

COVID-19 - Advice for Direct Payment Recipients who do not directly employ Personal Assistants

The following advice is based on the latest government guidance at the end of April. It is a generic briefing intended to give broad guidance and is not a substitute for detailed legal advice on the specific circumstances individuals are facing. You should consult all relevant Government guidance and take independent legal advice if necessary.

1. What you need to do if you want to change (or have already changed) your support

If you want to increase, reduce or alter the support you have previously agreed with your Social Worker (or have already done so) you should discuss this with a Social Worker at the earliest opportunity. Please contact Sefton Council's Contact Centre and request to be referred to a Social Worker.

2. If you receive care from a Home Care Agency

If you're using a direct payment to buy care and support via a service such as a home care agency, you should:

- a. Make contact with the agency. Discuss your situation and agree any actions that will be taken to support you should your regular, paid carer be unavailable.
- b. Ensure that they have your up-to-date details, any relevant care and support plans and relevant dates if you need to attend important appointments with support.

If you have made the decision to temporarily stop the care you receive from a care agency e.g. if you are shielding or self-isolating, you should check the agreement that you made with your provider to see if you must continue to pay. If your contract states that you need to continue to pay, then we will continue to pay your direct payment to cover this cost. If you do not have to pay the care agency, this element of your direct payment will be temporarily stopped until you start receiving care again.

You should discuss any changes to your arrangements for care with a Social Worker by contacting Sefton Council's Contact Centre.

If a care worker that usually provide you with support is unable to support you for any reason during this time, it is the responsibility of your care agency to identify alternative support. If your care agency is unable to identify alternative support, you should seek support from another agency. If you are unable to identify any alternative support, you should contact Sefton Council's Contact Centre and request to be referred to a Social Worker.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the Council has increase your Direct Payment by 5%, to cover the additional costs incurred by care agencies as a result of COVID-19 such as the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This should be reflected on the bills you receive from your agency during this time. The arrangement is reviewed on a regular basis and you will be advised when this arrangement stops.

3. If you attend a day centre

If your day centre has closed due to the COVID-19 virus, you should check the agreement that you made with your provider to see if you must pay for non-attendance.

If you need additional support at home whilst you are not attending the day centre, then we recommend that you should contact your day centre provider to ask if they are able to provide you with any other support. You should also speak to family members to see if they can help you.

If you are needing to pay for additional support, then please ring Sefton Council's Contact Centre for assistance and request to be referred to a social worker.

4. Other Types of Support

If you use your direct payment to purchase other types of support, it's important that you speak to your provider and agree arrangements if you foresee any issues in delivering this service during this period.

If for any reason your provider is unable to provide you with support during this time and you are unable to identify any alternative support, you should contact Sefton Council's Contact Centre and request to be referred to a Social Worker.

5. Telecare

Telecare is a service that provides care and reassurance to the elderly and vulnerable, allowing them to live independently in their own home for longer. Sefton Arc's technology can provide wireless motion sensors, personal alarm pendants and movement monitoring sensors – ensuring safety in the home, medical dispensers (with consent of pharmacist), and bed and chair occupancy sensors.

Telecare equipment can also detect environmental changes such as floor, fire or carbon monoxide. Sensors will automatically raise an alarm at a monitoring centre where trained personnel will determine the appropriate course of action.

You can email Telecare Services at Lifeline.Service@sefton.gov.uk or call them on 0800 622 610. Sefton Arc Trusted Assessors will contact you to discuss appropriate equipment options and equipment is then ordered.

Falls Pendants and Arc Angels can be arranged within 24 hours of ordering. Other items of equipment can take between 3 and -7 working days depending upon supplier availability, from the day the order is submitted.

6. Education and Supporting Resources

The council has developed a document to highlight key areas where there are free education and supporting resources available for you and your Personal Assistants both at a national level and what's available locally here in Sefton. The document can be accessed via the following link:

[https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care/social-care-provider-information/community-support-provision-information-\(including-domiciliary-care-and-day-care\).aspx](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care/social-care-provider-information/community-support-provision-information-(including-domiciliary-care-and-day-care).aspx)

7. Useful local contacts:

Direct Payments Team - Sefton Carers Centre

E-mail: direct.payments@sefton.gov.uk

Website: www.sefton-carers.org.uk/index.php/direct-payments

Telephone: 0151 288 6060

Sefton Council Contact Centre

Email: AdultSocialCare@sefton.gov.uk

Website: www.sefton.gov.uk

Telephone 0345 140 0845

Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)

Email: mail@seftoncv.org.uk

Website: www.seftoncv.org.uk

Telephone: 0151 920 0726

Sefton ARC

E-mail: Lifeline.Service@sefton.gov.uk

Website: www.seftonarc.com

Telephone: 0800 622 610

8. Other Useful Information

GOV.UK – Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for people receiving Direct Payments)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments>

GOV.UK – Coronavirus (COVID-19): What you need to do

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS website – latest information on COVID-19

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

GOV.UK: Statutory Sick Pay

www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay

If you require this information in any other format, then please let us know by contacting SelfDirectedSupport@sefton.gov.uk