



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Short Breaks Direct Payment Guide

UNCLASSIFIED

Document Control Information

Title: Short Breaks Direct Payment Guide

Date: April 2026

Review date: April 2027

Version: 2

Classification: Unclassified

Owner: **Kelli Scott**, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities

Version	Date	Description
Version 1	May 2025	Short Breaks Direct Payment Guide First Published
Version 2	April 2026	Web links and contact details checked and updated where required Fact sheet 3 updated 'One off payment' section on page 9 removed Rates of Pay revised page 16

Contents

Introduction	4
Factsheet 1: What is a Short Break Direct Payment? Who can get them? How do they work?	5
Factsheet 2: How do I use the online Bank Account / Wokingham card?	7
Factsheet 3: What can I spend my child's Short Break Direct Payments on?	11
Factsheet 4: How do I recruit and employ a Personal Assistant?	14
Factsheet 5: How do I use an agency, organisation or purchase a service?	24
Factsheet 6: What happens if I need support or there is a change in circumstances?	26
Factsheet 7: What Records Do I Need to Keep?	30
Factsheet 8: How are Short Break Direct Payments reviewed, suspended, or stopped?	31
Appendix 1: Working Environment Risk Assessment	34
Appendix 2: Care Plan	42

Introduction

Short Break Direct Payments are a form of Direct Payment specifically designed to support access to Short Breaks.

If eligible, the amount of Short Break Direct Payment your child will receive will be set out in your child's Short Breaks Support Plan.

It is intended that as more families make use of Short Break Direct Payments, this guide will be updated to reflect any new questions or points that may be of help. Please therefore check for updates in the future

If you cannot find the answer you are looking for, please contact:

Direct Payments Team, Tel 0118 9746000 (option 6) or email:

DPWokinghamCard@Wokingham.gov.uk

Or

Your child's Short Break Co-ordinator, Tel 0118 974 6000 or email: ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk

Or

Your child's Social Worker, Tel 0118 974 6000, or email: cwdduty@wokingham.gov.uk

NB: Although there will be common ground, this guide is not designed to cover any other use of Direct Payments that a family or individual has been assessed as requiring, i.e., services being delivered via Social Work support under Section 17 of the Children Act.

Complaints Procedure

We hope that everything will go smoothly, but if we are not getting it right, please contact your child's Short Break Co-Ordinator (or Social Worker) directly in the first instance. If this does not resolve your concerns and you need to make a formal complaint about your Short Break Direct Payment, you can find further details on the council's website at: [Children's Social Care](#) or by telephoning Customer Services on 0118 974 6000.

Please see [Factsheet 6 Support s Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of Short Break Direct Payments.

Factsheet 1: What is a Short Break Direct Payment? Who can get them? How do they work?

A Short Break Direct Payment is money you can receive from the Council to buy Short Break services / support on behalf of your child, rather than having the Council arrange them for you.

The Council will create a contract with you called a Direct Payment Agreement, permitting you to use allocated Council money to plan and meet your child's care and support needs, as identified in their Short Break Support Plan.

The organisations or individuals that you choose to use for your child's Short Break do not need to be accredited with the Council, but the services you receive must still be safe, legal, and meet your child's Short Break needs. For details of Short Break services, please see the Local Offer website: [Short breaks and respite services](#).

Who can receive Short Break Direct Payments?

If your child is assessed as eligible for Short Breaks, they will receive a Short Breaks Support Plan, which will detail the type of Short Break that has been agreed. Some services do not require funding and are direct access, due to being provided, commissioned or paid for directly by the Council. However, for those that do, details of how you will receive the Short Break Direct Payment funding will be included.

Full details about WBC Short Breaks and eligibility criteria can be found in the WBC Short Breaks Statement [Short breaks explained](#).

What happens if I do not want to receive Short Break Direct Payments, or my child is not able to receive them?

Whilst for some, Short Break Direct Payments would be their preferred option, there may be others who do not feel that this would be the right option for them.

Alternatives to this are:

- Direct access to a commissioned or council run provision.
- A Council managed service whereby the Council will buy a fixed number of Short Breaks from an organisation (this option cannot be used to pay individual carers).
- A managed account where a payroll provider or organisation manages the Direct Payment contract.
- An Individual Service Fund, where a direct payment is paid to a particular provider who will then provide an agreed amount of support for the money received.

In circumstances where people may not have access to the internet, other options can also be discussed.

If you would like to know more about these options, please contact the Direct Payment Team:

Tel: 0118 974 6000 (option 6)

Email: DPWokinghamCard@wokingham.gov.uk

There may be some circumstances where your child is not able to receive Short Break Direct Payments, and an alternative form of arrangement may be suggested. Reasons will always be provided but can include:

- If you owe the Council money.
- You may not have the capacity to manage a Short Break Direct Payment or anyone who can help.

In circumstances where you may not be able to manage a direct payment yourself, you may be allowed to nominate a relative or trusted friend to manage Direct Payments on your child's behalf (subject to a DBS check).

How do Short Break Direct Payments work?

Short Break Direct Payments are paid into a bank account set up for your child by the Council specifically to pay for short breaks. This bank account has standard features, such as paying someone, direct debit, standing order, and a debit card. There is more detail about this in **Factsheet 2 [How do I use the online Bank Account / Wokingham card?](#)**

You or a suitable appointed person will be given a Direct Payments agreement which sets out the terms and conditions for receiving your child's Short Break Direct Payments and what the Council requires from you.

You must be willing and able to manage your child's Short Break Direct Payments with support if required. Any person that receives the Short Break Direct Payment on behalf of the child is required to always act in their best interests.

If someone helps to manage your child's Short Break Direct Payment, they cannot use the Short Break Direct Payment to pay themselves.

If you need any assistance with this, you can contact a member of the Direct Payments Team. (Tel: 0118 974 6000 (option 6))

Email: DPWokinghamCard@wokingham.gov.uk

You or your suitable appointed person must sign this agreement before you can begin to receive Short Break Direct Payments.

Please see [Factsheet 6 Support s Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of Short Break Direct Payments.

Factsheet 2: How do I use the online Bank Account / Wokingham card'?

Your child's Short Break Direct Payment will be paid into your child's online Short Break Direct Payments bank account. This will be set up by the Council on your behalf. It will routinely be paid monthly in advance but can be paid as a one-off payment where this is required. You will receive remittance advice from the Council to tell you how much this payment is.

