



# Direct Payments

Putting you in control of your care and support



[www.npt.gov.uk/directpayments](http://www.npt.gov.uk/directpayments)



## Introduction

If you need care and support in your everyday life, then you have a choice about who, when and how this is provided. Direct Payments put you in control so you can live independently. We can help you through the whole process of setting up Direct Payments and we will also provide you with ongoing support. This booklet explains everything you need to know about Direct Payments.

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## What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are cash payments given to you by the Council to arrange and pay for your own care and support instead of the Council arranging services for you. This will give you greater flexibility over how your support is provided.

We want to make it easy for you to say “yes” to Direct Payments.

## Why should I choose Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are the best way to allow you to choose and control who supports you and how, when and where this support is provided. Direct Payments ensure your support fits into your lifestyle.

### Which means:

- You control the decisions that affect your life.
- The day-to-day control of the money and provision of your care is given to you.
- You have flexibility and choice, enabling you to purchase care that is best suited to your needs and what you want.
- You choose: How, When, What and from Whom you receive your care.

“I employ my own Personal Assistants (PAs) so I manage who supports me. Because of this, my PAs are people who I get on well with and are good at their job supporting me to do the things that I need and want to do in life.”

## Who can get Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are an option for people who are assessed\* as having eligible social care needs. This includes:

- People needing Homecare services
- People with physical and learning impairments
- People with long term health conditions
- People with mental health conditions
- Older people
- Parents of disabled children to meet their child's needs
- Carers

\* See our Jargon Buster on page 10 for more information about assessments

## What can Direct Payments be used for?

They must be used to meet your social care needs as described in your care and support plan. This will have been agreed between you and the Council's social care staff. Depending on your plan, the payment could be spent on:

- Personal care (e.g. assisting someone to wash and get dressed)
- Daily living tasks (e.g. cooking, cleaning, shopping)
- Social activities (e.g. attending community groups)
- Purchasing support equipment
- Support services from an agency
- Paying for long-term residential placements

Employing a Personal Assistant to support with the above tasks is one of the most common ways people choose to use Direct Payments.

## What is a Personal Assistant?

A Personal Assistant can be employed using Direct Payments to help you with what is listed on your care and support plan. For example, helping you with personal care, daily living tasks, and taking part in social activities.

The Council's Direct Payments Support Service can identify approved support providers who can take care of the responsibility of employing a Personal Assistant.

“Direct Payments has given me more control over my own life and enabled me to lead the life that I choose.”

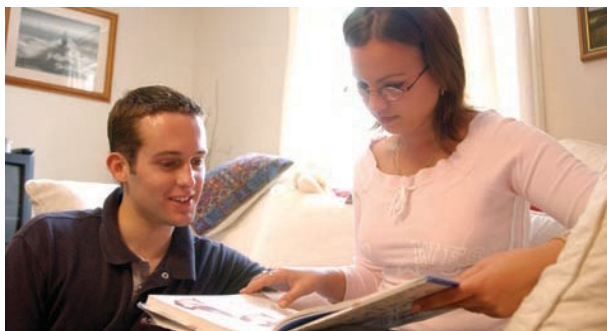
## Are there any restrictions on how I can use Direct Payments?

You are not generally allowed to use Direct Payments to:

- Purchase support from your spouse or partner, or someone who lives in the same household as you (unless it is agreed that this is necessary to promote your wellbeing)
- Purchase support that is not listed on your care and support plan







## What support will I receive to manage my Direct Payments?

Our main aim is to make it easy for you. The Council's Direct Payments Support Service can help you through the whole process of setting up Direct Payments and can also provide you with ongoing support. The Service works with approved support providers which can offer you advice and practical help with managing Direct Payments. This includes help with things such as employing staff, health and safety advice, paying wages, and sorting out tax and National Insurance. Additional money will be allocated to your Direct Payments package to cover the running costs of the support required.

In other words, for you, it is problem free.

Our Support Service can also help you to find and recruit a suitable Personal Assistant. For example, help with advertising a vacancy and interviewing.

