



Direct Payments

Frequently Asked Questions

A direct payment is a way of delivering a social care personal budget. It's used to meet an assessed social care need, either for children and young people aged 0-18 under the Children Act 1989 or young people aged 18 and over via the Care Act 2014.

The aim of providing a direct payment is to increase an individual's independence and choice by giving them control over the way the services they are assessed as needing are delivered. By having a say in the way this budget is used, a parent carer or young person can control elements of their support promoting flexibility, choice and quality of life.

Why would I want a direct payment?

Arranging your own care and support gives you more choice and control, and can help you feel more independent. For example, you may already know someone who could provide the support you need, want to use a particular home care agency or prefer to make individual arrangements for respite. Direct payments can give you more flexibility.

Can anyone have a direct payment?

Almost everyone who is eligible for Social care support would be able to have a direct payment. Some people who would not be able to manage the practicalities of a direct payment can have the payment made to someone else who will manage it for them.

What can I use a direct payment for?

You can use your direct payment to pay for services or equipment which will meet the goals identified in your support plan. For example, you might employ someone (A Personal Assistant) to provide the support you need to live independently, or you might buy a care service from an agency. Some people use a direct payment for a one-off purchase, such as a piece of equipment or a respite break. So long as the identified objectives are met, you can be as creative as you wish in putting together the support arrangements.

Is there anything I cannot use a direct payment for?

You must only use your direct payment to meet the aspirations of your support plan, so you couldn't use it, for example, to pay household bills. You also can't use any of your direct payments to cover costs that you've been told you are expected to meet from your own resources (following a financial assessment).

Does having a direct payment mean I become an employer?

If you choose to have a personal assistant, you will become that person's employer, but there is plenty of support available to help you. There are other ways to use a direct payment that do not require you to employ someone.

Are there any restrictions on who I can employ?

You cannot employ someone who lives in the same household as you (except in certain exceptional circumstances). Other than that, you can employ anyone you choose. Anyone you employ will need to have a DBS Check

How much money would I get?

The amount you get is linked to the cost of providing a council service. There are specific rates depending on what the money is for and these will be explained to you before you start receiving your direct payment.

In what way is a direct payment more flexible than Social care services?

Direct payments can make simple differences that can have a big impact on how you live your life. For example, you can decide for yourself when to get up in the morning and what time to go to bed at night; something that may be controlled for you when you get care from Social Care Services. Perhaps you have some good days or weeks when you need less care, and others where you need more support to be able to manage. Direct payments are flexible enough to cope with this, and you can save 'care hours' to use when you need them most.

Will having a direct payment affect the benefits I receive?

No. A direct payment isn't considered as income and it is not intended as a replacement for benefits such as PIP or DLA. So it will not affect any of your existing benefits.

Can I have a direct payment for some of my care needs and Social Care Services for others?

Yes, it is possible to have some of your care needs provided by Social Care Services and arrange others yourself using a direct payment.

I am a parent carer, can I get a direct payment on behalf of my disabled child?

A parent carer can receive a direct payment to provide support for a child aged under 18. Some parents receive a direct payment under what is referred to as 'Child in Need' legislation. Once your child becomes an adult any direct payment would be made to them, but you would be able to help them manage it.

What if direct payments don't work out for me?

That wouldn't be a problem. If you find that direct payments turn out not to be right for you after all, you can switch to having services provided by Social Care Services instead.

Do Direct Payments cover mileage/ travel costs?

No, you would be expected to fund this via your own finances.



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