Alongside the bank account, you will be issued with a Short Break Direct Payment Card facility known locally as the 'Wokingham Card.' You will receive one card for each eligible child, with their name printed on it. You can use the card in the same way as a debit card to purchase short breaks.

You can use the bank account or the card to make either one-off or regular payments for services that meet your child's identified Short Break needs.

The Short Break online bank account comes with the following standard features:

- Direct Debits
- Standing Orders
- Bank Transfers
- Ability to link funding to an approved payroll company if employing a personal assistant for your child (see [factsheet 4](#)).

The Wokingham Card can be used to:

- Make card payments in person using the PIN through a card machine
- Pay for services by telephone or on the internet

It is important to note that:

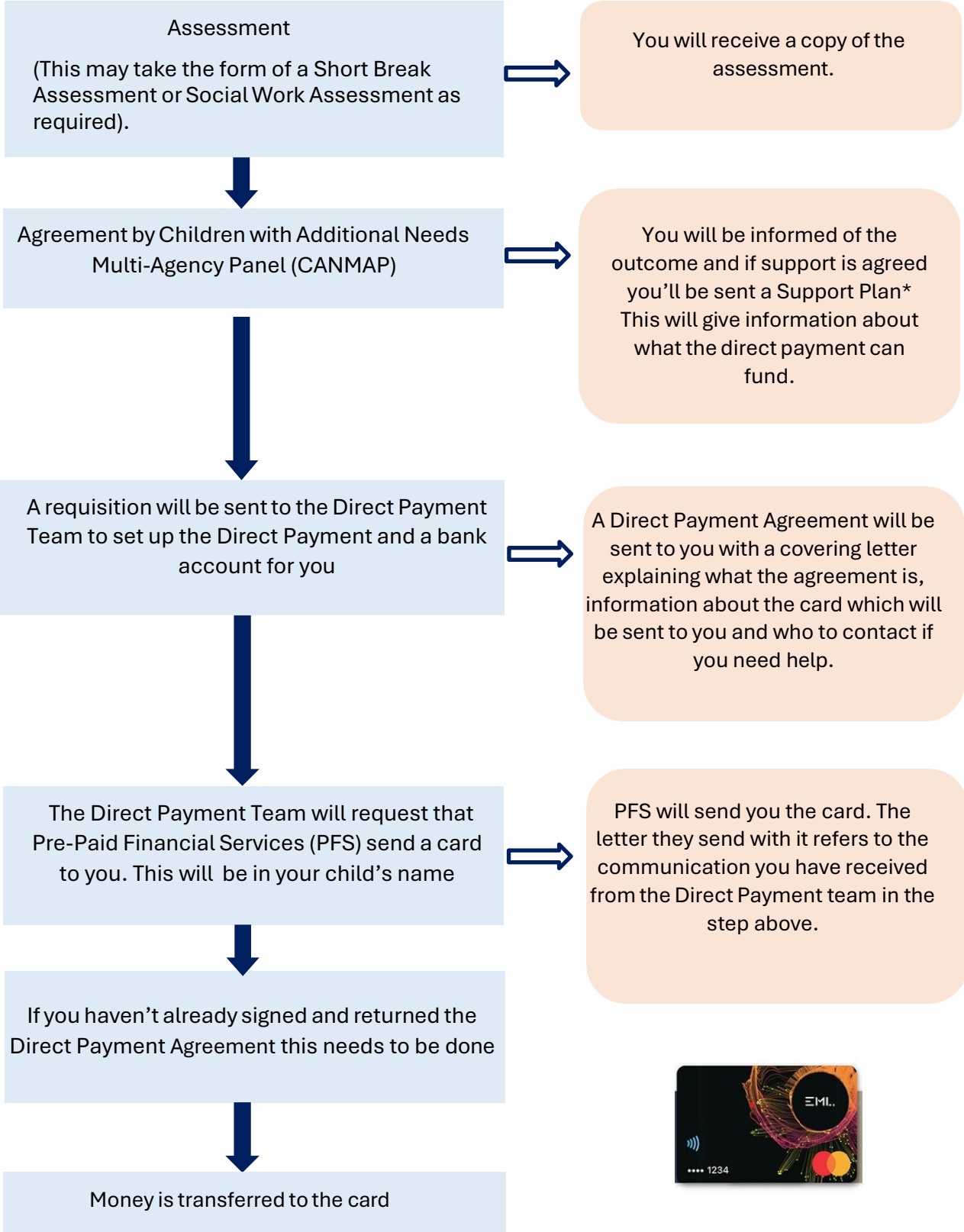
- You will only be able to make purchases if there are sufficient funds in the account. There is no overdraft facility.
- Cash withdrawals from your Wokingham Card Account are not permitted and there is no cheque book facility.
- As with any bank card, the Wokingham Card enables access to the full amount of money in your child's Short Break bank account. It should therefore be kept safe and not given to others, e.g., Personal Assistants, to use. You would be liable for any loss sustained through such action. Instead, consider how activities can be paid for in advance, online or over the phone.
- Short Break funding remains the property of Wokingham Borough Council, and any unspent funds must be returned to the council when requested.
- Receipts for expenditure need to be kept. See [Factsheet 7: What Records Do I Need to Keep?](#)

A FAQ is available on the [PFS FAQs](#) which explains how to activate the card. Should you experience any technical difficulties with the card, for example difficulties in operating

the online system, forgetting your password, or getting locked out of the system, please contact customer services at Prepaid Financial Services who are the card issuer - contact PFS: [PFS Website](#).

If you have problems with the actual money in the account, please contact the Direct Payments Team to discuss this (Tel: 0118 974 6000) (Option 6) Email: DPWokinghamCard@wokingham.gov.uk

What is the process from Assessment to receiving Short Break Direct Payments and what information will I receive?



*Please note that if you opt for a different way of receiving services this will be discussed with you by the Direct Payment Team. Likewise, if you are to receive support from a Council owned service, your child's Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker will explain what the next steps are.

Please see the Short Breaks Statement for further details on eligibility and what happens if your child is not eligible [Short breaks explained](#).

Please see [Factsheet 6 Support s Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of your child's Short Break Direct Payment.

Factsheet 3: What can I spend my child's Short Break Direct Payments on?

Short Break Direct Payments can be spent flexibly on a broad range of services or individuals that meet the needs identified in your child's Short Break Support Plan. These may be individuals that you know and trust, and you want to pay to look after your child via a payroll system, agency carers, registered childminders or support via a variety of activity providers, clubs, groups or play schemes.

