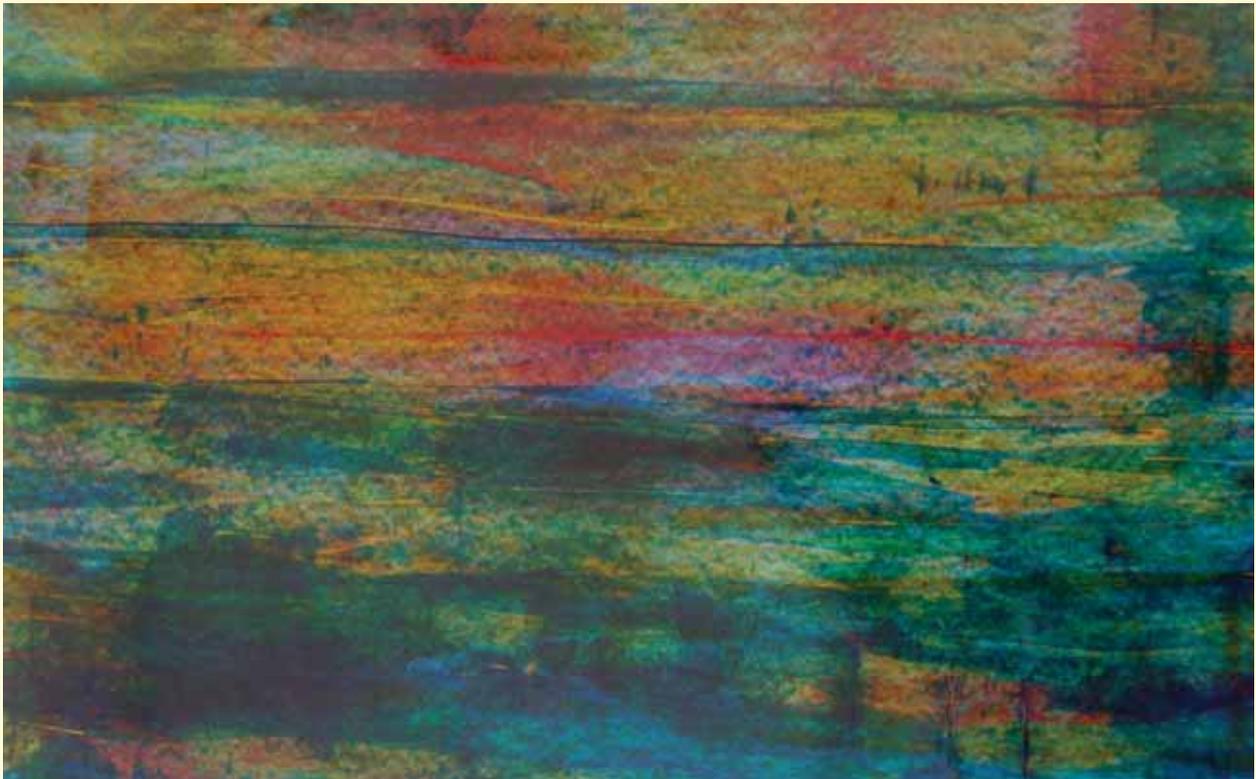


A Learning Journey to Direct Payments as Part of Self-Directed Support

Is it for me?



Painted by Lynda Waterson, The Well Artists, Norfolk

**Information and resources for trainers and people
in a position to make Direct Payments more accessible
for people who have mental health difficulties**

What are Direct Payments and why do we want to improve people's access to them?

Direct Payments are an important element of the mental health personalisation agenda and are one of the ways in which people can move towards more self-directed care.

Personalisation is not just another management approach but a radical change in thinking and culture, shifting power towards people who use mental health services. It aims to give people greater control in the choice of treatments and support they receive, enabling them to lead the lives they want.

Direct Payments will remain an important option within the developing system of individual and personal budgets. They enable people who are eligible to receive them to directly purchase some or all of their social support and care – instead of having their needs met through traditional social care services. Direct Payments aren't for everyone, but they can play a vital part in someone's recovery journey and can transform people's lives – giving people choice, control and power over the care and support they receive and improving their quality of life and social inclusion.

