



# ADVICE and SUPPORT

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What support is available? - You can have as much support, as you need to help you to use Direct Payments. You can also choose who helps you to use Direct Payments. This may be a family member or an advocate.

You may need support when thinking about using Direct Payments; or when you first start to make your own care arrangements with your payments; or indeed, you may need some assistance on an ongoing basis to support you with the administration and management aspects of Direct Payments.

An information and advice service is available from **E.L.I.T.E**. We can help you with:

- Explaining what Direct Payments are
- How to access Direct Payments
- What Direct Payments can be used for and how they can be spent
- How to employ personal assistants and support workers with advice on how to be a *good employer*
- Contingency planning for emergency situations

There is no charge to you for advice, information and support from **E.L.I.T.E**

A support network of people already using Direct Payments also meets regularly in across Staffordshire to give people the opportunity to meet other recipients of Direct Payments to share ideas and information. **E.L.I.T.E** can give you information about the network and when they next meet.

You can contact the information and advice service at:

**E.L.I.T.E**

Queens Gardens Business Centre  
31 Ironmarket  
Newcastle under Lyme  
Staffordshire  
ST5 1RP

Telephone: 01782 444576

Email: [info@elitestaffordshire.co.uk](mailto:info@elitestaffordshire.co.uk)

Or visit our website: [www.elitestaffordshire.co.uk](http://www.elitestaffordshire.co.uk)

## **Remember**

If you are receiving Direct Payments, the council cannot be held responsible for the services you purchase with your Direct Payments.

You are responsible for the arrangements made by contracting with the service or employing individuals to meet your needs. As a result, you are responsible for the decisions you make when using Direct Payments. You can expect information, advice and support from **E.L.I.T.E** with all aspects of employing personal assistants. This will include advice and support on how to be a responsible and good employer.

If you employ your own staff, it should be noted that the Local Authority will not make any payments in connection with any claims that an employee might bring e.g. for injury at work, unfair dismissal, redundancy, etc

An important aspect to consider when planning Direct Payments is to identify any potential areas of difficulty and to plan for any unexpected emergencies. This should include planning the arrangements that can be made to ensure that you receive the assistance you need when your usual arrangements break down, such as through a period of sickness for your personal assistant.

Examples of such 'contingency arrangements' could be recruiting personal assistants who are prepared to work additional shifts at short notice, as and when required, or to make contact with independent care agencies to make arrangements for emergency cover.

**E.L.I.T.E** can assist you to plan for contingencies. This should be done at the outset of planning your arrangements for Direct Payments.

You should be aware that you should contact the council when you require emergency assistance. The council will assist you to explore alternative arrangements and may provide services directly until you are able to once more make your arrangements through Direct Payments.