

Darlington Association on Disability

Information Guide

Living Independently

There are many services available to support disabled people to live at home. This section focuses on the services provided by Social Services, other statutory services and voluntary organisations. More information about Health Services can be found in another section of the Information Guide. This section also gives information about Direct Payments and provides details of the Independent Living movement, led by disabled people, that campaigns for the rights of disabled people to secure and maintain their independence.

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Community Care

Community Care is the name given to the group of policies and services that provide support to people to enable them to live as independently as possible in their own homes. Community care services can be provided by Social Services, Health services, and by private and voluntary organisations, usually following an assessment of need.

Direct Payments legislation now makes it possible for people to receive a payment instead of a service, to allow them to purchase their own care.

Community Care Law, more information about which can be found in another section, sets out when and how Social Services and others should assess for and provide services. Local Authorities, who are responsible for Social Services, are allowed to take their own resources into account when assessing need.

'Fair Access' is the term used to explain how Social Services make sure that services are provided in a fair way and that the rules used to decide who gets services are clearly set out. These rules are sometimes called 'eligibility criteria'. An information leaflet on Fair Access is available from **Darlington Social Services**.

Social Services

Darlington Social Services has a duty to provide certain services following an assessment and must also make sure that disabled people know about services. Other services are provided on a discretionary basis. The assessment process may also involve a financial assessment in certain instances, and may result in service users, including disabled people, being expected to make a financial contribution towards services. Social Services must take into account the additional cost relating to someone's impairment -Disability related expenditure – as part of the financial assessment. Once a service is provided Social Services are not allowed to withdraw that service if a person cannot afford to pay for it.

Before accessing services a person will need to have a Community Care assessment, which will be carried out by a Care Manager.

The following are some of the services that are available through Social Services:

Home care includes assistance with dressing, preparing meals, bathing and personal care but would usually exclude housework.

Meals at home includes hot meals and frozen meals. These can be delivered in bulk on a weekly basis.

Day services are provided separately for disabled people under and over the age of 65. For older people **Age Concern** offer a range of day services.

Younger disabled people can access Dimensions Disability Initiative, a service provided by **Darlington Association on**

Disability. The service promotes equality and encourages and supports independence. Members are supported to develop their own person centred plan. A wide range of courses and activities are offered, including computing to photography, arts and sign language.

Equipment can be provided following an assessment by an occupational therapist. Communication equipment can be provided for people with hearing impairments. More information can be found in the Equipment section of this guide.

People with a visual impairment can access a rehabilitation service at Vane House where they can be supported to gain skills, knowledge and confidence. Action for Blind People is also based there.

Short term breaks can also be provided following an assessment. These can provide a rehabilitation service that support disabled people to retain their independence at home, and can also provide carers with a break.

Social Services also provide information and advice about their own and other community services, including where else to go for advice and support.

Assessments

To identify what support might be needed, an assessment of care needs is carried out before services are provided. Assessments may be carried out by staff from Social Services, Housing or Health. There are several different types of assessment depending on a person's impairment and the level of assistance required. Within an assessment carers' needs should also be taken into account. Carers may also be entitled to a separate assessment. People being assessed should be given a leaflet at the start of the process setting out how an assessment can be challenged if a decision be made that is not satisfactory.

Other Services

Lifeline is provided by **Darlington Borough Council** and is an alarm unit which connects to a household telephone system. All that is required is modern push in telephone socket and a 3-pin power socket nearby. A lightweight portable alarm button is

supplied with both types of Lifeline. By pressing this or an alarm button on the Lifeline telephone a call is automatically made to the Darlington call centre. The operator holds details of emergency contacts, which may include family, friends or neighbours. There is a small weekly charge for this service.

Darlington Association on Disability's Volunteer Project can provide volunteers to support disabled people to increase their independence. Volunteers can support people who feel isolated as a result of their impairment, and can assist them to access leisure opportunities such as going to the theatre, shopping and taking part in sports.

The **WRVS** Good Neighbour Project provides support to older people, including older people with impairments. Volunteers provide a befriending service, and can provide support for tasks such as collecting prescriptions and writing letters.