*"Is it for me?"
is an important and effective
resource, both for now, and
in preparing for the future."*

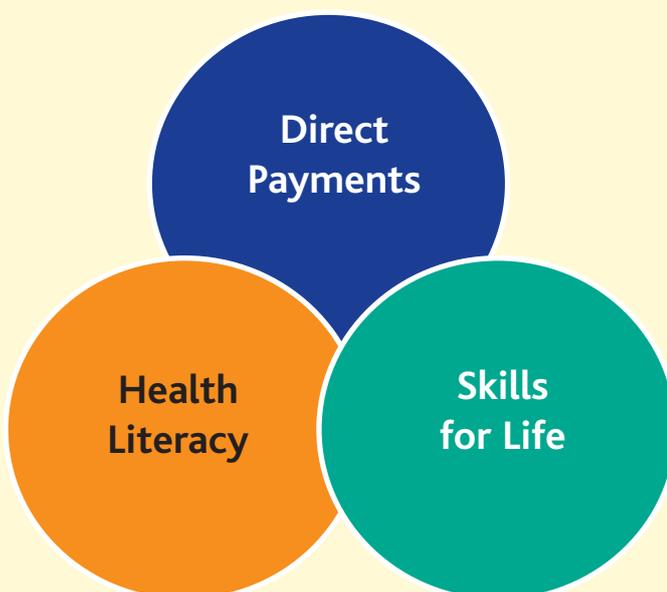
Robin Murray-Neill, National Lead for
Personalisation and Mental Health

Direct Payments can be used to meet people's needs, either through a 'one-off' payment or regular payments. They can be used in lots of different, creative personalised ways, including enabling people to access learning and skills and employment opportunities.

However, many people who have mental health difficulties experience multiple social inequalities, including inequalities of access to Direct Payments. Evidence shows that, for a variety of reasons, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups and people who have mental health difficulties have particularly poor access to Direct Payments, compared with other eligible groups.

Why have we linked access to Direct Payments with health literacy and language, literacy and numeracy skills?

The 'Is it for me?' project has been developed to improve access to Direct Payments for all adults who have mental health difficulties and are eligible to receive them, including carers. The 'Is it for me?' project has been developed to improve access to Direct Payments for all adults who have mental health difficulties and are eligible to receive them, including carers. We have deliberately embedded opportunities for people to develop and practise skills in speaking, reading, writing and maths in the resources to make them accessible to people who may not be very confident in using these skills.



A Learning Journey to Direct Payments as Part of Self-Directed Support

Many people who have mental health difficulties also experience educational and health inequalities. For example, learning at school and college may have been interrupted by ill-health meaning that they were unable to develop literacy, language and numeracy skills. For people who developed these skills when young, subsequent social exclusion from participation in employment and social activities (which help all of us to practise, maintain and grow our skills) can mean that as adults people lose confidence in their skills.

People and communities with low literacy and numeracy skills often experience the most social inequalities and face the most difficult challenges in managing their own health and accessing health services for themselves and their families. They also face major challenges in accessing employment opportunities, and in being able to manage the multiple aspects of daily life.¹

'Is it for me?'

'Is it for me?' is a 'no strings' opportunity for eligible mental health service users and carers to explore whether Direct Payments is an option they want to take up and to identify and address any skills needs required to do so. There are two elements:

1. A two-hour introductory workshop offering a chance for people to find out about Direct Payments, explore ideas for how they can be used and whether they would like to know more or develop their skills to be able to apply for and manage a Direct Payment.
2. A short taught course (lasting about ten hours). We have called this 'I'll give it a go'. It aims to help people to explore their options further and to develop the confidence to apply for Direct Payments and the skills needed to manage them. For many people this could also be an introduction and first step back into learning.

Twelve pilot projects involving different groups of people who have mental health difficulties and a range of local partnerships worked with us to develop a transferrable model of working and resources in the first year (2007/08) of this two-year development project.

The focus of the second year of the project (2008/09) is to test out using the internet to deliver the course online and to disseminate the findings and resources nationally to people who are in a position to use them to make Direct Payments more accessible to people who have mental health difficulties.

"One learner said she was going to use Direct Payments to retrain with more IT courses and buy a laptop. She would also use it to fund gym membership and attendance."

