



SELF DIRECTED SUPPORT

- Changes to Direct Payments
- New services and helpful ideas

Welcome

Dear Reader,

Social care is an essential public service. It provides day to day support for disabled people, those with impairments, and older people who need help maintaining their independence and living full and active lives. At the moment, it helps support over 1.5 million people, and is a fundamental element of our welfare system.

Despite its importance, social care has reached a critical stage for two reasons. Firstly, the current care system is being overwhelmed by an ageing population and the growing complexity of their support needs. In the coming decades, the number of people aged 85 and over in England is expected to increase by two-thirds. Furthermore, the number of people aged 50 and over with learning disabilities is projected to rise by 53% between 2001 and 2021.

As the number of individuals needing support increases, those who find themselves in supportive roles, usually the family, will also be in higher demand. These informal carers have needs too and any future system of Self Directed Support must guarantee their well-being.

Secondly, the existing structure is deeply unfair. The traditional needs-assessment model, pigeonholes users into one of four bands: low, moderate, substantial and critical, with three-quarters of local authorities providing services only to those placed in the latter two categories. This leaves thousands of people with serious needs on the outskirts of public assistance. Meanwhile, means-testing too often leaves people on the brink of poverty and the current limited menu of support provision, keeps disabled people in a position of dependency and frustrated isolation.

The "one-size-fits-all" approach and obsession with categorisation fails to cater for social care users as individuals with complex and widely varying needs. It limits an individual's choice and control over the very support that gives their life purpose and dignity. It is also vulnerable to a post-code lottery of social care provision.

So, as social care becomes an increasingly pressing problem, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fix its fundamental flaws. One chance for disabled and older people to have real control over their lives enabling them to maintain and improve their well-being and independence. One chance of proportionally managing the risks they take. One chance to access bespoke quality services closer to home and at the right time.

RUILS' seeks to engage everyone in achieving a fairer settlement between social care users and society. This newsletter is just one way of giving disabled people and their allies the information to shape and benefit from a more personalised and fairer system of social care.

Read on to see how Self Directed Support can make it happen!

The Editorial Team

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What is social care and Self Directed Support?

Social care or support means the services and activities that help people to live independent and healthy lives and to be part of their community.

Many disabled and older people need 'social care' and support to live a better life. So do unpaid carers (people who help and support someone who could not manage without them).

For all these people, a better life often means better assistance to:

- live at home
- to stay safe and well,
- to do the same everyday things as other people and
- to be treated just the same as others.

Nowadays, better care or support means giving people help that is more personal. This means finding new ways to give them:

- more choice of who supports them and how this help is given.
- more control of when and where help is given,
- more chances to do things like getting out and about or learning new skills,.
- more say in how money is spent to get 'good' individual support.

Richmond Council is in charge of making social care more personal and easier to use. They call this new way of working, Self Directed Support or SDS for short. It works like this:

- An amount of money, called a Personal Budget, is set aside by the Council to pay for a year's-worth of your future care or support.
- The amount of your budget is decided following assessments of your support needs and your ability to contribute towards the cost of your support.

- If you are entitled to get Council funding you are told how much it will be and asked to prepare a Support Plan.
- Your plan will show:
 - o who you are, what you can do and what you want to do,
 - o what care and support you need and how you want to get it,
 - o how you will spend the money that the Council gives to you.
- You can get help to prepare your Support Plan from:
 - o trained Brokers,
 - o Council Care Managers,
 - o relatives or friends.
- If the Council agrees that your plan will give you the support that you need, then the money in your Personal Budget is made available to you.
- Personal Budgets can be held and paid out in different ways. You can:
 - o Hold and spend it yourself by having monthly Direct Payment paid into an account set up for this purpose. You then buy and manage your own care or support.
 - o Get others to hold and spend the Personal Budget on your behalf. The Council, a charity or a business like a 'care' agency, can act as your representative.
 - o Use a mix of both Direct Payment and managed services.
- Finally, a routine review by the Council will confirm that your social care support is working well.

TIPS & ADVICE

Some people who can no longer look after their garden, have arranged for a neighbour or friend to turn it into an allotment and to share what is grown.

News In brief

Keep your staff's holidays legal

If you use Direct Payments to employ your own support worker or Personal Assistant(PA), then, from the 1st of April 2009, the legal minimum holiday entitlement for all your employees went up from 24 to 28 days per year (pro rata for part-time employees). This includes Bank Holidays.

You must make sure that your PA gets this new entitlement and that you inform them, preferably in writing.

If you need help to calculate your PAs' new holiday entitlement, you can contact Chris Marshall at Rowan Payroll on 02476642941.

