

## Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

**REPORT TO:** Healthier Communities Scrutiny Committee

**DATE:** 3/7/23

**LOCATION:**

**TITLE:** Direct Payments Support Service

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:** Direct Payments Support Service Progress Report for information

**REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION:** Update on DPSS

### BACKGROUND:



#### 1.1 Direct Payment Support Service

The Direct Payments Support Service under the management of the local authority was created on 01/04/21 when 4 staff were transferred under TUPE into the local authority from the former commissioned provider. The Service was re-designed as part of the Through Age and Wellbeing programme and established in this new structure at the end of 2021/22. The first year was consolidated The Service under local authority governance and ensured The Service provision was effectively maintained to service users so that they saw no changes to their support during the transition.

The year 2022-2023 set very clear objectives to review all aspects of The Service model and to develop The Service structure and ensure a programme of improvements. An additional Support Officer was appointed in July 2022 and a Team Manager was appointed to oversee the next phase of development from August 2022 to drive The Service forward.

## **1.2 Legislation**

Direct Payments are governed by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Care and Support (Direct Payments) (Wales) Regulations 2015.

## **1.3 What is a Direct Payment?**

A Direct Payment is money awarded by a Local Authority to allow Service Users to arrange their own package of care. Direct Payments can be offered to anyone who has been assessed as eligible to receive community care services. Once assessed an individual must be offered the choice of a direct payment. The amount allowed will depend on how much and what assistance is required and this will all be included in the care plan produced by the assessor.

Direct Payments can help meet an individual's eligible need for care and support, or a carer's need for support. They are an alternative to local authority- arranged care or support. The aim of Direct Payments is to give people more choice, greater flexibility, and more control over the support they get. Direct Payments can be provided to people of all ages if they have been assessed as needing social care services to support them with daily living, consent to receiving a Direct Payment and they (or their representative) can manage the payment.

Many people use their Direct Payments to fund a Personal Assistant to help them with various tasks. In these instances, Direct Payment recipients become employers and must meet the associated legal obligations. The individual's family member or representative can also employ a PA where the person requiring support does not have capacity to be an employer. Some choose to use a care agency instead. Local authorities are required to provide support and assistance to people to manage their Direct Payment and employment responsibilities. This is the role of the Direct Payments Support Service.

Direct Payments can be used to purchase a wide variety of services or equipment if these contribute to meeting an individual's agreed wellbeing outcomes. Payments can be made for day-to-day things such as dressing, cooking, driving and support to facilitate discharge from hospital. They can also be used for social activities – visiting friends, evening classes and gardening – as well as for assistance to access training and employment. The main benefit of Direct Payments is their adaptability. Service users can use them to organise their care in a whole range of new and more effective ways and local authorities are encouraged to explore innovative and creative options for meeting people's needs.

## **1.4 Audit Wales**

Audit Wales have described the benchmark characteristics of a local authority that effectively encourages, manages, and supports people to use Direct Payments.

The redevelopment of the Direct Payments Support Service now firmly established within the local authority has been designed around the following characteristics as the foundation principles. The new service has been embedded in Targeted & Short Term

Services as part of Porth Gofal, to support the Through Age and Wellbeing programme. These characteristics will direct the development and improvement activities over the next few years and build the evidence these characteristics have been fully embedded.

### **1. Local authorities who are good at promoting Direct Payments**

- Have simple and concise public information that is made available in a wide range of mediums and has been tested to ensure it is effective and tells people what they need to know
- Offers and encourages people to use independent advocacy to help people make informed choices
- Uses the 'What Matters' conversation in the assessment process to explain Direct Payments
- Direct Payments are promoted as an option at least equally with other choices