Feedback from one of our pilot projects

The resources

A workshop and short course to give people who have mental health difficulties better opportunities to decide if Direct Payments are right for them.

'Is it for me?' workshop

This two-hour workshop uses video and discussion to:

- give people the information they need to assess whether Direct Payments are an option they want to take up
- identify and work out how to address any skills needs.

It can be delivered face to face or online for a group (or individual).

All of the resources you need to be able to run an 'Is it for me?' workshop are included in the CD that comes with this pack. They can be personalised to meet the needs of your participants.

'I'll give it a go' trainer pack

'I'll give it a go' is a short course focused on people who have mental health difficulties' experiences of using Direct Payments.

Course outline

Unit	Content
1 Direct Payments and You	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ How Direct Payments can be used➢ Self-assessment of skills➢ Keeping a personal diary
2 Investigating options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ More examples of how Direct Payments are used➢ Local support and services mapping➢ Barriers to accessing local support and services and solutions
3 Making Choices, Making Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Identifying own support needs➢ Personal action planning
4 Taking Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Planning➢ Finance
5 Looking Ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Making your choices known➢ Applying for DPs➢ Other options

What people say about 'Is it for me?'

"Unusually useful, positive, productive session..."

"...I gained a sense that the boundaries may be more flexible than I thought..."

I'll Give It A Go: trainer pack

Course resources

This trainer pack includes:

Guidance on delivering the course
Guidance on supporting learners with literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) needs
Guidance on working with mental health service users
Session plans including training resources (printable cards, handouts etc).

Electronic resources

A DVD profiling service users' experiences of Direct Payments

A CD-ROM with:

- Downloadable versions of the printed resources
- An introduction to Direct Payments in mental health services: Information for people eligible to use mental health services and carers - PDF
- Independence, choice and risk - PDF

The "I'll give it a go" learner pack includes two booklets.

The "I'll give it a go" learner **Course Book** contains information and handouts used during sessions. You may wish to produce this as a bound "Course Book" or provide loose-leaf ring-binders, and give out the relevant pages for each Unit.

The "I'll give it a go" learner **Log Book** forms a personal file of information that can be used to support a Direct Payments application. The reflective diary is an integral part of the course. It is the key tool for learners to reflect on their own options in order to make choices.

The course can be delivered face to face or online for a group. Facilitators would ideally include a literacy, language and numeracy tutor working in partnership with a mental health practitioner, mental health service user-trainer or local Direct Payments team member. Course delivery costs could be sustained through learning providers' funding from the LSC for functional literacy and numeracy skills or by learners using their individual Skills Accounts.

The materials can also be used to support one-to-one or self-directed learning and as a tool by care co-ordinators and Direct Payments teams to support someone in preparing for Direct Payments. More samples from the pack are included in the CD.

Flexibility and choice

The course has been designed to be flexible and provide choice, so you can set the right pace for your group, and select activities to match your learners' preferences.

The session plans contain all the information you need to deliver each session to groups of learners. Timings for each two hour session Unit are suggested, but you may wish to use more or less time, as appropriate for your group. Some activities are marked in the training notes as optional – these can be used as extension activities, or for follow-up work.

Some Units include activities where learners need to prioritise or sequence cards, statements or stages. Resources for these are included with the session plans, and worksheet versions are included in the IGIAG Log Books for people who prefer to work on paper, or to keep their own written record.

While there is an emphasis on group activity and discussion throughout the course, some learners may wish to use the course and support books to complete work independently – to catch up in missed sessions, or for other reasons. Full instructions for each task are included in the Course Books to facilitate independent work.

To access the full resources simply register on the NIACE 'Moodle' (an online learning environment) at www.niace.org.uk/moodle and request the enrolment key for the 'course' entitled 'Is it for me? project'. Before you download the resources we will ask you to give us your contact details (name, job title, email address and organisation) and, for evaluation purposes, to tell us how you plan to use the resources.

Training for people who would like to deliver 'I'll give it a go'

We have also developed an online 'train the trainers' course for 'I'll give it a go' in order to support the widest possible range of organisations to deliver the course. If you are interested in participating, email directpayments@niace.org.uk or register your interest via the 'Is it for me?' Project at: www.niace.org.uk/moodle.

