

**Minutes of Hillingdon's Assembly for People with Disabilities**  
**7 December 2023**  
**Barnhill Community Centre, Ayles Road, Hayes, UB4 9HG**  
**11.30am to 1.00pm**

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>Sasha Jeffries, Senior Customer Engagement Officer welcomed everyone to the assembly.</p> <p>Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, LBH gave the opening remarks and thanked everyone for attending.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Quick update on Warm Welcome Centres and Vaccinations</b></p> <p>Sarah Durner, Public Health, Hillingdon Council</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council has published details of the Warm Welcome Centres available in the borough. Details can be found at <a href="https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/warm-welcome-centres">https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/warm-welcome-centres</a> or paper copies are available on request.</li><li>• Reminder to all attendees to have their flu jabs, Covid boosters and Shingles vaccination, where relevant, in order to stay healthy and well this winter.</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Presentation 1: Direct Payments</b></p> <p><b>Rifka Amanulla, Direct Payments Officer, Hillingdon Council</b></p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Direct Payments aim to give individuals choice, control and independence.</li><li>• Direct Payments can be given to an individual, following a social care needs assessment.</li><li>• A sum of money will be allocated so the person can arrange and pay for their care and support.</li></ul>

- Funds are paid on a 4 weekly basis (in advance) onto a prepaid card which works like a debit card.
- There are a variety of ways in which the money can be used to meet care and support needs.
- Benefits include giving people control over who provides their care and the ability to employ their own carers/personal assistants.
- People will need to keep records and receipts for care and support purchased and upload them onto an online portal. People who are unable to do this themselves will be given support.
- People who employ their own carers must make sure they meet responsibilities as an employer including issuing a contract of employment and ensuring tax and NI is paid, enrol carers into a pension scheme and work out holiday entitlement etc. A payroll company can assist with this.
- A friend or family member can help to manage a Direct Payment or there are approved support organisations available.
- Direct Payments cannot be used to withdraw cash, pay household bills, buy food, alcohol or medication.
- If you already in receipt of care arranged by the Council, you can ask to move to a Direct Payment.
- If you are not in receipt of any care and think you may be entitled, ask the Council to complete a social care needs assessment.

Key contact details:

Direct Payments Team, Hillingdon Council, 3 West, Civic Centre, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

Telephone: 01895 556694, 01895 250774, 01895 250296, 01895 277680

Hillingdon Social Care Direct: 01895 556633

Apply for care and support - Hillingdon Council

[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/apply-for-care-and-support-form](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/apply-for-care-and-support-form)

## **Presentation 2: Wheelchair Skills - Unlocking Potential**

Pete Donnelly, Founder, The Wheelchair Skills College

Key points:

- Aims include unlocking potential, learning new skills, building confidence, gaining independence.

- Skills include pushing forwards and backwards, turning, one handed pushing, wheelchair maintenance, negotiating kerbs, ramps, steps and more.
- Skills are for any age, any ability, for manual or power assisted chairs, full or part time users, temporary or permanent users.
- A video was played to give examples of skills gained [https://youtu.be/jSVw-3X\\_cqs](https://youtu.be/jSVw-3X_cqs)
- The Wheelchair Skills College aims to work with charities, schools, Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPO's), community groups, peer networks, wheelchair services, primary care and hospitals.
- The Wheelchair Skills College is already working with the Disabled Association Hillingdon (DASH).

#### **Presentation 4: Energy Saving**

Emma Goulding, Partnerships Officer, Energy Saving Trust (EST)

Key points:

- The EST is an independent organisation who works with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and has energy efficiency experts who aim to empower householders, lower fuel bills and carbon emissions, reduce fuel poverty.
- The EST offers advice on behavioural changes to reduce energy bills and consumption.
- There are a variety of home improvements that can be done which range from low to high costs.
- There is financial support available to people for energy efficiency measures, boiler upgrades and insulation schemes, as well as seasonal payments from the government, the Warm Home discount and the Household Support fund and people are encouraged to check their eligibility for these.
- Vulnerable residents should register for the Priority Services Register with their energy suppliers.
- Their website includes free advice and a local support directory, along with various video. Information and fact sheets are also available.

	<p>Key contact details:</p> <p>Call 0808 196 8260 to speak to one of our expert advisors or visit <a href="http://www.energyadvice.london">www.energyadvice.london</a></p>
	<p><b>Other Useful information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Uxbridge Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) offices are being refurbished and advise sessions will be delivered in the Civic Centre Corporate reception on Mondays and Thursdays, from 10am to 1pm.</li> <li>• Dial-A-Ride has launched a new app to make it easier for members to access services and get live estimates from drivers. 12 new drivers have also been recruited in the area to manage demand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Questions and Answers</b></p> <p>Q: What age groups can get the shingles vaccine?  A: You're eligible for the free shingles vaccine if you are aged 70-79 or 65 (This excludes people who are aged 66 – 69) or if you are immunocompromised and over 50 years. People aged over 80 are not recommended to have the vaccine as it has been shown to be less effective in this age group.</p> <p>Q: For Direct Payments, why does it take so long to get confirmation of client contributions and the amounts paid?  A: This has been an issue in the past which we apologise for and we now have a database in place to make this easier.</p> <p>Q: Why is the hourly rate allocated to pay for personal assistants not in line with minimum wage figures?  A: All Direct Payment users employing personal assistants will get a letter shortly to advise that rates have been amended to address this issue.</p> <p>Q: Can people of any age, including older people, be trained in wheelchair skills?  A: There is no age limit, The Wheelchair Skills College is happy to work with anyone.</p>

Q: Is it true that turning off the heating in one room can lower bills?

A: This can help, please speak to an advisor for more tailored guidance and advice.

Q: How do you register for the Priority Services Register?

A: Please contact your individual energy suppliers direct.

### **Close of meeting**

Sasha Jeffries thanked residents, speakers, staff and stallholders for attending and encouraged feedback using the forms provided or by speaking to one of the council officers available.

Comments will be passed on to the relevant departments.

The next assembly will take place on 18 April 2024, subject to confirmation.

Minutes and slides available online or on request.