Parents are routinely expected to pay the entrance fee for any activity their child is attending. The Short Break funding is provided to ensure that the additional cost incurred due to the child's disability is covered, such as the cost of support staff and/or the staff's entrance fee.

Please note the CAN Card provided by Wokingham Borough Council is accepted at a number of local venues as proof of disability and access to concessionary rates. (Please check with the place your child is visiting).

The CAN Card indicates that the child has a diagnosed disability and has joined our disability register and may allow the accompanying carer to enter for free. For further information on how to apply for a CAN card and what the CAN Network can offer, please visit the Local Offer website and search CAN Card: [Wokingham Directory | CAN \(children with additional needs\) Network and CAN Card](#)

In certain circumstances it can be spent on equipment to facilitate short breaks, i.e., hiring a mobile hoist. However, this cannot be equipment that should be provided by Health.

Likewise, it is also possible to spend money on additional costs connected to activities with a therapeutic value, i.e., music therapy, horse riding etc. However, these must not be therapies that should be provided by Health.

Parents are expected to pay for their child's food and drink. If it is reasonable for a carer to claim expenses for food and drink this is at parents' discretion. It is reasonable to say no if the duration or type of support doesn't warrant refreshments or food being purchased. It is also reasonable to pack a picnic for both the child and the carer or to encourage the carer to bring their own food. Please remember, there is no additional payment for carers' food, so large bills in this area will impact on the amount of service your child receives.

The Short Break Direct Payment can be used to cover carers' mileage whilst the child is in the vehicle but should not be used to pay for the carer to get to and from the starting point.

i.e., usually, the child's home or school as agreed. It is parents' responsibility to check that the carer has business insurance on their vehicle.

What can I not spend my child's Short Break Direct Payments on?

The services you purchase must be safe, legal, and meet your child's care and support needs and **cannot be spent:**

- To pay for routine transport (if there is an exceptional circumstance, please discuss this with the Short Break Co-ordinator, Social Worker, or the Direct Payments Team).
- To pay for long term residential / nursing care in a registered home environment.
- To buy medicines, alcohol, or tobacco products.
- To buy household items, food and drink or clothing and personal items, unless these are specifically identified in your Support Plan.
- To pay utility bills or pay for household maintenance.
- Buying equipment that should be provided by the NHS.
- To pay for gambling - such as horse racing, bingo, or the lottery.
- To cover some or all your housing costs, for example rent, mortgage or Council Tax payments.
- To allow you to take part in or promote any illegal activities.
- As a substitute for a Disabled Facilities Grant to make adaptations to your home.
- To enter into a Hire Purchase Agreement or Loan, which attracts interest payable by the Council and which can confuse ownership.
- To gain a profit from any activity that has been paid for using Short Break Direct Payments.
- To purchase services provided by us, for example transport, or Council commissioned block arrangements.
- To meet the needs of any person not named in your Support Plan or eligibility letter (this includes paying for breaks for other household members).
- On any activity which we deem to be unsafe, even after careful assessment and the application of mitigation.

Can I save up my child's Short Break Direct Payment money?

We would expect the funding provided to be used by year end (the anniversary of the start date), as there is no carry-over between years and any unused funds will be reclaimed at this point.

The funding can however be used flexibly to meet your child's needs, so whatever you do not spend in one month can be put towards the cost of Short Breaks in a different month. This enables you to save either part or all of a monthly payment for busier periods, such as school holidays, should you wish to do so (If your child uses a personal assistant, please remember to put aside holiday and pension contributions).

In case of a query about what you can spend your child's Short Break Direct Payment on, please discuss this in advance with the Short Breaks Co-ordinator, Social Worker or the Direct Payments Team; we do not want you to encounter any financial difficulties by having to pay back any money that has not been spent correctly.

For more details on the direct employment of a Personal Assistant using a payroll company see [fact sheet 4](#).

For more details regarding purchasing a service through a self-employed carer or provider organisation (such as a club, play scheme or activity) see [fact sheets 5](#).

Please see [Factsheet 6: Support s Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of Short Break Direct Payments.

Factsheet 4: How do I recruit and employ a Personal Assistant?

This Factsheet is about directly employing a Personal Assistant, as by doing so you become their employer. If you wish to purchase this service from a Personal Assistant who is self-employed, please see [Factsheet 5 How do I use an agency, organisation or purchase a service?](#)

If you choose to use your child's Short Break Direct Payments to employ a Personal Assistant, you will be responsible for the recruitment and employment process and managing the terms and conditions of their contract. This will include:

Responsibility	Who can help	Who Pays
Recruitment		
Advertising	The Direct Payment Team can offer advice.	Should be nil cost, discuss with Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker if considering paying for an advert.
DBS Check	The Direct Payment Team can organise DBS checks for Personal Assistants you want to employ. Self-employed PA's, services, and organisations are expected to DBS check their own staff.	WBC will fund the cost of the DBS check.
Contract of Employment	Once insurance is set up, contact the Direct Payment team who will then send you the relevant contract of employment.	Nil cost
Payroll		
Recording your personal assistant's hours worked on a timesheet	The Direct Payment Team can offer advice if needed. The payroll company can advise on technical issues.	Nil cost
Paying tax and national insurance	Unless you decide to do the payroll function yourself (see the	WBC will fund the cost of the following payroll providers:

	payroll section below), the payroll company will do this for you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paypacket • PAYE for Nannies • Avantedge • A financial advisor of your choosing up to £14 per month
Workplace Safety		
Work Environment Risk Assessment	A template is available at Appendix 1 and the Short Break Co-ordinator can offer advice if needed	Nil Cost
Employers Liability Insurance	The Direct Payment Team can offer advice if needed. The Insurance company can advise on technical issues	<p>WBC will fund the cost of Employers Liability Insurance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surewise • Premier Care (Mark Bates Ltd) • Fish Insurance

You will also be responsible for:

- Arranging any training
- Agreeing holidays and appropriate cover arrangements
- Making any changes to the employment

The Direct Payment Team can be contacted for help with any aspect of recruitment or on-going employment of a Personal Assistant should you require support. (If using a payroll company, they should be contacted in the first instance regarding any payroll issues).

Recruiting a Personal Assistant

It is important that you take some time to recruit your Personal Assistant, so that you can be sure that you have employed the best person to meet your child's short breaks needs.

Many families look to their existing network to identify people that they know and / or trust to look after their child. This may be someone from the child's school, clubs, or

activities they attend or someone that is known to the family, i.e., a Neighbour or family friend.

It is also worth talking to other parents, as they may know of a Personal Assistant that they use who has the capacity to pick up additional work.

