

Direct Payments: An introduction



Somerset
Council

Information sheet C2

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This information sheet introduces Direct Payments. It will help you decide if you would like to have a Direct Payment.

We have much more detailed information about how to manage a Direct Payment in information sheet **C3: Direct Payments guidance**. This contains the important details you will need to understand if you receive a Direct Payment.

What is a Direct Payment?

If you have a personal budget (funding to help pay for your care), from adult social care you could choose to have this money given to you so that you can make your own care and support arrangements. This is called a Direct Payment.

What is the advantage of having a Direct Payment?

Having a Direct Payment puts you in full control of how you spend your budget. You can choose who provides the care and support you need. You can arrange care from any CQC registered care agency you decide, or you could choose to employ your own care worker, usually called a personal assistant or you can use a self-employed carer called a Micro-Provider. You may also have social activities as part of your direct payment, so you may purchase services from a day care provider or use them to achieve activities agreed within your support plan. You do not have to use providers who have a contract with the Council.

If you have a Direct Payment to support an unpaid carer, you can choose when and where to arrange breaks when you need them.

You must keep a log of the things you spend the money on, and if you employ a personal assistant, you must follow employment law. But we have organisations that can provide advice about how to do this or help you with them if needed. If you prefer, you can ask someone else to manage your Direct Payment on your behalf. This cannot be your care provider unless they are directly related to you.

Is there anything I cannot use my Direct Payment for?

You must only use your Direct Payment to achieve the things agreed and written within your care and support plan, and there are some things you cannot use your Direct Payment for. Examples: to pay household bills, rent or food.

Monitoring

Once we are happy that you can manage your Direct Payment, we will usually only ask you to submit a simple return once a year.

How do I arrange to have a Direct Payment?

Your allocated social care worker will explain how to do this. The process is simple. An independent advisor from our Direct Payment advisory service will contact you. They will usually arrange a phone or video call with you and talk through Direct Payments. They can do a face-to-face visit to explain things if it is deemed necessary. They will help you to set up your Direct Payment and help you employ a personal assistant if you would like them to.

Your opportunity to feedback

We welcome your comments about the services you receive. If you would like to tell us what you think, please do so by choosing from the options below.

- Contact us by going to our website, [Complaints, comments and compliments \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/complaints-comments-and-compliments)
- Phone Customer Services on 0300 123 2224
- Contact the Adults and Health Customer Experience Officer
Floor B2 East
County Hall
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TA1 4DY
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