### **2. Local authorities who are managing Direct Payments effectively**

- Help people to access and use Personal Assistants 'Demystify' what Direct Payments are and provide sufficient support to assure people on employment requirements, liabilities, and fallback processes. Bureaucracy is kept to a minimum
- Clearly set out what Direct Payments can be used for giving examples of the type of support that is available and, wherever possible, encourage innovation
- Have regular and ongoing contact and provide support and information to adults using Direct Payments to clarify responsibilities and ensure people remain safe
- Work to shape the 'market' and by improving access to Personal Assistants, encouraging more providers, managing costs, and encouraging the pooling of budgets
- Jointly agree with NHS bodies on how best to address the needs of clients who use Direct Payments and Continuing Healthcare, so they are not disadvantaged

### **3. Local authorities who are delivering positive outcomes for people using Direct Payments**

- Evidencing that people's wellbeing is maintained or improving because of Direct Payments
- Have a comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of Direct Payments
- Involve and value input from all stakeholders/partners in evaluating the impact of services
- Compare and benchmark individual and collective performance with others and use the findings of evaluation to shape current plans and future approaches
- Know what works and whether the approach of the authority is delivering the aspirations of the Act

#### **1.5 The Direct Payments Support Service (DPSS)**

The Direct Payment Support Service provides information and support as well as practical help to services users to become employers, assisting with recruiting and employing staff, providing support to arrange Employer Liability Insurance, paying PA wages via employer confirmed hours and helping with Income Tax, National Insurance

and Pensions payments. It is important to note that all PA's working with DP service users are solely employed by the service user and are not employees of the council.



Working with the Porth Gofal team and across the corporate functions of Team Ceredigion, The Service has sought to provide help and support in understanding what is available through Direct Payments to promote Voice, Choice, and Control for service users within the Through Age Wellbeing programme.

## CURRENT SITUATION:

### 2.1 Promoting Direct Payments & creating a Direct Payments Support Service brand improving access to information



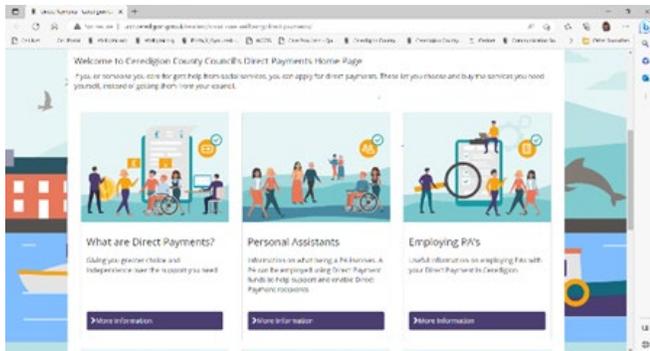
A website has been co- created to offer help and advice to those considering or already receiving a Direct Payment and it allows potential PAs to register their interest in being employed. The website was launched on 31/3/23 following extensive testing within the council domain.



Logos and images were commissioned from a local company Four Cymru to reflect some of the key images of Ceredigion and to represent groups of people accessing DP's and creating a welcoming and friendly space to find all the Direct Payments information in one place.

This provides a link to access the website.

[Direct Payments - Ceredigion County Council](#)



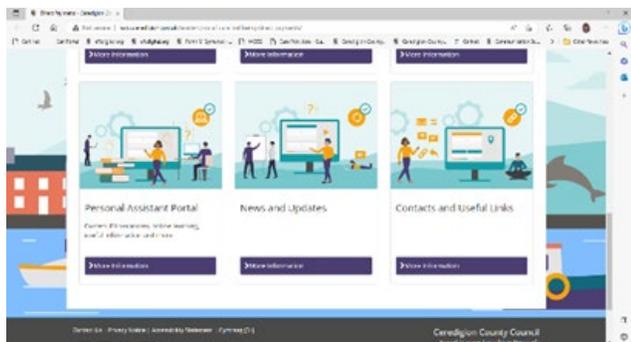


In addition to the available resources in DEWIS, and in response to service user feedback the Service is currently developing an information sheet to be issued to service users with signposts to the support that is available in their communities e.g., Age Concern, informal carer's groups etc. and these will also be added to the website. Creating Easy Read Documents and digital short clips to explain how the process works in Direct Payment terms, are also in development.

