



A guide to getting Direct Payments from your council

On the way to independent living



EasyRead version

This guide has the latest information on Direct Payments in 2009 under the Health and Social Care Act 2001.

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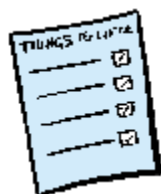
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Direct Payments mean that you get to make more choices in your life.

We want everyone to have a choice about how the money for their support is spent.



This guide will help you to understand what Direct Payments are and if they are right for you.



What is a Direct Payment?

It is money from your council to help pay for your support.



It can help you meet your needs in new and different ways.



You control the money for your services, instead of the council.

You can use it to employ people to help you with lots of different things, like:



- personal care



- support to live in your own house



- support for going out.



You can also use it to go on holiday or buy equipment.

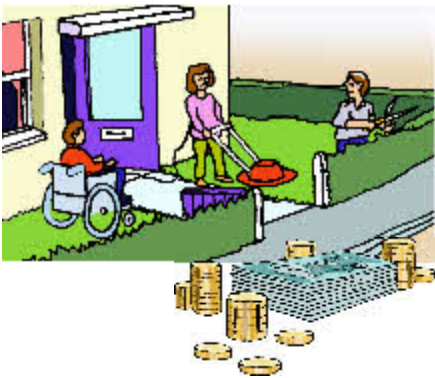


These payments do not change your:

- benefits



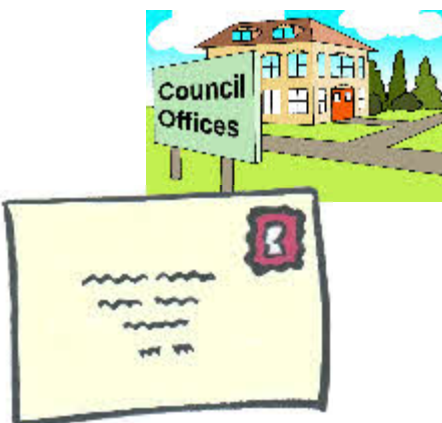
- child support



- independent living fund payments



- income tax.



Nearly everyone who gets services from the council can get Direct Payments.

Your council **must** tell you if you can have one.

What are my choices?



1. You want to use Direct Payments

You need to show that you can manage the money in the right way on your own or with help.



You need to show that you will spend the money on the right things.



2. You do not want to use Direct Payments

It is your choice. You do not have to get Direct Payments and your council can still take care of things if you want.



If you already have Direct Payments you can still change your mind. You just need to tell your council that you want services instead.



3. Looking after Direct Payments for someone else

If you have a family member or friend who cannot decide about Direct Payments, then you might be able to do it for them.



If things change, your family member or friend might be able to start looking after them on their own again, with or without your help.



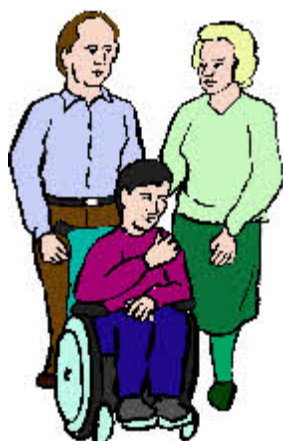


Can I get Direct Payments?

You can if you are:



- an older person who needs community care services
- a disabled person over 16 years old



- a parent of someone who is disabled
- a carer



- a disabled person who needs help being a parent



- helping someone who cannot look after the money on their own.



How do I get Direct Payments?

Speak to your social worker as they can help you to see what your support needs are.



If you have not had an assessment before then your council needs to do this before you can have Direct Payments.

An assessment is a check to see what you need.



What do I need to do for the assessment?

Think about what your needs are.

You can do this by keeping a diary for a week. Record:



- what you do



- how long it takes



- what help you get

- what you want to be able to do.



