

Your care and support – **Direct Payments**



- Your questions answered
- Where to get further information

What is a direct payment?

A direct payment is an amount of money that we will pay to you so that you can get the care and support that you need as agreed in your personal budget. Your personal budget is the amount of money determined as sufficient to meet your eligible care and support needs following your assessment.

A direct payment means that your personal budget will be given to you to arrange and pay for your care and support instead of the council arranging the service for you.

What can a direct payment do for me?

Having a direct payment means you can:

- be more independent
- have more control over your life
- make your own choices and
- decide what you want to do and when you want to do it

Who can have a direct payment?

You can have a direct payment once you have had a social care and support assessment and the council agrees you are eligible for care and support.

There are some restrictions on having a direct payment, for example, if a person is subject to a court order for a drug or alcohol treatment programme or similar scheme. Also, if a person lacks capacity they must have an authorised person to act on their behalf.

What can I use a direct payment for?

You can use a direct payment to buy services or employ carers as long as what you buy meets the outcomes that have been agreed in the care and support plan that follows your assessment.

This might include:

- paying an agency to send a carer to your home to help you with your care and support
- employing a carer (sometimes called a personal assistant) to help you with your care and support
- something specific, for example, joining a club or enrolling on a course to help you learn new skills and meet people

Is there anything that I cannot use a direct payment for?

Yes, there are some things that are not allowed, for example:

- anything that is not detailed in your care and support plan
- food and drink
- health care needs
- gambling
- long term care in a care home
- anything that is against the law
- to pay your husband, wife, civil partner or a close relative who lives with you to provide care for you
- council services, such as occupational therapy, equipment or attending a day centre

Do I have to have a financial assessment?

- Yes, this will determine how much you may have to pay towards your care and support

Will I have to tell you what I have spent the direct payment on?

Yes, you will need to maintain records and receipts for the money that you have spent. Every so often, we will contact you and ask you to provide details of the money that you have spent. We will check that this agrees with your care and support plan.

If I do not spend all of the direct payment, can I keep the money?

No, the money can only be spent as agreed in your care and support plan. If you do not spend all of the money, we will ask you to pay this back to the council.



How do I ask for a direct payment?

You can contact your social worker or if you do not have one, contact the team below:

Adults and Communities Access Point (ACAP)

Email

ACAP@birmingham.gov.uk

Phone

0121 303 1234

Text phone

0121 303 6230

Where can I get more information?

To get information and advice about adult social care i.e. caring for yourself by finding out the best way to meet your needs, and for other available services including direct payments, visit: www.birmingham.gov.uk/directpayments

Leaflets in this series:

- Deferred Payments
- Direct Payments
- Top-up Payments
- How much will you have to pay?
- Self-funders

Care Act details can be found at www.gov.uk (search Care Act).

If you use an organisation or individual that carries out regulated financial service activities in the UK, you are advised to check that they are authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority. You can check this by visiting www.fca.org.uk/irms/systems-reporting/register

