

Direct Payments for care in North Somerset

Fact sheet 1

General information

Aim of a direct payment

A direct payment (also called a DP) is a sum of money from the council to use to arrange and pay for your care and support.

The aim is to give you greater flexibility, more choice and control over the support you get. If you get a direct payment, you can decide how your needs will be met, by whom, and when. For example, you might decide to employ your own personal assistant (PA) to work at the times you choose instead of receiving support from a care agency arranged by the council.

Eligibility for a direct payment

Direct payments from adult social services can be made to anyone aged 18 or over who is assessed as having eligible needs for care and support. You must be able to consent to have a direct payment and have the capacity to manage one either on your own or with assistance.

North Somerset council will ensure everyone who is eligible has the option and support to have a direct payment.



Purpose of a direct payment

A direct payment is for you to use to achieve the agreed outcomes based on your eligible needs.

A direct payment means you can explore more creative ways of achieving the outcomes which will meet your needs. This means you have more choice about who provides your support and more control over how it is delivered.

Restrictions to the use of a direct payment

Direct payments cannot be used to purchase:

- Anything that does not meet your eligible care and support needs identified and agreed in your support plan. It is not an income so it cannot be spent on anything else.
- A long term stay in a care home, or residential accommodation.
- To pay a family member living in the same household as you to provide care unless agreed with the council in exceptional circumstances (see fact sheet 4).
- Services from the NHS or where another agency has responsibility.
- Equipment for which the council is not responsible or as a substitute for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Paying towards your care costs

You may need to pay towards your care. Following the assessment of your care and support needs you will be financially assessed to see whether you will have to pay toward the cost of your care and support. If so, the financial assessment will show how much you will be required to contribute. Your financial contribution will be the same as if the council were commissioning your support.

If the support you choose costs more than the amount within your direct payment amount you will need to discuss this with your allocated worker to find solutions, however if you decide that you wish to proceed with having a direct payment to purchase support costing more than the direct payment then you would be required to pay the difference in cost yourself.

Help available to manage your direct payment

If you would like a direct payment your allocated worker will contact the direct payment support team. They support with all aspects of setting up a direct payment. They will contact you to explain more about direct payments, how they work and the support available to help you understand the process.

This includes:

- Supporting you to set up a bank account.
- Advising you on employment responsibilities.
- Signposting and ensuring correct insurance is in place.
- Assist with completing any forms required.
- Support with recruitment of personal assistants (PA's) or care agencies.
- Completing Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for PA's.
- Reviewing the DP after 6 weeks with you to ensure it is working well and meeting your needs.

You can have as much help as you need to manage your direct payment.

This help can come from:

- Direct payment support team – North Somerset Council
- Family and friends
- Peer support

Setting up a direct payment

In most cases, you will need to open a separate bank or building society account. You will be expected to complete regular financial returns and return these to the council to show how you have been spending your direct payment.

If you are assessed to pay an amount towards the cost of your support, you will need to make arrangements to pay this money into your direct payment account so that you can clearly demonstrate that you are paying your assessed contribution. For further information about paying towards your care please speak to your allocated worker or request to see the non-residential charging policy.

You will need to contact your social worker/adult social care worker/DP support team or care connect if your needs or circumstances change.

Accepting a direct payment

The local authority has a duty to offer you the choice of a direct payment if you are eligible, but you do not have to accept. You can still choose to have your services arranged for you by social services. If you choose to have a direct payment and then decide you no longer want to continue with it, you can ask social services to stop the payment and arrange services for you. You are in control.

Applying for a direct payment

To be eligible for a direct payment, you need to be already receiving support arranged by social services or assessed as needing services. You can either speak to your existing social worker/adult social care worker or contact Care Connect and ask for an assessment of your needs.

A social worker/adult social care worker or the direct payments team can give you more information before deciding whether this is right for you.

How to contact North Somerset social services:

Care connect is the first point of contact for all social services adult care general enquiries.

Care Connect

Town Hall
Walliscotte Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

Telephone: 01275 888 801

email: careconnect@n-somerset.gov.uk

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files. Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English. Contact Jennifer.monks@n-somerset.gov.uk