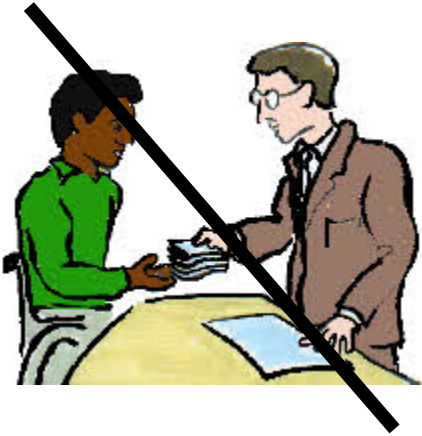
Do not leave anything out. Even the small things that you don't do all the time are important.

What if my council already sorts out my needs?



You still have the choice to use Direct Payments. Just ask them what your choices are.

What if I cannot get services from my council?



If your assessment found that you did not need services then you will not get Direct Payments.



If your needs have changed ask for a new assessment.





What can I spend the money on?

You can spend the money to get the help and equipment your assessment says you need.



Your council could sort out some of the things you need, and you could use Direct Payments to sort out the rest.



If you want to employ someone as a helper or personal assistant, we have a guide called **Becoming an employer** that can help.



See page 25 for how to get it.

What you cannot spend the money on



You cannot use the money for:

- help from the council



- paying your husband, wife or partner



- paying a close relative who lives in the same house as you unless the council has agreed



- long-term residential care.



You may be able to have short-term residential care if your council agrees.



If you want to leave long-term residential care you can also get Direct Payments to help you do this.

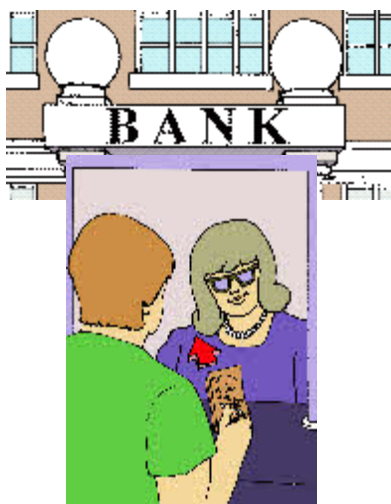


Residential care is when you live in a care home because you cannot live on your own even with support.



How much will I get?

You will get enough money to meet what you have agreed with the council.



Your council will need to make sure that you are buying services at the best price. You must have a bank account for the Direct Payment. If you don't have one now, it is easy to set one up.



What do I have to pay?

You may have to pay some of the cost of your services.



This should be a fair amount.

What if I am not happy about my Direct Payments?



If you are not happy about what you get or the money you have to pay then speak to your council.



You do not have to take Direct Payments if you think you will not get enough money.



What happens in emergencies?

You will need to make plans for when things go wrong. Ask your council what they expect you to do.



There may be money for when emergencies happen.



What if my needs change?

Contact your council if your needs change.



Do not spend the money if you no longer need to.

You will have to give back any money which you do not need.

Do I need to keep records?



Yes. Your council needs to see that the money has been used in the right way.



Keep a record of everything you spend and proof of what it was for. You may be able to get help to do this.



Will the council check up on me?

Yes. They need to make sure that your needs are being met and that the money is being spent in the right way.



What happens if I have problems looking after my Direct Payments?

Tell your council. They may be able to help or find you someone who can.



If you spend the Direct Payments wrongly your council may stop your payments.



You may have to give back the money.

Your council can decide to stop your Direct Payments if they think you cannot manage the money. If this happens, the council will take care of your needs for you.



What if I am not happy?

If you are not happy or want to make a complaint about your council then contact them.



If you are not happy about an agency or a certain person then speak to them first.



Things you need to do before you can get Direct Payments

Use this as a checklist for what you need to talk to your council about.

☐

What will your Direct Payments cover?

☐

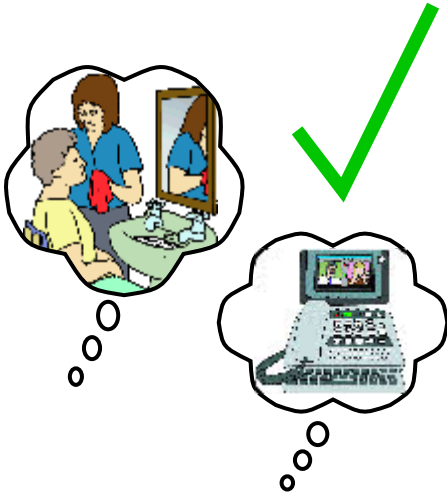
How much will you get?

