Information NOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Direct Payments from Adult Social Care

Direct Payments are a way of arranging your **Adult Social Care and support** services. Direct Payments can give you more independence and flexibility. You can choose how your services are arranged and provided.

Visit newcastle.gov.uk for a quick guide to Direct Payments.

Am I eligible for Direct Payments?

The Care Act sets out the criteria to decide if you can receive support or money from Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council.

It's described as having 'eligible care needs' or that you are 'eligible' for support if you meet this criteria. This is decided when you have a **Needs Assessment.**

You can get Direct Payments after your **Needs Assessment** and it's decided that you are eligible for care and support.

How do I receive a Direct Payment?

Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council will give you a **Personal Budget** to pay for your care and support. This allows you to buy and arrange your own care and support services. Instead of the council arranging services for you.

You need to have an account set up specifically for your Direct Payments. You can choose for your Direct Payment to be paid into:

- your own separate bank or building society account
- an account with a payroll management agency

If you pay towards the cost of your care and support, you will pay this into your chosen account.

What can Direct Payments be used for?

You usually have more choice when you receive your **Personal Budget** as a Direct Payment. This will allow you to buy services that the Council sometimes cannot provide.

You can only use this money to pay for services that are agreed with **Adult Social Care** in your Care and Support Plan.

You can buy things that have been agreed with Adult Social Care with cash. You will be asked for your receipts.

These are some common ways that people use a direct payment:

- **Employ a personal assistant to provide personal care at home and other support**
- **Choose and pay a home care agency** instead of having the Council do it for you
- **Pay for activities in your community** instead of going to a **day centre**
- **Pay for a short break** where your carer has been assessed as eligible

Please note: You can't employ your partner or a close relative who lives in the same house as you. There are exceptions to this. Speak to your social worker or Adult Social Care.

Direct Payments cannot be used to pay for

- long-term residential care
- health care or housing
- things that health services should provide like, wheelchairs, medicines or incontinence pads
- treatment that health services should provide such as, physiotherapy or chiropody
- things that the Council provides directly
- regular household expenses that everyone has such as gas, electricity, rent or food shopping
- alcohol, cigarettes or to gamble
- a house clearance if a relative goes into residential or nursing care
- general clothing
- equipment that could be classed as an offensive weapon. For example, knives or guns or anything else that is against the law!

You cannot use a Direct Payment to give money to people who do things for you.

Speak to Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council if your situation changes. They can review your care needs.

How much money will I get?

The amount you receive as a Direct Payment depends on the outcome of your **Needs** and **Financial Assessments**.

You may have to pay towards the cost of your care and support. This is decided after your Financial Assessment. If you have to contribute to the costs, you'll pay this into your chosen account.

Your responsibilities

You are responsible for managing your Direct Payments. You must:

- use the money to pay for the services that have been agreed

- keep financial records of how the money has been used
- pay the money back if you cannot prove how you have spent it or have spent it in ways that were not agreed to
- follow employment law and fulfil obligations to staff
- have an insurance policy. It must include employer's liability and provide clear legal advice on how to deal with employment problems.
- treat your personal assistants properly according to employment law
- pay your employees tax and National Insurance contributions. You can get help to work these figures out
- enrol your employees in a pension scheme
- deal with any recruitment and disciplinary issues with your employees
- plan for replacement support if your personal assistant is sick or leaves

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Help with managing your Direct Payment

You could ask a family member or friend to help you manage your Direct Payment or you can pay for help.

Disability North provide a direct payment advice and support service on behalf of Newcastle City Council. They have a personalised service which helps you have choice and control over your care and support package. They provide:

- information about direct payments
- support to recruit and employ a personal assistant
- help to find a suitable care and support provider, such as a care agency
- help to find community support that meets your needs
- support to plan for emergencies such as your personal assistant being sick or leaving
- peer support in local community settings across Newcastle
- help to find training for personal assistants

They can provide payroll support when you employ a personal assistant. They have 2 paid for services:

1. **Standard payroll services:** They work out the wages and any deductions for you. They tell you how much and when to pay your Personal Assistants
2. **Managed payroll services:** Receive the money and handle financial transactions. This includes paying tax and National Insurance for your Personal Assistants

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Support from the council

The council checks (audits) Direct Payments regularly. This means they can see if things are going wrong and help you to put it right.

Very rarely people can be vulnerable to **abuse** from personal assistants. If this happens you must **report it .** They take this seriously and will support you as much as they can. They will make a plan of how to deal with your concerns as employment law has to be followed in these situations.

Support from your relatives or friends

If you have problems with your memory or making decisions you can still have a Direct Payment. You will need someone to take responsibility for your Direct Payment. This must be agreed with the council. This is called having a “suitable person” who can act on your behalf. They sign up to a Direct Payment and take on all of the responsibilities.

The Council decides who is a “suitable person” to act on your behalf. This is decided, if you are assessed and do not have the mental capacity to make decisions about Direct Payments.

You can ask someone to help you as a “supporter” even if you do not have problems with making decisions. You are still responsible for your Direct Payment but can get help with some of the tasks involved from your named supporter.

Advocacy: help to get your voice heard

Advocacy is free, independent support to help you to get your voice heard. Advocacy services pair you up with an independent advocate who is on your side if you need support. Advocates can help people use NHS, housing and Adult Social Care services. They can:

- help you to find information
- talk things through with you to find out what you want
- help you to understand your rights
- support you to get your views across at appointments, meetings and assessments
- use services if you are unable to do so by yourself

Carers

Carers assessment: This is a conversation about your needs as a carer. To help reduce the impact of caring on your work, life and wellbeing. You can find out what support is available to you from Adult Social Care.

Carers can receive a **Personal Budget** as a **Direct Payment**.

If you have a learning disability please see the **Easy Read leaflet on newcastle.gov.uk**

Arranging Direct Payments

Contact Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council to speak to them about your care and support needs.

They can offer you a **Needs Assessment** to find out if you are eligible from the Council. You can have a Financial Assessment to find out how much you will need to pay towards the cost of your care and support.

Anyone who has been assessed as having eligible care and support needs can ask for a Direct Payment.

If you already receive Adult Social Care support can get Direct Payments. Speak to your social worker or contact **Adult Social Care.**

Read more about the Adult Social Care process in Newcastle.

Help with living costs

You can read more about help with other living costs on InformationNOW:

- paying for care
- food help
- problems with paying for heating
- practical help with moving house
- dealing with debt
- help with health costs
- help with addictions
- support with clothing

Other useful information

People Plus Group Limited also offer independent living advice and support

Age UK England have more information about personal budgets and direct payments

NHS have more information about personal budgets and direct payments

Last updated: October 25, 2024

Useful Organisations

People Plus Group Limited

Email: ilsnewcastle@peopleplus.co.uk

Website: https://peopleplus.mylifeportal.co.uk/landing-pages/newcastle

Telephone: 0330 123 2815

Adult Social CarePoint at Newcastle City Council

Email: ASCP@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/AdultSocialCare

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Adult Social CarePoint Newcastle City Council, NE4 9LU

Disability North

Email: reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

Website: www.disabilitynorth.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 2840480

Address: The Dene Centre, NE3 1PH

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