A Guide to Direct Payments.

About this guide

This leaflet offers information to people who are thinking about, or are already using direct payments.

Direct payments can be used to arrange support as part of a personal budget to meet their assessed care needs.

What are direct payments?

Direct payments are money paid from the Local Authority to a person who is eligible for social care funding or to an identified responsible person to arrange support on their behalf.

It is not a benefit and it does not affect your benefits, national insurance contributions, or income tax. If preferable, you can have a mix of direct payments and services arranged and provided by the Council.

Who can receive direct payments?

People who are eligible for social care funded support can be given a direct payment, for example:

- People with a physical disability, learning disability, mental health problems, sensory impairment for support with independent living.
- Elderly people who need help to live in their own home
- Carers who are finding it difficult to cope
- Parents of disabled children for children’s services
How do I get direct payments?

You will need to have an assessment of your care needs from a professional social care worker and an assessment of your financial circumstances.

To speak to someone about an assessment please contact Hull City Council’s customer service centre on 300300 or contact your Social Worker.

How much money will I get?

The amount of money you will get and the level of support you and your social care assessor feel you need, will be based on the answers you provide within a Personal Budget Questionnaire. This will provide an up-front allocation of money to enable you to start planning your support.

Showing how you will arrange your support, to meet your social care needs with all your risks managed to an agreed level and the costs involved will determine how much funding you will receive throughout the year.

What can I use Direct Payments for?

Direct payments can be used for almost anything as long as it is not:

- Something a health professional would traditionally provide (e.g. wheelchairs).
- Illegal, would not promote well-being and could bring the council into disrepute.
- Something considered day to day living (e.g. food, rent).
Depending on your individual circumstances, a direct payment could be used for:

- Activities in the community rather than attending a day service arranged by the council.
- Employing a personal assistant of your own choice, rather than a carer from the council.
- A short break, respite away from the home.

**Why would you choose direct payments?**

The aim of the direct payment scheme is to give you more independence, control and choice over how, when and where you have your support.

Direct payments can be used flexibly, enabling you to decide how to best meet your assessed care needs.

**Examples:**

- Mrs Jones is 89 years old and needs help to get washed and dressed each day. Mrs Jones prefers to be cared for by someone she knows and trusts. Under the direct payments scheme she employs a personal assistant of her own choice at a time to suit, to assist her with these tasks.

- Sam is 30 and is experiencing mental health problems. He uses direct payments money to attend gym sessions each week. These sessions have proven to be beneficial to his overall well-being and mental health.

- Matthew is seven years old and has a severe disability. His mum uses direct payments to employ someone to look after Matthew one afternoon each week. This gives mum a break and Matthew enjoys his time with the personal assistant.
Frequently asked questions:

Can I get support to manage my direct payments?

Yes, Hull has a number of support services who can advise and help you to:

- Arrange care for yourself or your disabled child
- Find personal assistants
- Organise your direct payments money
- Provide a payroll and money holding service, to assist with working out the money you pay for your support.
- Be a good employer
- Advise on health and safety matters
- Keep records
- Think about support you need to manage your direct payment

Will direct payments affect my social security benefits and other money I receive?

No. Getting direct payments will not affect your social security payments or other money. Direct payments are not regarded as extra income by the benefits agency or HM Revenue and Customs (Inland Revenue).

Will I be expected to contribute towards the direct payment?

You will be expected to contribute towards the cost of your social care services if you are 18 years or over. The amount will depend on your income and savings, but will be exactly the same amount if you had chosen Hull City Council to arrange and provide your services directly. However, children’s services are free and some adults do not have to contribute anything.

Do I have to tell Hull City Council how I have spent the money?

Yes. You will need to keep records of how you have used the money. For example, receipts for money spent and timesheets signed by the
person you pay to provide care or support. You can only spend the money on things that have been agreed with Hull City Council.

**Is there anyone I can’t employ?**

You cannot use direct payments to employ:

- Your spouse or partner, except in exceptional circumstances
- Anyone living in the same household as you, except in exceptional circumstances.

**How is the money paid?**

Payments are either paid four weekly, or as a one off, depending on your assessment. If you receive regular payments you will be required to open a dedicated bank account for the sole purpose of the direct payment.

**Getting in touch**

For Social Care Information and Advice (including assessments)
Contact Hull City Council on 01482 300300

General Social Care Advice and comprehensive support to manage Direct Payments can be provided by Choices and Rights.

Contact Choices and Rights on 01482 878778
Or visit our website at www.choicesandrights.org.uk

**Useful Links:**

Department of health www.dh.gov.uk
Care Quality Commission (CQC) www.cqc.org.uk