**NHS Funded Carers’ Breaks Service: NCC Staff Guidance, October 2017**

This document provides staff at Nottinghamshire County Council with guidance on Personal health budgets for the NHS funded carers’ breaks service. Personal Health Budgets for NHS funded carers’ breaks are available via a direct payment or managed by Rushcliffe Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on behalf of the 5 CCGs in South and Mid-Nottinghamshire.

**1. Background**

Management of the NHS Funded Carers Breaks service transferred from Arden and GEM CSU to Rushcliffe CCG on 1 July 2015.

Within the first 12 months of the transfer, Rushcliffe CCG undertook a review of the service to more clearly define its remit.

This guidance outlines the current provision which now forms part of the integrated personal commissioning delivery programme.

**2. The Service**

The CCGs provide a joint source of funding to support carers in taking a short break from their caring role if this has been identified as an outcome in their care and support plan.

A carer’s personal health budget can be taken in three ways:

* A managed budget
* A direct payment
* A mixture of both

The total cost of the care must be within the budget allocation.

The process for a managed service is for Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) to send a referral via email to Rushcliffe CCG on ruccg.carersbreaksservice@nhs.net. The referral is be checked against eligibility criteria and, if met, approval is secured from the relevant Lead Nurse of the responsible CCG. Providers i.e. care homes and home care agencies are then advised of invoicing arrangements and these are processed by Rushcliffe CCG.

The carer may also access funding via NCC for a direct payment to commission care from providers of the carer’s choice where there is no contract in place. This option offers the carer more choice, control and flexibility over how to use the personal health budget to take a break. The carer can find solutions that may not have been available in the past e.g. to organise a personal assistant to provide care at home or pay for a carer to join them on holiday to provide a break whilst away from home(this funding source is managed by NCC and also available to carers in Bassetlaw).

A carer can choose to take a mixture of both a managed payment and a direct payment so long as the cost of care is within the budget allocation.

**3. Personal Health Budget Allocations for Carers Breaks**

The amount of funding available for a carer as a personal health budget (PHB) is dependent on the level of need as determined by the NCC carer’s assessment.

Carers assessed as having:

* ‘High impact’ needs can access a PHB of up to £650.
* ‘Extremely high impact’ needs can access a PHB of up to £1300.

The rationale for these indicative budget allocations are that they relate to the charge for 1 and 2 weeks respite in a NCC Care and Support centre.

The budgets are for use within a 12-month period from the date of the assessment/review. It is anticipated that most carers will not require all of the indicative budget. The amount required will depend on the carers needs for a break as set out in their support plan.

**4. Eligibility Criteria**

**To be eligible for a ‘managed service’ AND/OR a Direct Payment:**

* The carer and cared for must BOTH be registered with any of the following CCG’s - Rushcliffe, Nottingham North & East, Nottingham West, Newark and Sherwood and Mansfield and Ashfield
* The carer and cared for must BOTH be resident in Nottinghamshire County (except City and Bassetlaw\*)
* The carer and cared for must be aged 18 or over
* The carer must have had a NCC Carer’s Assessment undertaken within the last 12 months of the date of the break
* The carers needs must be defined by the Carer’s Assessment as having either a high impact (showing an indicative carer’s personal budget as £150) or an extremely high impact (showing an indicative carer’s personal budget as £200).

**\*Bassetlaw is via Direct Payment ONLY and:**

* The carer and/or the cared for must be registered with Bassetlaw CCG. If either the carer or cared for are not registered with Bassetlaw CCG, they must be registered with one of the other Notts CCG’s as listed above (excluding Nottingham City)
* The carer and cared for must both be resident in Nottinghamshire County (except City)

**5. Defining an NHS Funded Carer’s Break**

These definitions are applicable to both PHBs managed by Rushcliffe CCG and also via direct payments.

