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direct payments
SUPPORT SERVICE

# Welcome...

## to the Flintshire Direct Payments Scheme

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# *Getting Started*

This welcome guide is aimed at helping you to understand how you can use your direct payments to meet your assessed needs for care & support. It explains your options, your responsibilities and the support that is available to you to set up, manage and maintain your direct payments for as long as you continue to use a direct payment.

Direct payments are money from Flintshire Social Services made available to eligible people to enable them to arrange support and solutions that help meet assessed social care needs and agreed well-being outcomes.

Most of us would agree that having choices in our lives from what we eat, where we go and how we spend our money are important and help make us individual and give us the freedom to live our lives in the ways we choose. It makes sense that if you need additional support to live your life you should be able to choose how this is provided, by whom and when.

Direct payments can offer greater flexibility, choice, and control than support arranged for you by the local authority. For example, you may decide to employ your own personal assistant (PA), providing you with support from a person you have chosen, at the times that suit you. You may decide to buy your support from a care agency of your choice, or from a micro care provider. You may want to find an alternative to the types of respite care being offered by the council. You can think about how your needs are met in a range of creative ways and even pool your direct payments with other people if you choose. There are very few limits to the types of solutions you could fund. All we require is that the funding is used to meet your assessed needs and agreed outcomes and that solutions are planned with and agreed by Flintshire Social Services.

If your chosen solutions are safe and legal, Direct Payments can be used in a variety of creative and innovative ways. The most important thing is that you can meet your assessed needs for care & support in the ways that you choose, enjoy improved opportunities and independence and are able to get on with living your life.

The Flintshire direct payments support service has produced a range of direct payments related information designed to give you relevant information and help you make choices that are right for you. Your allocated direct payments officer will discuss this information and the options available to you and provide appropriate support at every stage.

You can also access a variety of useful information at our web site, so please visit:

https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/DirectPayments/Home.aspx

Please remember that Support is available from the Direct Payments Support Service at every step of this process, so if you have any questions, please contact the team:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk

## *Direct Payments Support*

Flintshire Social Services has invested in an in-house specialist direct payments support service. The purpose of the service is to work alongside people who are either considering receiving a direct payment or who have chosen to arrange their care & support using a direct payment. The team aims to help people gain the knowledge and confidence to be able to manage their arrangements well, get the best possible outcomes from the funding available, and get on with living life with the support they need.

With the information necessary and the right support many people who receive a direct payment manage their responsibilities with very little involvement from the support service, some people may need a little extra help and guidance whilst others will require ongoing support and reassurance.

The direct payments team will work with you to try to make sure that you get the right level of support. We don't want to over support you, so will always encourage, and support you to be as self-managing as possible.

Whatever your support needs, the direct payments team are only a phone call away.

Some of the key things that we will do are:

- Arrange for an allocated member of the team to meet with you face to face whenever possible to introduce ourselves, provide you with information and answer any initial questions you might have.
- Help you to consider how you might use your direct payments and how this might benefit your life and the things that matter to you.
- Discuss how you would like to be supported, the best types of communication for you and whether there are family members or friends who you would like to be involved.
- Agree next steps and what each of us will do.

- If you choose to employ Personal Assistants to provide care & support, we will explain our step by step approach to recruitment and how we will support you to recruit the right person safely.

Choosing to arrange your care and support through a direct payment does not mean that you must do everything on your own. The Direct Payments Support Service want you to get the best outcomes from your funding and will be with you every step of the way.

## *Managing your Direct Payments*

When you begin to use direct payments, you need to know how you will receive the money, make payments for the services you use, pay Personal Assistants, and pay any associated costs such as payroll or Care Agency bills.

We have worked hard over the years to make managing your direct payment as simple as possible. There is now very little paperwork and people can choose the level of involvement they have over managing the money.

Whilst for some people managing direct payments can initially feel daunting, we will ensure that your funding is set up in the right way for you and our support won't end until you are confident that everything is working for you.

Your direct payment support officer will explain the options in more detail and help you set things up, so please don't worry.

## *Who can get a Direct Payment*

If you have been assessed by Flintshire Social Services as someone who needs additional care & support to live your life and are eligible for financial help towards this, you can choose to receive a direct payment. This means that you can receive the funds directly and begin to arrange the types of support that are right for you.

If you receive care and support that has been arranged by the council and feel that something more bespoke or personal would improve the way that you live, you can choose to move onto a direct payment at any time.

Unpaid Carters can also receive a direct payment if an assessment of their Carers needs has been completed and it is agreed that funded support is needed.

If you have any questions or need clarification regarding eligibility to receive direct payments, please contact a member of the Direct Payments Team.

## *Your Direct Payments Bank Account*

In Flintshire we have worked alongside a company called EML. They are leaders in developing payment solutions. Flintshire Social Service purchase a simple to use card account system to help people manage their direct payments. When a direct payment is set up Flintshire Social Services issue an account for the money to be paid into every four weeks. You use the account specifically to pay the agreed bills associated with your direct payment.

