

DIRECT PAYMENTS

What are Direct Payments?

They are payments of money made by Worcestershire Social Care Services to people so they can arrange their own care when they need it.

This includes:

- Children and families
- Older people
- People with learning disabilities
- People with mental health needs
- People with physical disabilities and sensory impairment
- People with long term health needs
- Carers
- Young carers

What does this mean for you?

Direct Payments help you to choose who provides your support, when it is provided and where. Direct Payments help you to be independent. This means having control over your life and making your own choices. Direct Payments do not affect any benefits that you may be receiving.

What can Direct Payments be used for?

You can use Direct Payments to employ your own personal assistants. This gives you the greatest level of choice and control over the support you receive. Alternatively, you may choose to contract with independent agencies or people who are registered self employed

Direct Payments can be used to pay for:

- Personal assistance and support to help you live in your own home
- Short breaks including periods of respite care and breaks for carers
- Social and leisure activities
- Items of agreed equipment
- Transport
- Support for carers

You can use a combination of Direct Payments and local authority services.

It also means that if you are eligible you can, if you wish; use the money to employ your own personal assistant. This option provides the user with the most direct control over the support they receive.

Others may choose to contract with independent agencies or to contract with self employed individuals and not employ personal assistants themselves.

Direct Payments cannot be used to pay for:

- Services directly provided by Adult and Community or Children's Services
- Long term residential or nursing care
- Housing services e.g. rent

Who can provide this support?

- You can employ your own support workers or use a private care agency
- You can pay family or friends who do not live in the same house as you

Direct Payments give you flexibility to choose who provides your support, when it is provided and where. However the services you buy must not cost more than they would do if directly provided by Social Services.

What does Direct Payments involve:

With support and information, most people can manage Direct Payments. You need a bank account just for Direct Payments, and you will also need to keep records and receipts to show how you have spent your Direct Payments. You will then be able to make your own care arrangements.

Advice and support:

Direct Payments are available to people whatever their needs are, and however much support they need. You can choose who provides you with support to use Direct Payments. A support service is available to give as much information, advice and support on Direct Payments and independent living, as you need.

Direct Payments Peer Support Group meet quarterly and enable Direct Payment users to:

- Share ideas and experiences
- Exchange information and promote good practice
- Find practical solutions to problems
- Influence practice and policy through consultation

This service includes:

- What Direct Payments are and what is involved
- What help is available if you are thinking of using Direct Payments
- How to access Direct Payments
- What an assessment involves and support to assist you to think about what your needs are
- What the money can be used for
- How to employ personal assistants and how to be a 'good employer'
- How to contact care agencies

For further information on Direct Payments contact:

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No responsibility is accepted for the level of service provided by the organisations listed in this publication. All details are correct at time of publication. However, if you find any information is inaccurate or out-of-date, please call us.

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