Once the new payroll software (Staffology) system is embedded the Service will be offering training to those service users who wish to learn how to manage their accounts themselves while still providing detailed support for those that wish to have greater levels on active support.

The ethos of Team Ceredigion has been hugely effective with the implementation of the Staffology system with Finance, IT, Procurement and DPSS along with the other Pwrth's all coming together to ensure that the payroll bureau project has been delivered on time and enabling the next phase of development to progress effectively.

## **2.2 Manage Direct Payments effectively and creating a proactive approach to recruiting Personal Assistants**



The new Personal Assistants (PA) Portal enables people to see the current vacancies PA's and how to apply. For existing PA's it provides access to all the information they need in regards of their role. More will be added to the Portal in the coming year.

## **2.3 Paying PA's as a managed service through the DPSS Payroll Bureau Software redesign and development**

Following identifying payroll software governance and compliance concerns with the previous software contract inherited at the point of transfer into the local authority, on a three counties basis it was agreed to seek a new software payroll solution for payroll functions to be managed. Ceredigion Procurement and Commissioning Service led this process on behalf of the 3 local authorities and this was completed with the implementation of the Staffology payroll suite on 01/4/23. This was an incredibly significant project and required a Task and Finish project team operating for many months to implement a new system, training and to ensure a safe transition, testing and onboarding the new system whilst continuing to ensure payroll was maintained until the

switch over. The teamwork of Tim Ceredigion has been outstanding to bring this project in on time. It is hoped in the future to be able to give the service users access to input their own timesheet information if they wish to while still offering full support to those that don't. With the benefit of automated processes, most of the administration is now digital so pay slips are now emailed to the PA and their employer, The service user. This has had a tremendous benefit significantly reducing the spend on the postal costs and reducing the resource impact on the corporate post room every pay period.

## **2.4 PA Recruitment, Training and Peer Support**

With the appointment of the new Team Manager and the creation of the PA Coordinator function within the Team Leader post, the impetus to recruit new PAs has started to become more focused with new links built with Jobcentre Plus to attend local jobs fairs.

With the new branding now embedded the DPSS have been able to promote the Service with new Pop-Up promotional banners at community events to draw individuals to the team to discuss opportunities. A brief PA Information leaflet has been developed to share at public events (See attached leaflet). This, together with several Employer, PA and General resources, can be found on the website links.

In 2023 to date 5 jobs fairs have been attended and more than 20 PAs recruited. The Team Manager has also encouraged the wider Council recruiters to take part in these events and this has proved highly successful and has been recognised by the Employment Lead at JCP. The Team Manager has also instigated building links with the farming community as a means of increasing recruitment within this group, encouraging the development of care provision within local communities, promoting eco-friendly reduced travel from local working, and keeping money local. It is also a positive and proactive approach increasing the income stream into a farming sector which is experiencing difficult times and needing to further diversify.

Local support for employers to recruit PAs is essential; previous issues reported, such as a lack of experience in recruitment and variable support, can make it difficult to recruit PAs. Routes to recruitment most frequently referred to by PAs include conversations with friends or colleagues, a direct approach from a potential employer, already knowing their employer (friend/family member), and 'word of mouth.'

Recruitment and retention are ongoing challenges within the whole social care sector and PA's is no different to the wider social care workforce. There is no single solution to increasing the supply of PAs.' The website and PA Portal is a key link to making connections with existing PAs and ways to support them and encourage PAs to look for additional roles. Developing a proactive PA register has the potential to be more than just a recruitment tool and may assist efforts to make the PA workforce more visible or even start to develop a 'community' of PAs at a local level.