If, however, you do not know anybody, we would strongly recommend that you only put an advert up in an appropriate setting with the permission of the person in charge, i.e., school, clubs, activities, colleges, or universities where for example, there may be students undertaking relevant childcare courses.

It is important to remember though that this is a position involving the care of your child that is being advertised and to be careful about what personal information you include. We would advise against giving the child's name or home address.

It is also important to consider and negotiate the security of the advert, i.e., will it be put up in a specific place where only relevant people can see it rather than being on public display for anyone to read? When recruiting new staff for children receiving Short Break Direct Payments you must:

- Ensure staff are DBS checked (see below).
- Make sure that you get at least two references for each person you employ (one with their last employer).
- Check if there are any gaps in the person's employment history and make sure they are explained to your satisfaction.
- Not routinely employ family members or people living in the same household, as they cannot be paid as a carer, except in exceptional circumstances. If you want to employ a family member or someone who lives in your household, this must be approved in advance by the Council and is likely to be subject to an agreed period.
- You must check their right to work in the UK.

Disclosure and Barring Service

Checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) are undertaken to safeguard and help inform the recruitment and employment of staff working with children.

A potential employee could have criminal cautions or convictions, have committed previous offences against other children, or have been dismissed from a care agency due to the delivery of poor care practices. Some workers that have been barred from one section of the care industry may try to move to work in other areas.

Where you employ a Personal Assistant to provide support for a child, an enhanced DBS for children check must have taken place, and no employment should begin until the DBS disclosure is in place.

- We may need to talk to you about risk if the check is not clear.
- The Direct Payment Team can organise and pay for these checks.

- Each worker needs their own DBS check.
- If a Personal Assistant is offering an existing DBS they already hold for an existing / current employer, it would be highly advisable to ask for a reference from the employer named on the DBS check.
- If you or your Personal Assistant do not want a DBS check then you must sign a 'refusal to consent' form. If this happens, we will do a risk assessment to see if any action needs to be taken, which may include not being able to pay the Short Break Direct Payment.
- Please note you cannot employ someone under the age of sixteen to undertake a paid caring role or members of your immediate family.

Safeguarding Concerns

If you become aware of any safeguarding concerns relating to a Personal Assistant, you must immediately inform:

Wokingham's Duty Triage and Assessment Team Phone: 0118 908 8002 or email: triage@wokingham.gov.uk in office hours

Or

The Emergency Duty Team (01344 351 999) outside of office hours

Or

The Short break Co-Ordinator/Social Worker and the Direct Payment Team, if these are concerns that you know have already been reported.

Even if you stop using this person they may also work for other families. Do not think what if I am wrong? Think what if I am right?

Contract for employment

Your Personal Assistant must have a contract of employment, which sets out the hours of work, terms and conditions of work and their rates of pay. Once you have set up insurance, the Direct Payment Team can provide an employment contract template. This can be adapted to meet specific needs.

You will need to keep a copy of this and give a copy to your employee. You will also need to send a copy to the Direct Payment Team.

You will also need to create a brief job description, which details their duties within the caring role. A care plan template is also included in [Appendix 2](#) that can be adapted to let Personal Assistants know how to care for your child.

Employment Record Keeping

You need to keep employment records, such as the application form, references, a copy of the contract of employment and job description, for three years (this includes after the Personal Assistant has ceased to work for you).

Paying your Personal Assistant

It is important to think about your responsibilities when employing someone; these are set out in your Direct Payment agreement.

New Personal Assistant Rates

From 1st April 2026 we introduced a new rate of pay for Personal Assistants within Children's Social Care.

Rates of Pay

What are the new rates of pay?

Weekday

The new base rate of pay for weekday hours will be **£12.71** per hour, with the following additions:

- A £0.76 per hour pension contribution; and
- A £1.63 per hour Holiday pay provision up to a maximum of 5.6 weeks (28 days) for a PA working full-time (37hrs a week).

Total weekday hourly rate = **£15.10**

Weekend

The new base rate of pay for weekend hours will be **£15.01** per hour, with the following additions:

- A £0.90 per hour pension contribution.
- A £1.92 per hour Holiday pay provision up to a maximum of 5.6 weeks (28 days) for a PA working full-time (37hrs a week),

Total weekend hourly rate = **£17.83**

Pension

All employers are now required to help their employees to save for retirement. You must enroll your Personal Assistant in a workplace pension scheme. If they do not want to be in the pension scheme, they must choose to opt out. You can find out more about pensions at www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

How is pension calculated and paid?

If using a payroll service, pension contributions will be calculated by the payroll provider and taken as part of the monthly wages for a PA from the Direct Payment account.

As the employer, it is important that you hold the £0.76 (weekday) and £0.90 (weekend) per hour pension contribution in the account for this purpose. If the Personal Assistant is not receiving pension contributions, then this money will be reclaimed by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) on the anniversary of the Direct Payment.

Holiday Pay

How is holiday pay calculated?

Holiday pay has been calculated at £1.63 per hour weekday and £1.92 per hour weekend worked.

There is a statutory requirement of 5.6 weeks (28 days) based on a Personal Assistant working full-time (37hrs per week) that can be claimed in a year.

For ease, the following link will take you to [Calculate holiday entitlement - GOV.UK](#) which provides step by step instructions on how to calculate holiday pay for regular and irregular hours worked.

If you calculate the holiday entitlement in hours, this can then be multiplied by the weekday or weekend rate per hour holiday entitlement and kept within the account to pay for holidays when requested over the year.

If there are any problems, please speak to your child's Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker, who will be able to get you support with this.

How is holiday pay claimed?

Holiday pay can be claimed either via the Personal Assistant requesting time off, or as a way of ensuring their regular income, for example, if you go on holiday with your child or go out for the day and do not need them.

Holiday needs to be entered on the Personal Assistant's timesheet (clearly labelled), and this will then be paid as part of their monthly payments via payroll.

It is necessary to keep a record of holidays taken, as it is important that Personal Assistants do not take more than they are entitled to, but also that they take their full entitlement, as it cannot be carried over. Any unspent holiday pay funds will also be reclaimed on the anniversary of the Direct Payment.

An example of how you might capture this is detailed as follows:

Name of Worker: Joe

Dates of leave year: April 26 – April 27

Entitlement in hours: 50

Date	Balance	Leave taken	Closing balance	Reason
1.4.25	50	6	44	Worker requested
3.4.25	44	4	40	Family not available
5.6.25	40	6	34	Child health appointment

How will the change in the rate of pay be managed in terms of the increase reaching the Direct Payment account?

