

A Brief Guide to Direct Payments



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What are Direct Payments?

Direct payments are a way for you to take control of your care. With a direct payment you make your own care and support arrangements.

A direct payment is your personal budget paid to you instead of the council arranging services. This means you do not have to use services arranged by the council and can choose what is right for you.

You must be eligible for adult care to request a direct payment. The amount of money you get will be enough to achieve your outcomes identified following an assessment. You spend this money on care and support which helps you achieve these outcomes.



What are the benefits of Direct Payments?

Direct payments give you control and flexibility. You choose what services you use when you use them and who you purchase them from.

You are the expert and know the best way to meet your needs.

Having a direct payment means you can:

- be more independent
- have more control over your life
- make your own choices
- Have more flexibility

Having a Direct Payment will not affect your entitlement to welfare benefits, though may affect benefits claimed by any personal assistant you employ.

Can you get Direct Payments?

If the council has agreed that you are eligible for social care support, then you should be able to have a Direct Payment. You can choose to have all your personal budget as a direct payment, some of it or none. You can also change your mind at any time.

We do need to make sure you are able to manage the direct payment. If you are not able to manage Direct Payments yourself, you may ask a trusted friend or relative to manage them for you. A relative or friend can request a direct payment for you if you are not able to.

What support will I have?

The council's Direct Payments team is here to help make things as easy as possible. They will provide you with information and signpost you to whatever help you need. There are many organisations that can help you to manage your Direct Payments.

Some support which is available includes:

- managed accounts to support with the finances
- support to recruit personal assistants
- support with payroll
- support with becoming an employer

We will help you get whatever support you need.



What can I use a direct payment for?

You can use a direct payment to buy services or employ carers, as long as what you buy meets the outcomes that have been agreed in your care and support plan.

This might include:

- paying an agency to send a carer to your home to help you with your care and support
- employing a carer (called a personal assistant) to help you
- purchasing equipment that reduces your need for care and support
- pooling your direct payment with others to share costs
- attending a day centre or club
- arranging respite

Is there anything that I cannot use a direct payment for?

Yes, there are some things that are not allowed, for example:

- anything that is not detailed in your support plan
- ordinary living costs such as food, drink, housing costs, bills
- health care needs
- gambling
- long term care in a care home
- anything that is against the law
- to pay your husband, wife, partner, or a close relative who lives with you to provide care for you unless we agreed this specifically for you.

Do I have to have a financial assessment?

Yes, this will determine how much you may have to pay towards your care and support. You can find out what you may have to pay towards your care by visiting the council's betteroff webpage, www.derbyshire.gov.uk/betteroff

How can I get a direct payment?

If you already have a service, arranged by adult care, you should speak to your Adult Care worker and request a direct payment.

If you do not receive a service from Derbyshire County Council adult care already, you will need an assessment first to determine whether you are eligible for adult care support.

You can contact 'Call Derbyshire' on 01629 533190 and ask for a social care assessment. If you are eligible for support from Derbyshire County Council you can request a direct payment.

You could also contact Derbyshire County Council's Direct Payment Advice service via phone or email, available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, but they will need to go back to your adult care worker to agree a direct payment.

Tel: 01629 533345 or email: asch.directpayments@derbyshire.gov.uk

Some examples of how direct payments have been used in Derbyshire to meet people's individual circumstance:

Adam, Ben, Chris and Denise have learning disabilities. They previously attended a day centre together. They now each have a direct payment they use to contribute towards a shared personal assistant.

They go out into the community together with the personal assistant, sharing the costs of the support. This means that they maintain their friendship with each other, access the community, engaging in social activities in a meaningful way.



Steven and Andrea are a couple who both have a visual impairment. They both receive a direct payment. Andrea has a direct payment which is used to employ a personal assistant to support her with activities of daily living.

Steven has his own direct payment which is used to fund a special app on his phone which helps him to be independent. If he needs extra help, he can pay his partner's PA to support him from his direct payment.

Mary is an older woman who has a direct payment which she uses to arrange support at home from a care agency. Care staff help her with getting washed and dressed in the morning and evenings. They also support with shopping and meals. This means she contacts the agency directly when she wants to make changes to her care and gives her some flexibility. The council provide her with money, which she uses to pay invoices from the agency.





Megan is 22 and has complex health needs and a significant learning disability. Her support is jointly funded with Continuing Health Care. Having a direct payment means Megan can access a number of bespoke services such as a specialist day centre, domiciliary support and personal assistants. Megan did not respond well in residential respite but her direct payment means that her parents could be creative. Megan now takes her PAs to stay with her in an accessible rental property, giving her parents a much-needed break.

For more information....

The Direct Payments Information Pack gives you more detailed information, including information about support available to manage a direct payment and employer responsibilities. There is also an explanation of the direct payment agreement. This information can be found on the council's direct payments webpage, www.derbyshire.gov.uk/directpayments

Or you can request a copy from your Adult Care worker. This may help you decide if you want to request a direct payment.

Derbyshire County Council's Direct Payment Team

Tel: 01629 533345 or email: asch.directpayments@derbyshire.gov.uk



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