## 2.5 PA's role, skills, importance, and value

Social Care Wales defines the role of a PA as providing 'person-centred care and support for individuals, so that they can achieve personal well-being outcomes where the individual lives. PAs utilise numerous high-level skills (autonomy, communication, co-ordination, assessment, and decision-making) and undertake a variety of duties including support with personal care, mobility, particular health needs, household tasks such as cleaning and shopping, attending college/university, and socialising. Having more than one employer is typical.

## 2.6 PA's Recruitment

Period	PA's Total Recruited
<b>2021-2022 Full Year</b>	122 (12 months)
<b>2022-2023 Full Year</b>	133 (12 months)
<b>2023-2024 1<sup>st</sup> April -1st June 2023  New website</b>	56 (first 2 months)

## 2.7 PA's and the Active Offer

In line with the Welsh Language Standards the Service actively promotes service users to be able to choose the language they prefer to use at home and allocates a Welsh speaking Support Officer and actively recruiting a Welsh speaking PA.

## 2.8 PA's and Peer Support



The Service is to reintroduce Peer Support meetings where service users and PAs can meet to have training and support. In partnership with the Fire Brigade, Police they will be available at the sessions to give advice to attendees. With cooking demonstrations and craft classes also to be added. It is hoped by offering a wide range of options it will encourage more service users and their PA's to attend to share ideas and begin to develop interest in pooling resources. The Service has received a grant from Learning and Development to provide courses for the PAs at the same time. It is hoped that by encouraging these meetings it will help to alleviate the isolation that many carer's and cared for experience.

## 2.9 “Engaging with the Social Care Personal Assistant workforce” Collaboration with Aberystwyth University Employability Placement Scheme - Student Placement

In September 2022, a collaboration between the local authority Learning and Development service and Aberystwyth University under the Work Placement scheme, provided the opportunity to place a student with the Direct Payments Support Service. Mentored by the Team Manager the project assigned was “*Engaging with the Social Care Personal Assistant workforce*”

- *Carry out research to establish a picture of personal assistants (PAs) working across health and social care in Ceredigion.*
- *Consider this research in the context of how the council can encouraging engagement with communities to promote the role of Personal Assistants and increase interest in provision of care to individuals, building strong partnerships to develop and embed local connections.*

At the end of the work placement the student produced a report and presentation which provided a baseline to commence the PA workforce development. The key outcomes have been built into the PA Peer Support plans for 2023/24. The outcomes for the student were also hugely valuable in terms of developing the individual and introducing them to the wide-ranging value and benefits of Direct Payments. The student reported that the experience had been “interesting, enjoyable, and educational which I hope will help me in my chosen career. I have really enjoyed creating the survey and working on the results and hope that they will offer you an insight into how the team can improve their assistance to Service Users and their PAs.”

## 2.10 Communication Plan

The DPSS is taking a holistic approach to recruitment including using word-of-mouth via peer networks and working with the local authority Press Office to increase the social media presence to actively harness this as a resource for the promotion of the PA role.

The new website was extensively promoted at the launch and will have repeated campaigns, and plans are in place to have a monthly feature including videos encouraging community members to become PA’s highlighting the number of vacancies in particular areas, these will also be added to the website including a list of the areas where posts are based each month.

Example of a communication post on Facebook



Linked to this is the power of hearing from people already in the PA role and those employing PA's and work in ongoing to encourage PA's and Service Users to share their stories to improve the profile and appreciation of the difference a PA can make to someone's quality of life and enhance their job satisfaction.

## **2.11 Reaching out to the community and promoting the value of DPs on social media**

### **Outcomes impact example**



### **Anna's story - how a Personal Assistant can change not just an individual's life, but the life of their family too.**

*Philip is Anna's son. He has diagnoses of autism, global developmental delay, and Crohn's disease. Anna has been Philip's full-time carer for 20 years and now would like the chance to give focus on her own personal development with the aspiration of becoming a nurse after securing a place to study at Aberystwyth University from September 2022.*