Keep track of your spending

If you already get Direct Payments, you will have received a letter from the Council informing you that the original Financial Monitoring Form no longer needs to be submitted. You will, however, have to complete a new form when you transfer to SDS (see p.07). Although you will not yet have received this, remember to keep all your receipts so that when the form does land on your doorstep you have the necessary paperwork. You should keep:

1. Bank Statements, Cheque books, paying in books of all things to do with Direct Payments
2. Invoices and receipts for everyday supplies and services e.g. agency fees for personal assistant, domestic help, special supplies, transport, help getting to work, leisure activities etc.
3. Receipts for major equipment or major non-permanent adaptations e.g. personal computer, electric bed or chair.
4. If you are an employer you should be keeping any correspondence from the tax office and the Rowan Payroll service.

Anyone entitled to public money to pay for their care or support are also reminded that you must spend it in ways that are suitable. That is, your spending must buy the support you need, it must be legal and not involve gambling.

Keep up-to-date by text

RUILS can now keep you up to date by sending you a text message. We will only do this to let you know about any important events or major changes affecting your care or support. We will also be using this service to contact Personal Assistants who are looking for work or to keep our 'paFinder' register up to date.



Ed.

To be added (or removed) from our text messaging list, please contact Hanna on the helpline 020 8831 6083 (10am-4pm. Weekdays).

Supported by people like you

Richmond is trying out a new way for disabled and older people to get support from those who have similar needs and live similar lives.

People often find that the best way to get support is from someone who can understand what their life is like because they have been through similar situations. This is sometimes called 'peer support' and is the way RUILS has always worked.

Over the next two years, a government department, called the Office of Disability Issues (www.odi.gov.uk), is to help the Council and local user led groups to develop a 'peer support' brokerage service. This will provide trained brokers to help people to plan and set up their life, living at home and supported in ways that work.

Although a similar brokerage role is performed by Richmond's Care Managers, the recent introduction of social-care provision, called Self Directed Support (see page 03) and the ODI project will provide an opportunity for disabled and older people to do much the same thing.

Volunteers, who are already getting social care support will be offered a chance to draw upon their own direct and personal experience of planning and setting up their own support, to train and work as peer support brokers. The credentials of being 'experts by experience' will give them a unique insight into knowing what works because they have already 'been there and done that'. And who knows, this form of peer support could provide an opening for the volunteers to secure future paid employment as independent brokers.

RUILS has always looked for ways of turning the experience of living with a disability into something more positive. So what better way than by taking the experience of supported living and using it to offer a 'peer brokerage' service to those who are about to live life using social care support?

The project will also give an important role to other disabled and older people who are unable to take advantage of the peer brokerage offer. They will be asked to use their experience as recipients of brokerage support, to monitor and evaluate the quality of the local service.

To judge how well peer brokerage support benefits the recipient and all those involved, the ODI project team will visit and interview a number of disabled and older people. Some of these will have used brokers and others will have not. The views and experiences of both groups will be compared to see if the new way of working does actually help people achieve greater independence.

A report will be published by The Norah Fry Centre (Bristol University). The results of their interviews, together with facts and figures that describe what happened, will be sent to the Government and be used to see if 'peer support' services are worth developing elsewhere in the country.

TIPS & ADVICE

An easy-to-use mobile phone for older people and those with limited sight and dexterity. Most calls can be completed by the press of one big button. They include: answering incoming calls, dialing any of your pre programmed (four) numbers, placing an emergency call or sending a text message (or SMS) to your four pre-programmed contacts.
Contact 08450 111 160

Do you need care or support to live at home? Do you have questions that need answers? If you have access to the internet, then look no further. Click on www.ruils.co.uk

It will help you to find out more about: social care in the borough of Richmond, Direct Payments, Personal Budgets, Self Directed Support and us here at RUILS.

So, cut out the 'middle man' and get straight to the answers that you need.

Our new live **FORUM** is an exciting way to 'pick our brains' and get your questions answered. All you have to do is:

- *register as a member of the forum, then*
- *post your comments or questions, then*
- *sit back and wait for other service users to offer advice and helpful solutions.*

Typical Forum questions include:

Q. *"How do I go about employing my own support worker or personal assistant?"*

Q. *"What can I spend my Personal Budget on?"*

Q. *"How do I find out if the person I employ is eligible to work in the UK?"*

**The forum comes with a step by step guide for becoming an active visitor but if you need help getting started then ring Hanna on our Helpline 020 8831 6083.*

Changes to Direct Payment

The introduction of Self Directed Support means that if you already get a Direct Payment you will need to do some things differently and the money that you get might change.

