

Direct Payments for care in North Somerset

Fact sheet 9

Avoiding risk and keeping safe

Introduction

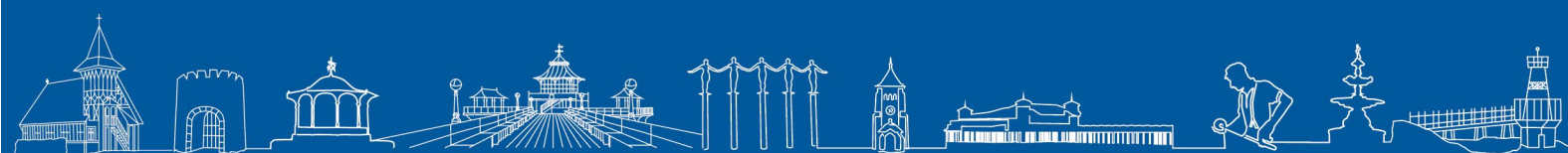
If you decide to have a direct payment, you can choose the people who will support you with your daily living needs, instead of using the services provided by the council. You can employ a carer of your choice or you can make a direct contract with a care agency. These arrangements can help you make sure your care needs are met in your own preferred way, by giving you more control over who helps you and how they help you.

There can be risks associated with managing your direct payments. This factsheet will help you think about how to manage those risks and put plans in place to reduce them, to help you stay as safe as possible.

The information provided in this factsheet is intended to go alongside the advice and guidance you will receive from adult social services. This might include a social worker, occupational therapist, or other health and social care professional.

Will I be safe employing a paid carer in my own home?

Just because there is a risk associated with something does not mean you should not do it. But it is important to know and understand the risks, and not just ignore them, so that you are able to protect yourself if necessary.



Letting people come into your home, undertake personal care, and get to know your routines and how you live, can be daunting. With some forward planning you can reduce the chance of any risks becoming a problem.

Training: A paid carer may support you in a variety of tasks (such as supporting you to take medication or helping you to move safely around your home and whilst out and about). This will require them to have certain level of knowledge, skill or experience. North Somerset Council offers free training to Personal Assistants in key skill areas. You can enrol your paid carers on these courses through your main Adult Social Service contact (i.e. social worker or occupational therapist etc).

If you receive your care and support from a care agency, they will have a responsibility to ensure that all their staff are trained appropriately.

Safe recruitment: Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are a way of helping employers to ensure that people providing care do not have prior convictions, which might indicate they are unsuitable for a caring position. North Somerset Council recommends that you interview people and check references and qualifications. We strongly recommend you carry out DBS checks on all PAs, whether or not you recruit through the [PA register](#).

The council's Direct Payment Support Team will support you in the process of getting all the relevant arrangements in place, including the navigating the DBS process.

Quality of care: The Care Quality Commission (CQC) checks whether care agencies are meeting government standards. You can read reports about the quality of care provided by any care agency that is registered with CQC (available at <http://www.cqc.org.uk>).

If you are concerned about the quality of care provided by an agency, you can also speak to your contact in adult social services. They can advise you on the best course of action to take.

What could go wrong?

Anyone can experience the following types of abuse at any time of life in different circumstances:

- **Physical abuse** is not just about physical injuries; it also includes the administering of medication that is not licensed for the purpose used
- **Financial abuse** is another name for stealing or defrauding someone of their goods and/or property.
- **Psychological abuse** invariably involves threatening or denying access to an object or person that matters to a vulnerable person unless that person complies with demands.
- **Sexual abuse** involves sex or sexual activity without a person's consent. It is a subject that is rarely discussed in relation to vulnerable adults, but is nevertheless a reality.
- **Neglect** can often be degrading because it involves denying someone access to basic human rights, whether that is food, medicine, companionship, or aids to day living such as walking sticks or frames.

Abuse is not acceptable in any shape or form, but taking steps to protect yourself can help. Self-protection is about understanding these risks and then taking actions to reduce or prevent those risks from becoming a problem for you.

It is important that you feel safe with the people who offer you care and support. You should always feel in control and in charge of the care and support your paid carer provides. If you feel like you are not in control or you feel uncomfortable with any situation it is right to raise your concerns as soon as possible. You can raise concerns with the person in adult social services you usually deal with, or through Care Connect on 01275 888 801.

What if I can't manage my direct payment money myself?

If you don't have capacity to manage your direct payment, then a 'suitable person' can be nominated to manage your budget on your behalf. A 'user controlled trust' may also be agreed, which means several people have responsibility for helping you manage the payments, but you still say how your money is used. If you have a suitable person or user controlled trust, the council must be satisfied that they will always act in your best interest before giving you a direct payment.

Ask you contact in adult social services for more advice about this. You can also call Care Connect for advice on 01275 888 801.

Is there anything else I need to know about direct payments?

If you need further information regarding direct payments please see the direct payment factsheet series.

How to contact North Somerset social services:

Care connect is the first point of contact for all adult social services adult 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 adultspolicy@n-somerset.gov.uk