

## Care and support choices: **direct payments**

More and more people living with EB are being offered direct payments as an alternative to their current council-managed care arrangements. Choosing the right care can be tricky, so we've put together this article to help answer some of your questions about direct payments. Your DEBRA EB Community Support Manager will be happy to provide you with further information and support you in arranging care. Contact us using the numbers on the back of this magazine. Alternatively, if you are unsure who your Community Support Manager is, please call 01344 771961 or email [membership@debra.org.uk](mailto:membership@debra.org.uk).

### Your care and support options

If you have been assessed by your local council as needing care and support, you can decide to use services provided by your council or you can opt to receive direct payments and arrange the care yourself. With either option, you may also have to make a financial contribution towards the cost of your care.

### What are direct payments?

An alternative to using services provided and arranged by your local authority, direct payments are paid directly to you so you can decide how you want to meet your care and support needs. Some people use direct payments to employ a personal assistant (PA) to help with daily living tasks like washing, dressing and preparing food, although there are many other ways direct payments can be used.

#### Many people find direct payments useful because:

- you take control of your care
- you may be able to plan a care package you feel best suits your needs
- you have more flexibility and choice about who provides your care and when

#### Things to consider if you are thinking about using direct payments:

- If you use your direct payments to employ a person (such as a PA), you are an employer in the eyes of the law and must meet your legal obligations, including:
  - providing your employee with a pension
  - ensuring their tax and national insurance is paid
  - providing holiday entitlement
  - making sure you have adequate public liability insurance

- If you use your direct payments to pay an agency to provide care, these requirements should be covered by the agency, but it's always a good idea to check they are being met.
- Direct Payments will be paid into a separate bank account which you will need to set up.
- You will need to keep documentary evidence showing how the payments are being used to meet the care needs detailed in your care plan or assessment. This includes:
  - submitting receipts and invoices to your council
  - completing records and paperwork involved with becoming an employer
- You can get help from another person to manage the direct payments – however, unless the person has been granted Power of Attorney for you, or you are under 18, you remain legally responsible for your direct payments.

- You can decide whether to use direct payments or care provided directly by the council – you do not have to have direct payments if you do not want them.
- If you decide to have direct payments, you can change your mind at any time – contact your local social services and ask them to arrange services instead.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions – it's important to choose what's right for you.

**Miranda Hartley –  
DEBRA EB Community  
Support Manager**

*Thank you to all members of the DEBRA EB Community Support team and the EB team at Solihull Hospital for their contributions to this article.*

### Useful links

[www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council)

[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/direct-payments-personal-budgets.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/direct-payments-personal-budgets.aspx)

[www.disabilityrightsuk.org/community-care-direct-payments](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/community-care-direct-payments)

[www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/direct-payments](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/direct-payments)