all else chillin' out with my mates.

M. Do you know a lot about Direct Payments?

S. A lot, but I'd like to know more.

M. How did you find out?

S. From my friends

M. Do they use Direct Payments?

S. They've just found out about the scheme – a few friends are trying to get on

M. Is it a good idea?

S. Yes, but it's hard to get it.

M. Do you think Direct Payments will help with your social life?

S. It will fine tune my life – in general, to have more control on my terms, be my own boss, go on holiday when I want, but there is a lot of responsibilities.

Direct Payments

and personal assistants



“ Hi, I’m Tina. I’m 17 and come from North Yorkshire. ”

Did you know that a change in the law means that if you are disabled and aged over 16 you can ask Social Services to give you money to buy your own support and services? This system is called Direct Payments. Direct Payments can give disabled young people more independence and choice about how to live their lives.

A Personal Assistant is someone you employ to help you do what you want to do. A PA is simply a person. Think of someone you like and who supports you. That person could be a PA. You choose who it is.

I pay for my PA with Direct Payments. It gives me more freedom, independence and choice.



A PA can help you live your life to the full. Here are just a few ways PAs help us and some of our mates...

You could ask a PA to:

...help you with getting up, getting dressed and getting ready...



...support you when you go out with friends and help you get around...



...go shopping with you...



...help you make choices about what it is that YOU want to do...



“ And I’m Tom. I’m 20 and live in Manchester. ”



People who already have Direct Payments often use the money to get themselves a Personal Assistant. But it doesn’t only have to be spent on a Personal Assistant. You could use Direct Payments for transport for example.



When I escaped residential hell I began to gain more independence whilst using my PA’s. I could do what I wanted, like going to bed at 6 in the morning and not getting in trouble for it.

So what's good about having a PA?



Hi, I'm, Maresa.

Imagine you are a person from another planet. People are terrified and feel helpless around you. Nothing seems to fit your needs. Then someone comes along who wants to learn how to give you access to the world. She likes you, you like her. It's wonderful, the world opens up, you want it to stay like that for ever...

It's not just a dream! Here are some of the good things about having a PA –



Freedom:

Freedom to get out where you want and when you feel like it.



Choice:

New opportunities, a chance to do new things in your life.



Relationships:

Meeting more people, making your own relationships with the people you like, breaking down barriers between disabled and non-disabled people

Independence:

Making a difference to where and how you live, maybe moving away from parents or out of residential care



And here's my PA wish list ...

I want a PA to share in my excitement for learning ...

I need someone who can help me make friends ...

I don't want to be contained or bored ...

I want a PA who can listen and be at peace with themselves...

Direct Payments

– getting going...



I'm Lucy. Some disabled people complain that they don't always have a say or choice in who will support them. Direct Payments is a way of putting control in your own hands, so here's how to get going.

To get Direct Payments you'll need to do the following things. Remember you don't have to do these things by yourself – there are people who can help you if you want.

1 Contact your local Social Services Department. Their number will be in your phone book. Or you could ring the main phone number for your Council and ask to be put through to the Social Services bit that deals with young disabled people.

2 Ask to talk to someone in Social Services about Direct Payments.

Here's what will happen next:

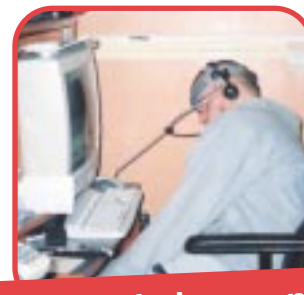
3 Ask for an assessment of your needs. This means Social Services will want to know the kinds of things you would like to use your Direct Payment for. Make sure the assessment covers things like:



Going out with friends



Doing things you enjoy doing



As well as help you need at home or at college.

You could talk to other people who have been through it first to get advice.

4 Find out if there is an organisation in your local area that can help you with all this. There might be a Direct Payments Support Scheme in your area, or an Independent Living Centre, or an organisation of disabled people that could give you help and advice.

5 There is a good website you could access which is aimed at disabled teenagers and contains some information on Direct Payments. It's called, 'After 16 – what's new?' and is at www.after16.org.uk

You'll find some more useful information on the back page, but remember, don't give up!

What makes *the perfect PA?*



It can take time for you and your PA to work out what your needs are and how best to support you, so it's important to know what qualities you're looking for right from the start.