The direct payment team will calculate the amount of additional money that needs to be paid into the direct payment account for your child based on the new rates.

They will also require you to sign a new agreement, as the funding amount has changed.

Managing funds in the account

The difference between the hourly rate and the additional contingencies for pension to holiday pay need to be made clear to Personal Assistants, so that they understand how their payment works. This may result in a credit balance in the account if, for example, the Personal Assistant does not receive a pension or claim holiday. This money needs to be held for reclaim by WBC as unused funds. Managing the spend should be straight forward and can be done in one of two ways:

For those who are financially minded and like to keep track of money:

Weekday – Hours worked x £15.10 = money that has effectively been spent.

Weekend – Hours worked x £17.83 = money that has effectively been spent.

For those who like a simpler approach:

You will be informed how many hours per week or month your child is entitled to. The funding in the Direct Payment account will align with these hours.

Rather than focus on the balance of the account, simply keep a running record of hours used.

For example, if your child receives 6 hours' support a month:

Month	Carried over from previous month	Monthly hours	Hours available	Used	Closing balance
Jan	0	6	6	4	2
Feb	2	6	8	6	2
March	2	6	8	2	6
April	6	6	12	12	0

If you have any questions, queries, or concerns, please contact your child's Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker. They will either be able to help you directly or will know who to contact for further advice and support.

Payroll

It is essential to use a payroll system.

The options you have for managing payroll are:

- To use Pay Packet: <http://paypacket.co.uk/>
- To use PAYE for Nannies: [Home | PAYE Scheme for Nannies | Domestic Staff Payroll | UK](#)
- To use Avantedge: [Avantedge - accountants + business advisers](#)

Any of these which will be paid for by WBC via an additional payment to your child's Short Break Direct Payment.

Alternatively:

- Find an alternative payroll company. WBC will pay no more than £14 per month.
- Manage the payroll yourself through the HRMC payroll www.gov.uk/browse/employing-people/payroll

If you use a payroll service, it will tell you how much employer's national insurance to pay, will deal with the tax office (HM Revenue and Customs) for you, sort employers pension contributions and help you sort out your paperwork. They will also be able to advise on things like holiday pay, sickness pay, maternity pay and paternity pay.

If you have any problems with a payroll provider, contact them first and try to sort out the issue directly. If it cannot be resolved or is a frequent occurrence, contact the Direct Payments Team.

Conducting a working environment risk assessment

To comply with Health and Safety requirements, it is important that you conduct a risk assessment of the working environment that you are asking your Personal Assistant to work in. This should consist of looking at the working environment and identifying any obvious hazards, removing those that can be removed easily and considering how to mitigate any that cannot be removed. This may include consideration of personal safety regarding challenging behaviour, manual handling, and threats to safety i.e., fire as well as physical objects etc. These should be shared with and signed by the Personal Assistant(s). Obviously, things change over time, and these should be reviewed at least annually. It is also important to inform your Personal Assistant that their health and safety is also their responsibility and to advise of any new hazards they come across.

A template is available to get you started that can be adapted by you to suit your environment, see [Appendix 1](#).

If you require any help with risk assessing the working environment, please contact your child’s Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker.

Employers’ liability insurance

When you employ your own staff, you must have employer’s liability insurance.

Most employers’ liability insurance covers you for employee liability, public liability, redundancy insurance, personal accident cover, theft cover and provides a 24-hour helpline.

All the information that you require will be contained within your insurance policy, including the telephone helpline number, and you must keep this along with your policy number in a safe place.

WBC has three recommended insurance companies:

	Surewise	Mark Bates Ltd.	Fish Insurance
Tel	0843 178 1600	01476 514478	0333 331 3770
Email	Help Centre Surewise	he@markbatesltd.com	admin@fishinsurance.co.uk
Web	Surewise Live Life Confidently	Mark Bates Ltd Specialist Insurance C Warranty Policies	Specialist Disability Insurance Fish Insurance

The Direct Payment Team will add the cost of the insurance through these companies to the Short Break Direct Payment your child receives.

Please see [Factsheet 6 Support s Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of Short Break Direct Payments.

Factsheet 5: How do I use an agency, organisation or purchase a service?

You may choose to use your child's Short Break Direct Payments to purchase a service to help you meet your child's assessed care and support needs. These can be paid for on an ongoing basis or through a one-off payment. You will need to ensure that what you purchase is safe, legal and that you have / upload receipts for the money spent.

If you decide to use your child's Short Break Direct Payments to buy services from an agency, self-employed person, or organisation it is important to remember that you are entering into a contract with that organisation, as you are paying for their services.

Consequently, you do not need to do any payroll tasks or consider the health and safety of the worker (beyond ensuring that there are no immediate dangers within your home), as this is the responsibility of the organisation that employs them or the self-employed person.

You will need to be clear with them about the terms and conditions under which you are buying the service including things like; the type of service, how much you are paying them, how payments are to be made, what cover arrangements are in place and notice periods for ending the contract. You need to be especially careful about this if buying a service in advance or block booking dates (be sure to check the cancellation policy) and be mindful of any increase in rates for work on bank holidays, (please note there is no additional funding for bank holidays). You should also create a way of logging what you have used in case of any dispute with the provider.

When entering into the contract with the self-employed person, agency, or organisation you will need to consider what has been agreed in your child's Short Break Support Plan, as this will determine how you can spend your Short Break Direct Payments. If you choose to purchase additional hours or services which have not been agreed, you will be responsible for paying for these.

Your chosen individual or organisation will send you an invoice for services that you have received, and you should pay for this from your child's Short Break Direct Payments using a banking process or using the Wokingham card.

How can I find out what services and products are available?

You may already have some ideas about how you wish to use your child's Short Break Direct Payments to meet your care and support needs, and you may have discussed this with the Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker as part of the assessment process.

If not, please take a look at the Local Offer for details of organisations that provide Short Breaks: [Short breaks and respite services](#)

If you require assistance looking for a particular activity, please contact the CAN Network Co-ordinator, who will be happy to help:

Email: CAN.network@wokingham.gov.uk

Please see [Factsheet 6 Support C Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of Short Break Direct Payments.

Factsheet 6: What happens if I need support or there is a change in circumstances?

Will I get any ongoing support?

