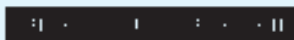




Direct Payments

If you or a member of your family needs support to live independently, this leaflet tells you about direct payments, a way of having more choice and control over the help you need.



What are direct payments?

Direct payments are payments given to individuals by Social Services departments to enable them to buy services they have been assessed as needing. They can be given to disabled people aged 16 or over, to people with parental responsibility for disabled children, and to carers aged 16 or over in respect of carer services.

The aim of a direct payment is to give more flexibility in how services are provided to people who are assessed as eligible for social services support. Providing money in lieu of social care services gives people greater choice and control over their lives, and enables them to make their own decisions about how their care is delivered.

Who can get direct payments?

Most people who have been assessed as needing a social care service can get direct payments. This includes people with:

- ◆ physical or sensory impairment
- ◆ learning difficulties
- ◆ mental health problems
- ◆ a long-term illness or who need help because of the effects of growing older.

You can also receive direct payments if you are a:

- ◆ carer who has been assessed as needing support in your own right
- ◆ parent of a disabled child - for services that support you in bringing up your child.

You can ask for direct payments if you wish to be in control of the services you need, and you are able to arrange and manage those services, either by yourself or with help. You do not have to be able to do everything yourself. As long as you stay in charge of what happens you can have as much help as you need to manage direct payments.

What can direct payments be used for?

You can use direct payments to arrange support tailored to meet your individual needs. You can decide what sort of help you need, how you want the help to be provided and the times when you want to have help.

Direct payments are not extra money to spend as you wish. The money must be used to meet the needs for which Social Services have agreed you should have help. You can do this by:

- ◆ employing your own support staff
- ◆ buying services from private care agencies
- ◆ paying for daytime opportunities.

Direct payments can also be used for one-off or intermittent services, such as buying short periods of respite care, or buying equipment to help you remain independent.

You do not have to take full control straight away. You can continue to have some services arranged by Social Services whilst you arrange only part of your support package. In this way, you only have to do what you feel confident about, giving you time to develop the skills needed to completely manage your services.

Is there anything I can't use direct payments for?

Direct payments cannot be used to buy long-term residential or nursing care. You cannot use direct payments to buy a service that is managed by Social Services, for example Devon's in-house Home Care Service

Unless exceptional circumstances apply, you cannot pay a relative or partner who lives with you for the support they provide. The restrictions are not intended to prevent you from employing live-in personal assistants. What is important is that the relationship between you and your personal assistant must be contractual rather than personal.

What are the advantages of direct payments?

You are in control. You can choose who supports you, how they support you and when. People who use direct payments enjoy the flexibility and choice that direct payments can bring, and frequently comment on how they have gained greater self-esteem, confidence, and control over how they live their lives.

Direct Payments

How much will I get?

Before you can access direct payments you need an assessment in the same way as you would for any social care service. Social Services will then offer a payment equivalent to its estimate of the cost you would incur to buy the service you need. If you choose to employ your own support staff, the level of payment will include allowances for meeting all your statutory responsibilities as an employer.

How is the money paid?

You must open a separate bank account for direct payments. Payments will be made four-weekly in advance into your account. You will have to provide records of how you have used the money to pay for the help you need. You will be provided with simple forms for this and can have help to complete the forms.

Will my benefits be affected?

No, direct payments are to be used only for meeting your care needs and are not counted as extra income. Direct payments will not be taken into account by the Benefits Agency.

Will I be liable for tax?

No, direct payments are only to be used to pay for your care needs so cannot be assessed as income on which you have to pay tax.

Will I have to pay anything?

You will usually have to contribute to the cost of your services. The exact amount will depend on your income and savings, but it will be the same amount as you would be charged for services had Devon County Council provided them directly.

What happens if I start having direct payments and find it does not work for me?

You simply tell us you no longer wish to have direct payments and Social Services will arrange to provide services to meet your needs.

What support is available to help me manage direct payments?

Social Services employs specialist staff to provide information, advice and support for all aspects of managing direct payments.

What do I do next?

If you have not already had an assessment of your social care needs, you must do this first, by contacting your local Social Services office. If you do not have contact details, please ring our general enquiries line on 01392 382331 or see our leaflet:

Ref. 1 Social Services in Devon Explained.

For carers of children with disabilities please contact your local Team below:

Joint Agency Teams

The Health Centre
Vicarage Road
BARNSTAPLE
EX32 7BH
Tel. 01271 371761
Fax: 01271 321586

George Street
EXETER
EX1 1DA
Tel. 01392 384444
Fax: 01392 383783

Fairfield House
New Street
HONITON
EX14 1BS
Tel: 01392 384500
Fax: 01392 384488

36 Post Hill
TIVERTON
EX16 4ND
Tel. 01884 235010
Fax: 01884 258206

South & West Devon Children with Disabilities

Team (including Totnes
and Newton Abbot)

Abbey Rise
Whitchurch Road
TAVISTOCK
PL19 9AS
Tel. 01822 614121
Fax: 01392 386748

If you have already been assessed as needing a social care service, or you are already receiving directly provided care and wish to know more about direct payments please use the following contacts:

By Post: Write to: Direct Payments, Room A117, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QR

Email: send your enquiry to direct.payments@devon.gov.uk

Website: visit our website at www.devon.gov.uk/directpayments

**Information from
Devon County Council
SOCIAL SERVICES**



Direct Payments

Further copies from: Social Services General Office,
County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QR. Tel. 01392 382946.

Other formats: To get a copy of this leaflet in a format that makes it easier for you to read, or another language, please contact the Public Information & Communication Team, Tel. 01392 382332 (address above).

Comments on this leaflet: Please contact the Head of Public Information & Communication, Tel. 01392 382566 (address above).
Email: paul.giblin@devon.gov.uk

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