Here are some suggestions:

Communication

Trust

Enjoying what the person is interested in

Ability to learn and listen

Interested in human rights issues

Teamwork

Making it *work*

Shopping – a day in the life of Shabaaz and Maresa with their PAs



1

Working as a team with your PA is important. You have to be able to trust one another...



2

Especially if it comes to the PA being responsible for your money.



3

It is important for a PA to actively listen...



4

...to enable a young person to be able to choose what they want.



5

Where there's a will, there's a way. A PA can enable you to problem solve in tricky situations – like getting up steps!



6

A PA should be prepared to get their hands dirty!



Happy shoppers!

A shopping trip well done!

7



Keeping it Sweet

Katie's Casebook



Hi, I'm Kate. There are bound to be ups and downs in any relationship, and you and your PA are no exception! But remember, you're not alone. Look on the back page for more sources of advice and support.

Q

Sometimes I don't know if my PA is my friend or my support worker – it's really confusing – help?!

A

Katie: Relationships can be difficult with your PA. There is no right or wrong – everyone needs different things from the help they get, and all assistants have different characters. Some people want an assistant as bestest buddy but others want the relationship as icy

cool. So from the very start, set some ground rules for your relationship.

Q

I wanted my PA to take me to a party but she just said she wasn't available, so I couldn't go. I felt I'd really missed out on a good time and wonder if she'll let me down again.

A

Katie: Expect to compromise – it may not be possible to do everything you want to when you want to do it. So talk about your expectations and agree what is and isn't possible. This can all be put down in a simple contract which may save a lot of misunderstandings as you go on. A contract could cover things like working hours, rates of pay, the PA's role and tasks, and arrangements for giving notice on either side should either of you wish to move on. **If you need help with this, there are contacts on the back page.**

Q

My PA gets too involved in my social life and ends up mixing with my friends. How can I tell him "hands off!" I can do without the competition!

A

Katie: It's often important to have a PA to help you get out so that you can make friends and see people. The friends you choose may be people your PA likes, maybe not, but it's not a PA's role to make friends with these people too. Try to talk to your PA about this, and be prepared to listen to his point of view. He may not realise that he is making you feel uncomfortable – he may just think he is being helpful.



Q

I'm a new PA and I want to know how to develop a good relationship with the young person I am working for.

A

Katie: It's important to make time to talk and to be willing to listen, on both sides. I talked to Wendy and Jade, both PAs, about what it takes to build a good relationship and this is what they said:

"There has to be mutual trust. It's good to share social and other interests. When I'm working lots we both also need a bit of space."

"Sometimes it's not really like a job – there is give and take – like friendship. I can't always do everything she wants me to do, but I understand her issues from a friendship perspective."

There are some good training courses which can help. See the back page for contacts.



We hope you've found this magazine helpful. Here are some more contacts for support and advice.

“Good luck with living it up!”

To get more information about Direct Payments and support you can get, contact the organisations below:

Social Services

To find out about Direct Payments in your area contact your local social services department. You will find their number in your phone book. Ask to be put through to someone who works with disabled young people. Then ask to talk to someone about Direct Payments.

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People: Young Disabled People's Forum

To find out more about the Young Disabled People's Forum or about Independent Living and Disability Equality, email gmcdp@globalnet.co.uk or phone **0161 273 8141**

West of England Centre for Inclusive Living (WECIL)

WECIL have been running a Personal Assistant Support Scheme for young disabled people. To find out more contact: Youth PASS, WECIL, Leinster Avenue, Bristol, BS4 1AR tel. /minicom **0117 903 8900** email reception@wecil-ltd.demon.co.uk

National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL)

NCIL can give information and advice on Direct Payments. They produce books and newsletters including a video called 'Direct Payments - A Beginners Guide'. There might also be an Independent Living Centre in your area. NCIL can tell you where it is. Contact: NCIL, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD tel **020 7587 1663** text. **020 7587 1177** email ncil@ncil.org.uk website www.ncil.org.uk

Values Into Action (VIA)

VIA works for the rights of people with learning difficulties and they have made a video about Direct Payments. Contact: VIA, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London, E2 6HG tel **020 7729 5436** email general@viauk.org web site <http://www.viauk.org/>

Credits:

Thanks to everyone who helped put this magazine together:

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