A carer’s break is:

* A pre-planned break from caring;
* Of primary benefit to the carer e.g. to support them in taking a break from their caring responsibilities such as to take a holiday;
* Likely to be a one-off stay for the cared for in a care home, care agency or personal assistant support in the cared for’s own home or day care;
* ‘Short’ e.g. a week or two.

A carer’s break isn’t:

* For support in an emergency situation or for crisis prevention (consider use of the Carers Crisis Prevention Service);
* For intermittent/fragmented support over a period of weeks/months providing regular ongoing care for the cared for;
* Part of a longer term placement in a care home e.g. for short-term care to trial a placement before a permanent move;
* About accessing the entire potential allocation i.e. the funding allocation is a limit not a ‘target’.

 **6. Referral Information**

If the carer has chosen a care provider which has a contract (formerly described as an ‘AQP’), Rushcliffe CCG will manage the carer’s PHB and pay for the care direct. Referrals should be directed to **ruccg.carersbreaksservice@nhs.net** and must fulfil the following requirements:

* The request should be received >5 full working days before the start of the break;
* All referral information should be correctly completed using the form on Mosaic and a case note added;
* It should be sent securely (i.e. via an email address ending in  .x.gsi.gov.uk; .gsi.gov.uk; .gse.gov.uk; .gsx.gov.uk; etc. or via Cryptshare);
* No retrospective requests will be accepted;

Referrers are required to inform the service if the break doesn’t take place or if there are changes to the break as originally requested.

**7. Services for the Cared For**

**7.1 Planned Short Breaks**

If the ‘cared for’ is eligible for NCC services, planned short breaks can also be commissioned in their name through the NCC. The NCC’s Short Breaks Policy provides a matrix to illustrate an indicative personal budget.

The matrix combines the needs of the carer with those of the cared for to indicate a maximum allocation.

If planned short breaks are already being accessed through NCC, it is proposed that an NHS funded carers break would only be supported if the indicative budget would not be exceeded when taking into account the funding available through the NHS.

NCC

**7.2 Continuing Care**

If the cared for is eligible for either continuing NHS healthcare or a jointly funded package, then any breaks required for the carer would be commissioned as part of the continuing care package and funded according to the assessed health and social care needs of the cared for.

 **8. Cost of Care**

**8.1 Care Home Placements**

NCC and Nottingham City Council have agreed standard rates for placements with most of the homes in Nottinghamshire. Every effort should be made to adhere to the Local Authorities’ standard rates for NHS funded carers’ breaks.

If a home has been identified out of area, similarly, every effort should be made to adhere to that area’s Local Authority standard rates.

**8.2 Home Care**

The CCGs are associate commissioners to NCC’s home care contract. Services commissioned from contracted home care providers have associated rates which are also applicable to carers’ breaks.

The CCGs may also negotiate rates with non-contracted home care providers i.e. through the continuing care service and these too are applicable to carers’ breaks.

**9. Direct Payments**

A carer can choose a Direct Payment via NCC to commission care from providers of their choice. This gives the carer more choice, control and flexibility over how they can use their personal budget to take a break.

For the carer to access a Direct Payment, the same eligibility criteria applies as per the managed service.

The same principles also apply for carers as for any other service user who wish to receive their personal budget as a Direct Payment. The Direct Payment is paid directly to the carer (not the ‘cared for’).

A carer can also have the option of a Managed Budget and Direct Payment combined, as per any other service user. If a carer chooses to do this, the budget can be monitored in Mosaic, via ‘Provisions’ within ‘Personal Budgets’ section on the front screen of the carer’s record.

Please see the attached link here for Direct Payments staff guidance for further information: [Direct Payments for Adults - Staff Guidance](http://intranet.nottscc.gov.uk/policiesperformance/policy/policy-library/?entryid100=207708&q=11026943%7eDirect+Payment%7e11026968%7eGuidance%7e11026959%7eOlder+People%7e)

For carers that are registered with a Bassetlaw GP, NHS Short Breaks are only available to carers via a Direct Payment (see point 4. Eligibility Criteria above for more details).