

Questions for Adult Social Care Zoom Session

Q1. During the time of isolation can we use DP to buy in items that would support my child's wellbeing and mental. Otherwise their funds are not being used and they have complex needs. Their PA is paid by invoice for hours they work as they are self-employed. We would not owe them any funds.

A: This would be based on your daughters' individual needs. Please contact your social worker if you have any queries.

Q2. If you are a DP user and use a day service that is not run by OCC, what are the rules about continuing to pay for those services even though they are not running?

A: You should continue to pay for your service as usual.

Q3. When will the new strength based assessments start to be used?

A: We have had to delay the start of the Strengths-based Assessment as we were unable to do the planned briefing sessions for staff due to Covid-19 social distancing rules. As soon as the situation settles down and staff aren't focussed on ever changing Covid-19 response we will be able to go live with the new assessment form.

Q4. My child aged 15 currently receives DPs and I am considering using part of the money to employ a PA - but I am not registered with Purple - can I go to them direct or do I have to go via my social worker?

A: You should discuss this with your social worker or local team who will refer you to Purple.

Q5. Can I employ my child's two siblings to do this work during lockdown? What do they need to do to become employees?

A: We can consider this temporarily under our exceptional circumstances process, and you should discuss this further with your child's social worker. Employing family members on a temporary basis should be done using a zero hours or casual worker contract of employment. You will need to continue paying the services you were using previously as per your contract with them.

Q6. What is the hourly rate of employment for a PA with on costs (e.g. NI, insurance etc). Is it less than £20 an hour? I understand the County Council assumes a PA rate of £10.85 per hour, but I assume this excludes on costs? Would it be about £15?

A: On costs are usually around 30% but will vary depending on the pay level. Please discuss with the Direct Payment & Employer Support Service or your social worker/ local team.

Q7. I pay a PA £20 an hour, she is self-employed so I invoice her. If I can't find suitable cheaper care and my son's personal budget doesn't cover his assessed needs of 15 hours a month - what are the options available?

A: You should discuss this with your social worker/ local team in the first instance. We can discuss the options available, depending on your sons needs for example formal support providers.

Q8. I am a key worker currently having to work from home. My daughter who is 18 is not able to attend school. I employ a support worker to look after her during the week when I am at work and my daughter is not at school. The support worker is now having to do more hours during the day whilst I am working but the DP my daughter receives does not cover her costs and I am having to cover the costs myself. Can I claim for the difference?

A: Keyworker children should be able to attend school so we can help negotiate this if necessary. Yes, please discuss this with your social worker/ local team, we have added 10% extra to your Direct Payment for 1 month and this will be reviewed in a couple of weeks. If the 10% doesn't cover the additional costs then this should be able to be resolved with you.

Q9. When/how do support providers providing support in supported living settings get tested for COVID 19?

A: Personal Assistants can request testing by sending an email to Ouh-tr.covid@nhs.net, testing is prioritised and needs to be done between days 2 & 4 of the onset of symptoms.

Q10. Furloughed because of risk to vulnerable family including client, and no PPE to protect them or other vulnerable other adults in home. Staff that live in multi occupancy housing increasing risk to families and use public transport especially at high risk times.

A: Personal Assistants shouldn't be furloughed as they are funded by the council/NHS, they should continue to be paid as per their contract.

Q11. Can DP be used for additional 20% on top of govt funding?

A: No as Personal Assistants shouldn't be furloughed

Q12. Why is PPE only available two days at a time for DP families, which means more visits and not always possible, increases risk?

A: We are working really hard to secure supplies of PPE for all of our social care workforce in Oxfordshire. 2 days' supply has only been available based on the stocks we have. We are now in a position to offer a week's supply, this is under constant review based on our stock levels each day. OCC distributed 62,000 pieces of PPE at the weekend across Oxfordshire including to Personal Assistants and people living in supported living.

Q13. Transport reductions mean staff cannot get there for shifts (non drivers) at right times. Public transport too risky for vulnerable high risk to allow staff to come into home especially if working in other care homes.

A: The risk of any PA, should be considered carefully and the availability of Personal Protective Equipment should be able to address those risks.

Q14. So, can families pay family members living in house at this time if they notify SC, as they are not receiving services. (Families that don't have exceptional circumstances agreed). What flexibility is there at this exceptional time with DP? Where can families get clear guidance from this locally? Many are struggling to cope with the high level of support needed. Too risky to let in home if supporting more than one family and also live in multi occupancy accommodation.

A: You should discuss your individual circumstances with your social worker/ local team. We are then able to consider any exceptional circumstances and ensure that needs continue to be met. We can consider paying family members temporarily under our exceptional circumstances process.

