

Direct Payments



Direct Payments mean that you have more **choice** about the services you receive

Direct Payments mean that you have more **control** over the way your services are designed

This leaflet tells you about Direct Payments:

- what they are
- who can get them
- how you can get them
- what you can use them for
- and how KDC can help you manage them



Choice and Control



What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are cash payments made to individuals who have been assessed as eligible to receive social care or support from their social services department. So instead of Knowsley Council arranging or providing your services directly, you are given the money to buy the support and services you need.

If you use the money to employ your own personal assistant or to pay for support from an agency, then the council will make regular payments into an account that you have set up for this purpose.

A one-off Direct Payment can be made to help pay for, or contribute towards, the cost of an item of equipment.

Direct Payments give you the flexibility to vary the support you buy as your needs change over time.

Direct Payments do not affect your state benefits and are not counted as taxable income (although the wages for anyone you employ using a Direct Payment will be subject to tax and national insurance).

Who can get a Direct Payment?

Anyone who has been assessed as needing a service provided by the Council's social services department can choose to fund the services they need via a Direct Payment.

Direct Payments are available to disabled people over 16, older people, parents of disabled children and people affected by mental illness.

Carers who are over 16 can receive a Direct Payment for services to meet their own needs.



How can you get a Direct Payment?

Ask the council whether Direct Payments may be a possibility for you. Your social worker, care manager or key worker will be able to help you get a Direct Payment.

Once you have been assessed and the budget for your support plan has been agreed you will need to open a dedicated bank account.

Under Knowsley's Fairer Charging Policy everyone has a financial assessment. This will determine how much (if anything) you should pay towards the costs of your care and support. This is called your 'client contribution' and will be deducted from the amount of the Direct Payment that the Council will pay into your dedicated bank account every four weeks.

You will be given lots of advice and assistance from KDC to help you make the necessary initial arrangements as well as continued on-going support to manage your Direct Payment successfully.

What can you use Direct Payments for?

You can use Direct Payments to pay for any services or support that meet your assessed needs. These will be described as outcomes in your care or support plan.

In Knowsley, there are lots of different ways that people spend their Direct Payments. Some common examples are:

- Employment of staff as personal assistants
- Using a domiciliary care agency of your choice
- Community-based short breaks or respite care in residential accommodation
- Taking part in community activities
- Transportation and travel
- Domestic and household tasks

The council will keep a check on your spending to make sure that your outcomes continue to be achieved.





How can we help?

Knowsley Disability Concern provides a specialist service for people who receive Direct Payments from Knowsley Council. We offer information, support and advice on all aspects, making it easier for you to:

- think about your support needs
- find the right support
- manage your Direct Payments bank account
- recruit a personal assistant
- be a good employer
- manage your payroll
- keep a record of your spending
- link with other Direct Payments users in Knowsley
- stay in touch with latest news and developments

For those people who cannot manage Direct Payments for themselves, KDC can offer a Managed Account Service which takes care of most of the responsibilities on their behalf.

For more information, contact the Direct Payments Team at KDC on 0151 480 8873 or email andy.gilbert@kdc.org.uk

