

# Direct Payments: An introduction

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Information sheet C2

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This information sheet gives an introduction to 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 care agency you decide, or you could choose to employ your own care worker (usually called a personal assistant).

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 do not have to use providers who have a contract with the Council.

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.

## **Is there anything I cannot use my Direct Payment for?**

You must only use your Direct Payment to achieve the things written in your care and support plan, and there are some things you cannot use your Direct Payment for, an example, to pay household bills.

## **Monitoring**

Once we are happy that you are able to 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 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 to visit you and talk through Direct Payments. 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 either:

Contact us by going to our website, [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk), or

- Speak to your social care worker
- Phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224, or
- Contact the Adults and Health Customer Experience Officer

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County Hall

Taunton

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Email: [customerexperience@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:customerexperience@somerset.gov.uk)

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