

Factsheet G6 – Direct Payments

People who are eligible for services from Hertfordshire County Council can now have cash equal to the cost of services (a 'direct payment'), with which to buy their own support services if they prefer. Direct payments are available to people aged 16 or over in their own right, disabled people with short and long-term needs, to parents of a disabled child, to elderly people who require community care services and to carers. Eligibility for a direct payment to carers would result from a carers assessment - see factsheet G3.

A direct payment to the person cared for aims to give people choice, flexibility and control over the support they receive. It allows them to choose whether to have all or part of their care package paid for by direct payments, or to continue to receive services directly provided by the county council as before.

Who is eligible for a direct payment?

The person must be:

- eligible for services from the County Council
- willing and able to be in control of decisions about care and be able to manage direct payments, either alone or with assistance (if direct payments are for a child, the person with parental responsibility should manage them on the child's behalf)
- Certain exclusions will apply.

How to get a direct payment

Anyone already receiving services from the county council should contact their social worker to discuss the option of changing to direct payments. If care services are not yet in place, or there is no named social worker, contact Hertfordshire County Council (phone numbers overleaf) to request an assessment or re-assessment, explaining that you are interested in direct payments.

How much will a direct payment be?

This is normally equivalent to the cost of the services that would be directly provided by the county council. Depending on the age of the person receiving the direct payment, and their income / savings, they may have to contribute towards the costs of their support. In this case the direct payment will be reduced by this amount.

What can I use a direct payment for?

The social worker carrying out the assessment can give guidance on how to use the money. Examples of how direct payments have been used in the past include employing personal assistants, home carers, paying for practical assistance in the home, buying day service activities or respite care or any other services assessed as being necessary. Direct Payments cannot be used to purchase local authority services, permanent residential and nursing care or for housing & NHS services.

Where can I go for further information and support?

If you would like to be sent a copy of a useful guide to direct payments, please contact us, stating whether you would like the version for parents of children with disabilities, or for adults receiving direct payments in their own right.

Organisations to provide you with information and advice about direct payments:

Hertfordshire County Council Health and Community Services 0300 123 4042

Hertfordshire County Council Children's Services 0300 123 4043

www.hertsdirect.org

Leonard Cheshire Direct Payments Support Scheme

(Provides support in managing direct payments, including recruiting staff)

Tel: 01462 439002

Website: <http://www.lcdisability.org/?lid=4938>

Independent Living Advice Line

Tel: 0845 026 4748

Website: independentliving@disabilityrightsuk.org

Nannytax (Payroll Services for Parents and Nannies)

Tel: 0845 226 2203

Website: www.nannytax.co.uk

The Rowan Organisation – Information Services for Disabled People

Tel: 0845 608 8048

Website: www.therowan.org

Gov.uk – the official government website for citizens: www.gov.uk

www.carersinherts.org.uk