If at any point you feel you do not have the information you require or need advice and support, please feel free to contact the following who will be happy to help:

Name	What they can help with	Telephone	Email	Website
Direct Payment Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All aspects of the Short Break Direct Payment process including recruitment C payroll What Short Break Direct Payments can be spent on Change in circumstances 	0118 9746000 (option 6)	DPWokinghamCard@wokingham.gov.uk	N/A
Short Break Co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment regarding the amount of Short Break Direct Payments, What Short Break Direct Payments can be spent on (the Support Plan) Working Environment Risk 	0118 9746000	ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk	N/A

	<p>assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in circumstances 			
Children with Disabilities Team	<p>If your child has a social worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment regarding the amount of Short Break Direct Payments, • What Short Break Direct Payments can be spent on (the Support Plan) • Working Environment Risk assessments • Change in circumstances 	0118 9746000	cwdduty@wokingham.gov.uk	N/A
Local Offer	Information about Short Break services	N/A	info.families@wokingham.gov.uk	SEND Local Offer
CAN Network Co-ordinator	Information about Short Break services	N/A	CAN.Network@wokingham.gov.uk	Wokingham Directory CAN (children with additional needs) Network and CAN Card

Prepaid Financial Services	Technical issues to do with the Wokingham Card (Short Break Direct Payment card)	020 3633 4515	wokingham@prepaidfinancialservices.com	Cardholder Portal
Surewise	Employers' liability insurance	0843 178 1600	Help Centre Surewise	Surewise Live Life Confidently
Mark Bates Ltd.	Employers' liability insurance	01476 514 478	he@markbatesltd.com	Mark Bates Ltd Specialist Insurance C Warranty Policies
Fish Insurance	Employers' liability insurance	0333 331 3770	admin@fishinsurance.co.uk	Specialist Disability Insurance Fish Insurance
PayPacket	Payroll	N/A	Contact	http://paypacket.co.uk/
PAYE for Nannies	Payroll	01485 533 322	admin@payefornannies.co.uk	Home PAYE Scheme for Nannies Domestic Staff Payroll UK
Avantedge	Payroll	02382 148 188	N/A	avantedge - accountants + business advisers
SEND Voices Wokingham	Parent Carer Forum who can offer advice and collect feedback to help. shape future provision	N/A	info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk	Parent Carer Forum for Wokingham Borough SEND Voices Wokingham

What if I change my mind?

If you accept Short Break Direct Payments on your child's behalf, you can change your mind at any time and have services arranged via another means.

Speak to your child's Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker and the Direct Payments team if you decide Short Break Direct Payments are not for you. You will be required to pay back any money you have not used.

Change in circumstances or bereavement

We appreciate that in some circumstances, sorting out Short Break Direct Payments may not be your primary concern; however, it is important that you let us know about any changes in circumstances. Therefore, as soon as you are able, please contact the Direct Payments team and your child's Short Breaks Coordinator or Social Worker.

If the person managing the account leaves or dies, we will need to arrange to transfer the management of the account to another appropriate person for Short Break Direct Payments to continue smoothly. For this reason, you will be asked, at the beginning of the arrangements, to provide the Council with contact details of your next of kin and details of who will be dealing with your estate in the event of your death, so that we can conduct a final audit of the Short Break Direct Payments account prior to transfer. This must be kept up to date.

In the event of a child's death, we would need to stop the Short Break Direct Payment. If there is any Short Break Direct Payments money left on the Short Break Direct Payments Card or in the specific bank account, there is a legal obligation for it to be returned to Wokingham Borough Council after all employees' wages, income tax and national insurance and invoices from organisations are paid.

If you are simply leaving Wokingham Borough, please contact the Direct Payments Team in advance of the move to discuss arrangements. Please also let your child's Short Break Co-ordinator or Social Worker know. It is also worth contacting your new Local Authority to see what arrangements need to be in place for you to access support in your new local area.

In any of these difficult or stressful circumstances, Children's Social Care practitioners and the Direct Payment Team will do what they can to assist you to make the process as seamless as possible.

Factsheet 7: What Records Do I Need to Keep?

If you employ a personal assistant to support your child, you will need to keep the following records for 3 years after the person has ceased to work for you:

- The application form
- All references
- A copy of the contract of employment
- A copy of the job description

Whilst the Council can access the bank statement to monitor expenditure, there is also a requirement to keep proof of financial records for a minimum of 3 years after the payment was made:

- Monthly Payroll summary in case the Inland Revenue requires any details.
- Other Expenditure (including reimbursements for monies paid in advance or BACS payments to other accounts). You can choose to upload evidence instantly when making payments while you are logged onto your child's Short Break Direct Payment bank account, or you can keep paper records.

We will monitor your Wokingham Account on an ongoing basis by viewing the transactions on the online account.

We may ask you for further information about any payments you make where the reason for the payment may not be clear.

Please upload expenditure evidence for every payment on the online banking portal

This could include items such as:

- Receipts for purchases
- Invoices
- Pay slips / timesheets.
- Copy of the Contract of Employment
- Any other relevant records related to Short Break Direct Payments Expenditure

You must supply these records when asked to. If satisfactory evidence showing how your child's Short Break Direct Payment has been spent is not provided within 4 weeks of our request, you will be in breach of the Direct Payment contract. In that case, we reserve the right to suspend or stop Short Break Direct Payments, and you may have to repay some or all the Short Break Direct Payments that have been paid to your child.

Please see [Factsheet 6 Support s Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of Short Break Direct Payments

Factsheet 8: How are Short Break Direct Payments reviewed, suspended, or stopped?

How often will my child's Short Break be reviewed?

Whilst you are welcome to ask for your child's short break needs to be reviewed at any time, we will hold a review at least annually to ensure that the short breaks meet the needs of your child, yourself, and your family.

All new packages of support will be informally reviewed within three months of their start date, to ensure they are working effectively. This initial review will take the form of a telephone call. A subsequent formal review will be held six months following and then annually moving forward. If there is a need to review more regularly, this will be discussed with you. You can also request a review at any time. Reviews will be conducted by a Short Break coordinator or your child's Social Worker.

Where possible and applicable, we will tie the review process in with the review of your child's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

EHCP's will be updated with the amount of short break funding or directly provided service your child receives.

The EHCP review can make recommendations that the amount and type of Short Break provision should be reconsidered if the needs of your child or family have changed. This may require reassessment, but decisions about alterations to support will follow the same decision-making process as all other requests for initial or reassessment of Short Breaks.

