



Tara & Jason's Story

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Tara & Jason's Story

Interviewer: Robby

Robby: So, as it's all about Direct Payments, I'll start by asking you what drew you to Direct Payments and how you heard about Direct Payments?

Tara: It all started at Short Breaks, they were the ones who suggested it. They recommended that if we employed someone, that it'd be useful. That appealed to us because it meant that somebody else took control of it.

Robby: How did you get involved with Short Breaks to begin with?

Tara: It was the Children's Centre, they suggested it as a referral. They said that funding could be awarded for our son in order to help him access things in the community and give us a break. Yeah, that's how it came about.

Jason: It was a nice way for us to get time with our other son as well. We could take him to places Carl might not be able to access so easily with all of us, so it gives him a better opportunity.

Robby: How did you find going through the Direct Payment process?

Tara: It wasn't too bad. It was more setting up the meetings that was hard because obviously with work and other commitments trying to organise the meetings is quite difficult.

Jason: More on our side really because of our commitments.

Tara: Other than that, once you've done it, it's actually quite straightforward. They explained it quite well.

Jason: Yeah, they did and they gave us all the information booklets. They gave us a lot of information. Obviously, they said if we had any questions, we could ring them so that was that was good.

Tara: We were given a number and an email address we could contact them on.

Robby: And was this Short Breaks you did this through, or was it Social Services?

Tara: It was also through Short Breaks. They set it all up and put us in contact with Purple and then we just took it from there.

Robby: Do you like feel you had enough help and support through the process?

Tara: Yeah, I'd say so because we already knew what we wanted, having had the discussion with Short Breaks. We knew what we wanted to achieve with our care plan and that was set out accordingly. We knew what we were doing with the care plan and then obviously they passed us over to the right because we wanted something fairly straightforward. Then they suggested Direct Payments would help make it an easier process for us, it would make it less of a hassle.

Once Purple made contact with us, it was pretty straightforward. Purple came out and they were very good with telling us the information. They went through it and they did know a lot. They kept on going back and saying, "Was there anything you're not sure of?" So, that was quite good. They went through all the options that we had and so I found them to be quite informative. We got the information we needed and then going forward it's been quite a simple process. Yeah, it's been pretty straightforward.

Jason: It's been nice because it's integrated into our family so easily because it was done in the right way.

Robby: That's really good to hear. Okay, so if you had any concerns or any problems came up now, do you feel comfortable going back to either Purple or Short Breaks?

Jason: Yeah.

Tara: Definitely. It's been simple enough for me, and there's a few queries I had about a couple of things and I got quite a quick response via email from Purple. I think we'd be quite happy to go back if we had any issues.

Robby: Are there any problems you've been having with Direct Payments and have you resolved them?

Tara: No, we haven't had any problems. We've been quite lucky.

Jason: No, we only had the queries about the payment.

Tara: Yeah. I needed to know whether I needed a reference number, which I didn't so it didn't matter.

Jason: Other than that, it's been really good. Purple said it was nice because when they came around we knew exactly where we were as a family, what we wanted and how we wanted it done. Then they gave us all the information to try and made that fit. I think because of that they said that it was good that we

were people who obviously knew exactly what we wanted. That meant they could then help us to do what we wanted. So, yeah it's worked out really well for us.

Robby: What do you do with the Direct Payments and how easy do you find it to do the things you want to do on Direct Payments?

Tara: So, Carl has a Personal Assistant. When we need her to she takes him out and then we fill in a timesheet. It's really helpful because I just photograph the timesheet and just email it across and they make the payments.

Robby: How easy did you find it to find this Personal Assistant?

Tara: Actually, really easy because she's actually an old teaching assistant that worked with him at school. So actually, it's someone we already knew and it's something that she does already.

Jason: It was his one-to-one TA. It was such a good transition. She was really keen to carry on a relationship with him and we were keen for it. So, this has really helped.

Tara: Yeah, we were very lucky. I mean, I've heard other people have really struggled to find someone but because we already knew somebody it made it a lot easier. I think it's quite a daunting idea to try advertise a post and go through that process. That was quite daunting but we never had to do that so because obviously our situation was quite different and quite straight forward by comparison.

Robby: Fantastic. So, does Carl get to do the things he wants to do, like go out and about in the community?

Tara: Yeah, he does get to do a lot of things out and about in the community. It's helped him access a lot of things that he might not be able to otherwise.

Jason: We've done everything with our children and they still do the same things but they don't get to spend as much time focussing on the activity as they'd like to. Carl struggles with his concentration. Then Sam, our other son, obviously was suffering slightly because he wasn't able to do the things that he wanted to do as much as he'd like to. So, we'd start an activity and then we'd have to go on to something else because Carl wasn't actually getting the benefit that he wanted to. So, this has really helped because Carl can go off now and again to do something just for himself and we can have some time with Sam to make sure that we're doing everything right by Sam as well. So, for us it's been the perfect thing and it really has helped.

Robby: And, I suppose it's teaching him independent skills as well because he's doing things away from you?

Jason: Yeah, that's right.

Tara: That was the other thing we wanted. It gives him a head start.

Jason: It will help him integrate into society and help him understand when he's not with us how the world works. So yeah, it's really good.

Robby: That's fantastic, I'm so glad to hear so many benefits for you. Are there any other benefits you can think of?

Tara: I don't think so. It is just that I think it gives us all a better quality of life. We get a break. He can be quite hard work. He has a lot of needs and so it does give us the break we need. That really helps us and the fact that the process is simple and just making the payments is so simple it doesn't add a lot of work to my day. It's a case just sending an email out and the payment gets made and that makes my life a lot easier.

Jason: I also think because some people struggle to understand Carl's needs and the care he needs. We found it difficult to leave him with them to do things because he wasn't getting that interaction with other people he needed. Now he's going off without us, so this has helped because he will actually learn how to cope without us doing other things. So, it's really good.

Robby: That sounds really positive. Okay, what advice would you have for other people wanting to get into Direct Payments or using Direct Payments?

Jason: I think it's good to have a real in-depth conversation before you go into it between you and your partner. If you're on your own just think about what you want and understand what it is. Just sit down for yourself and understand what your family needs, where you are with life and then when you have a chat with, obviously, Purple or whoever it may be, then you have a direction to go in.

Tara: Yeah definitely. I'd say have a list of questions, I found that there were odd things I didn't know about so I wrote down some questions. When we did have the meeting I didn't go, "What about this and what about that?" I had it ahead of schedule so that helped.

Jason: I think some people find it a bit daunting so they don't really ask the questions. It's so important that they get out what they want. Purple and everybody go through all the things they've heard from other people but every family is different, so you've always got something different to bring to the discussion. So, it's important that you get that information out.

Robby: Thanks for that. Is there anything else that you'd like to share with me today?

Tara: We're happy with the service that's provided and that's all that matters. There's always an open line of communication and that's good so as far as we're concerned.