

Please find Devon County Council's response below.

1. Please provide a copy of your policy regarding the trialling of SEN Direct Payments and personal budgets.

Devon County Council is working with colleagues in the NHS to develop arrangements for offering personal budgets under the SEND pathfinder programme. A working group has been established to take this forward. Direct payment arrangements already exist for the purchase of short break provision and family support services, for children and young people

2. Please confirm whether all parents/carers issued with a new or amended statement since January 2012 have been informed about their right to apply for a Direct Payment for SEN provision under the Special Educational Needs (Direct Payments) (Pilot Scheme) Order 2012. How has this information been provided? Please provide a copy of any standard leaflet or letter issued together with confirmation of the date of issue.

The Council does not hold this information as we are still developing these arrangements.

3. Please confirm the number of parents/carers who are receiving SEN Direct Payments and what those Direct Payments relate to.

We are currently trialling the new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and personal budgets as part of the SEND Pathfinder Programme. At present none of the pilot families have requested direct payments for SEN and are happy with the transparency of a notional personal budget.

4. Please confirm whether any of these SEN Direct Payments could be provided outside the Pathfinder project, e.g. payments under Part 6 of a statement for transport.

As part of the SEND Pathfinder Programme, we are still exploring direct payments for SEN and where it may apply.

5. Please provide a copy of your policy for considering requests for direct payments for SEN provision. If you do not have a policy, please confirm whether there are any limits placed on direct payments applications, e.g. they will not be provided if the LA has a block contract or there is a financial limit. Please confirm whether these criteria are communicated to parents and provide a copy of that document .

The Council does not hold a policy or a document to which you have asked. Personal budgets will relate to those areas of service that are additional to services commissioned from our local providers.

6. Please confirm your arrangements for reviewing appeals against a refusal of a request for SEN Direct Payments. Please provide a copy of any policy and any leaflet/letter issued to parents explaining this.

This is still being explored as part of the SEND Pathfinder Programme.

7. Please confirm what information is provided to parents/carers about the trialling of personal budgets. Please provide a copy of any leaflet or letter issued.

The SEND Pathfinder Programme is working very closely with Devon Parent Partnership Service to undertake specific piece of work around support, information and advice for families who will be undertaking the new SEND pathway.

The Devon SEND pathfinder website also contains a range of information including newsletters. Please see the link below:

<http://www.devonsendpathfinder.info/>

8. Please confirm how many parents/carers are receiving a personal budget within the auspices of the Pathfinder project?

We currently have 18 out of 21 families who have a personal budget as part of their EHC plan. Some of these families have a notional budget, whilst others have direct payments for social care and a small number have personal health budget.

We will continue to offer a personal budget wherever families qualify for funding that can be represented in a personal budget.

9. Please confirm how parents/carers in receipt of SEN Direct Payments/ personal budgets obtained the information to make an application. For example, were they:

(a) sent the information with a new or amended statement

(b) recruited as part of a specific pilot

(c) neither (a) or (b), the family approached the LA having heard about SEN Direct Payments/personal budgets from other sources

Not applicable

10. Please provide a copy of your local offer.

Please see the document attached in the email.

If you wish to speak with someone regarding the above request, please contact the Information Governance Team on 01392 384678 or email foioffice@devon.gov.uk