

Direct Payments Support in Flintshire



If someone receives or is considering receiving a direct payment from Flintshire County Council to arrange individual social care support, this leaflet provides a summary of the information, advice, guidance and support they can expect to receive.

Background

Direct payments allow people to arrange and manage support that is personal to them, enabling more flexible and bespoke arrangements. To support people to understand, set up and manage their direct payments and to get the best outcomes from the funding, Flintshire County Council has a legal duty to make information, advice and support available.

In Flintshire we have done this by developing and providing a specialist direct payment support service.

The purpose of the service is to work in partnership with people who choose to receive a direct payment to help them develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to set up and manage their arrangements and responsibilities effectively.

Our aim is for people to competently self-manage their chosen support, or solution, enjoy improved quality of life and ensure that public money is used well.

The Services We Provide



Information and Advice

Aim – To help people to make an informed choice about whether a direct payment would be right for them.

We have developed a range of direct payments information in several different formats. We have tried to make this information easy for people to access and to understand.

The team will aim to provide information at the right time and explain things at a pace that is appropriate to the person.

Where a person chooses to employ their own Personal Assistants, we have a specific duty to ensure that employment responsibilities are understood.

If there is anything that the person doesn't understand, or they want to go back over, the team will revisit any part of the process at any time.

Once we have got to know each other and the person feels that they have received and understood the information needed to make an informed decision we will move onto the next steps.

Support

Aim – We want to help people develop their skills and confidence so that they can successfully arrange and manage good quality support independently.

Initially having a direct payment can appear daunting, but once set up direct payments generally work very smoothly and provide the person with many positive benefits.

As a starting point we will revisit the purpose of the direct payment and what is to be achieved. This information will be recorded in the persons Care & Support Plan. This enables us to begin to work with the person to think about how their direct payment will be used, what support might look like and how the arrangements will be managed.

It is important to understand that direct payments can be used for anything that is agreed will help meet a person's assessed social care needs and achieve agreed well-being outcomes, so it is not all just about direct support.

Throughout the process of support, we will regularly check the person's understanding and ensure that we are providing the right information, and support at the right pace. We will revisit anything that isn't clear, so please let us know.

Together we will gradually agree a plan of what needs to happen and when. This will involve us agreeing some actions and some timescales. It is important that you as the direct payment recipient commit to working with us.

The aim of direct payments is to enable people to take as much control as possible, so we will use this time to get a good understanding of the person's abilities and the levels of support they may need going forward. We will ensure that tasks are broken down into manageable chunks, so people needn't worry.

We will support the person to develop working relationships and strong links with supporting services. These networks will help ensure that support arrangements are successful once things are set up and that any potential problems are resolved quickly.

Our support will continue until the person is confident to manage their arrangements independently. However, we are always only a call away and further support will always be available from a member of the team.



Employing Personal Assistants

Employing Personal Assistants directly can be the most rewarding arrangement for many people. This option enables people to choose who supports them and enter a relationship that can grow over time. However, with employment comes some responsibilities.

The team has a duty to ensure that people considering this option understand what is involved and are prepared to commit to their responsibilities either with, or without support.

If the person has chosen to employ a Personal Assistant the team will provide support that is right for the person at every step, from advertising through to induction, arranging training, issuing contracts of employment, and getting criminal records checked etc.

As a service we want to help make sure that working arrangements and terms & conditions for Personal Assistants working in Flintshire are of a high standard. With this regard we will support direct payments recipients to become the best possible employers.

This support may involve arranging additional training, producing supporting literature, or providing hands on support in the longer term. We can support with whatever is needed to enable people to feel able to manage their employment responsibilities confidently.

Managing the money – Some people can be put off by the thought of being responsible for their funding, however, we will discuss all the options with them to ensure they are comfortable with whatever is agreed. For many people full control over the finances is preferable, whilst other people choose for this to be managed on their behalf. There are a range of different options available to make managing the money simple and stress free.

Our support will continue until we are all confident that everything is working well. Even then we are only a phone call away if there are ever any questions or queries.

Ending Support

Before ending any period of support, we will meet with the person to review what has been achieved and to ensure that all parties are comfortable and confident with the situation. We will never end our support unless we feel that it is the right time.

During the set-up process we will have provided you with useful contact details. Before closing we will revisit this to make sure that you know who to contact should you need support etc.

Your Responsibilities

As a team we are dedicated to promoting and developing opportunities for people to benefit from personalised care and support. We are wanting to work in partnership with people who want to use their direct payments to have greater choice and control over their lives and live as independently as possible. All we ask is that people are prepared to commit to the following:

- Work in partnership with us to get the most from your direct payments.
- Make sure that you understand the direct payments agreement between you and Flintshire County Council before you sign it.
- Commit to the support that you arrange using your direct payments.
- If you employ personal assistants take time to understand your employment responsibilities.
- Always ask for help from the team whenever you feel you need it.



Feedback

Your opinions matter to us, so

If you have been impressed by the service you have received from the direct payments team, or if you have suggestions about how we can improve the services we provide please complete the following short feedback form. Thank you in advance.

English: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/R8F05R/>

Welsh: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/10XWXF/>

Finally, we want you to be confident to approach any member of our team for support when you need it. We are here to help, so please don't hesitate if you need to contact us.



Contact details

Email: dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01352 701100