



**sense**  
for deafblind people

# Deafblind people and families' experiences of direct payments and personalisation

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# About Sense



- Sense is a national charity that supports and campaigns for children and adults who are deafblind.
- Our vision is of a world in which all deafblind children and adults can be full and active members of society.



# Deafblindness



- Persons are regarded as deafblind if their combined sight and hearing impairment cause difficulties with **communication**, access to **information** and **mobility**.
- Estimated 242,000 deafblind people in UK.



# Sense's direct payments project (May 2007 – April 2010)



## Aim:

To fill the gap in information and advice available to deafblind people and families about direct payments

## Outcomes:

- Consultation report
- Advice service
- Factsheets on direct payments and purchasing own support
- Training for local direct payments support services
- BSL DVD (Spring 2010)



# Challenges when using direct payments/ personal budgets



- Accessible information and advocacy
- Real choice about how to meet assessed needs
- Amount of direct payment/personal budget
- Recruitment, staff absence and training
- Extra responsibility and paperwork
- Managing direct payments



# Amount of direct payments: individuals' experiences



- 'I was given only £6/hr to employ a carer for an epileptic deafblind child. When I said that wasn't enough, the manager said to reduce the number of carer hours if I wanted to pay more.'
- '[The local authority] were reluctant to pay the "going rate" but have agreed that £25.00 an hour is the sort of rate they would have to pay someone if they got someone in themselves for a communicator-guide BSL user.'



# Amount of direct payments



- Local authorities award varying rates of direct payments to pay for support
- There should be **no maximum amount**
- Local authorities have a duty to meet needs under The Deafblind Guidance
- The cost of support for deafblind people must be taken into account



# Resource allocation for personal/individual budgets



If councils decide to use a RAS, they should ensure these areas are assessed:

- Communication support
- Access to information
- Mobility
- Need for specialist assessment
- Changing needs



# What kind of services do deafblind people and families buy?



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- Communicator guides
- Interpreters
- Intervenors
- Other support workers
- Everyday tasks
- Leisure activities and social activities
- Holidays
- Equipment



# What can help individuals and families find appropriate services?



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- Receiving an appropriate rate
- Recruiting locally
- Employing people that are already known to individuals and know appropriate communication skills
- Employing 'family members' who live in the same house



# Managing direct payments



- Management might include regular paperwork, recruitment, employer responsibilities
  - ‘The administration is demanding and financial returns are difficult.’
  - ‘After 1 year...social services...finally explained how we should have been dealing with the direct payment.’



# An example of good practice in direct payments support services



- A deafblind person who uses Braille and deafblind manual uses the local DP support service
- Sends emails with hours worked
- Support service send payslips with two staples in the envelope and Braille names on each payslip
- Confidentiality and control maintained
- Deafblind person takes on the responsibilities he wants to and receives appropriate support for the rest



# Self-assessment and brokerage



## Self-assessment:

- Individuals' knowledge of entitlements and services
- Specialist assessments
- Ability to challenge

## Brokerage:

- Resourcing to support people effectively
- Specialist knowledge and information



## **Direct payments:**

- [simon.shaw@sense.org.uk](mailto:simon.shaw@sense.org.uk)
- 020 7014 9396 (voice and text)
- [www.sense.org.uk/directpayments](http://www.sense.org.uk/directpayments)

## **Putting Everyone First:**

- [www.sense.org.uk/help\\_and\\_advice/social\\_services/](http://www.sense.org.uk/help_and_advice/social_services/)

## **The Deafblind Directory:**

- [www.sense.org.uk/deafblind\\_directory](http://www.sense.org.uk/deafblind_directory)