

Direct payments

What is a Direct Payment?

A Direct Payment is a payment of money from the local authority to either a person needing care and support (known as a service user), or to someone else acting on their behalf, to pay for the cost of arranging all or part of their own support.

If you, as a service user, ask them to, your local authority could make Direct Payments to you instead of arranging or providing any care or support services itself. This ensures you can take full control over your own care. The local authority must provide a Direct Payment to someone who meets the criteria specified in the Care Act 2014.

I've been offered Direct Payments as a way of providing my care. What should I think about?

Look at your existing package of care: what works and what does not work?

Consider the number of hours spent on the activities detailed in your current care package. This can include:

- dressing
- personal care
- hospital appointments
- religious activities
- social and leisure activities
- aids, equipment or adaptations

Please note this allocation of funds and resources can vary in different regions across the UK.

Who do you want to provide your care?

- existing carer
- family member
- informal carer
- agency
- paid carer
- social services

Before you can be awarded direct payments, your care needs will be assessed. Who could be involved in this assessment?

- a representative from your local council
- a social worker (if you have one)
- your advocate
- your current carer
- your relative involved in your care

What is involved in your assessment?

Looking at your current package of care. Your care package will be broken down into episodes of care. This can include:

- bathing
- dressing
- eating meals
- daily living which require assistance, such as assistance with attending clinic appointments
- Agreeing a care timetable that works for you – the negotiation will take place between you and your care provider

How is your care package calculated?

Your local council will use a 'resource allocation system' to decide how much money you will be paid through direct payments. This involves:

- assessing your needs and evaluating how much they may cost – this is determined by information collected during the assessment process
- each response will be given a score
- each score will indicate how much money to allocate to your care package

A representative from your health authority and your EB Clinical Nurse Specialist could be involved or your EB Clinical Nurse Specialist could be invited to offer their expert opinion on the needs related to your EB.

Your EB Community Support Manager can help

Your EB Community Support Manager can provide you with information and support on wide range of social issues, including help with applying for direct payments, filling out DLA forms or obtaining support from other organisations. Please get in touch using the numbers on the back of this magazine, visit www.debra.org.uk/practical-and-emotional-support/intro, or call 01344 771961 if you are not sure who your local EB community support manager is. We'll be happy to help!

This is the second in a series of articles on direct payments. You can read the first one in the Autumn 2015 issue of In Touch (available here: www.debra.org.uk/publications#intouch). In the next issue of In Touch we will be focusing on top tips for the ongoing management of your direct payments.