

DIRECT PAYMENTS

Introduction to Direct Payments

Guide to Direct Payments

This guide provides you with basic information and an introduction to Direct Payments. For further information please contact your local Direct Payments Support Service, contacts see below.

What are direct payments?

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) places a duty on Local Authorities to provide Direct Payments to an individual following an assessment and where there are identified, eligible and agreed needs and outcomes to be achieved. Direct Payments is an alternative to directly provided care and support from the Local Authority.

Direct Payments are monetary amounts paid to individuals, or their representative, to enable them to meet identified, eligible, and agreed care and support outcomes. Direct Payments are not a form of income or benefit you apply for.

Direct Payments enable you to direct how, when and who provides the support, you need in your daily life. They can improve choice, control, and independence for people who want to direct the care and support they may need.

Eligibility to receive Direct Payments

You must have had an assessment discussing and identifying your strengths, networks, and any support available. You and the social care practitioner will identify where you may require additional support and

where you are eligible to receive support from your Local Authority.

What are the benefits a Direct Payment?

Using Direct Payments is a personal decision, and you will need to think about everything involved before agreeing to them. Direct Payments may enable you control over your care and support and provide you with the flexibility to maintain your independence in a way that suits you and your lifestyle.

What help and support is available to me?

Each Local Authority has a Direct Payments Support Service to provide information, advice, and assistance to set you up, administer and run Direct Payments if you decide to go ahead. They will support you to become confident administering your Direct Payment. However, if you decide Direct Payments are not for you, that's ok, you can receive care and support arranged directly by your local authority.

How is the money paid to me?

A weekly amount of money is calculated and sufficient to pay for the care and support previously identified and agreed in your care and support plan.

You may be asked to open a bank account (separate to your personal account) to receive funds. If you are unable to do this for whatever reason you can receive support to receive payments in other ways, but you will still control and direct your care and support.



How much money will I get?

This is dependent on how care and support is to be delivered. For example, if you employ a personal assistant (See Guide Employing Personal Assistants) then all costs of being a legal employer will be covered. For example, holiday and sick pay, Employer NI contributions, liability insurance costs and payroll. Alternatively, enough is provided to purchase a legal and appropriate service from a provider such as a care agency.

Will I have to pay towards the cost of the Direct Payment?

Unlike the NHS, Adult Social Care services are 'not free at the point of contact'. You may be asked to contribute towards the cost of your care and support. Financial Assessment teams within Local Authorities will look at your ability to contribute to any care and support you require. This will be explained to you.

The Local Authority should fund all reasonable costs of the Direct Payment. However, Direct Payment Recipients (DPR) must be aware that if they do not follow advice from their Liability Insurers or Direct Payment support service and for any reason are taken to Industrial Tribunal by one or more of their staff the Local Authority may not fund all the costs incurred.

You may decide to purchase a more expensive service than the amount calculated for the Direct Payment. The additional costs must be provided by you to 'top up' the Direct Payment account or pay the additional

costs separately to the provider. This will be explained to you by the Direct Payment Support Service.

Does receiving a Direct Payment affect my benefits?

Receiving a Direct Payment does not affect the state benefits you receive and is not classed as taxable income.

How would Direct Payments be made to me?

Payments are made to an agreed and dedicated bank account every four weeks.

There are some differences for example if you are receiving a one-off payment, or an annual amount is agreed and paid once a year, or if a piece of equipment is to be purchased.

You cannot use the money to withdraw cash and there may be restrictions on what can be purchased. Payments cannot be used for anything not identified and agreed in your care and support plan and not for things such as gambling and illegal activities.

Direct Payments the same as other services provided by the Local Authority is subject to review. Direct Payment funding may increase, decrease, or end.

You will always be informed and given the appropriate time to adjust your Direct Payment. Help and support can be provided, and you must be aware if any change affects the employment of any staff you employ you must seek appropriate advice.

Useful Contacts

Each Local Authority will have experienced Direct Payments teams who are there to support you with any queries or information that you need. They will endeavour to provide you with as much help and reassurance as you need, until you feel confident to manage arrangements yourself. But remember, if you need periodic support, or advice the teams are only a phone call/email away.

This guide provides you with basic information on Direct Payments.

For further information please contact your local Direct Payments Support Service.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Direct Payments Team Office

e. directpayments@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Caerphilly County Borough Council Direct Payments Team Office

e. directpayadvisors@caerphilly.gov.uk t. 01495 235522

Monmouthshire County Borough Council Direct Payments Team

e. mccdirectpaymentteam@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Newport City Council Direct Payments Support Team

e. direct.payments@newport.gov.uk

Torfaen County Borough Council Independent Living (Direct Payments) Team

e. independentlivingteam@torfaen.gov.uk