Q15. Can families claim increased mileage that is needed to take young people out for a drive? What flexibility is there in DP at this time?

A: This needs to be discussed with your social worker/ local team to ensure that needs continue to be met. There is national guidance relating to permissible travel – for example only travelling to buy/collect essential items, or short distances for exercise or to go to work where this cannot be done from home.

Q16. I understand there is a carers card, I have rec'd no information about it. Where can families get clear guidance from this locally? Should I expect a call to provide this info from social care? Is routine support/ contact being offered to families and guidance.

A: You can request a carers ID card from Carer.ID@Oxfordshire.gov.uk. We are working with providers and Purple to ensure that people who may require these badges are aware of how to request one. We have written to people in receipt of DPs, letters should be arriving early this week. Please contact your social worker/ local team for routine support in the usual way.

Q17. Do OCC notify anyone that people in receipt of DP vulnerable for getting delivery for groceries? Families not getting slots this way with disabled kids, hanging on line for a long time when under great pressure who can put them on list? GP?

A: Central government shared information with supermarkets about people who are 'shielded' to enable them to access delivery slots. People in receipt of a DP were not classified in the national Public Health guidance as shielded/ vulnerable. Please contact your social worker/ local team if you need support.

Q18. What is the routine support being offered to families and guidance around appointments? Health are using Microsoft teams; can Social Care use same or offer guidance that is effective now on how they are supporting?

A: Yes, please contact your occupational therapist or social worker if you need support. We have access to Microsoft Teams, Skype and some of our staff also have access to WhatsApp.

Q19. What happens about completing work outstanding on property that OCC own, who will update us?

A: We need more information on what the property is to be able to respond to this.

Q20. Will providers still invoice me so they have funds so service will not fold, or should I expect reduced invoice for online support?

A: You should continue to pay your providers in line with your contract with them.

Q21. Can I use my budget to increase hours as long as I am not going over budget?

A: You should discuss this with your social worker/ local team so we can ensure that your needs are continuing to be met and you have the right amount of money in your Direct Payment to meet your assessed needs.

Q22. There are concerns that respite provided by elderly support worker has had to continue, a managed risk. Can I use a family member who lives with us (is the employer) in these exceptional circumstances?

A: You should discuss this with your social worker/ local team in the first instance to talk through the risk. We are then able to consider any exceptional circumstances and ensure that needs continue to be met. The employer and employee are usually separate roles.

Q23. I have only just received a lump sum for direct payments for my family member. How can I spend any as it hasn't been started yet and I am here isolating on my own with them? I only have 2 people who have been DBS checked and they can't have my son/daughter at the moment. Will OCC ask for some or all of the DP back?

A: A Direct Payment is intended to be flexible. We can support you to be as creative as possible in meeting needs. Please contact your social worker/ local team/ Direct Payment & Employer Support service so we are aware and can support the flexibility that you need. Working with you we will claim back any surplus funds as per our normal process around surplus funds.

Q24. It has not been easy to find registered inclusive care services and places available that aim to achieve eligible outcomes on the support plan – if they also have to close down because they run out of money during the prolonged lock-down, it will be even harder to use direct payments for buying reliable and suitable care. Is it okay that we carry on paying the bill as requested, to bridge over the period of the lock-down and still have a service to return to, after the lock-down is lifted?

A. You should continue to pay your providers in line with your contract with them as we want to support providers. You should discuss this with your social worker/ local team so we can ensure that your needs are continuing to be met and you have the right amount of money in your direct payment to meet your assessed needs.

Q25. DP normally cannot be used for employing a family member living in the same household, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Can the ASC team grant exceptional circumstances and allow a family member (i.e. sibling) to provide care and support, where a family member living in the same house during the COVID-19 emergency situation is the only way that the needs of a cared person for are met safely, given the present rules of social distancing, and to make recruitment safer and to make it work (for example in case of complex communication difficulties where the family member can understand their needs, or the given unpredictability of times,

where we still don't know when or how the pandemic, and the lock-down, come to an end)

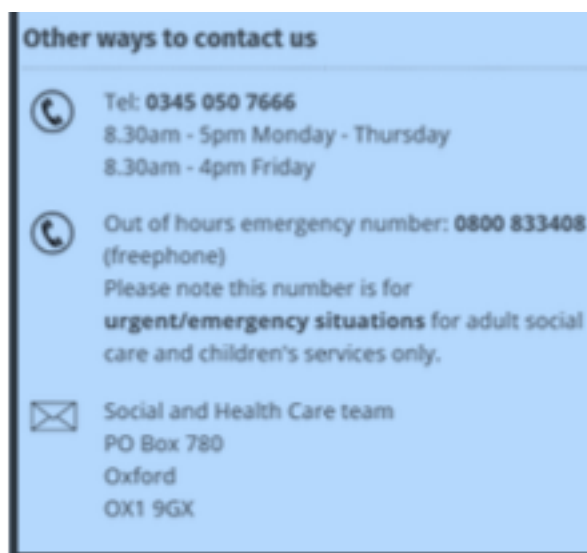
A: We can consider this temporarily under our exceptional circumstances process, and you should discuss this further with your social worker/ local team.