Alternative formats for reflective diary. If you work with learners who are very reluctant to write, but respond willingly in discussion, you may wish to use an alternative option for the reflective diary.

Use a **video or digital voice recorder** to capture a learner's responses to the diary prompts. You can embed audio files in the Microsoft Powerpoint diary templates (provided on the CD-Rom) by either of the following methods:

Method 1

1. Download each recording to a folder on your pc, and give it a relevant filename (name, diary 1, 2, etc).
2. Open the Microsoft PP presentation diary template.
3. Insert each audio file in the relevant slide.
 - Select Insert.
 - Select Movies and Sounds
 - Select Sound from File
 - Browse to the relevant folder and select the file.
 - Select OK.
4. An audio clip icon will appear in the slide. When you play the presentation, click on the icon to hear the clip.

Method 2. Learners can record their responses directly into the Microsoft PP presentation diary template.

1. Open the Microsoft PP presentation diary template.
2. Select Insert.
3. Select Record Sound.
4. Press the record button.
5. Select OK.



An audio clip icon will appear in the slide. When you play the presentation, click on the icon to hear the clip.

"...the Direct Payments Scheme has given me a life that I could not have envisaged five years ago. It CAN work very effectively with mental health service users, and the assumption that people could not cope because of their diagnostic label needs challenging."

Pauline Heslop, from Direct Payments for people with mental health support needs.

The Advocate. May 2001: 8-9

What works?

We found that key elements for success are:

- If you work with people who are eligible to receive Direct Payments – ask them if they know what Direct Payments are and if they would like to know more
- Acknowledge social and educational differences and inequalities among people who have mental health difficulties
- Be clear on local policies about who is eligible to receive Direct Payments
- Be risk positive and aspirational for people who have mental health difficulties and who want to make choices and take more control of their own care and support
- Develop a local partnership between mental health services, the Direct Payments team and learning providers to gather information, recruit participants and deliver workshops and courses – this is key to:
 - > Being able to sustain interest and demand
 - > Getting access to specialist literacy, language (including English for Speakers of Other Languages) and numeracy teachers from a local learning provider as part of your local team, who will be able to help with training and assessments and access to possible LSC funding for the 'I'll give it a go' course
 - > Being able to offer access to personalised information, advice and guidance as part of the workshops and courses to maximise opportunities for further learning.

You can read the full report of our findings from the pilot projects on the 'Is it for me?' project Moodle or request a copy by email from directpayments@niace.org.uk.

Our vision – making workshops and courses available to everyone

Our vision is that there will be 'Is it for me?' workshops springing up all over England. People who decide that they want to know more and would like to develop skills to manage Direct Payments will be offered encouragement and support to do so, including, for those who would like it, access to the 'I'll give it a go' course.

What people say about 'Is it for me?'