☐

How much will you have to pay?

☐

How will you spend the money?


☐

What can you spend it on?


☐

What can you **not** spend it on?


☐

What changes can you make in the future?


☐

What are your plans for emergencies?

☐

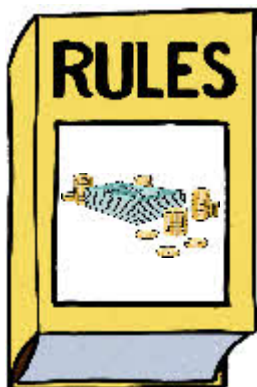
When and how you will get the money?

☐

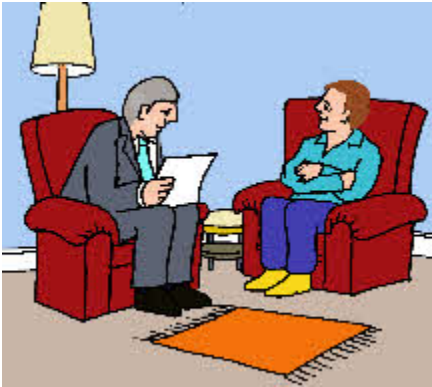
How should you show the council what you have spent?

☐

How will the council check how you have spent the money?

☐

What rules do you need to follow?

☐

When will your Direct Payments be looked at again?

☐

Why would the council stop your Payments?

☐

What happens if you stop spending the Direct Payment?

☐

What money will they want back if you stop?



Where to get help and information

Speak to your council first.

They can also tell you who else can help.



Most councils have set up a local support service to help people use direct payments. These can help you understand how to manage your direct payment.

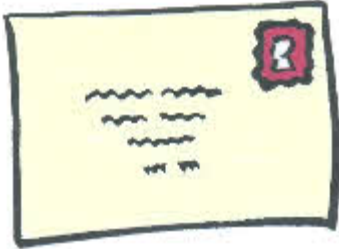


You can ask your friends and family to help.



The National Centre for Independent Living

They have information about local support organisations and Direct Payments.



**Unit 3.40 Canterbury Court
1-3 Brixton Road
London
SW9 6DE**



Telephone: **020 7587 1663**



Fax: **020 7582 2469**



Textphone: **020 7587 1177**



Website: **www.ncil.org.uk**

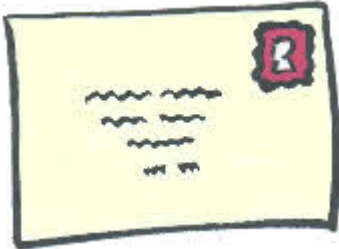


Email: **ncil@ncil.org.uk**



Values into Action

They have information about Direct Payments.



**Oxford House
Derbyshire Street
London
E2 6HG**



Telephone: **020 7729 5436**



Fax: **020 7729 7797**



Website: **www.viauk.org**



Email: **general@viauk.org**

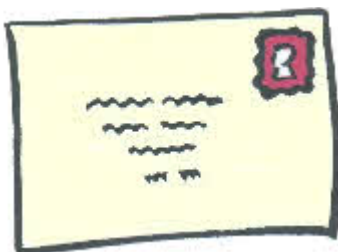
The Department of Health



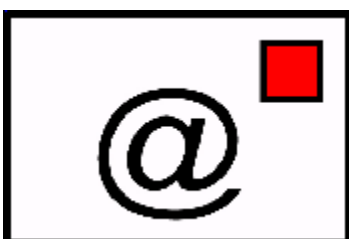
They have a booklet called 'Guidance on direct payments for community care, services for carers and children's services: England 2009'.



They also have a guide called 'Becoming an Employer using Direct Payments'.