The reason for the changes

Richmond Council has a new way of offering 'social care' to disabled and older people. It is called **Self Directed Support (SDS)**. The new approach gives eligible people an amount of money (called a **Personal Budget (PB)**) to buy some or all of their support. This sum can be taken as monthly **Direct Payments (DP)**, but if you currently receive Council money in this way you will need to do some things differently.

A change in assessing your needs

The first change that you will notice is when a Care Manager visits you to review your support needs. This they will do, by asking you to complete a new needs assessment form called a **Self-Assessment Questionnaire** or **SAQ** for short.

We suggest that you prepare for this meeting by asking yourself:

- Are my personal support arrangements working?
- Are my living and family arrangements OK?
- Would I like to change or do things differently?
- Have my support needs increased because my disability or way of living has got worse?
- Is the amount of my current Direct Payments enough?

Having answered the above, the next step is to complete the SAQ. For each question you have a choice of alternative answers. You need to select the one that best describes the level of support that you need in regard to that aspect of your life.

Your visiting Care Manager or Reviewing Officer, will discuss your choice of answers with you. This may help in two ways. It may avoid any

unreasonable expectations you may have or encourage you to think about other ways you may need support. The aim, in both cases, is to try and give a full and accurate picture of what you need to be properly supported.

After you have completed the SAQ, your Care Manager will take it back to the Council. The answers that you gave will help them to:

- work out how much support you have,
- decide if it is enough to keep you living at home and living a reasonable quality of life and
- work out what amount of money they may need to set aside to pay for your future support?

Deciding what you can afford to pay



As always, the amount of money you get from the Council will depend on what you can afford to pay out of your own pocket. You will not have to pay anything if you receive the guarantee credit element of Pension Credit or Income Support. If you do not receive either of these, you will be asked to fill out the

form called, '**Financial Assessment Form for Adult Social Services Support**'.

If you have not filled in one of these forms in the last year, then you will be asked to do so by your reviewing manager. The form asks you to say what savings you have, how much money you pay out

(expenditure) and how much you have coming in (income). It also asks for photocopy proof to confirm the amounts that you have declared.

This check of your finances will tell the Council what amount, if any, you can afford to contribute each week towards the cost of your care and support.

Knowing what money you will get

After reviewing your support needs and your ability to pay, the Council will send you a form that has the title, **'Self Directed Support Assessment'**. It contains some important information, including:

- a copy of all your answers to your SAQ, together with any supporting information you have discussed with your reviewing Care Manager,
- whether your support needs are judged to be 'critical', 'substantial', 'moderate' or 'low',
- **'Indicative resource allocation – gross'** – the total amount of support money available to you before any adjustments are made,
- **'User contribution'** - the amount of money the Council will expect you to pay towards the cost of your support,
- **'Indicative resource allocation'** - the amount of money the Council agrees to pay towards the cost of your future support. It is also known as a **'Personal Budget'**.

You should keep this form safe and use it to help you with the next step - that of preparing your own Personal Support Plan.

Describing how you will spend your Direct Payments.

You must now prepare a **Support Plan**. It should describe what support you prefer and need, who will provide it, and when and where it will be given. Your plan should also say how you will spend your Personal Budget and if you still wish to take the Council's contribution as a Direct Payment(DP).

Your plan can describe your current support arrangements but now is a good time to review matters because;

- preparing a plan gives you a chance to think about how well your existing DP funded support is working or if there may be better ways.
- your plan, unlike the old Care Plan that it replaces, can tell others how you like to be supported and treated, how you can best avoid situations or settings that are unsafe and maybe, how to achieve those things that are still on your 'wish list' of things to do.
- the Council will not release your Personal Budget until they are sure your Support Plan has been thought out and properly costed.

Once the Council has approved your plan, your Personal Budget will be paid to you as a direct monthly cash payment.

Some rules to follow

Here are some of the SDS rules that will now apply

.... If you employ a support worker.

- Money for a Personal Budget can be given in different ways but a Direct Payment is the only way for you to employ your own support worker or Personal Assistant.
- The Council will pay the Rowan Organisation to provide you with a 'free' payroll service.
- All other and the additional costs of employing a support worker must be paid out of your annual Personal Budget. The Council will no longer top-up your funding or give additional money for such expenses as, sickness and maternity payments, insurance cover or advertising and recruitment costs

..... if you want to vary your spending.

- You can keep up to eight times the weekly value of your Personal Budget(PB) to pay bills

which may be due later on. e.g., National Insurance contributions, holiday pay or 'set aside' money for future support need.

