

Direct Payments

Guide for Citizens

Introduction to Direct Payments:

When you have had a Social Care assessment and it has been identified that you are eligible for Social Care support, your allocated Social Care Worker will have a discussion with you about the different services available to meet your needs. These include both commissioned services (services that the City Council arrange on your behalf) and services or support that can be purchased via a Direct Payment.

A Direct Payment is money that is provided to you so that you can pay for the service(s) or support that has been agreed to meet your needs directly. Direct Payments can be used to purchase services (such as support from private agencies or social groups), they can also be used to enable you to employ your own Personal Assistant(s) where appropriate.

Direct Payments can provide greater choice, control and flexibility over how your needs are met, however with this comes certain responsibilities which you will need to consider before deciding whether a Direct Payment is right for you.



Fairer Charging:

All citizens who have been assessed as eligible to receive Social Care support are required to be financially assessed by the Fairer Charging Team. This process is to determine whether or not you will be expected to make a financial contribution towards the cost of your support package, (further details regarding the financial assessment can be found online at:

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/fairercharging>).

If you are assessed to make a financial contribution this amount will be deducted from the Direct Payment made by the Council. It is then your responsibility to pay your personal contribution into the Direct Payment Account that you will be given by the Council. If you do not make your contribution there will not be enough money available in your Direct Payment account to pay for the agreed service(s) or support. Where this happens you will be responsible for any accrued debt.

Your Responsibilities:

You will be responsible for making payments to the agreed service(s) and/or support. You should keep hold of any receipts, invoices or other paperwork relating to how you spend your Direct Payment. The Direct Payments Team may ask you to submit these from time to time but you will not have to submit any regular monitoring.

You are held responsible for any debt accrued by either non-payment of your financial contribution or misuse of funds. Where a package has broken down for these reasons the Council may decide to end your Direct Payment and replace it with a commissioned service instead, (these are services that the City Council arrange on your behalf).

If you choose to receive a Direct Payment to employ Personal Assistants, you will be taking on the responsibility of being an employer. This is a significant responsibility and one which is sometimes overlooked. As an employer you will be held liable for the following:

- Recruiting your Personal Assistant(s)
- Making payments of Tax and National Insurance to HMRC on behalf of your Personal Assistant(s)
- Understanding and complying with Employment Law

- Taking out the appropriate insurance for your Personal Assistant(s) (employers liability insurance)
- Organising cover for holidays and sickness of your Personal Assistant(s)
- Any training required for your Personal Assistant(s)
- Dealing with any grievances

You may be happy to take on these responsibilities yourself, or you may know of a friend or relative who is willing to help. There are also a number of external organisations called Direct Payment Support Providers who can help as much or as little as you need them to with the above responsibilities. Your Social Care Worker should discuss this with you.

Implementation and Review of the Direct Payment:

An account for your Direct Payment will be opened for you by the Council and this account will come with a card which has chip and pin functionality and works in the same way as any other debit card. You will have the option of banking online or via telephone, paying by direct debit, standing order or by chip and pin card. You will be able to draw money out at a cash machine if this agreed as part of your support plan. This account should only be used for your Direct Payment and paying for your care and not for anything else.

Your Social Care Worker will ask you or your authorised person to sign a Direct Payment agreement form. This form lays out your responsibilities as a Direct Payment recipient as well as the City Council's responsibilities. By signing it you agree to meet the responsibilities laid down within it.

The Direct Payments Team will then pay the agreed amount into your Direct Payment account on a four weekly basis, (payments are made in advance).

You should keep hold of any receipts, invoices or other paperwork relating to how you spend your Direct Payment. The Direct Payments Team may ask you to submit these from time to time but you will not have to submit any regular monitoring. The Council can view and print reports of the money spent from your account and the balance held. The Council uses this information to monitor that the money provided to you is meeting your assessed care needs. This means that you do not need to provide this information quarterly by sending in paper returns.

Your Social Care Worker will review the Direct Payment after approximately 6 weeks of it being in place. It will then be reviewed in line with the community review policy. If at any point you feel that your needs have changed or reduced, or if you decide you no longer wish to receive a Direct Payment, you must inform your allocated Social Care Team or worker. You cannot arrange for additional or different support to be paid for from your Direct Payment until it has been approved.

For further information about how the Direct Payment account works please see the Direct Payment Account Factsheet and the Frequently Asked Questions document. Ask your Social Care Worker for copies or view online here:

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/article/29638/Personal-Budgets>