
What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are where money is paid to you (or someone acting on your behalf) from your local Council so you can arrange your own support to meet your eligible care and support needs.

If you have a Direct Payment, you are provided with a personal budget which is the amount of money that has been assessed as being how much you need to be able to meet your eligible needs.

Having a Direct Payment is a different option to having a Council Arranged Service, which is when your care and/or support is arranged and paid for by the Council. The Council may provide some services themselves, or they may buy services from care providers to meet your needs.

How can Direct Payments be used?

Direct Payments can give you more choice and control over the support you receive, because you can spend the budget on support that works best for you.

You could employ your own Personal Assistants (PAs) to meet your needs and enable your independence, or you might choose to buy support from a care and support provider or agency.

You could spend some of your budget on activities or equipment that meet your needs.

As long as it meets your assessed, eligible needs, you can choose to spend the budget in the way that suits you best.

What are the benefits of having Direct Payments?

- You are in control over your care and support.
- You are free to make choices about how your support is arranged to meet your eligible needs.
- Your support can be more flexible e.g. you can choose to change when you have your support and how you are supported.
- You can choose who provides support for you e.g. you may wish to employ someone of the same gender, there may be specific skills you need from your support, you may want to be supported by someone with similar hobbies and interests.
- If you are unhappy with your support or want to try something different, you are able to make changes to your support.

- You can make changes to your support to manage temporary emergencies or changes.

Who can have a Direct Payment?

To get a Direct Payment you must be aged 16 or over and have had a social care assessment that says you are in need and are eligible for support (under the Care Act).

Parents or carers with parental responsibility of a disabled child or young person, who is eligible for support from children's social care, may also be able to have a Direct Payment.

You must want to have a Direct Payment and be able to make decisions about the care and support you want your Direct Payment to provide.

Some people may not understand or be able to manage Direct Payments themselves. A decision may be made in their best interest to identify someone who can be their **Suitable Person**. A Suitable Person is usually a family member or friend who receives the Direct Payment on behalf of another person, and they take on the responsibilities of the Direct Payment, including making decisions.

You also need to understand the responsibilities in taking and managing Direct Payments. You can have help or support to manage your Direct Payment.

What support is available?

People may need information and support to understand what is involved in taking a Direct Payment, what their responsibilities are and how they set up and manage their Direct Payment.

Here are some examples of the different support available:

- **Support from a family member or relative** to help you organise your Direct Payment or they might help you to manage your Direct Payment on your behalf.
- Information, advice and guidance from the **Direct Payment Support Service** to support you to manage and organise your Direct Payment yourself, answer any questions you might have and support you if you have any problems with your Direct Payment.
- A **managed account service**, provided by a Money Management Company, can help you manage your Direct Payment and support

you with paying bills and invoices for your care and support. They will also help you to collect and record evidence of your spending ready for the financial monitoring of your Direct Payment each year.

You will be in control of your Direct Payment, and you will make decisions about how your budget is spent to meet your eligible needs.

What will I have to do?

You will need to open a bank account which is only used for your Direct Payment and not any household bills.

Each year you will need to show how you have spent your Direct Payment to meet your eligible needs.

You will need to keep basic records of your spending and send these to the Council when requested. This will include a breakdown of how you have spent the money and may include staff timesheets, receipts or invoices for services or equipment.

You will need to keep records such as bank statements, invoices, receipts and timesheets for 3 years.

Contributing towards the cost of your support

Following a financial assessment, you may be required to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the support you receive.

If you need to pay a financial contribution, you will pay this into your dedicated Direct Payment bank account. The Council will then pay the remainder of your Direct Payment into your account. You will need to pay the correct amount into your Direct Payment bank account to make sure there is enough money to pay for your support.

If you have a managed account, you will need to make arrangements to pay your financial contribution to your Money Management Company.

How can I request a Direct Payment?

If you are aged 18 or over

If you have already had a social care assessment, and have services provided by the Council, you can contact Adult Care and Wellbeing (sometimes called Adult Social Care) on 0114 273 4908 and ask for a

review of your support so that they can consider Direct Payments as an option. A social care worker will work with you to think about your options and what you will need to do. If Direct Payments are a good option for you, they will work with you to identify the personal budget available for you to buy your own care and support.

If you don't receive support already, you can ask for a care and support assessment to see if you need help with your long term care needs. If the assessment finds you have eligible needs we will work with you to decide how these needs can be met and what outcomes you want to achieve. You can consider Direct Payments as part of these discussions.

If you are aged 16 – 18 years or a parent or carer with parental responsibility of a disabled child or young person

If your child already receives support from children's social care, you should discuss your request for Direct Payments with either your social worker, MAST worker or contact the SNIPS team on 0114 273 5368.

If you are not currently accessing support from children's social care, you need to ask the Council to carry out an assessment of need. To do this you need to ring the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub on 0114 273 4855. Following the assessment, if it has been decided by the Early Help Panel that your child is eligible for support from children's social care, you may have the right to receive some or all of this support through a Direct Payment.

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