Darlington Handyperson Service is run by Three Rivers Housing Group's Care and Repair Darlington Agency. This is an affordable home repair and adaptation service for Darlington residents who are over 60 or who have an impairment. Other residents who can show that they are unable to do jobs themselves and have no one else to assist, may also access the service. Clients are asked to pay for materials used at a cost price. A small labour charge of £5.00 per hour is made but this is waived for people in receipt of a Means Tested Benefit. The Handyman cannot undertake jobs such as painting and decorating jobs and everyday gardening tasks, jobs above stepladder height or jobs that are a landlord's responsibility.

Direct Payments

Direct Payments is an alternative way to provide services for people following a Community Care Assessment. Direct Payments enable disabled people to receive a cash payment in order to purchase the services they need. The payment received does not affect benefits. The advantages of this form of service provision are that it can give people greater independence, choice and flexibility in the way the services are delivered. People can use a Direct Payment to purchase care from an agency or to employ someone. **Darlington Association on Disability** has a support service for people wishing to use Direct Payments. The service can provide information and support, assist with

completing forms, recruitment and can provide training and support for people using the service. The service also has a payroll service and regular newsletter.

The Direct Payments Interest Group is a group of disabled people promoting Direct Payments and advising the local authority on the development of a support service in Darlington. It can offer an opportunity to talk to other people with experience of independent living and users of Direct Payments. The group can be contacted via **Darlington association on Disability**.

The Independent Living (1993) Fund

The Independent Living 1993 Fund (ILF) is a discretionary trust set up and financed by the Government. The fund aims to support disabled people in having more choice and control over their lives by helping them to live at home rather than in residential accommodation. The Independent Living Fund works closely with Health and Social Services, helping to pay towards community care packages costing more than £200 per week. If the application is successful, the fund makes regular payments, usually directly to the disabled person. To qualify for ILF, which is financially assessed, a disabled person must be aged 16-65 when the first claim is made, receiving personal social services or a Direct Payment costing at least £200 per week and must be in receipt of the highest rate of Disability Living Allowance. The Independent Living Fund can pay up to a maximum of £420 per week on top of the contribution from Social Services providing that the cost of the total service does not exceed £715 per week. Applications can be made via **Darlington Social Services** or directly to the **Independent Living Fund**.

Supporting People

Supporting People is a national programme providing housing related support to people with support needs, including disabled people, and people with learning difficulties. As a minimum a service user will be provided with a Support plan. This lists things which the person needs assistance with and sets out how the support provider is going to help them achieve these things. For more specialised services such as those for people with a learning difficulty the support plan is more in-depth. It looks at all aspects of the person's life and details how the support provider is going to

assist independence in that area. For more information contact the **Supporting People Team**.

Complaints about local authority services

If you have a problem getting what you believe you need from the Local Authority, or are unhappy about the way in which you have been treated and want to make a complaint, **Darlington Borough Council's** Town Hall and **Darlington Social Services** have leaflets outlining the complaints procedure. Social Services have a Performance and Standards Officer who deals with all complaints, comments and suggestions.

If you need assistance in making a formal complaint about a Local Authority Service you can contact MACA which is a locally funded Advocacy service. **Darlington Association on Disability** has an Information service that can advise people on how to make a complaint. They have a Community Care Self-Help Pack produced by the Public Law Project, which includes a step-by-step guide to making a complaint.

If you are not happy with the outcome of a complaint, you can refer it to the **Local Government Ombudsman**, which investigates claims of maladministration in local authorities. The Ombudsman's office produces a free leaflet: 'Complaint about the Council? How to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman'.

Darlington Citizens Advice Bureau is also able to assist people who want to make a complaint about community care services.

Independent Living

Independence does not necessarily mean a disabled person living alone or doing everything for him/herself. It means having the choice and control over the services that are delivered. It also means having the right to live in the community, and being able to access local and community services.

There are many groups that work to promote independent living.