*However, she can only undertake her studies with additional care and support in place for her son. With the help of the Ceredigion Direct Payments Support Service, this dream could soon become a reality as Anna is in the process of recruiting assistants to care for Philip. Philip's needs are significant and complex, and with his special dietary requirements, caring for him is a full-time job. As the family are not ready to place Philip in residential care, having Personal Assistants look after him full time will allow Anna the freedom to study and follow her career.*

*This will not be the first time Anna has used the Ceredigion Direct Payments Support Service to employ personal assistants. When Philip was younger, local schools were unable to meet his needs, so instead of placing him in a special residential school far from home, Anna opted to home-educate him. She used Direct Payments to employ carers part-time to play with Philip and provide social experiences which gave Anna some respite.*

*Anna said, "Many wonderful and caring people have come through our door over the years. Some stayed and became part of Philip's life for three years, six years, or even ten years or longer. Others only stayed a few months, but many of them became lifelong friends and became like family. Having a child with additional needs can be hard work and challenging, but I'm so grateful for all the amazing people who came into our lives to care for Philip. I'm also excited to get to know the new personal assistants I've recruited who will look after Philip full time so that I can have a life of my own now."*

## 2.12 PA Training

The Service is working to maximise the strengths and potential of existing PAs – Filling emerging gaps, including the need for more PAs who can perform complex tasks, is not just about growing the supply of new PAs. This requires systems which enable existing PAs to develop their skills. In an innovative partnership with the local authority's Learning and Development service, a new training process has been set up to ensure that all PAs undertake training early in their career with options for extra training available should it be requested. It is important that the PAs offer the best support possible. An example of training courses includes Introduction to Care and Personal Care, First Aid Awareness for PAs and Health and Safety in the Home for PAs. All courses are taken online, and the PAs are paid for the time taken to complete.

## 2.13 Delivering positive outcomes for people using Direct Payments

### Service User Feedback



*I am extremely grateful to have found out about the Direct Payment scheme! Most of the time it's used to give me a chance to get something done without needing to check on mum for a couple of mornings per week. However, I love the fact it's so flexible and can also be used to help with appointments and even to ensure mum is safe if I have to go out for a day. (Agreed between myself and the PA). From mum's perspective, it gives her a different person to chat with a couple of times each week. Our PA has become her good friend and they chat about family and mutual interests, as well as being able to have extra help with small household tasks like bending to get out washing from the machine and other tricky tasks. When the PA is on holiday, she is greatly missed by us both! It's a fabulous provision both for anyone who is a carer and for the one who needs care!*

## 2.14 Training and Developmental Opportunities for the Direct Payments Support Service Support Officers to deliver positive outcomes

Staff are encouraged to undertake personal development training and are offered opportunities to take a lead on a range of projects with the Team Manager and Team Leader. All staff are currently involved in undertaking *NVQ Level 4 Advice and Guidance* to help improve the service offered to service users. One member of staff is undertaking an Aspiring Managers course and has also completed the Easy Read course to assist with producing documents for public dissemination. Welsh Language training courses are underway for team members working to develop their language skills. The staff have undertaken a broad range of topic specific training including Autism Awareness, Transgender Awareness and Dementia training and are actively encouraged to take full advantage of the range of social care training available.

## 2.15 Awareness Training for Through Age and Wellbeing Teams

To increase awareness of the roles, functions, and the operational responsibilities within the Direct Payments Support Service and to understand the processes involved from start to finish a new Awareness Session presentation has been developed. These sessions will commence in June 2023.

## 2.16 Performance Reporting

The DP Steering Group oversees an Action Plan to monitor the improvement and development objectives, meeting monthly chaired by the CLO for Porth Gofal, with support from the corporate Project Office. A key development area for 2023-24 is the design of an appropriate suite of performance indicators and measures to better illustrate the impact of Direct Payments.



Recognising that the inward and outward flow of service users commencing their DP journey and those for who the DP journey has come to an end on a daily/weekly/annual basis, has an impact on the illustrative data below, the increase in the volume of referrals is hugely significant, showing a *75% increase* between March 2022 and March 2023.

