South Gloucestershire Council

Department for Children, Adults and Health

An introduction to

Direct Payments

**June 2018**

**Do you want control over the money used to arrange your care** ✔ **and support?**

**Do you want choice in how you are supported throughout your** ✔ **life?**

**Do you want to stay independent living at home?** ✔



**What is a Direct Payment?**

A Direct Payment is money from the council paid to you so that you can buy the support you need.

This support is set out in your care and support plan or your child’s Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

**What are the benefits of having a Direct Payment?**

More independence, choice and control in how you are supported to meet your outcomes and needs, as compared to a service the council may arrange on your behalf.

Flexibility so that the support you receive helps you carry on doing those things that are important to you. Please see some quotes about why Direct Payments work well for people on page 4.

**How does a Direct Payment work?**

After your assessment your social care worker will discuss with you what will work best for you in terms of support. They can discuss Direct Payments in more detail and if you are interested will work out how much the Direct Payment will be, and ask you to sign an agreement about using the funds.

As part of this process they will check that adults have mental capacity to understand what a Direct Payment is. If you or the person you care for do not have mental capacity to understand what a Direct Payment is, a Direct Payment can still be put in place to a suitable friend or family member under what is called a ‘best interests agreement’. Direct payments can be made to parents of disabled children, in order to arrange care and support for their child.

If you go ahead to have a Direct Payment the council will provide you with a Direct Payment Card Account. The Direct Payment Card Account is similar to a bank account and comes with a debit card. The account is loaded with the Direct Payment money you receive from the council and you can use the account to pay for services in your care and support plan. The account can be used for payments in person, over the phone, and online banking.

**What can I spend my Direct Payment on?**

You can only use your Direct Payment to pay for support as written in your care and support plan or your child’s Education, Health and Care Plan. Common examples include:

* Employing a Personal Assistant (this can be a friend, neighbour or family member as long as they don’t live with you)
* Support at home from a provider or agency
* Activities away from home (such as accessing college courses, going to a leisure centre or finding work)
* Short breaks

**What can’t I spend my Direct Payment on?**

Direct Payments from the Council can’t be used for things such as:

* Housing and Health services
* Permanent residential or nursing home support  Services from your council.
* Gambling or alcohol
* Anything that doesn’t relate to meeting the outcomes in your care and Support Plan /Education Health and Care Plan.

**Will I get help and support when I have a Direct Payment?**

If you need help to run your Direct Payment or to employ staff, there are council approved Direct Payment Support Providers that can help you.

It is also possible for you to nominate a trusted friend or family member to have access to your account and help you run your Direct Payment.

The Council can look at your Direct Payment Account statements online, so can see the payments you have made from your account. We may contact you from time to time to see if you need any assistance.

**Will I have to pay towards my Direct Payment?**

Following a financial assessment, service users that are 18 and over may need to contribute toward the cost of their care.

**Will Direct Payments affect my benefits?**

No your benefits are not affected by Direct Payments.

**I would like a Direct Payment, what happens next?**

Discuss Direct Payments with your social care worker. They will need to make sure that you are able to consent to getting a Direct Payment.

If you can’t manage the Direct Payment, they will discuss this with your family/carers if appropriate.

If you aren’t in touch with a social care worker please call 01454 868007 to speak to adult care or 01454 868008 for Children’s services.

For more information including more detailed guides to Direct

Payments, visit  [www.southglos.gov.uk/directpayments](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/directpayments)

**What do people say about Direct Payments?**

We are committed to promoting Direct Payments as the first choice for people, in order to enable as much choice and control over their care and support as possible.

We recognise that Direct Payments may not suit all situations, however overall people use them successfully and in a way that works well for them. Here are some quotes from South Gloucestershire Direct Payment recipients about why Direct Payments work well for them:

**“I was apprehensive at first; but my social worker Chris guided me and my Personal Assistant to exactly how it works. Within a**

**couple of weeks of receiving the help it was to my surprise just how much easier it has made my everyday life. It's less stressful...”**

**“She is gaining independence from her parents and confidence in travelling independently (with support initially) the work**

**experience placement is helping her gain confidence and skills and we hope she will be able to gain paid work soon”**

**“The Direct Payment Card Account works well as I am able to settle my mother’s invoices as soon as they arrive. It is a simple**

**process as I already use online banking for her and personally. We**

**also know that the account is monitored and the person doing this is very helpful...”**

**“I’m able to get the help I need when I need it …. It's completely flexible and very convenient and the feeling of being in control of your own care needs is crucial”**

**“They gave me back my independence. Allowed me to be a parent again. We could enjoy family life again. I**

**was supported and I didn't need to be in hospital as much”**

**“I feel in control of finding ways to meet my care needs and I have gained confidence. Also I have learned a great deal from training events to help me learn interviewing skills and staff management skills.”**

**“I get to employ Personal Assistants that I feel are right for me and my needs. I am able to choose staff who I know and trust and really care for my wife. I am able to have care at the times I require from an agency of my choice”**

**What if I am not happy with the service I’m getting?**

In the first instance you should speak with the team or service involved. Most problems can be sorted out quickly this way. You can ask a friend or relative to do this on your behalf if you wish.

For further information about making a complaint ask for Factsheet CCH82 - Your feedback counts. Or, you may wish to contact the Complaints and Freedom of Information Team:

Freepost RTXL-YHGY-GSYS

South Gloucestershire Council

Children, Adults and Health Department - Complaints & FOI Team

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