

# **ADULT AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

16 January 2006

**Present:**

Councillor Ray Waller (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services  
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## **19. DIRECT PAYMENTS - EQUIPMENT** *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To seek approval to the extension of the Direct Payments Scheme in Hartlepool to cover items of equipment. The report outlined the policy context and the key issues in respect of the introduction of Direct Payment for items of equipment, and included Policy and Procedure guidance for staff.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The existing Direct Payments scheme was introduced in March 2001 and provided the opportunity for service users to manage some or all of their care using a Direct Payment in lieu of directly provided services. Since the introduction of the scheme some forty (40) individuals had benefited from receiving a Direct Payment. The use of Direct Payments was strongly ratified as an approach to increasing choice and independence in the Green Paper 'Independence, Well-being & Choice' and is expected to feature highly in the White Paper regarding care outside of hospital.

The Department of Health Direct Payments guidance issued in 2003 advised that the councils may make Direct Payment to enable people to purchase for themselves services that otherwise would have been provided by the social services department. Direct Payments cannot be made, however, to purchase services or equipment for which the council is not responsible, for example, services that the NHS provides. Nor are Direct Payments a substitute for the disabled facilities grant. The policy guidance

also states that when making a Direct Payment for the purchase of items of equipment, local councils will need to satisfy themselves that the person's needs for the services will be met by the user's own arrangements. In particular, local councils will wish to ensure that the Direct Payment recipient is adequately supported by specialist expertise. Advice may be needed to ensure that, in the case of major items, equipment purchased is safe and appropriate. Officers have ensured that adequate advice is provided to ensure that equipment is safe and appropriate. The policy and procedure guidance (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) reflects that the assessment and support will be given by Care Managers with appropriate Occupational Therapy input.

The policy advice also advised Local Authorities of the need to clarify the ownership of the equipment. The proposed way forward was that the item would be owned by the Direct Payment recipient, and thus would be their responsibility for maintenance, as set out in 8.1 of the procedure guidance. The cost of the Direct Payment for equipment is proposed as a price that reflects the equivalent cost of an item from Tees Community Equipment Services catalogue. If an item was not available through TCES, the cash equivalent would be calculated on the basis of two quotations to evidence best value.

### **Decision**

- i) That the extension of Direct Payments to cover equipment, including the Draft Policy and Procedures set out as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- ii) That the ownership of the item(s) of equipment and any subsequent maintenance remain with the Direct Payment recipient.
- iii) That the amount of the Direct Payment be calculated on the basis of the Tees Community Equipment Services catalogue price or two quotations.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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