

Social Care Provider Direct Payments: Information Sheet 14

This information sheet provides guidance to Social Care providers who offer their services to people in Warwickshire who have chosen to take their Personal Budget as Direct Payments.

Background

Section 24 of the *Care Act 2014* reinforces Personal Budgets as a key part of the aspiration for a person-centred care system and Direct Payments remain the preferred mechanism for doing this.

What is a Personal Budget?

The budget allocated is an amount sufficient to meet the person's assessed eligible care and support needs. The budget is broken down into how much the council will pay and how much the customer will pay, based on their financially assessed contribution. This is called the estimated Personal Budget. The estimated budget is used to plan and agree outcomes that meet the customer's care and support needs. The Personal Budget is agreed at the end of this process.

If someone wants to manage their Personal Budget and purchase their support with a Direct Payment, the council will use the domiciliary care rates to calculate the Personal Budget.

Can a customer make an additional payment (top up)?

A customer can choose to pay an amount above the Personal Budget if the agency of their choice costs more than the Local Authority would normally pay for such type of care. This does not form part of their personal budget as it does not reflect the cost of the Local Authority meeting their needs.

What is a Direct Payment?

Direct Payments are a cash payment based on the amount agreed in the customer's Personal Budget so they can arrange and pay for their social care support, instead of the council arranging support for them.

Direct Payments offer the customer greater flexibility, choice and control than support arranged by the council.

It is the customer's choice if they want to request a Direct Payments. The council must consider the request and ascertain if the person meets the conditions within the Care Act 2014 to receive one.

The customer can choose how and when they arrange their support to meet the agreed outcomes.

What does this mean for you as a provider?

People requiring social care support will approach you and ask about the service you provide. The council would expect you to offer a service to the same standard should you be delivering services through normal procurement routes. However, with Direct Payments the agreement is between you and the Direct Payment recipient. The council are keen that these arrangements operate successfully for both parties.

Top tips for a provider offering support to Direct Payment recipients:

- Find out what the Direct Payments recipient wants, share your costs and discuss how you can support them to achieve their agreed outcomes.
- Get a clear idea of how the customer wants to live their life and provide assurance that your service can fit around them to do this.
- Agree the costs in writing at the beginning of the arrangement between both parties.
- Share all your costs at the start - include any extras such as bank holiday charges and mileage with the person.
- Tell them how to check if you are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) if you provide a regulated activity
- Explain how you supervise, train, undertake Disclosure and Barring checks and manage your staff
- Let the Direct Payment customer know at the start when someone will come and check they are happy with the service.
- Explain how they can compliment, raise concerns or complain about your service if they wish to do so.
- Let them know what you do and how you cover when their regular carer is absent.
- Discuss the risk assessment as an employer you undertake with your staff.
- Provide details of how you will invoice for the support and how the customer can pay the invoice.
- Provide contact details of who to contact should the need arise

Finally, **draw up an agreement** in the appropriate format so that both parties are clear what is required, making sure everyone knows how much the service purchased will cost.

If you would like to know more about Direct Payments please contact the Warwickshire County Council Independent Living Team.

Contact details:

Independent Living Team

- Tel. 01926 413908 (between 9:00 -17:30 Monday to Thursday and 9:00 - 17:00 on Friday)
- Email: ilt@warwickshire.gov.uk