



## Self Directed Support

### What is Self Directed Support?

Supported assessments and Self Directed Support put you in control of your care arrangements and provide you with a Personal Budget to pay for the services. At Dorset County Council we believe that you should have a say in how the money you are eligible for is used.

### Who is eligible for Self Directed Support and a Personal Budget?

Dorset County Council has a duty to assess anyone who is eligible for community care services. To make sure that services are provided fairly and used to support people in the greatest need, we use guidelines which we call Fair Access to Care Services eligibility criteria. We assess people's needs individually to find out if their level of need qualifies for a service and, if so, at what level of priority.

### What are the advantages to Self Directed Support?

- You tell us about your own care needs and what is important to you.
- You identify your outcomes (what it is that you want to achieve).
- You know early on in the process how much money is available for you to spend.
- You decide how you spend the money.
- You have choice and control over the support you have.

### How does it work?

You will be offered a supported assessment; the form is like a questionnaire and can be sent to you prior to a social workers visit. The supported assessment can be completed on your own or with help from another person or with assistance from a social worker at the time of their visit. In Dorset we promote outcome focused assessments and this means that we encourage you to consider what is really important for you and then for you to consider the steps as to how this can be achieved.



### **How is the amount of money worked out?**

The questions that you answer in the supported assessment help us to work out the sum which will be available for your Personal Budget. At the time of your referral we will arrange for you to have benefits advice and a financial assessment and this will enable us to calculate what you will be expected to contribute to your care costs. The amount of money you receive in your Personal Budget will be minus your assessed contribution.

### **How is the money paid?**

You can choose how the money is paid, it could be:-

- As a Direct Payment; where we make cash payments directly to you.
- Into a holding account, where monies are managed on your behalf.
- If you wish, we can manage the money for you and arrange the services you want.
- Or as a combination of any of the above.

### **Who will help me decide how to spend the money?**

You may already know how you want to use the money but if not we want you to be able to get good support and advice, you can ask for help from one of the following:-

- A family member or a friend.
- A member of the local social work team.
- An independent support organisation, funded by Dorset County Council.

### **How will I be able to spend the money I am given?**

As a part of your assessment you will have been asked to think about what your outcomes will be (what you want to achieve) and this is what your money should be spent on. You can use your Personal Budget to buy services directly from Dorset County Council or other sources; you cannot use it to buy health care or long term residential care.

Some people use their money to buy care or support; help with every day tasks such as washing or getting dressed, from agencies or organisations, others may choose to employ a personal assistant. Your outcomes may have identified other areas



of life; for example leisure and social activities and in this case you may wish to purchase day care or recreational pursuits.

**Will anyone check to see if I am spending my money properly?**

Yes, we will need to make sure that you are using the money to meet your agreed outcomes. You must use the money lawfully, what you buy must be to meet the agreed outcomes and must be within your Personal Budget. You have a duty to return any unused money to Dorset County Council on a regular basis. You will need to keep receipts for what you spend and if you choose to employ a personal assistant you will have the responsibilities of being an employer. This involves keeping wage records, paying tax and national insurance and other statutory details but we can provide some help with these tasks.

**What happens if my circumstances change?**

You can tell us at any time if your circumstances change and you feel that you need to reconsider your outcomes. We will also contact you regularly to see whether you are achieving what you set out to do.

**What if I am not able to make decisions for myself?**

In line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, we believe that anyone aged 16 or over is able to make decisions for themselves, unless we have proof that this person is not able to. If you are not able to make your own decisions and we have to take action on your behalf, we will do this in your best interests. In these circumstances, we will discuss your needs with anyone who has power of attorney (is legally allowed to make decisions for you) to act on your behalf. If the Court of Protection has asked someone to act on your behalf, we will work closely with that person to make sure that we meet your best interests.

**Where do I go for more information?**

Other factsheets 'Fair Access to Care Services' and 'Direct Payments' may provide useful information.

Contact the Adult Access Team (AAT) telephone 01305 221016.



## **Compliments and complaints**

Adult and Community Services staff in Dorset are committed to providing quality services to our service users, their carers and families. We welcome comments from our service users as this helps us to understand what aspects of our service people like.

If you are unhappy about the service you have received and want to make a complaint, our factsheet 'How to complain' describes the procedure. Our Complaints Officer can give you advice on the process and can be contacted on 01305 224322.

## **Diversity statement**

Diversity is not about treating everyone in the same way, but about recognising and valuing difference, as well as recognising and addressing inequalities and disadvantage.

As an employer and service provider, Dorset County Council seeks to promote an environment that accepts and actively supports diversity in age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, culture, work style and the many other ways in which people differ from each other.

All our factsheets are available in large print and on audio cassette/CD, Braille, Easy to Read or alternative languages. Please contact the Information Office on 01305 224320.

Further information on services provided by Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services can be accessed at [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

