Social Care Direct Payments

Parent and Carer information leaflet



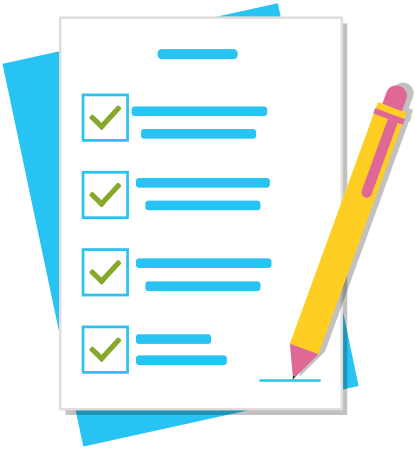
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Warwickshire County Council

What are Social Care Direct Payments?

Direct Payments (often called DPs) is money the council gives you so that you can arrange support for your child in a way that works for your family, DPs can give you more choice and control.



Direct Payments can only be agreed following a Child and Family Assessment (also known as a Family Help Assessment) under the Children Act 1989 assessment, which identifies unmet needs for your child and has been approved by Warwickshire's Children with Disabilities Resource Panel. Any support purchased using Direct Payments must help your child achieve the outcomes set out in their support plan.

Examples of outcomes might include:

- Developing independence and life skills.
- Reducing stress within the family and providing a level of respite.
- Helping your child take part in community activities.
- Keeping your child safe at home or outside.
- Supporting behaviour, communication, or emotional needs.

Why do families choose Direct Payments?

Many parents say DPs help them create support that fits their child's personality and routine.

With DPs you have:

- Flexibility: choose support that meets your family's needs.
- Control: choose your own Personal Assistant (PA) or support worker.
- Consistency: find the right person or service your child feels comfortable with.
- Opportunity: support your child to attend activities and experiences they enjoy.



Who can receive Direct Payments?

Your child may be able to receive a Direct Payment if:

- They have been assessed by Warwickshire Children and Families service as needing support.
- Their needs can be safely and appropriately met through a Direct Payment.
- You or the young person agree to manage the money responsibly.

Direct Payments can be paid to:

- A parent or carer with parental responsibility (most common).
- A young person aged 16–17, if assessed as able to manage their own Direct Payment.
- An authorised person, chosen by a young person aged 16–17 who wants support to manage their DP.
- A representative, in cases where the child or young person cannot consent on their own behalf.

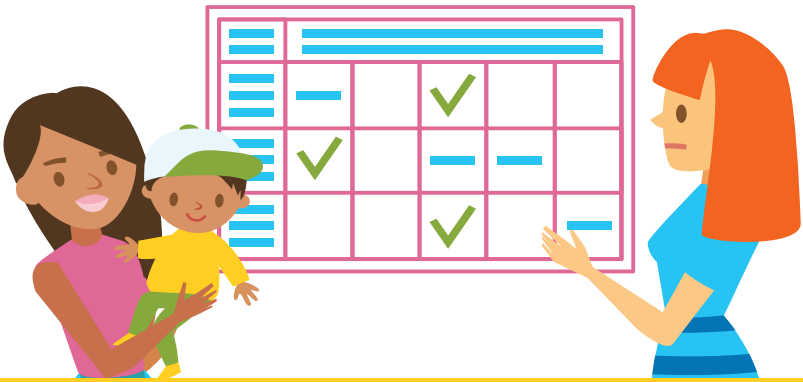
Parental responsibility must always be confirmed before a Direct Payment can start.



What can Direct Payments be used for?

