

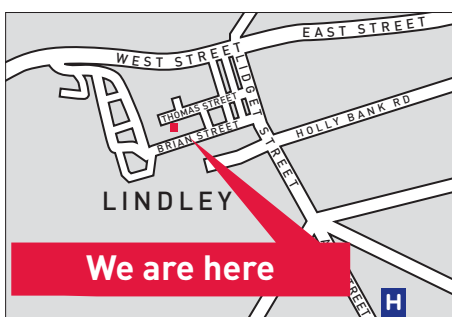


Independent Living Team Online!

We now have an up-to-date, comprehensive website. There is lots of useful information on there regarding managing your Direct Payment, what a direct payment is and various forms you might need.

You can find it by going to www.kirklees.gov.uk and searching for Direct Payments. The search box is on the right hand side.

There is also a very useful link on the site to take you to our web forum. This is an online community where you can share advice and info about Direct Payments, Independent Living Fund, the Carers Service, social care issues, and experiences of using this service. The discussion forum is managed by Kirklees Council and you can get to the forum by going straight to www.kirklees.gov.uk/forums. There are user guidelines and instructions on how to use the forum.



Full Body and The Voice

FULL BODY AND THE VOICE is a successful, producing theatre company with a ten year track record in high quality touring productions and co-productions at leading theatres. Our award winning learning disabled actors have worked in high profile theatres and on television and we have a new two year

ACTOR@scheme professional acting training course which began in September 2008. This innovative course has opportunities available to train 15 new actors until September 2010.

We work across the country but our offices are at the Lawrence Batley Theatre in Huddersfield and we run 4 weekly Youth Theatre classes, in both Dewsbury and Huddersfield for

60 young people with learning difficulties between the ages of 11 – 25 plus a Performance Group session for 10 young actors who have demonstrated potential. We also have a main acting company which tours productions nationally and internationally.

If you know of any young person with learning difficulties who could benefit from joining in any of our projects – Youth Theatre; main Acting Company or Training company or you would like to commission us to deliver some good quality user led training for your organisation, please contact **Maggie McEwan, Managing Director** on **01484 484441** or **maggie.mcewan@lbt-uk.org**



New Hourly Rate for Direct Payments

From the start of the new Financial Year, the hourly rate will increase to £10.66 from £10.40.

The payment which goes into your account on the 30th March 2009 will be the first payment at the new rate.

Personal Budgets (A.K.A. Individual Budgets)

We'll be piloting the first few Personal Budgets over the next few months to see how they go. They will be very similar to current Direct Payments and the amount of money a person gets will be the same, but this can be spent on different things.

These 'different things' can be anything as long as they help towards social care needs, so we can be really creative and help get the most out of the money.

If you'd like to find out more, or would like to be part of this pilot, please email us or call us at the office.

Recommend a service to others

Have you been really impressed with a service which you have received and would like to share it with others?

Please let us know as this will help us to deliver useful information to other service users.

You could write a short piece and either email it to us at

Independent.living@kirklees.gov.uk

or post it to us at our free post address which is

Freepost Kirklees Council
607

or ring us at the office on 01484 416760

Can you support the work of the Ethnicity Sub Group?

We are a group of people who meet every few months to work to make things better for people with a learning disability and their families in Kirklees. We come from many different areas such as social care, health, leisure services and also family carers and people with learning disabilities.

It's part of the Partnership Board which has 8 subgroups.

These sub groups carry out work in 8 key areas. Their work links to the Partnership Board which has the lead role in finding what the big issues for people with learning disabilities in Kirklees are and doing something about them.

Meetings are at the Resource Centre in Dewsbury once every 2 months. The meetings are from 1:00pm to 3:00pm and have a coffee break in the middle.

The group has written an action plan that lists all the things they are going to do over the next year. Every six months the group tells the Partnership Board about what they have been doing.

The group is trying to get more BME service users and family carers to join the group.

If you interested in joining the group and having a say at the meetings then please contact Gurmit Jauhal on 01484 226530 or email him at gurmit.jauhal@kirklees.gov.uk to find out about how you can join the group

Cut your council tax

Is someone in your home disabled, giving or receiving care? If so, you could get discount!

If you:

- care for a person with a disability who receives certain allowances or a disablement pension
- care for a person with a disability in return for payment of up to £44 per week
- or someone in your home is severely mentally impaired
- are living elsewhere longer term to provide or receive personal care and your property is unoccupied
- live in a property adapted to accommodate the needs of a disabled person
- own a self contained property which is part of a larger property (for example a 'granny flat') and it is occupied by a dependent over 65, or a relative who is disabled or has a severe mental impairment.

