



What Direct Payments can be used for?

Direct Payments are simply an alternative to the social care services otherwise provided by the council. Direct Payments are very adaptable and people are encouraged to be creative and innovative in how they use their Direct Payments to meet their eligible needs. Some of the ways people generally use Direct Payments are summarised below.

Personal Care - Assistance with personal care and essential daily living tasks, both within the home and local community.

This may include:

- Assistance with getting washed and dressed

Other examples of personal care support may include:

- Sitting services to enable an informal carer to take a break from their caring role
- Support from a communicator-guide for a person with dual sensory impairment
- Assistance for parents to purchase session support for a disabled child

Direct Payments can be used to purchase services from private care providers but most people chose to employ their own personal assistants as this affords people the greatest levels of choice, flexibility and control.

Short Breaks and Respite Care

Direct Payments can be used to purchase short breaks and respite care to meet assessed needs. This gives people the opportunity to identify how, when and where they would most benefit from a short break or respite care. This may include:

- A period of respite care in a residential or nursing home setting of the person's choice
- Support with personal care whilst the person is on holiday
- Additional support at home whilst a carer or family member has a break

It is important to note that the council does not routinely provide holidays to meet people's assessed needs. However, some of the costs of support/care that the person needs whilst they are on holiday may be covered. Long term residential and nursing care cannot be purchased using Direct Payments.

There are certain parameters relate to the provision of Direct Payments for respite care and short breaks. The council may set a maximum number of weeks over a certain period that respite care will be provided.

Carers, parents and family members may wish to use a Direct Payment to arrange overnight short breaks for the person they care for but may wish to look at making more flexible or imaginative arrangements.

If a private or voluntary organisation is used to provide short breaks for example in a residential home, the facility would need to be approved by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and subject to inspection by the relevant regulatory body.

Support to Access Community, Social and Leisure Activities

Direct Payments can be used as an alternative to traditional day care services, usually provided by a day centre. This gives people the opportunity to plan their own community, social and leisure activities by providing the support they need in order to access the activities. It provides people with the support they need in order to continue with family and community life.

Examples may include:

- Assistance with personal care and support whilst the person accessed a leisure pursuit such as going swimming
- Assistance with essential daily living tasks such as undertaking household shopping
- Additional personal care at home whilst an informal or family carer takes a break
- Support to access educational and personal development opportunities
- Individual sessional support for a young person
- A group of people using Direct Payments to contribute towards the costs of running a self directed support group, such as room hire

It is important to note that generally Direct Payments cannot be used to pay for the costs of accessing leisure and social activities, such as admission fees. In addition, Direct Payments should not be used to purchase meals or drinks whilst the person is accessing an activity.

Transport

Direct Payments can be provided for transport services and can offer the following benefits:

- Increased control for the person over the nature of journeys; times and days of journey and choice in transport provider
- Greater consistency and continuity in driver and/or escort
- More effective use of the funds available and greater flexibility in journeys travelled

For a person to be eligible to receive Direct Payments for transport, all of the following circumstances must apply:

- They must be eligible for services from the council as set out in the Eligibility Framework
- Transport will only be provided where people are unable to make their own transport arrangements or does not have access to private or public transport. The council may also take into account whether the person receives the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or where they have access to a motability vehicle funded by their DLA.
- Provision of transport will only be considered to enable people to travel to and from services they are assessed as needing to meet their social care needs following an Adult Care Assessment. Therefore, this excludes transport to educational and leisure activities.

Support for Carers

A Direct Payment can be provided to enable family and informal carers to purchase the services they are assessed as needing as carers to support them and to maintain their own health and well-being.

A Carers Assessment and Support Plan should be completed to identify the impact of caring on the person's life along with the support they require to continue caring or to take a break from their caring role.

Carers are able to use Direct Payments to purchase support in any variety of ways including:

- Short breaks for themselves and/or the people they care for;
- Personal assistance within the home;
- Sitting services;
- Social, education and leisure activities;
- Transport costs;
- Equipment
- Relaxation, stress management and holistic therapies.

Some of the intended outcomes of using Direct Payments for carers are:

- Promoting social inclusion through greater opportunities for carers to actively participate in family and community life;
- Greater opportunities for the personal development of carers;
- Promotion of the carer's health, well-being and coping skills;
- More responsive, timely and consistent methods of providing support, with greater opportunities for creativity;
- Values the essential contribution carers make to family life and the wider community.

Under the service, young people, aged 16-to17-years are also eligible to receive Direct Payments to support them in their role as young carers and to minimise any difficulties or isolation they may experience in undertaking their caring responsibilities.

Direct Payments users should be aware that they are responsible for their own health and safety and that they have a common law duty of care for any personal assistants they employ.

As part of this, your social worker should make available any risk assessments or moving and handling assessments that were completed as part of the care planning process. This will enable the Direct Payments user to share the assessment with the care agency or the employee who provides the service.

In doing this the service user can take reasonable steps to minimise any risks to the health and safety of themselves or of any staff they employ.

Direct Payments promote choice, flexibility, control and creativity in the way you meet your needs. You are encouraged to identify creative solutions to meeting your needs. Therefore, not all services that can be purchased through Direct Payments have been mentioned but instead are intended to provide examples to illustrate the possibilities.

The way you propose to use Direct Payments should be discussed with the social worker/care co-ordinator.

Direct Payments should only be used in such ways that keep you healthy, safe and well. You are also reminded that all arrangements using Direct Payments should be legal.