



Self Directed Support Factsheet – 1

Direct payments: an introduction

What are direct payments?

Direct payments are one way to receive support from social services. You can ask social services to give you an amount of money as a direct payment instead of providing you with a service. You then have to use this money to pay for the support to meet your needs.

Who can receive direct payments?

If they are eligible for social service support, the following people can receive direct payments:

- Disabled people over 16 years old;
- Older people;
- Carers, including people with parental responsibility for a child and young carers who are over 16 years old;
- A 'suitable person' on behalf of an adult who lacks the capacity to consent to direct payments themselves.

What can you use direct payments for?

There should be flexibility about what you spend your direct payments on. However councils are still adjusting to these new systems, so you may need to be very clear on how what you are spending money on fits into your support plan.

These are some of the things that you could use your direct payments for:

- Household tasks such as cooking, housework or gardening;
- Accessing information such as reading mail;

- Personal care;
- Guiding and communication support;
- Transport such as taxis;
- Leisure activities such as socialising, sports, classes or groups;
- Holidays, short breaks or a link family
- Equipment such as computer equipment, specialist home ware, mobile phones;
- Minor home adaptations (e.g. a handrail).

Parents or carers might also use direct payments for:

- Short breaks;
- Support with domestic tasks;
- Support so that carers can go back to work;
- Activities to help alleviate stress.

What are direct payments not for?

You cannot use a direct payments to buy services which the Health Service should provide or to pay for services provided by your council or permanent residential care.

Case studies: five examples of different ways that direct payments can be used.

1. Regular direct payments to pay for support for all assessed needs

Jane is a deafblind woman who has been assessed as needing 15 hours a week of communicator guide support. Jane is happy to employ a communicator guide herself and wants to have flexibility around when she receives support. Jane decides to accept direct payments and uses them to pay for all the hours of communicator guide support. Her communicator guide supports Jane both at home and outside the home. She assists Jane with household tasks such as cleaning, washing and ironing. She also guides Jane to college, as well as to leisure activities such as concerts and the cinema.

2. Using one-off direct payments to pay for some assessed needs

Steven is a deafblind man who lives in residential accommodation. His assessment also includes providing computer equipment and attending an art activity (the residential service are not able to provide this service). He has received a one-off direct payment to pay for a computer, webcam and printer. He also received a one-off direct payment to pay for enrolling in a regular art class.

3. Direct payments for services for a child

Jenny is an 11 year old deafblind child. Jenny has been assessed for intervenor support at home. Jenny's council talk to her parents about the different ways to meet Jenny's needs. The council offer to provide an intervenor service or direct payments. Jenny's parents decide to receive direct payments and employ a qualified intervenor themselves. This allows them some flexibility over when Jenny receives the support. They are assisted by a local direct payments support service who manage the payroll paperwork.

4. One-off direct payment for a minor adaptation

Joy is an older deafblind woman who lives in her own home. She has been assessed as needing a grab rail in her bathroom. Due to her visual impairment, it would be better for the handrail to be in a colour that contrasts well with her bathroom wall. Joy knows where she wants to purchase the right handrail from and has decided to take a direct payment to pay for this, instead of social services providing her with their standard handrail. Joy also has the choice to buy a more expensive handrail by adding her own money to the direct payment to pay for this.

5. One-off direct payments for a carer's assessed needs

Aisha is the mother of a deafblind child. She is the primary carer when her son is not at school. Aisha has had a carer's assessment and the assessment said she would benefit from a break from caring. She has decided to take a one-off direct payment to pay for a holiday for her son. This enables her to pick a holiday that will meet her son's needs, including appropriate communication and a safe environment.

More information about direct payments

If you want to find out about receiving direct payments in your area, you should contact your local social services. Most people who already use social services should be able to choose to receive a direct payment if they want to. As long as you are entitled to receive them, social services must tell you about direct payments when your needs are assessed or reviewed. Adults may also be able to receive a personal budget, see Sense's factsheet 'Personal budgets: an introduction'.

If you don't currently receive services from social services, you must contact them to ask for an assessment of your needs. If you are assessed as being eligible for services, you can then decide how you would like your needs to be met.

It should be your choice about whether you receive direct payments. The Department of Health is the government department that is responsible for direct payments in England. The Department of Health wrote best practice guidance on how councils should offer direct payments. For more information on your rights under this guidance, see Sense's factsheet 'Direct payments and personal budgets: what are your rights?'.

Resources

Sense factsheets on direct payments, personal budgets and purchasing your own support

Direct payments and purchasing your own support: Tips for deafblind people (British Sign Language DVD)

Post: Sense, 101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG.
Telephone: 0845 127 0060
Textphone: 0845 127 0062
Fax: 0845 127 0061
Email: info@sense.org.uk
Web: www.sense.org.uk

The Deafblind Directory – a database of providers of services for deafblind children and adults

Web: www.sense.org.uk/deafblind_directory

Email: deafblind.directory@sense.org.uk

Department of Health information on direct payments

- A guide to receiving direct payments from your local council;
- A guide to receiving direct payments from your local council – easy read version;
- Guidance on direct payments for community care, services for carers and children's services: England 2009.

Post: The Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS.

Telephone: 020 7210 4850

Email: dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.dh.gov.uk

A parent's guide to direct payments

Post: Every Child Matters, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

Textphone: 01928 794274.

Email: info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Sue Lavender's direct payments page

Sue Lavender is a deafblind person who uses direct payments

Web: www.suesdirectpayments.org.uk

National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL)

Post: Unit 3.40 Canterbury Court, 1-3 Brixton Road, London, SW9 6DE.

Telephone: 0207 587 1663

Fax: 0207 582 2469

Email: info@ncil.org.uk

Web: www.ncil.org.uk

The Rowan Organisation

Post: Eliot Park Innovation Centre, Barling Way, Nuneaton, CV10 7RH.

Telephone: 02476 322 860

Information Service: 0845 608 8048

Textphone: 02476 374 439

Fax: 02476 374 948

Web: www.therowan.org

Disability Wales

Post: Bridge House, Caerphilly Business Park, Van Road, Caerphilly, CF83 3GW.

Telephone: 02920 887 325

Fax: 02920 888 702

Email: info@disabilitywales.org

Web: www.disabilitywales.org

Centre for Independent Living Belfast

Post: 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GB.

Tel: 02890 875 001

Fax: 02890 875002

Textphone: 02890 875 003

Email: info@cilbelfast.org

Web: www.cilbelfast.org

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