**[www.npt.gov.uk/directpayments](http://www.npt.gov.uk/directpayments)** is our dedicated website for helping people who receive Direct Payments in Neath Port Talbot and is kept up to date with useful information.

“Using Direct Payments I employ someone from my local area to help me get up and go to bed. I can change what time my Personal Assistant starts which is useful for me when I'm asked to work overtime in my job at short notice.”

## How much money will I receive?

Direct Payments are based on the amount and type of care you need. This will be decided during your assessment.

After you have identified what you would like to achieve, you can decide what services and support you want to use to meet your eligible needs. This forms the basis of your care and support plan.

The Council will also assess if you need to pay towards the cost of your support. This is known as your social care contribution and applies regardless of whether you have a package of care and support delivered by the Council or use Direct Payments.

## How will the money be paid?

You will need to open a separate bank account for your Direct Payments. The agreed amount is paid into your account every four weeks in advance and you will be advised of these dates.

## Is there anything I need to do?

All we ask is that you keep a record of the money going into and out of the account and what you use it for. This allows you to demonstrate that you are spending the money outlined in your care and support plan. The Direct Payments Support Service can help you to manage this account.

**“My direct payment has allowed me to advertise and choose exactly who I want to care for me”.**

## **Other Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What if I don't want the responsibility of being an employer?**

The Direct Payments Support Service can help you to identify an approved support provider who will assist you to manage the responsibilities of being an employer. Additional money will be allocated to your Direct Payments package to cover the running costs of this service.

### **Is there help to find the correct type of support services?**

The Direct Payments Support Service will help you to find suitable providers to assist with your care and support needs.

### **Can I decide what time my Personal Assistant starts and finishes?**

Yes you can. Direct Payments give you the choice and control to decide exactly what time your Personal Assistant starts and finishes.

### **I am already receiving services from the Council - can I switch to Direct Payments?**

Yes, all you need to do is ask your social worker to change to Direct Payments.

### **Can I have Direct Payments for some of my care needs and use Council services for others?**

Yes you can. It is possible to have some of your care needs provided by the Council's Social Services teams and arrange others yourself using Direct Payments.

### **Will having Direct Payments affect the benefits I receive?**

No it will not affect your existing benefits. Direct Payments are not considered as income and they are not a replacement for benefits.





## Contact details

**To receive an assessment for Direct Payments (adults):**

### **NPT Gateway**

**Address:** Cimla Hospital, Neath SA11 3SU

**Telephone:** (01639) 686802

**Email:** [thegateway@npt.gov.uk](mailto:thegateway@npt.gov.uk)

**To receive an assessment for Direct Payments (children):**

### **Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Team**

**Address:** Neath Civic Centre, Neath SA11 3QZ

**Telephone:** 01639 686803

**Email:** [spoc@npt.gov.uk](mailto:spoc@npt.gov.uk)

**If you have already received an assessment or need further information on Direct Payments:**

### **Direct Payment Support Service**

**Address:** Cimla Hospital, Neath SA11 3SU

**Telephone:** 01639 686812

**Email:** [directpayments@npt.gov.uk](mailto:directpayments@npt.gov.uk)



## **Jargon buster**

### **Assessment**

An assessment is carried out between a person and the Council to help decide what is required to support a person's needs. An assessment focuses on what is best for the person and what is needed for a person to live comfortably.

### **Care and support plan**

The care professional will agree with you a care and support plan which sets out how your eligible needs are going to be met. You will be given a copy of your plan.

### **Direct Payments**

Money that is paid to you on a regular basis by your local council, so you can arrange your own care and support.

### **Personal Assistant (PA)**

This is someone you choose to employ to support you. This may include cooking, cleaning, help with personal care such as washing and dressing and other things like going out and about in your local community. Personal Assistants are often called PAs.

### **Approved support providers**

Independent organisations which can take on all the responsibilities of being an employer of a Personal Assistant on behalf of a person receiving Direct Payments.

### **Eligibility**

The Council decides how much money you are allowed, based on how much care and support you need to live independently. You are eligible for support if you needs meet the Council's criteria.