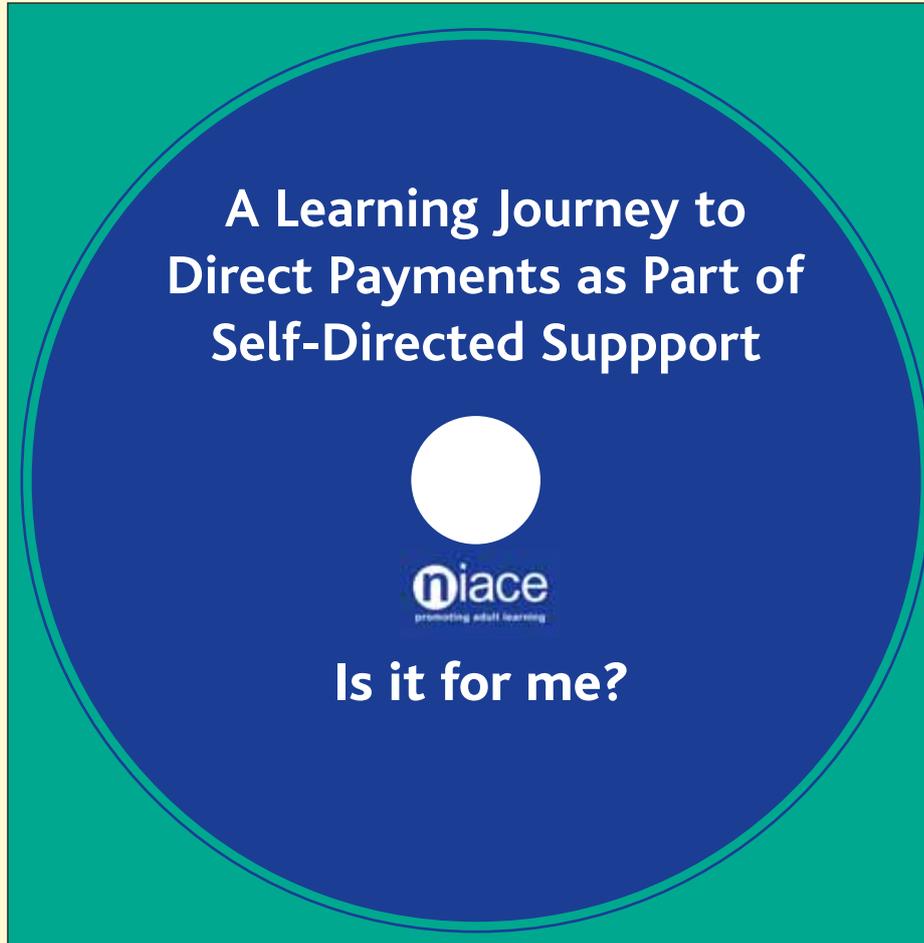
"I feel I learnt a lot of information that I can pass on to other people"

"It was a very good workshop; everybody was able to give their own input"

"I realise that I may be able to use Direct Payments to buy in the services of a life coach and/or a career advisor"

What can you do?

1. Run 'Is it for me?' workshops and the 'I'll give it a go' course in your area
2. Register your interest in using the resources on the NIACE Moodle at www.niace.org.uk/moodle and we will give you access to the full workshop and course materials
3. Help us to spread the work further by telling people about the resources and how to access them via NIACE Moodle
4. Tell people about the opportunity to join an online workshop or course. Give them our contact details and offer to support them while they do the course
5. Give us space at your event, conference or in your regular newsletter or e-bulletin
6. Share your experiences, other people's stories of how they are using Direct Payments and your views with your colleagues and on our Moodle
7. Stay up to date and network with other people who are working in this area via our regional mental health networks and our Direct Payments virtual network
8. Participate in our online 'Train the Trainers' course. We would particularly urge learning providers, advocacy workers, mental health service user trainers and trainers from national and local mental health charities to take up this offer.



The NIACE/NIMHE (part of CSIP)/LSC Partnership Programme

Funded by the Department of Health Section 64 Grant Programme and the LSC in three regions (London, South West and East of England) 'Is it for me?' complements the wider NIACE/NIMHE (part of CSIP)/LSC² Partnership Programme. The partnership team at NIACE works at national and regional levels to promote access to, and success in, learning and skills, so that people who have mental health difficulties can lead active and fulfilling lives as members of their communities and in employment, in ways that sustain positive mental well-being. This work includes:

- Assisting the LSC in developing and implementing its 'National Mental Health Strategy Refresh' (September 2008) to reflect the changing policy context and to strengthen their commitment to this group of learners.
- Inputting into cross-government policies.
- Working with Regional Employment Teams in their work to support delivery of the Public Service Agreement 16 target to increase employment rates for people who have severe mental health problems.
- Leading on regional work that promotes access to and success in learning and skills for more and different people who have mental health difficulties, including facilitating regional networks of providers, learners and policy makers in this area of work.

Want to find out more?

Email: directpayments@niace.org.uk

Or contact susan.rees@niace.org.uk Tel. 0116 204 4256

NIACE, 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE

Website: <http://www.niace.org.uk/mentalhealth>

Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks go to all of the participants in the pilot projects, Tat Ruck and David Wright, the NIACE consultants who developed the 'I'll give it a go' course materials and Robin Murray-Neill the national lead on Personalisation and Mental Health.

Notes

1 http://www.continyou.org.uk/what_we_do/healthy_active_learning_communities/skilled_health

2 NIACE – National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education

NIMHE – National Institute of Mental Health in England, which is part of the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP)

LSC – Learning and Skills Council