A financial review of the Short Break Direct Payment will occur both at the 6-month mark and on the anniversary of the Short Break Direct Payment; this will be undertaken by the Direct Payment Team. This is a systems review of the accounts and does not involve a meeting. If there is a build-up of money in the account at the 6-month mark, they will contact the Short Break and Early Help Team, or the Social Worker and we will contact you to find out why the money has not been spent. If you find it difficult to spend the money, we will hold a review to explore this with you and look at different options.

If the funding is not in surplus but has been saved for a specific purpose, i.e. a summer play scheme, please inform us and the funding will not be reclaimed. If it emerges that the funding is surplus, arrangements will be made for this to be reclaimed so that it can be used to support other children and their families.

Likewise, any unspent funding on the anniversary of the Short Break Direct Payment Team is routinely reclaimed. You will be written to in advance of the money being reclaimed. This may mean you need to advise us of any money that has been saved for a particular purpose.

For example, if the anniversary of the Direct Payment is in July and you have been saving an amount each month to cover a more significant cost in the summer holidays, when

you receive communication from the Direct Payment Team about reclaiming the funds in July, simply alert them to this and earmarked funds will not be reclaimed.

The Direct Payment Team also periodically monitors the accounts to ensure there is no inappropriate spending. Should inappropriate spending be discovered, a Short Break Co-Ordinator or Social Worker will contact you to discuss this in the first instance. If the discussion determines the expenditure was not within the scope of the support plan, you will be expected to reimburse the account. Whilst we hope that formulating clear Short Break Support Plans will prevent this from happening, if you are unsure about a spend, please contact the Short Break Co-Ordinator, Social Worker, or Direct Payment Officer.

Any technical issues relating to making payments or use of the card should be directed to the Direct Payment Team in the first instance.

Should your child be subject to any other type of plan i.e., a Child in Need, Child Protection or a Child in Care, the Short Breaks will be reviewed in line with the overall plan.

Suspending or Stopping Short Break Direct Payments

We will suspend Short Break Direct Payments (pending investigation) if:

- You ask us to.
- Financial records are not provided within four weeks of a request to see them.
- Services are not received for some reason for a temporary period (e.g. a hospital stay). Individual circumstances and commitments will be taken into consideration.
- Services purchased using Short Break Direct Payments regularly break down or they do not meet an adequate standard for your child's assessed eligible Short Break needs.
- It is not clear that you are complying with the law, such as paying tax, national insurance, or pension contributions.
- You do not comply with the Direct Payment agreement.
- You move out of Wokingham Borough.

If we cannot work out a satisfactory resolution to allow Short Break Direct Payments to continue, we reserve the right to immediately terminate the Direct Payment agreement.

Before stopping Short Break Direct Payments, we will work with you to try and find a solution to the issues or concerns that have arisen.

We will terminate this agreement with immediate effect in the following situations:

- If a Direct Payment Agreement is not properly completed and signed.
- If the Council or its agents provide the services that the Short Break Direct Payments should have paid for.

- If the Short Break Direct Payments are not being used to meet your child's assessed eligible needs.
- Your child is no longer eligible for Short Break services through Wokingham Borough Council, or those care services cannot be paid by a Short Break Direct Payment for legal reasons.
- If we are not satisfied with the arrangements made to meet your child's assessed eligible needs using Short Break Direct Payments.
- If it is found the Short Break Direct Payment is being used to purchase unauthorised items.
- If you fail to provide detailed financial records showing how the Short Break Direct Payment has been spent.
- If it is found that you are unable to manage the money and there is no suitable person to manage the Short Break Direct Payments for you.
- If you do not comply with the agreement.
- If your child dies.
- If your child spends 4 weeks or longer in hospital, please contact the Direct Payment Officer. Tel 0118 9746000 (option 6) or email: DPWokinghamCard@Wokingham.gov.uk to discuss the circumstances and arrangements regarding Short Break Direct Payments.

Please see [Factsheet 6 Support s Changes in Circumstances](#) for a list of useful contacts who can help with all aspects of Short Break Direct Payments

Appendix 1: Working Environment Risk Assessment

The following template is a suggested format for home risk assessments to be undertaken by the employer to ensure the health and safety of their Short Break Direct Payment worker. Every home will differ, and the template can be amended as required to meet individual needs. It is good practice to review risk assessments annually, when there are significant changes to a property or following an incident or near miss.

Address of property:

Assessment Date:

Completed by:

1. GENERAL	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Is the light suitable for reading and playing?		
Can the room be kept suitably warm/well ventilated?		
Is the home generally clean and tidy?		
Are there any obvious hazards? e.g., frayed carpets, rugs etc. that may cause tripping accidents.		
Are any large glass areas fitted with safety glass? (in the case of old glass is plastic safety covering fitted?)		
Is there any broken furniture being used?		
Are there banisters on the stairs (either filled in or a max. gap of four inches)?		

Is there a stair gate fitted?		
Are buggies, highchairs, and any other children's equipment in good repair? What equipment will be used?		
Has any manual handling equipment such as a hoist or profiling bed been inspected?		Date of Inspection

2. FIRE / ELECTRICAL/ CARBON MONOXIDE / HOT WATER	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Does the worker know where the fuse box is located and how to turn off Gas and Water if required?		
Is all electrical equipment in good repair? e.g., no frayed/loose wires.		
Are there smoke detectors fitted on each floor, and do they work? Where are they situated?		
Are room doors kept shut at night to inhibit fires?		
Are fireguards used anywhere in the property?		
Do parents smoke? If yes, what measures are taken to avoid the risk of fire and passive smoking by others and where in the house does smoking take place?		
Is there a fire escape plan? This should include details of where door and window keys are kept and their accessibility in emergencies.		

Is there a fire blanket and/or fire extinguisher? Where kept?		
Are carbon monoxide monitors fitted and checked on a regular basis?		
Is gas central heating/hot water supply checked annually?		Date of Inspection:
Is the hot water thermostat set at a level which will not cause injury?		

3. SECURITY	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Are all household keys kept out of the reach of children? e.g., keys belonging to garden sheds, medicine cabinets, front door etc.		
Do parents have a view on what children should do if they hear the doorbell ring? Is it okay for children to answer the door?		

4. STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS ITEMS	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Is medication locked away from children's reach – if so where?		
Are cigarettes and alcohol locked away out of the reach of children?		