**PO Box 777
London
SE1 6XH**

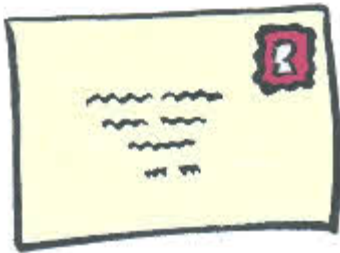


Email: **dh@prolog.uk.com**



Other people who can help

Give them a call. They may have an office near you that you can go to.



People First

**299 Kentish Town Road
London
NW5 2TJ**

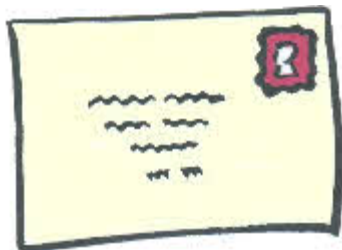


Telephone: **020 7485 6660**



Fax: **020 7485 6664**

Carers UK



**20/25 Glasshouse Yard
London
EC1A 4JT**



Telephone: **0808 808 7777**



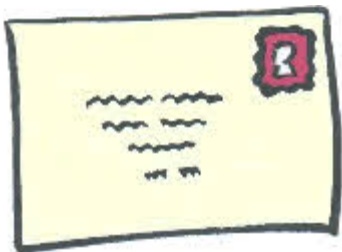
Fax: **020 7490 8824**



Website: **www.carersonline.org.uk**



Email: **info@ukcarers.org**



Contact A Family
209-211 City Road
London
EC1V 1JN



Telephone: **020 7608 8700**



Fax: **020 7608 8701**



Textphone: **0808 808 3556**



Contact A Family helpline for parents and families with disabled children



Telephone: **0808 808 3555**

(10am-4pm, Mon-Fri)

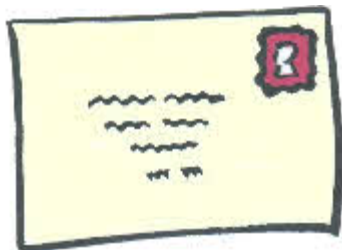


Website: **www.cafamily.org.uk**



Email: **info@cafamily.org.uk**

Council for Disabled Children, National Children's Bureau



**8 Wakley Street
London
EC1V 7QE**



Telephone: **020 7843 1900**



Fax: **020 7843 6313**



Website: **www.ncb.org.uk**

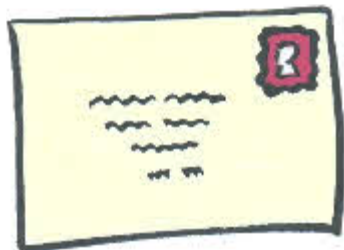


Email: **cdc@ncb.org.uk**



For better mental health

MIND (the mental health charity)



**15–19 Broadway
London
E15 4BQ**



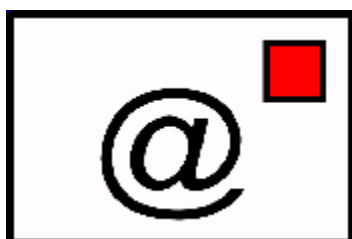
Telephone: **020 8519 2122**



Fax: **020 8522 1725**



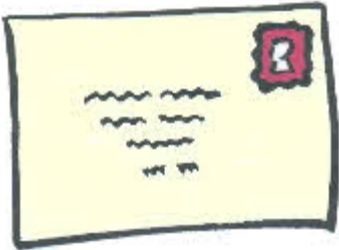
Website: **www.mind.org.uk**



Email: **contact@mind.org.uk**



Rethink (mental health charity)



**15th Floor
89 Albert Embankment
London, SE1 7TP**

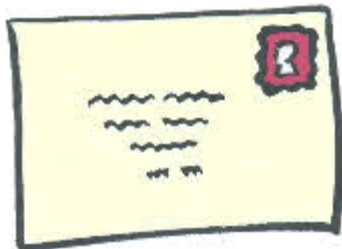


Telephone: 020 7840 3188



Email: advice@rethink.org

Alzheimer's Society



**Gordon House
10 Greencoat Place
London, SW1P 1PH**



Telephone: 020 7306 0606



Fax: 020 7306 0808



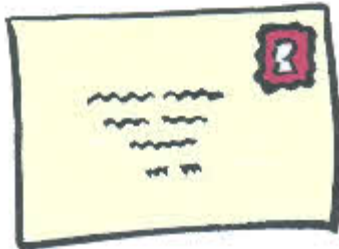
Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk



**Email:
enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk**



Help the Aged



**207-221 Pentonville Road
London
N1 9UZ**



Telephone: 020 7278 1114



Fax: 020 7278 1116



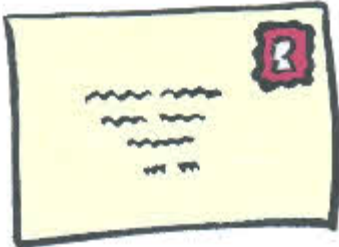
Website: www.helptheaged.org.uk



Email: info@helptheaged.org.uk



Age Concern England



**Astral House
1268 London Road
London, SW16 4ER**

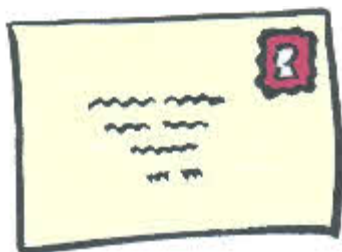


Telephone: 0800 00 99 66



Website: www.ageconcern.org.uk

Counsel and Care



**Twyman House
16 Bonny Street
London, NW1 9PG**



Telephone: 0845 300 7585



Website: www.counselandcare.org.uk

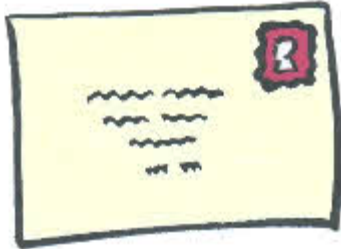


Email:

advice@counselandcare.org.uk



The National Centre for Disabled Parents



**Unit F9
89-93 Fonthill Road
London
N4 3JH**



Telephone: 0800 018 4730



Fax: 020 7263 6399



Textphone: 0800 018 9949



Website: www.dppi.org.uk



Email: info@dppi.org.uk

**Disability
alliance**



Disability Alliance

**Universal House
88-94 Wentworth Street
London E1 7SA**



Telephone (voice and minicom):

020 7247 8776



Fax: **020 7247 8765**



Website: **www.disabilityalliance.org**

Home Office

UK Border Agency

The Border and Immigration Agency

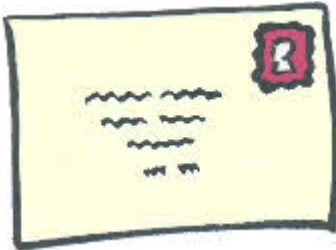
For information on work permits.



Website: **www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk**



The National AIDS Trust



**New City Cloisters
196 Old Street
London
EC1V 9FR**



Telephone: 020 7814 6767



Fax: 020 7216 0111



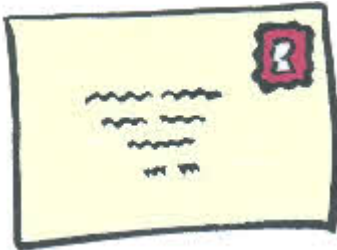
Website: www.nat.org.uk



Email: info@nat.org.uk



Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development



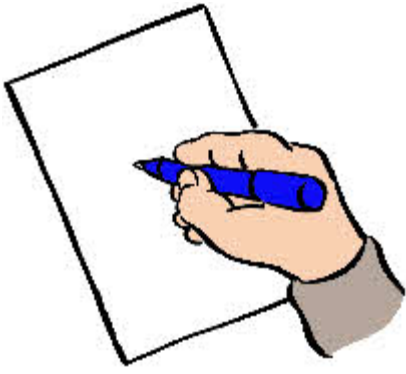
**151 Broadway
London, SW19 1JQ**



Telephone: 020 8612 6200



Website: www.cipd.co.uk



Space for writing notes



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