Direct Payments must be used for support that helps meet your child's assessed needs and outcomes. Common examples include:

	Allowed
✓	Employing Personal Assistants (PAs)
✓	Agency provided support
✓	Community based Short Break activities
✓	Required transport where not otherwise funded
✓	Necessary employer costs (payroll, insurance, NI, Tax, DBS, holiday or sick pay)
✓	Agreed essential enabling equipment (including safety equipment for example: riding boots or helmet)



	Not allowed
✘	Anything not linked to assessed outcomes
✘	Household bills, food, rent or mortgage
✘	Healthcare costs
✘	Alcohol, gambling, unsafe items
✘	Paying family members in the same household (unless exceptional approval is given)
✘	Reducing hourly rates to ‘stretch hours’
✘	Paying self-employed workers without full HMRC and Warwickshire County Council approval

Your practitioner will help you plan how the money can be used.





How are Direct Payments paid?

There are different ways to receive the money:

- A pre-paid Direct Payment card.
- A managed account (where someone else handles payments).
- Your own bank account (in some cases).

Your Children and Families practitioner will help you choose the best option.

Don't worry; most families manage these responsibilities with support from Warwickshire County Council. It's important to understand what you agree to.

If approved, the signed Direct Payments agreement outlines your responsibilities when receiving Direct Payments.

Support from the council's Direct Payments Team

The team can:

- Explain how Direct Payments work.
- Help you set up your pre-paid card.
- Provide payroll and managed account support.
- Help with monitoring and evidence uploads.
- Offer guidance if difficulties arise.



Employing Personal Assistants

Warwickshire County Council commissions Penderels Trust to provide support throughout the entire Personal Assistant recruitment and employment process.

Support for parents and carers

A Children and Families practitioner continues to review your child's support plan to make sure the support still meets their needs.



What happens if your child's needs change?

Your child's plan should always reflect their current needs.

If something changes, you should:

- Speak to your Children and Families practitioner.
- Discuss whether the Direct Payment amount needs updating.
- Review the PA's duties or hours if needed.

Reviews are carried out at least once a year, although a review can be requested sooner if circumstances change.

Your practitioner is also available to support you with:

- Reviewing your child's needs.
- Updating your plan.
- Discussing alternatives if Direct Payments aren't right for you.



Further information

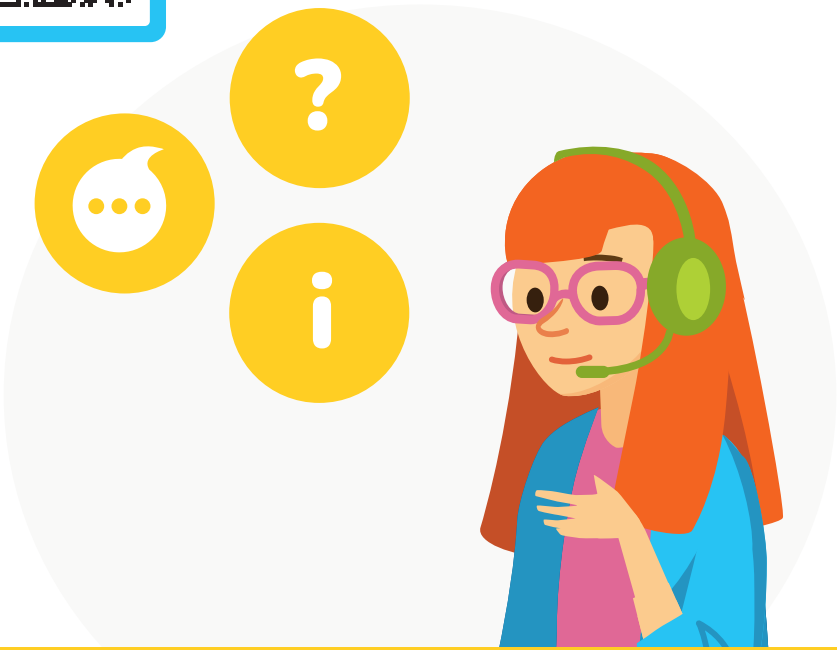
Direct Payment Support Team

Call: 01926 413908

Email: DPSTofficers@warwickshire.gov.uk

You can also find more information about Direct Payments on the Warwickshire County Council website:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directpayments



For more information to support your family visit

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis

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