

What is a Direct Payment?

A Direct Payment is a mechanism that an individual can use in order to have more choice and control over their care and support.

A Direct Payment is a cash payment paid directly from the Local Authority to an individual (or a third party) who has been assessed as being eligible for social care support. The individual's assessment for support will identify their 'outcomes', i.e. what matters to them in

their life. For example: "I want to feel safe" or "I want to improve my skills". The aim of the Direct Payment is to fulfil the individual's agreed outcomes.

By choosing to use their social care money as a Direct Payment, an individual is choosing Option 1 of the 4 options of Self-directed Support (SDS) within the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013.

A Direct Payment is 1 of the 4 options of Self-directed Support

Option 1: Direct Payment

A cash payment paid directly to the supported person, or to a family member/carer/guardian, to be spent on fulfilling the outcomes from the person's assessment.

Option 2: Individual Service Fund


The person chooses what support they would like. The Local Authority (or an agency) holds their budget and makes the arrangements on the person's behalf.

Option 3: Direct Service

The Local Authority selects the support and arranges it.

Option 4: A Combination

The supported person can choose to mix the above options to suit them.

 - See Self-directed Support factsheet for more information.

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Who can get a Direct Payment?

To get a Direct Payment you must be eligible for social care support from your Local Authority. A Local Authority's Social Work Department finds out if an individual is eligible by carrying out an assessment.

A Direct Payment is an option for anyone who is eligible for social care, e.g. people with learning difficulties, people with mental health problems, people with a physical impairment, older people and disabled children.

A Local Authority cannot offer a Direct Payment to an individual receiving long-term residential care. There are also certain circumstances in which a Local Authority is not required to give the opportunity to choose a Direct Payment.

☐ - See Self-directed Support (Direct Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. In a case like this, the Local Authority must notify the individual in writing and suggest other support options.

What can a Direct Payment be used for?

A Direct Payment is for fulfilling the agreed outcomes from an individual's assessment. The individual should have the freedom to use the money to fulfil those outcomes creatively and flexibly.

Here are some examples of what some people use the money for:

- Employing their own staff (Personal Assistants)
- Purchasing services from an agency
- Making a one-off payment for something specific, e.g. enrolment onto an adult education course.

Can an individual get support to manage their Direct Payment?

As well as choice and flexibility, individuals using Direct Payments also have responsibility for making sure they are using this option correctly. Support is available from 'support organisations'.

To find out who your local support organisation is and how to contact them, search the SDSS Information and Support Database: www.sdsinfo.org.uk