<p>Are the following locked or kept out of reach?</p> <p>matches/lighters</p> <p>Knives/razors</p> <p>Glasses/China</p> <p>Polythene bags</p> <p>Cling film</p>		
<p>Are dangerous substances / household chemicals kept appropriately?</p> <p>Liquids</p> <p>Powders</p> <p>aerosols</p>		

5. BATHROOM	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Is the bathroom / toilet kept in a clean and hygienic manner?		
<p>Is there any electrical equipment in the bathroom?</p> <p>E.g., are all lights/heaters controlled by pull cord?</p>		
Does each house occupant have their own toiletries and towel etc.?		
Is there a lock on the door?		
Are there protective gloves available and suitable arrangements for disposing of any waste arising from personal care		

6. FIRST AID		
--------------	--	--

Is there a First Aid Kit available – where is this kept?		
Is the Short Break Direct Payment Worker First Aid Trained?		Date of training:
Where does the worker record accidents or injuries to a child?		

7. KITCHEN	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Is the kitchen maintained in a clean and hygienic manner?		
Are kettle flexes short?		
Are chest freezers locked?		
What arrangements are in place to keep children safe whilst cooking is taking place?		

8. GARDEN	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

Is there a garage or shed – is it kept locked?		
Are tools/garden equipment locked/out of reach?		
Are any garden chemicals kept appropriately? i.e.: Paints Paraffin Petrol or weed killer		
Is the garden safe and are fences and gates secure and in good condition?		
Are garden ponds/water butts securely covered?		
Are greenhouses similarly protected?		
Are sandpits covered when not in use?		
Does the clothesline pose a risk?		
Garden Toys/Play Equipment: Detail type of toy/equipment - Is it safe i.e., position/gates/safety netting?		
Are pet feaces cleaned up on a regular basis?		

G. PETS	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Do any pets pose any risk to the worker - if so list them:		

10. GUNS	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS/ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Are there any guns in the home? If so, what are they used for?		
Give details license of storage and safety arrangements.		

11. CARS (used by the DP worker to transport the child)	Yes/No/ N/A	COMMENTS ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Does the DP Worker have valid, current driving licenses?		License seen: Yes No Expires:
Is the car appropriately insured? (Car Insurance should be fully comprehensive)		Certificate seen: Yes No Reg. No: Expires:
Does the car have a current MOT certificate?		Certificate seen: Yes No Reg. No: Expires:
Is the car(s) fitted with BSS approved safety restraints appropriate to the age of any child carried?		

SUMMARY

Action to be completed?	By who?	By when?	Completed date

Signature of Employer:

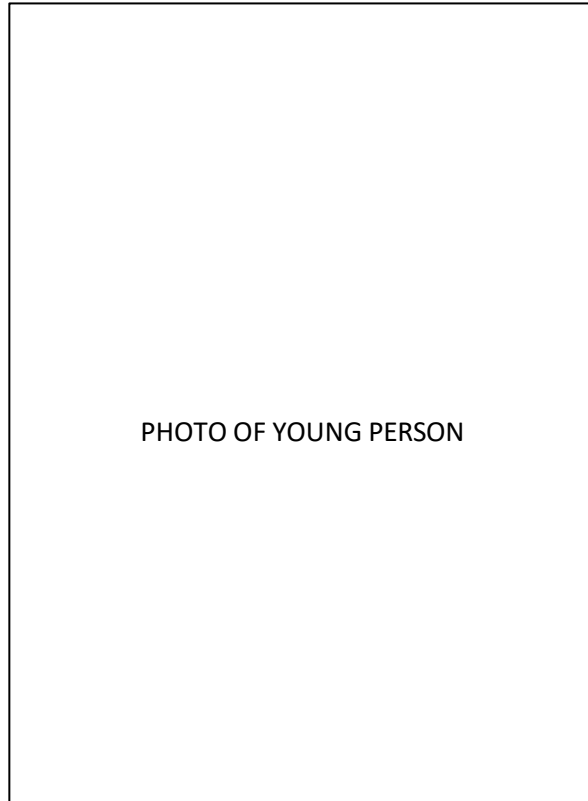
Date:

Appendix 2: Care Plan

CARE PLAN

NAME:

D.O.B:



Goals:

-
-

Introduction

Communication

Relationships

Health/Medication

Prescribed medication

Non-prescribed medication e.g., Calpol, Paracetamol

Leisure Time and Activities

OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT FOR: Going out in the community.

What benefits are there in me undertaking this opportunity?	
Could I be harmed?	

What can you do to make this opportunity safer for me to undertake?	
Can the things you can do to make this opportunity safer be put in place straight away or is there any further work needed?	
How many staff do I need support from to undertake this opportunity?	
Other information that might be helpful to you	
Emergency Procedure	

Mealtimes

Manual Handling

PHYSICAL HAZARDS	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Could my height cause a problem?			
Could my weight cause a problem?			

Do I have swollen/fixed/flaccid limbs?			
Are my feet in poor state?			
Is my skin condition poor?			
Am I difficult to hold?			
Am I in pain when moving?			
Is my hearing impaired?			
Is my sight impaired?			
PHYSICAL HAZARDS	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Do I experience seizures/ involuntary movements?			
Am I unstable/ uncoordinated?			
PSYCHOLOGICAL HAZARDS			
Am I uncooperative/ non-compliant?			
Am I unpredictable?			
Do I have difficulty following instructions?			
Am I anxious?			
Am I prone to mood swings?			
Do I display distressed behaviour?			

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK

TASK	EQUIPMENT USED/PRECAUTIONS s NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED
Moving in bed/ movement up the bed	

In/out bed	
Sitting in balance	
Bed/chair to wheelchair/toilet	
Bathing/showering	
Walking (inside/outside)	
Stairs/steps	
Dressing	
Comments	
Use this space for notes relating to the assessment that may be relevant for reassessment	

Personal Care

OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT FOR: Using the bathroom facilities.

What benefits are there in me undertaking this opportunity?	
Could I be harmed?	

<p>What can you do to make this opportunity safer for me to undertake?</p>	
<p>Can the things you can do to make this opportunity safer be put in place straight away or is there any further work needed?</p>	
<p>How many staff do I need support from to undertake this opportunity?</p>	
<p>Other information that might be helpful to you</p>	
<p>Emergency Procedure</p>	

Behaviour

<p>Baseline Behaviour (include any special interests)</p>
<p>Possible triggers for inappropriate behaviour (including any fears, phobias)</p>

Low Level Behaviours	Appropriate Responses	No. of people
Medium Level Behaviours	Appropriate Responses	No. of people
High Level Behaviours	Appropriate Responses	No. of people
Use of sanctions:		
De-briefing process following incident:		

Religious and Cultural Needs

Signatures

Parent: Date:

Personal Assistant: Date: