

Direct Payments Factsheet

It's your choice

What do Direct Payments mean for me?

Your support your choice

I want more choice and control over the way I receive my social care support from Surrey County Council, Direct Payments could help me with this, but how do I find out more?

What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are financial payments made to individuals, who have been assessed as eligible to receive support from Surrey County Council, instead of the Council arranging or providing services directly. You then use this money to purchase support that you consider most appropriate to meet your assessed social care needs.

A Direct Payment will give you more flexibility in how you get the support you need. You will have greater choice and control over your life and you will be able to make your own decisions about how your support is provided. If you are a carer you can also receive Direct Payments to help you in your caring role or to have some time for yourself.

A Direct Payment can be used for all or part of your care or support package. Having a Direct Payment as an element of your support can be a useful and relatively safe way for you to see if Direct Payments are the right option for you.

Why would I want Direct Payments?

Direct Payments allow you to make more of the decisions that affect your life. They give you more flexibility and choice, by enabling you to buy support for yourself that better suits your individual needs.

If you receive a Direct Payment, you can decide how your support needs will be met, by whom and at what time. You are in control. You can employ your own support staff, which means they will report directly to you. Or, you can have a contract with a local agency, in which case the agency will be accountable to you, not to Surrey County Council.

Who can have Direct Payments?

We can make a Direct Payment to most people who need our support, including:

- older people who have been assessed as needing community care services;
- disabled people (including people with Mental Health needs) aged 16 and over, including those with short as well as longer term needs;
- carers for 'carers services',
- parents of disabled children, for children's services;

A small number of people may not be eligible to receive a Direct Payment. For example, this includes people who are subject to some mental health or criminal justice orders, or do not have the mental capacity to consent to receive a Direct Payment.

If you are assessed as being eligible to receive council support and you want to consider having a Direct Payment, you will also need to be:

- over 16;
- able to legally consent to receiving the payment from the council; and
- able to manage the money to meet your needs. This maybe on your own or with someone's help, as long as you are in control of how the money is spent.

What can Direct Payments be used for?

The money is for you to arrange support to meet your eligible needs. You may choose to employ people directly, to buy services from an independent or voluntary sector provider or purchase equipment to help you live more independently. Direct Payments enable you to choose and plan your support in more flexible ways that fit in with your life.

It is important that your plans meet your assessed needs in the best way for you. As long as the money is used lawfully, and your eligible needs are met, there can be a lot of flexibility about how you spend the money. For this reason there is not a list of things the money can be used for.

Most Direct Payments are made to meet regular ongoing support needs, however they can also be made as a single payment, for example, to purchase equipment or a short respite break.

If you prefer, Surrey County Council can arrange services to meet some of your needs directly, we can offer you a combination of a Direct Payment and services that we provide or buy from another provider on your behalf.

What can't Direct Payments be used for?

You can't use Direct Payments for things such as:

- health care, housing costs, or household bills;
- residential or nursing-home costs, unless it's for short periods of respite, for example to give a carer a break;
- services from Surrey County Council or any other local authority; or
- support for needs that have not been assessed by Surrey County Council and are not in your agreed care or support plan.

What responsibilities will I have?

You will be responsible for managing and accounting for how the money is spent. The money you receive as a Direct Payment is entrusted to you to pay for support or services to meet your assessed social care needs. For this reason you will need to keep records which will help you, and us, ensure that your Direct Payment is working well.

There is a lot of support available to advise and assist you with this. We have a contract with Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) to work in partnership with us to provide you with help and information. SILC are experts in Direct Payments and independent living and are committed to helping you have more control of your life. They are an independent voluntary organisation run by and for disabled people since 1999 and can provide up to date and accessible information, advice and support on Direct Payments to anyone who is interested in learning more.

To receive a Direct Payment you will be asked to sign an agreement that outlines any conditions that you need to follow, for example keeping records of how the money is spent.

Will I have to make a financial contribution towards my Direct Payment?

You may be asked to contribute towards your care or support package, although carers are not charged for services.

Any charge that you may have to pay will be based on your personal financial circumstances.

How do other people in Surrey use Direct Payments?

Mrs A an eighty seven year old woman living in Surrey uses Direct Payments to employ a Personal Assistant for about five hours a week. Although she has never employed anyone before, she has managed, with a little help, to do everything she needs to do as an employer and to manage the finances successfully.

The Personal Assistant not only provides her with personal care but is also able to help her go out and do her own shopping, something which previously had not been possible.

Mrs A is delighted with the positive change that Direct Payments have brought to her life

Mr B moved into his own flat after twenty-five years in residential care. Initially he had live-in agency care workers provided directly by Surrey County Council. But he found this inadequate, as he had no control over who came to live in his home and provide the care and support he needed.

After a year he changed to Direct Payments and was able to advertise, interview and successfully employ his own support staff. This arrangement is going very well; he is much happier and more in control than he was with staff provided directly by Surrey County Council.

Mrs C, a carer undertaking regular and substantial care, had given up work to look after her partner. She needed some time for herself and to keep fit so is using a Direct Payment for her gym membership.

What do I do if I am interested in Direct Payments?

If you are interested in Direct Payments and are currently receiving social care support from Surrey County Council, please contact your care co-ordinator (who may also be called your care manager or social worker) for more information.

If you are interested in Direct Payments and are not currently receiving social care support from Surrey County Council, please call 08456 009 009 for more information.

Further advice and support

Surrey Independent Living Council

Tel: 01483 458111 Fax: 01483 459976

Website: <http://www.surreyilc.org.uk/>

DirectGov:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DG_10016128

Carersnet

<http://www.carersnet.org.uk/>

Department of Health:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Personalisation/Directpayments/DH_076522