If so please ring 01484 414900 or email revenues.benefits@kirklees.gov.uk

News Update - From April 2009 the annual leave entitlement for employees is 6 weeks a year pro rata. This includes bank holidays.

Financial Monitoring - Just a reminder to everyone that monitoring needs to be sent in every 3 months so that your adviser can monitor your account. The freepost address is Freepost Kirklees Council, 607

Alternatively monitoring can be taken to any Gateway to care or Kirklees library and information centre.

For information on anything in this newsletter or other issues on your mind please call the Independent Living Team on 01484 416760.

Castle & Minster Credit Union Ltd

We are working closely with Castle & Minster Credit Union as an easy way for you to receive your Direct Payment money. The Direct Payment money goes into the credit union by bank transfer and they will pay your provider straight into their bank account.

This frees you from writing cheques and getting mixed up with your own personal account. It cuts out having to save bank statements for monitoring and having to order copies should they get lost.

People who cannot open a bank account, for whatever reason, can also access the credit union.

This has been working very well for our service users who have decided to go with the credit union. If you would like any more information or would like to apply for a credit union account please visit our website at www.kirklees.gov.uk and search for direct payments. Alternatively please inform your adviser, who can arrange an application.

Batley Resource Centre

The office in Batley is now open to our service users on Monday Mornings, all day Wednesdays and all day Thursdays. There will be a member of our team there available to help deal with any queries, and site advice. Monitoring can also be handed in there. The resource centre is at 90 Commercial Street, Batley, WF17 5DS. It's located centrally near Batley Town Hall.



The flyer for Castle & Minster Credit Union Ltd features a blue and white design. At the top, the logo reads 'Castle & Minster Credit Union Ltd'. Below this, it states 'Castle & Minster Credit Union is a local financial cooperative run by members for members'. A central graphic shows several coins. To the right, a box highlights 'Castle & Minster Credit Union Ltd' with the tagline 'More than a basic bank account. Direct Debits and Standing Orders. Cash Cards and Debit Cards'. On the left, a Visa credit card is shown. At the bottom, there are three sections: 'Need a loan? We might be able to help' (Small loans from £50, Fixed interest rates, No hidden costs), 'Money Money Savers' (A savings account just for children), and 'Save with us, it's easy' (Save as much or as little as you like, Friendly, personal service, No call centres, Your money is safe).

Other information

Useful website links for equipment

<http://www.abilitynet.co.uk>
<http://www.williammerrittleeds.org>
<http://www.assist-uk.org>
<http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk>
<http://www.after16.org.uk>
<http://www.motability.co.uk>
<http://www.showerright.co.uk>
<http://www.lmb-ltd.co.uk>
<http://yorkshiremobility.com>
<http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk/>
<http://www.lazarusmobility.com/>

Useful numbers

Independent Living Team
01484 416760

Pay and Employment Rights Service (PERS) is in Dewsbury and will give help and advice to employers about legal rights and obligations. Please contact them on 01924 439381.

Gateway to care 01484 223000

Enquiries regarding financial assessment - Client Financial Affairs
01484 222059

Credit crunch help - useful contacts

Rent arrears or other debts

Money Advice Team
01484 223262

Help with information about Social Security Benefits or Tax Credits or Council Tax Benefits

Benefits Advice Service
North Kirklees
01924 326010
Benefits Advice Service
South Kirklees
01484 223950

General help and advice

Citizens' Advice Bureau
0844 848 7970

Help with cutting your energy costs.

Consumer Direct
08454 04 05 06
www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Home owner or private tenants energy advice

Kirklees Council's Energy Service
0800 052 7496

Council tenants energy advice

KNH Energy Team
01484 416733

Stop Press - Has your personal assistant used all the annual leave that they are entitled too. Annual leave runs from April to March every year, only one week should be carried over. Any more carried over is at the employer's discretion.

Keep safe & warm this winter

Kirklees Council and Anchor Staying Put have teamed up to provide **FREE** gas fire servicing.

Yes, **FREE** gas fire servicing!

To qualify for this service you need to:

- Live in Kirklees
- Own your own home
- Receive a means tested benefit
- Not have received a gas service through Anchor in the last 12 months
- Be over 60 or have a disability or long term illness.

If you meet the above just contact Anchor on 01484 845492 or stayingput.kirklees@anchor.org.uk for an application form.

Anchor can also help with hand rails, grab rails, making paths safe, door safety chains and loads of other helpful things. Please contact for more information.



We can support you look for help to meet your needs