- You can spend your PB on anything as long as it is not gambling or illegal, and what you buy helps you to get the support and do those things that were noted in your self assessment and Support Plan.
- You will have to account for your spending once every year or more often if there is a risk of your support or spending breaking down.

... if you have to show proof of your DP spending.

- You must keep financial records and bank statements to show how you have spent your Personal Budget. You will only have to submit detailed records or receipts if things 'go wrong'.

Changes to the amount of money you get or pay out.

Self Directed Support should ensure that the level of your support is agreed in a way which is fair, open and flexible. However, in applying these standards to everyone, it may mean that some people will get less money and some more. The likely reasons for this are:

See over



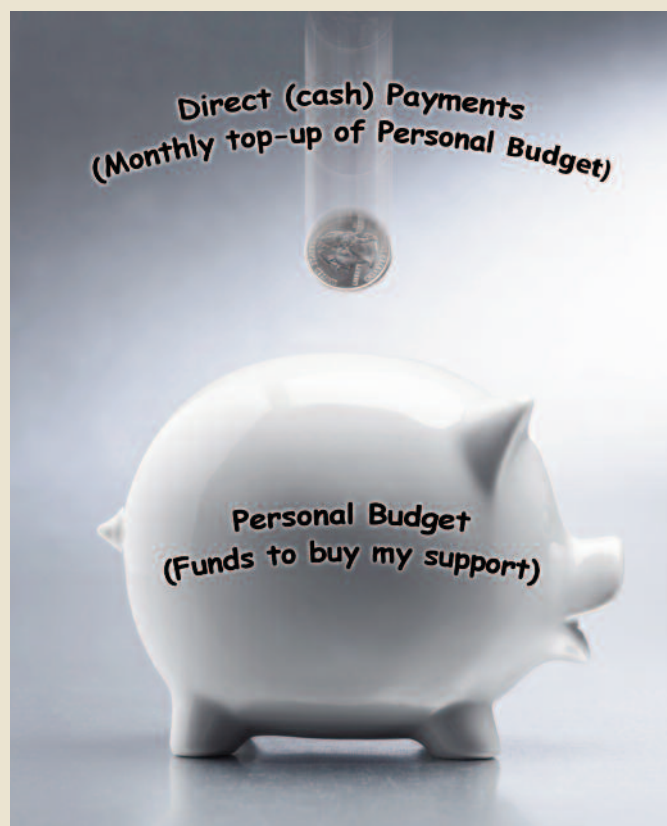
The difference between Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

Personal Budgets and Direct Payments are not the same thing. Everybody getting Self-Directed Support is given a Personal Budget but only some people may choose to manage and spend their Personal Budget as a Direct Payment.

A Personal Budget is an agreed amount the Council will set aside for your future support. If you choose Direct Payments, then the Council pays out your Personal Budget as monthly cash deposits into an account you have set up for this purpose. You then buy your own support using this money.

If you choose not to receive or handle money from your Personal Budget, then it can be held and spent on your behalf by:

- the Council,
- people you trust,
- an agency or organisation that supports you, or
- a private company that manages, for a fee, your Direct Payment on your behalf.



If one of the above alternatives is chosen, then no direct cash payment is made to you

Changes to direct payments. (continued)

- a) your present personal support needs are more, or less, than before,
- b) in the past, you were paid more, or less, than others with similar support needs.
- c) you are financially 'better off, or 'worse off' now and can afford to contribute more, or less, than before,

Managing your support on less council money will not be easy. So you need to prepare for this or consider an appeal.

If you have to live on less money, then you may need to adjust your current DP spending and/or look for alternative informal help.

You may consider a formal appeal if your Support Plan shows that your Personal Budget, and all other reasonable ways of getting support, are not enough to meet all the needs and outcomes that were recorded in your SAQ Assessment Form.

Arrangements to help users of DP move to SDS

In addition to our helpline and home visiting Independent Living Advisors, RUILS offers:

- The factsheet "A service user's guide to completing a SAQ" or download Issue 5 of 'Options'
- Written advice on preparing your own Support Plan – download Issue 6 of 'Options'
- Workshops on Support Planning and Self Assessments.

For more details of the above ring the RUILS Helpline 020 8831 6083, Email: info@ruils.co.uk or 'click on' www.ruils.co.uk

Other help includes:

- Trained brokers from RIBS (Richmond Independent Brokerage Service) to help you to prepare a Support Plan and put your support

arrangements in place.

