

Direct payments:

DEBRA Community Support Managers Miranda Hartley, Sondra Butterworth and Zainib Hussain, and Susan Lewis, Social Worker, Adult Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council, have put together this handy traffic light guide to employing carers using Direct Payments.

DEBRA's EB Community Support Managers often work with health and social care professionals when supporting families living with EB. Susan is actively involved in supporting people who receive direct payments. Your DEBRA EB Community Support Manager can provide you with help and support with your Direct Payments every step of the way. If you are not sure who your local EB Community Support Manager is please call 01344 771961. This is the third and final article in a series on direct payments. You can read the other articles at www.debra.org.uk/publications.



DO NOT

- Allow your carer to bring uninvited guests to your home
- Discuss your carer on social media or allow yourself to be tagged or mentioned in their posts
- Provide carers with your bank details or PIN numbers
- Make wage payments from your personal bank account – always make wage payments from the bank account set up for your Direct Payments



ALWAYS

- Be clear about what is expected from an employee – make sure there is a clear contract of employment and a detailed and specific job description
- Make sure the employment contract makes provision for things like maternity leave, statutory sick pay and annual leave
- Make sure National Insurance costs and pension contributions are factored into wage costs
- Make sure you are fully insured, and that your policy covers Public Liability
- Investigate potential employees using the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Be aware of health and safety responsibilities
- Provide mandatory training
- Take up references
- Make sure you are putting your assessed charge into your Direct Payments account
- Ensure your carers are not working more hours than your budget allows
- Keep your carer's personal information, such as address and bank details, confidential at all times
- Ensure your carer understands the

need for confidentiality too – they should not discuss your care needs with anyone else or share your personal information without your permission

- Ensure any flexible working arrangements fully meet your needs
- Be aware of issues which may arise if you are employing close friends and family – will they be comfortable with fulfilling your personal care needs? Will you?



DO

- Be aware of boundaries, especially as you are now an employer – befriending carers can lead to problems
- Use your care plan to assist with writing up a contract and a job description
- Ensure your support plan is up-to-date and fully meets your needs
- Consider whether your carers will need any specific or ongoing training
- Consider using a support agency so you are not directly employing your carers
- Have a mobile phone number just for carers – do not use your personal number

a traffic light guide

Using direct payments

By using direct payments you can employ your own PAs. For me, this is very useful because I'm no longer clockwatching or worried in case we go over time and I get charged by the agency again. Things are never rushed now – this is especially important when there are dressing changes to do. The only real problem I've had is finding carers to provide cover when my usual carers (or PAs) need time off for holidays or sickness. However, these setbacks were easily resolved – the support worker who is assigned to you when you go over to direct payments can work alongside you to sort out these hiccups.

Now I have three regular PAs: two share my care during the week and one provides care at the weekend as well as sickness and holiday cover. My PAs assist me with all of my care needs – bathing, applying dressings, domestic work, shopping and more. The advantage of employing your own PAs is that you have continuity and choice, things you hardly ever have with an agency and which are doubly important when you have EB. I advertised for,

interviewed and chose my PAs myself. I know which carer I will be having on which day and when they will arrive. They are a great bunch and we all get on well.

If you are considering using Direct Payments I would strongly recommend them, although I would also recommend employing more than one PA and making sure you have plans in place to cover your care when your PAs are on holiday or call in sick.

Giving direct payments a try is the best thing I have done to manage my care. Since using them, I am getting a lot more out of my care than I was when my care was being provided by an agency – I am no longer stuck in the house all the time.

Rhian Edwards

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'We're fundraising for DEBRA'



Riley (pictured) has Recessive Dystrophic EB.

'We have had a lot of help from Sondra, our EB Community Support Manager,' says his mum, Jackie. 'She has visited us at home a number of times to help me complete Disability Living Allowance forms to get benefits to help Riley. She has also helped towards the cost of going to Birmingham Children's Hospital when Riley had to go for his operations.'

Because of the help we have received from DEBRA we wanted to give something back and decided to fundraise. Sondra put us in touch with Tony Eckersall, our regional DEBRA fundraising manager. We held a fun day to raise money for DEBRA last year and Riley even got a certificate from Tony. We will be running another event in August which Tony is helping us with.'

Tony adds, 'It's always a pleasure to support Riley's family and everyone living with EB to

help raise awareness of the condition and fundraise for DEBRA. If you would like to find out more about this event, or are interested in helping out on the day please contact me. Your help will make a real difference to families living with EB.'

Get in touch

Call 01344 771961 or visit www.debra.org.uk/regionalfundraisers to get in touch with your regional DEBRA fundraising manager and find out more about raising awareness of EB and fundraising for DEBRA in your area. Thank you.