

Kent County Council

Direct Payments Factsheet #1

What are Direct Payments?

1. Who is this factsheet for?

This factsheet is an introduction to direct payments and is produced by adult social care. If it does not give you all the information you need, please contact us, our details are at the end of this factsheet

2. What is a Direct Payment?

Direct payments are local council payments for people who have been assessed as needing help from adult social care, and who would like to arrange and pay for their own care and support services instead of receiving them directly from the local council. Having a direct payment gives you choice and control over how you organise, buy and manage your care and support.

3. How you can use Direct Payments

A person must have been assessed as needing services to receive a direct payment and the payment must be used to purchase the services that the person is assessed as needing. You will need to show within a care and support plan how the direct payment will be used to meet your assessed needs (there is a factsheet on care and support plans).

A range of support services are available, and direct payments can be used to buy either all of the support that a person has been assessed as needing, or just part of that support.

However can include:

- Personal care and assistance to help you to live in your own home
- Short breaks and respite care
- Support to access community, social and leisure activities
- Support for carers
- Items of agreed equipment

A person may wish to use their direct payment to employ a Personal Assistant/s (PA) to help them with meeting their needs. If you would like more information about Personal Assistants and Self Employed Personal Assistants you can contact the Direct Payment Support Team. The Direct Payment Support Team can provide information on becoming an employer and can help you with recruiting a PA.

4. How do I get a Direct Payment?

You will have a needs assessment and a financial assessment to determine if you are eligible for ongoing support from us and if you are required to make a financial contribution. If you are eligible for ongoing support you will be given a personal budget, you will need to show how you intend to spend the budget within a care and support plan which will need to be agreed with your Case Manager. You can choose how you wish to receive your personal budget from a range of options which includes direct payments or you may choose to use a combination of options for different elements of your care and support.

If you are required to make a financial contribution, this will pay for the first part of the care, with KCC contributing the balance of the personal budget. If you choose to receive all your personal budget as a direct payment your contribution will need to be paid into the direct payment account. Without this you will not have enough money to pay for the support you need.

Your direct payment method will be by the **Kent Card**: This is adult social care's primary method for providing a direct payment. The Kent Card is a CHIP and PIN Mastercard card. The direct payment is loaded onto your Kent Card. You manage this money and use it to purchase your support. You can use the card on the internet, the telephone or face to face. It is like a debit card so you cannot run up a debt on it. You can view your Kent Card statements online or choose to receive monthly statements to help you manage your direct payment. You can also have your direct payment sent to a bank account.

5. What does Direct Payments Involve?

With support and information, most people can manage direct payments. You need to keep records and receipts to show how you have spent your direct payments at regularly planned reviews. You will then have the freedom to arrange your own care and support that best meets your needs.

6. More Information

Information online: Social care: www.kent.gov.uk/adultsocialservices

Direct Payments: www.kentdp.co.uk

Direct Payment Support Team:

Kent's Direct Payment Support Team can provide information on all aspects of accessing and using direct payments. The team can provide support for people who have chosen to recruit and employ a Personal Assistant/Carer. This can include help with:

- Recruiting and employing a Personal Assistant
- Information on Self Employed Personal Assistant
- Information on Direct Payments

7. What to do next

If you want more information on direct payments you can contact your Case Manager or contact the Direct Payment Support Team on:

Telephone: 03000 413 600

Email: direct.payments@kent.gov.uk