- Welfare benefits advice from Richmond Community Partnership (The Pension Disability and Carer Service and Age Concern) Ring 020 8481 3112 or Richmond AID Ring 020 8831 6070 or email: advice@richmondaid.org.uk
- Council information on personal contributions. Ring: 020 8831 6215, or email: charginghelpline@richmond.gov.uk

Finally, some reminders

- Your current Direct Payments will continue whilst you are waiting to be told the amount of your Personal Budget and getting your Support Plan agreed.
- Any contribution you have to make is deducted from the Direct Payment before the monthly amount is paid into your account.
- If your Personal Budget increases due to an increased level of care needs, then your contribution may also go up. You will have 6 weeks notice of this.
- Any personal contribution will not increase by more than £20 per week in 2009 and the maximum contribution by any individual is £310 per week. This will take effect from the date a Personal Budget begins.
- Assessed personal contributions will be capped at a level that does not reduce your weekly disposable income below the current rate of Pension Credit/Income Support plus 25%, excluding housing costs.
- All Direct Payments will be made on the 28th day of every month.
- You can ask for a review at any time if your health, spending or support breaks down.

Poem

At an early support planning workshop, we looked at our future dreams and aspirations. Brian Hare said he wished to publish a book of his poems. He has achieved his goal and we are delighted to stick to our side of the deal by featuring one of his poems.

Thoughts from the day care centre.

We are quieter now ...
 We are older now.
 Look more closely, ...
 You will see what we used to be,
 Some think we are lost.

But those whose life counted towards the
 Values we share today.

There's Barbara and Alyte, Keith and Doris
 And Linton our driver,
 There's Paddy who sits next to me,
 Rosie, Maureen and Joyce, Eddie and lots
 Of others who live peacefully,
 In England but can't in the place they came from.

Jacob and Hamed, cousins who live in the land
 God gave to their Father Abraham.
 They wanted to sit under their fig trees
 And taste the fruit of the vine
 They just wanted to live in peace ...,
 Not beat the daylight out of each other
 But they can't quite make it
 (They might if we left them alone).

We used to be a "Commonwealth of Nations"
 And the globe had more pink on it than
 before. We are still British, and sing
 "RULE BRITANNIA" at the PROMS...
 Our neighbour is the person that lives next to us,
 Let us not "pass by" on the other side.



Poet, Brian Hare

Ed.

Brian's book of self-penned poems is available by contacting RUILS. All proceeds will go to a charity

TIPS & ADVICE

Datalink is a plastic bottle that you store in your 'fridge'. The bottle contains information about you that will help anyone attending you in the event of an emergency.

Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme (RUILS) is a charity and not-for-profit company limited by guarantee.

It is an independent, grassroots, self-help organisation that is run and led by its peers – the people who use its services.

RUILS acts as the champion, representative and peer supporter of all disabled and older people who have social care needs.

It serves those who are in receipt of a Personal Budget or use Direct Payments, Personal Assistants or other means of support to achieve greater independence and well being.

Help us to help each other

As a self-help group of individuals who are receiving Direct Payments, we value your knowledge, skills and experience and invite you to share your know-how with others.

For further information about volunteering opportunities, the services and events mentioned here, or a copy of this newsletter in Braille, large print, audio tape or community language, please contact us at:

RICHMOND USERS INDEPENDENT LIVING SCHEME (RUILS)

Disability Action and Advice Centre
4 Waldegrave Road
Teddington
TW11 8HT

T: 020 8831 6083/4 E: info@ruils.co.uk
www.ruils.co.uk

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Per informata te metutjeshme lidhur me sherbimet, mundesite per tu bere vullnetare ose per kopjen e ketij botimi ne gjuhen e te verberve (Braille), me shkronja te medha, ne kasete ose ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi kontaktoni

如欲查詢更多有關各項服務、義工工作機會的訊息，或者索取這份出版物的盲人點字、大字體印刷、錄音帶或另一種語言的印本，請聯絡：

ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਵਲੰਟੀਅਰ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਪੀ ਬਰੇਲ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

સેવાઓ વિષે અથવા સ્વયંસેવક તરીકેની તકો વિષે તમને વધુ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, અથવા આ પુસ્તિકાની નકલ અંધલિપિ (બ્રેલ)માં, મોટી છપાઈમાં, ઓડિયો ટેપ પર અથવા ગુજરાતી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો મહેરબાની કરી સંપર્ક સાધો:

للمزيد من المعلومات حول الخدمات و فرص العمل التطوعي او للحصول على نسخة من هذا المنشور مطبوع بلغة برايل او مطبوع بالاحرف الكبيرة او نسخة مسجلة على شريط تسجيلي او مترجم بلغة الجالية الرجاء الاتصال على

ruils