Because this account is monitored by Flintshire Social Services from time to time there is no need for you to provide any financial monitoring information to the council. It also means that if there is a problem, we can easily freeze the account, or if additional money is needed we can pay this into the account.

The system cuts down on paperwork and enables you to focus on living your life with the support you have arranged.

## *Using your Direct Payments Creatively*

We want you to get the very best outcomes from your direct payments.

To help you use your direct payments effectively we will help you think about the different ways you might choose to use the available funding.

This will always be to help you meet your assessed social care needs and achieve the outcomes that are important to you and have been agreed with Flintshire Social Services. This might be to buy equipment, or technology that could help you, arrange an activity, pool funding with other people, or create an opportunity to develop skills etc. Each solution will be personal for you and the list of possibilities is endless.

## *How to find the right Personal Assistant*

The Flintshire Direct Payments Support Service will support you to find a Personal Assistant that is right for you. We may already have someone on our Personal Assistant Portal who would be suitable and/or we will help you to recruit someone. We often use online jobsites such as Indeed, can help you recruit locally or via social media, or consider recruitment from other places you may have links with.

You may already know someone, like a family member, friend, or neighbour who would like to be your Personal Assistant. Depending on your circumstances you may even be able choose to employ a family member whom you live with.

## *Buying Support from a Care Agency*

For more information on Care Agencies please visit the Care Inspectorate Wales website **https://careinspectorate.wales** or ask your Social Worker for a list of local agencies included on the council's care provider framework.

The direct payments support service can also provide a list of Care Agencies. This list may also include Care providers who are registered with Care Inspectorate Wales but have chosen not to join the councils care provider framework.

## *Using a Micro-Care Provider*

Micro-Carers are self-employed sole traders or small companies of no more than four individual self-employed workers. Micro-Carers provide care and support to people living in their own homes to meet their assessed needs and help achieve agreed well-being outcomes.

As micro-care workers are self-employed, they pay their own tax & National Insurance, so there is no need for payroll services, insurance, or employment support.

Whilst this may seem appealing, and can be a great option for people, self-employment is situation specific, so before you choose to use anyone claiming to be self-employed you must satisfy yourself that they would not be deemed as employed if anything went wrong.

Micro Carers can be a good option for some people, so if you would like further information, please discuss with the direct payments team.

## *Monitoring how you Direct Payments are Working.*

Your direct payment must be used in ways that meet assessed care & support needs and agreed outcomes. These should be written down in the Care and Support Plan you agreed and signed with your Social Worker.

The council will review how your support is working to make sure that it is and continues to meet its intended purpose. This will usually be after 6 weeks, then either 6 or 12 monthly thereafter.

As direct payments are public money, the council is also required to check that you continue to spend the direct payment as it was intended. Audits of your account are proportionate and will be carried out regularly over the first 6 months. Ongoing monitoring reviews will be held either 3, 6 or 12 monthly depending on the amount of money involved as well as other risk factors.

If there any issues are identified during monitoring reviews, we will discuss these with you as soon as possible and discuss ways in which they might be resolved.

If you do get into difficulties managing the money, we would strongly urge you to contact the direct payments team as soon as possible so that we can provide support and guidance.

## *If you have Concerns about how you are Being Treated*

If you suspect that you are being abused, or neglected by someone including any Personal Assistants you employ it is very important that you inform someone immediately.

Please call Adult Social Services on 01352 702000, or Childrens Social Services on 01352 701000.You could also ring the Police or talk to someone that you trust.

Alternatively, you can speak with the direct payments team in confidence.

## *Compliments and Complaints*

The Flintshire Direct Payments Support Service aims to provide a consistently high-quality service Flintshire citizens choosing to arrange their care and support using direct payments.

We are continually striving to improve the services we provide so please let us know what we are doing well and any ways we might improve.

If you are unhappy with the service, you have received we will listen to your complaint or concern and aim to deal with it swiftly, openly, fairly and honestly, you will be able to fully express your concerns and will not be discriminated against.

For a copy of the Flintshire Complaints Procedure or to discuss concerns please contact the **Direct Payments Team Manager** in confidence on **01352 701101**

If on the other hand you wish to compliment a member of the team for any aspect of the support, they have provided to you, it really is appreciated and helps us know that we are doing a good job.

To provide feedback please ask a member of the team to provide a feedback form. This can be completed anonymously if preferred. We also operate a digital feedback form which can be accessed by following the link attached to any emails you have received from us.

From time to time, we may contact you to ask you about the service you have received, this is for us to maintain high standards, make improvements and ensure you are receiving a consistently high-quality service.

## *Contact Details*

Direct Payments Support Service

**Telephone:** 01352 701100

**Email**: dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk

**Address:**

Flintshire Social Services
Ty Dewi Sant
St David's Park
Ewloe
CH5 3XT