The development of greater insight data analysis is a key requirement in the coming year to understand the changing trends and the impact of the now fully operational new service model.

The Service is currently processing a payroll budget of more than £180,000 per month in Managed Accounts and supporting 42 service users who use Agencies or Self-Employed PAs for their care and to whom the Service pay invoices directly on behalf of the service users.

<b>End March 2022</b>	<b>End March 2023</b>	<b>April – May 2023 (First 2 months of Q1)</b>
508 Service Users who employed: 460 PA's	510 Service Users who employed: 464 PA's	486 Service Users who employ 520 PA's
112 Referrals - an average of 9 per week	199 Referrals - an increase of approx. 75% in 12 months	26 Referrals in the first 2 months of the new financial year
56 SU receiving intensive support	68 SU receiving intensive support	94 SU receiving intensive support

## **2023/2024 Development Objectives**

- To revise operational procedures in the DP team to efficiently utilise the new bureau-based payroll system once fully implemented.
- To consider the contents of the WAO audit report and take development actions as necessary.
- To design and implement a Ceredigion Direct Payments policy. This will incorporate planning and delivery of a DP training programme for TAW staff.
- To design and implement a Personal Assistant strategy incorporating recruitment, training, and welfare considerations.
- To develop and implement a defined Communication and Stakeholder plan to promote the Direct Payments scheme both internally and externally.

**WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS: Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why**

**Summary:**

**Long term:**

**Integration:**

**Collaboration:**

**Involvement:**

**Prevention:**

**RECOMMENDATION (S):**

**For information and update on developments within the Direct Payment Support Service.**

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):**

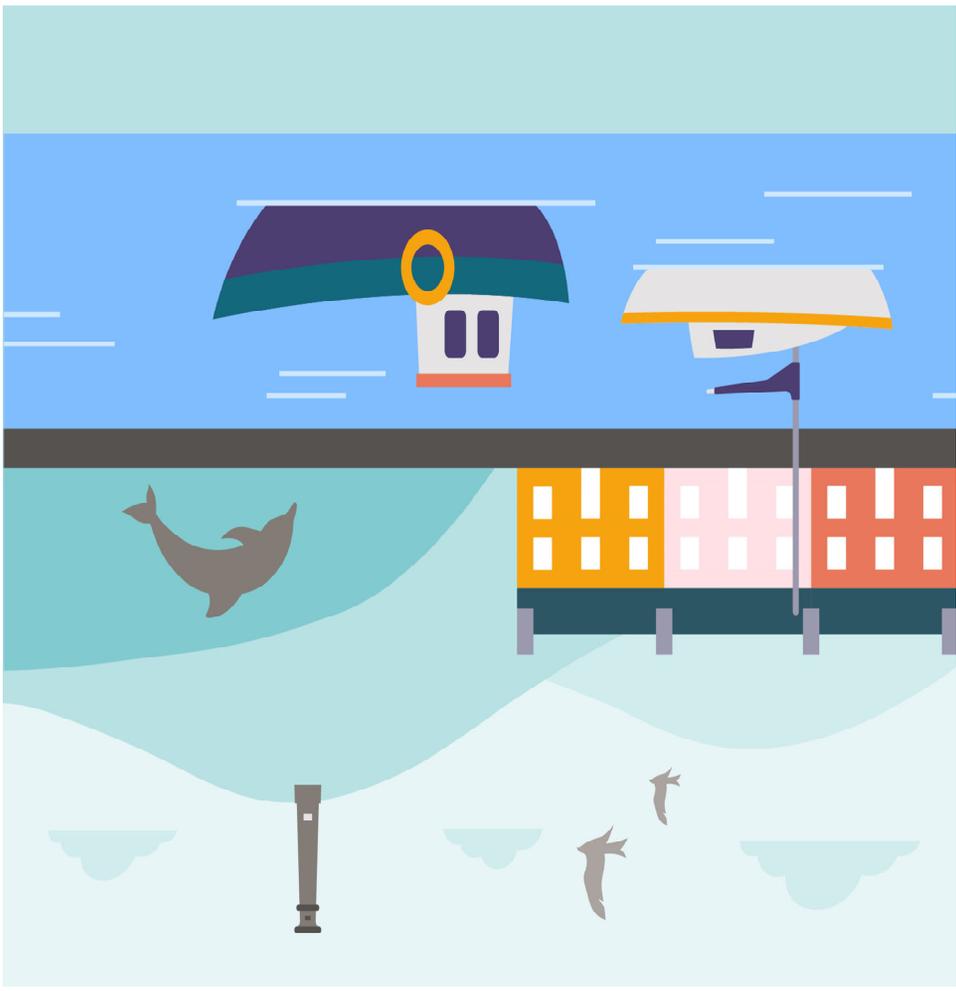
**N/A**

**Contact Name: Donna Pritchard**

**Designation: Corporate Lead Officer Porth Gofal**

**Date of Report: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**Acronyms:**



# What is a Personal Assistant?



Annibyniaeth | Dewis | Cefnogaeth  
 Independence | Choice | Support



**Beth yw  
 Cynorthwydd Personol?**

Annibyniaeth | Dewis | Cefnogaeth  
 Independence | Choice | Support



Tu\_dp@ceredigion.gov.uk

Neu cysylltwch â ni trwy e-bost

www.ceredigion.gov.uk/preswlydd/llies-gofal-cymdeithasol/  
taliadau-uniongyrchol/

Am ragor o wybodaeth a swyddi gweigion ewch i'n gwetan

- Drefnu apwyntiadau, gweithgareddau cymdeithasol a chortforo
  - Help gyda gofal personol fel hylendid personol a gwisgo glanhau.
  - Cymorth gyda thasgau cartref fel siopa bwyd, paratoi bwyd a edd ac oddi yno
  - Mynd gydag unigolyn tra bydd yn teithio i apwyntiad neu weithgar-brwrdd
  - Mynd allan am brydau bwyd, gwyllo ffilimia a chwarae gemau
  - Diwrnodau allan yn ymweid ag atyniadau
- Mae'r dyletswyddau a gyflawnir gan Gynorthwydd Personol yn amry-wiol ac yn rhoi boddhad. Gall y rhain gynnwys pethau fel:
- Nid yw pob swydd PA yn cynnwys gofal personol, mae rhai ar gyfer mor annibynnol â phosibl.
- Gall cynorthwydd personol weithio i fwy nag un cyflogwr, a bydd yn eu helpu gyda gwahanol agweddau o'u bywyd bob dydd i'w galluogi i fyw Taliadau Uniongyrchol
- Mae Cynorthwydd Personol yn cael ei gyflogi gan unigolyn sy'n derbyn
- Beth yw Cynorthwy-ydd Personol?**

Gwasanaeth Cymorth  
Taliadau Uniongyrchol  
Ceredigion  
Direct Payments  
Support Service



Gwasanaeth Cymorth  
Taliadau Uniongyrchol  
Ceredigion  
Direct Payments  
Support Service

### What is a Personal Assistant?

A PA is employed by an individual in receipt of Direct Payments

A PA can work for more than one employer, and will help them with various aspects of their daily life to enable them to live as independently as possible.

Not all PA jobs include personal care, some are for socialisation only.

The duties carried out by a PA are both varied and rewarding. These can include such things as:

- Days out visiting attractions
- Going out for meals, watching films and playing board games
- Accompanying an individual whilst they travel to and from an appointment or activity
- Assistance with household tasks such as food shopping, food preparation and cleaning.
- Help with personal care such as personal hygiene and dressing
- Organising appointments, social and physical activities

For more information and job vacancies please visit our website

[www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/social-care-wellbeing/direct-payments/](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/social-care-wellbeing/direct-payments/)

Or contact us via email

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