Q26. If the primary and single carer falls ill with corona-virus and needs to go to hospital, what help can the Social and Health Care Team provide for their client on their DP list, who is normally living and cared for in their family home, and what number should be contacted in case of emergency: is it still the same number i.e. 0345 050 7666?

A: That is the number for the Social and Healthcare team who will direct you to the correct locality team. You should call if there is any change to the care you receive so that we can ensure that needs are being met appropriately. Out of hours there is an emergency number 0800 833408. Please advise the Adult Social Care team as soon as possible. This will allow time for an individual plan to be formed with the team. The Review team is currently calling those with direct payments to discuss contingency/crisis plans.

OXFSN can also assist in providing a template for parents/carers to create a plan:

<https://www.oxfsn.org.uk/coronavirus-information/#anchor-make-a-pl>



Q27. How will the Day Support Centre's open again, will they be run as normal, as my family member who is 43 and lives alone, attends such a Centre, three days a week, this is heavily relied on by them and us as elderly parents/ Carers, it is a way of being with friends, access to activities, and Key workers, without this they would be on their own or with us most of the time. They also have support 8 Hours a week from a care provider, for cooking meals, shopping etc. This has all stopped for the last 4 weeks because of lock down, we could not keep ourselves safe while our family member was having carers going in and out of their home, we therefore have been our family members only support during this time.

A: It is still too early to make decisions on how services will operate when restrictions have been lifted however, we will do everything we can to ensure that needs are met for both people using services and their carers.

Q28. Are you aware of blanket policies of DNAR in care homes & all residents being kept in their rooms even if there is no COVID in the home. Is there a policy on this?

A: There has been a lot of national coverage re care homes applying blanket DNACPR procedures. We are not aware of anything specific to Oxfordshire. Of course, the position is that this cannot be applied as a blanket rule, advance care planning should always be done on an individual basis with involvement from the person and family where possible.

Re: being kept in rooms, we expect services to follow the national COVID isolation guidelines where these apply to individuals, and to follow infection control guidelines. In addition, the national guidance for care homes does advise that services follow social distancing and shielding guidance, which is obviously challenging for many services. However, this does not equate to keeping everyone in their room.

Additional Information

- Connections Support can help anyone who needs to set up a temporary contract and PAYE if employing a family member. Contact at Connections Support is Christine Witcher who can be reached on christinewitcher@connectionsupport.org.uk or Tel: 01865 711267
- There is a lot of **Anxiety with regard to DP's that where there is excess funding now, it will be removed later when the parent needs it, particularly after providing care 24/7 at the moment.** OCC offered reassurance that DP's are flexible and these are exceptional times. There will be flexibility for breaks / additional time for working for parents to catch up later in the year.
- There was reassurance also around **flexibility in using DP's to buy items to support care.** For low cost items (example was a badminton set to encourage physical activity) then the advice was that these should be acceptable without prior approval. The key is to ensure it is needed for care, that it is low cost and within budget and can be justified in the annual return.
- To **ensure continuity of support agencies** OCC are asking for payments to continue to ensure these agencies continue to be available in the future and to continue sending invoices for these services to Purple.
- If you don't have an allocated social worker contact the central ASC number or locality number of the area you reside.
- OCC still have a range of flexible support available at day services including basic day services if needed, online support and individual support in the home if needed. Day centres are open and some people are still attending the centres.
- It was commented, that the key messages from the meeting were both reassuring and positive. There was a suggestion, that perhaps the Adult Social Care team could communicate information on availability and flexibility of service to a wider audience to ensure families and carers feel more supported in these difficult times.

Accessing Services

- There are six locality teams and a review team (the latter, for those not allocated a worker)
- They currently have good staffing levels and response to phone calls shouldn't be delayed
- Front door number is still running. Details as above or on OCC website.

Disability Related Expenditure

- A question not referring to COVID19 was raised, addressed to the financial assessment team and the issue of an adult not being able to claim for rent when living with parents but they are still having to contribute funds to the rent. It was agreed this would be more appropriate to be addressed separately outside of the meeting but did raise the question that those who were still living at home especially during this period of self-isolation would be having an impact on the cost of living.