Darlington Association on Disability provides information, support and services for disabled people that promote independence and choice. Its Information Service can provide information and advice on all aspects of independent living.

Disability North has an information and advice service that covers a wide range of topics, from benefits to education and employment. Disability North also has an independent living resource which provides advice and information about equipment and adaptations. The team includes a mobility adviser, occupational therapists and information staff.

National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) campaigns for disabled peoples right to independence. NCIL offers information and advice and has an online advice forum.

Other Sources of Information

Other sections of the Darlington Association on Disability Information Guide may contain further information relevant to services that should help you to live independently.

The **Carers** section covers information about carers assessments in more detail.

The **Consumer Issues** section gives details on shopping.

The **Equipment** section gives information on choosing, buying and borrowing equipment, and includes more information on occupational therapy services.

The **Health** section gives a brief overview of local health services and includes sources of advice and information.

The **Holidays** section provides information on taking a holiday.

The **Housing** section outlines housing and adaptations services.

The **Legal Rights** section gives general information on how to access legal advice, and how to make your voice heard.

The **Mobility** section looks at transport issues in more detail.

The **Money Matters** section gives information on entitlement to Benefits.

Contact **Darlington Association on Disability's** Information Service for assistance with searching for information about any subject in this guide or for support in dealing with your information requests.

Contacts

Darlington Association on Disability

20-22 Horsemarket

Darlington

DL1 5PT

Telephone 01325 489 999

Fax : 01325 488 188

Minicom : 01325 245 061

Email : mail@darlingtondisability.org

Website : www.darlingtondisability.org

Darlington Handyperson service

Care and Repair Darlington

CVS Building

Church Row

Darlington

DL1 5QD

Telephone : 01325 460114

Fax :

Minicom :

E-mail :

Website :

Darlington Social Services

Access and Contact Team

Central House

Gladstone Street

Darlington

DL3 6JX

Telephone : 01325 346200

Minicom : 01325 360862

Emergency Duty Team : 08702 402994, outside of ordinary office hours

Minicom : 01642 602346

Fax : 01325 346474

Email :

Website : www.darlington.gov.uk

Darlington Town Hall

Feethams

Darlington

DL1 5QT

Telephone : 01325 380651

Fax :

Minicom :

E-mail : enquiries@darlington.gov.uk

Website : www.darlington.gov.uk

Disability North

The Dene Centre

Castle Farm Road

Gosforth

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE3 1PH

Tel (0191) 284 0480

Fax (0191) 213 0910

Minicom: (0191) 2846659

E-mail : reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

Website : www.disabilitynorth.org.uk

Independent Living Fund

PO Box 7525

Nottingham

NG2 4ZT

Telephone : 0845 6018815

Fax : 0115 9450945

Minicom : 0845 6018816

Email : funds@if.org.uk

Website : www.if.org.uk

Local Government Ombudsman

Beverley House

17 Shipton Road

York

YO30 5FZ

Telephone : 01904 380200

Fax : 01904 380269

Minicom :

E-mail : via website

Website : www.lgo.org.uk

National Centre for Independent Living

4th Floor

Hampton House

20 Albert Embankment

London

SE1 7TJ

Telephone : 0207 587 1663

Fax : 0207 582 2469

Minicom : 0207 587 1177

E-mail : ncil@ncil.org.uk

Website : www.ncil.org.uk

Supporting People Team

Housing Division

Department of Community Services

Darlington Borough Council

Rotary Annex Room

The Arts Centre

Vane Terrace

Darlington

DL3 7AX

Telephone : 01325 388108

Fax :

Minicom :

E-mail : supportingpeopleteam@darlington.gov.uk

Website :

Vane House Resource Centre

Arts Centre Grounds

Vane Terrace

Darlington

DL3 7AX

Telephone 01235 388131

Fax :

Minicom :

E-mail :

Website :

WRVS Good Neighbour Project

30 Rosemary Court

Fenby Avenue

Darlington

DL1 4UB

Telephone : 366682

Fax : 01325 366683

E-mail : codurhamcp.darlingtonmgr@wrvs.co.uk

Website :