



CARERS FACT SHEET 6f

Frequently asked Questions about Direct Payments

Applying for Direct Payments

Q What are Direct Payments?

A Direct Payments enable you to buy services that meet your assessed needs instead of receiving services directly provided by your local council. You choose how you organise the help you need in a flexible way.

Q What do I have to do to get Direct Payments?

A Your social worker should discuss this option with you when they assess your care needs. If they do not, or if you already receive services, ask about direct payments.

Q What if the local council has not previously assessed my needs?

A To access Direct Payments you need an assessment in the same way as you would for any social care service. Contact your local council to ask them to assess your needs.

Q What if I am already receiving social care services arranged by my local council?

A The majority of people who receive social care services from the council have a right to Direct Payments. Your local council is obliged to offer you direct payments in place of the services you currently receive.

Q What if my local council has assessed my needs before but has not arranged services for me?

A If your local council concluded that you did not need social care services, then it will not offer you Direct Payments. If you think your needs or circumstances have now changed, ask your local council for a new assessment.

Q If I am entitled to social care services, am I automatically entitled to direct payments?

A Yes, most people who get social care services have a right to Direct Payments. There are some limited circumstances where Direct Payments are not given and your council will be able to tell you about these.



Using Direct Payments

Q What can I spend my Direct Payments on?

A The money is for you to use to arrange the services (including equipment) which the local council has assessed you as needing. Your local council social services department will explain what the money can and cannot be spent on.

Q Can I purchase residential care with my Direct Payments?

A Direct Payments are intended to support adults in independent living, so you cannot use them to pay for permanent residential accommodation. You may be able to use Direct Payments to secure occasional short periods in residential accommodation, if your local council agrees that is what is needed.

Q Can I use Direct Payments to employ my relatives?

A Direct Payments are not intended to replace existing support networks within families and communities. For this reason, you may not normally use direct payments to secure a service from: your spouse or partner, close relatives or anyone who lives in the same household as you (unless that person is someone who you have specifically recruited to be a live-in employee). You should discuss your situation with your care manager if you think that any person you would like to employ or purchase services from might fall into one of these categories. In exceptional circumstances, your care manager may be prepared to consider allowing you to use Direct Payments to pay a close relative or a friend.