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**Parental Guidance for the use of Direct Payment for Overnight support in the Home of a Personal Assistant**

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**Kent County Council – Disabled Children and Disabled Young People Service.**

**Parents’ Guidance for the use of Direct Payments for overnight support** **in the home of a Personal Assistant**

Some disabled children and young people need extra support during the night and this support can be provided via a direct payment to enable the child/young person to stay overnight in their PA’s home as an alternative to a residential overnight short break unit or short break foster care. Your Social Worker will advise you if your child is eligible for this level of support after an assessment of need. The decision will be confirmed at the Disabled Children and Disabled Young People’s Service Decision-Making Panel. The Panel will decide if this is the right kind of support for your child. If this is not the right kind of support, alternative suggestions will be offered to meet your child’s needs.

It is essential that you are confident that the person that you are entrusting your child to knows your child’s needs in great detail.

It is also essential that you have visited the Personal Assistant’s home and are sure that the environment will be safe for your child, both day and night. You will need to think about who else lives in the house and who else visits the house. You will also need to think about any pets, and if they are safe for your child to be around. Your social worker will help you to assess how safe the home is by carrying out a joint visit with you to the PA’s home and completing the Health and Safety checklist.

If your child is under 8 yrs their Personal Assistant (PA) must be either a registered childminder or a foster carer.

If you are unsure about what to look out for and what questions to ask your PA after reading the guidance below then please contact your Social Worker for advice.

1. All PA’s must have a Disclosure and Barring Service check at the enhanced level. Most people are honest about their past but there have been a few occasions when the check has highlighted concerns for a small number of PA’s. It is essential that you are confident that your child will be safe in your PA’s care. The Direct Payments Support Service will carry out checks on all members of the PA’s household aged over 18 and must be requested to do so.

The PA and your child must have spent sufficient time together in order to get to know each other and to have developed a trusting relationship before an overnight stay can go ahead.

1. The PA must know all about your child: how their health and other care needs are met, their likes and dislikes, their routine, and very importantly how they communicate. We have attached a communication passport for you to use, in order that you can complete it with your child and the PA so that everyone is clear about the plans. The passport must stay with your child.
2. You must visit the PA’s house with your social worker before any overnight arrangements are in place. It is essential that you see where your child will sleep and where other members of the household will sleep. You will need to know what arrangements are in place if your child wakes in the night and needs support. This visit will also give you the opportunity to see any household pets and decide if they are safe for your child to be around.
3. You will need to check with the PA that their contract of employment allows for this arrangement.
4. Your child’s stay with their PA would normally be for a short time (1-3 nights) but you should discuss any proposed arrangements with your Social Worker. Your child cannot stay in any overnight short break provision for more than 75 nights in any 12-month period.
5. If you are satisfied that this arrangement is suitable for your child, then the Social Worker will present the recommendation to the Decision-Making Panel for final approval. If agreed, the Direct Payments Support Service will be notified to set up or revise the financial agreement to ensure that the Direct Payment will cover the cost of the overnight care. (If the Panel does not approve the recommendation, then you have the right of appeal – ask your Social Worker about the Panel Appeal Process).
6. Once the stay has taken place we recommend that you spend time with your child to hear how the stay went from their perspective and if they would like to stay with the PA again.
7. Your Social Worker will arrange a review following your child’s first stay, which may be virtual or in person. A review should also be arranged if there is a change in circumstances eg your child’s needs change significantly, the PA moves home, someone else joins the PA’s household. You should let your Social Worker know if an extra review is required.
8. If your social worker updates the assessment and is of the view that overnight stays are no longer appropriate, then they should return to the Decision Panel for confirmation and recording and notify the DPSS for a change in costings.

Flow chart

1. Following assessment or review, consider whether overnight care is required for the child/young person
2. If overnight care is required and the parent/PA would like to consider overnight care in the PA’s home, the PA is willing to care for the child/young person and the child/young person agrees to this, Social Worker seeks approval from their Manager/Supervisor in the first instance.
3. If agreed that this is appropriate and would meet the child/young person’s needs, complete referral to Decision-Making Panel
4. If agreed by Panel, Parent and Social Worker arrange to visit the PA’s home.
5. Social worker completes the Health and Safety checklist of the PA’s home.
6. If parent is happy to proceed, Social Worker notifies Panel so that the arrangement is recorded, requests Safeguarding checks for any other adults in the PA’s home by the Direct Payment Support Service and notifies the agreed frequency so that a set-up or revised costing and financial agreement can be drawn up.
7. Social Worker ensures that the Guidance has been completed and arranges a review date with the parent following the child/young person’s first stay.