

An easy guide to direct payments

giving you the choice and control



Welcome

This book is from the Department of Health.



The Department of Health wants to make sure as many people as possible get the chance to have direct payments.



Some things in this book might be new ideas or hard words. These ideas or words are **shown like this.**

If you are not sure about some of these words or ideas, ask a friend, supporter or your nearest People First or Speaking Up Group.






This book is part of a pack. There is a tape with this book. You can listen to the tape and look at the book at the same time.

There is a CD at the back of this book. It is a CD to use with a computer, called a **CD-Rom**. It won't play on a CD player.

The CD-Rom is a fun way to find out more about direct payments.



When you see this picture  it means there is more information on the CD-Rom.

About this book

This book is for people who want to know more about **direct payments**. Direct payments are a different way of getting the support you need.



This book tells you the most important things about direct payments. It tells you about some new rules to do with direct payments. The new rules started in April 2003.



We hope this book will help you work out if direct payments might be right for you.

We have tried to make this book fun and easy to use. Sometimes there is a space for you to write or draw your own ideas.



Direct payments can mean two things

This book is about direct payments you can get to pay for your own support.



The other direct payment is to do with **benefits**. Instead of using an order book to get benefits, they get paid straight into a bank account or post office account. This book is not about the kind of direct payments to do with benefits.

Meet the people in this book

Here are some of the people you will meet in this book.



Cliff gets a direct payment



Gay is Cliff's Personal Assistant



Adam likes to tell people about direct payments



Justin is not happy with the Social Services he uses



Alice is a Social Worker or Care Manager



John is a boss at the council



Samira and Janet are thinking about getting a direct payment



About direct payments



A direct payment is money your **Social Services** can give you. It is a different way of getting the **support** you need. You use it to buy the support you want.

Social Services give you the money instead of a **service**. You spend the money on getting the support you need.

Most people who use Social Services from the council could get a direct payment. Your **Social Worker** or **Care Manager** should talk to you about direct payments when they look at what care you need.



From April 2003 all councils must tell people if they can get direct payments. This is a new rule.

About support

Support can mean different things. Here are some of the types of support you might know about.



Support from a place or team of people

like a day centre, community team or staff where you live.



Support with personal things

like having a bath, washing or getting dressed.



Support to live in your own house

like help with money, cooking or cleaning the house.



Support to get out and about

like driving you to see friends, help to join in things with other people, or someone to go on holiday with you.

What type of support do you need?
You can write or draw your ideas here.



How direct payments work



The **government** gives money to **councils** all over the country. This money pays for services – things like day centres, places to live and other types of support.

These services are run or paid for by Social Services – a part of the council.



Social Services get a bit of money for every person with learning difficulties using services.

Social Services put all this money together.

When you get a service from Social Services, it is paid for by this money.



Some people are not happy with the support they get from Social Services.

Some people want to do new or different things.

Now they can choose to have a direct payment instead of using services.



Social Services must tell you if you can get a direct payment.

If you say yes to a direct payment, you take your bit of money back.

You spend this money on getting support that you choose. You must spend it on support that Social Services agree you need.

Things you should know




Most people who use Social Services from a council could get a direct payment. There are only a few times when councils won't let people have a direct payment.

Councils can't make you have a direct payment if you don't want one.




Direct payments are a good way of you being the **boss of your own life**. You are in charge. You choose what services you use, when you use them and who you get them from.


Being a boss means being in charge of people. It is important that you treat people fairly. 


You must have a bank account for the direct payment. If you don't have one now, it is easy to set one up.



You will need to write down how you spend your direct payment. Lots of people get someone called a **book keeper** to help with this. A book keeper is someone who works out things to do with money for you. 



You could use an **agency**. An agency is a business that sells you care services, like support staff. 

Most councils have set up **direct payments support** to help people use direct payments. They can help you understand and run your direct payment. They sort out some of the hard things with you. 

Cliff's direct payment



1
Cliff lives in his own house. He gets a direct payment instead of a service. He uses the money to pay for his own supporter called a **Personal Assistant**.



2
Cliff's Personal Assistant is called Gay. He **interviewed** and chose her. He is Gay's boss.



3
Cliff does a lot of things for himself. But he needs support with some things – like money ...



4
... and shopping. Today he is going to the supermarket with Gay. First they check to see what food Cliff needs for the week.



Then they write a shopping list together.



Gay has her own car. This makes it easier for her to give Cliff the support he needs.



Now it's time to do the shopping! Cliff gets support for all sorts of things ...



... like doing things in the day, going for check-ups at hospital and sorting out paperwork. Cliff is in control of the support he gets.

Things people do



The way Cliff uses direct payments is just one way of doing it. He uses his direct payment to buy support to live in his own home.

People use direct payments in lots of other ways. You could use a direct payment to:



Pay someone to support you in a job



Pay someone to support you at college



Get support with **personal care** – things like having a bath, washing or getting dressed



Get support with cooking or cleaning your house



Get support to do sport or leisure



Get support for a short break

More things people do



You can get support during the day instead of going to a day centre.

You can get support to live in your own home instead of living in a care home.



You can get your own support worker, sometimes called a **Personal Assistant**, instead of using services.



The council will let you know what you can and can't spend the money on.

You need to tell them your plans for buying services. If you still want to use some Social Services the council might be able to sort out a mix of direct payments and Social Services.

Is it right for you?

Not everyone wants a direct payment. It's important to work out if it might be right for you. You don't have to do this on your own.

You can talk to your friends, supporters, your local Speaking Up Group or your Social Worker or Care Manager. They can help you work out what you want. Here are some things you could think about:



Are you happy with the social services you use?



Would you like to be more independent?



Do you want to be more in control of who supports you?



If your answer to any of these questions is YES,
then direct payments could help you get support that
meets your needs better.



What would you use a direct payment for?

You can write or draw your own ideas here.



Getting direct payments

If you decide you would like a direct payment, here are some things you could do next:

Check out the CD-Rom

There is more information about direct payments on the CD-Rom.

You put the CD into a computer. You could get someone to help you with this if you want.




Talk to your council



If you already use Social Services, you should speak to the person you usually speak to about these services.

If you have a Social Worker or Care Manager, you should speak to them.



If you don't have a Social Worker or Care Manager, but want to speak to one, you could phone or write to Social Services. There is a letter you could use on the CD-Rom. 

Assessment



Your Social Worker or Care Manager will need to spend time with you to find out what support you need. This is called an **assessment**.



Before your assessment it is a good idea to keep a diary for a week or two to see what help and support you need each day. Some councils ask you to fill out a form before your assessment.

Getting direct payments

Decision time


If Social Services say you need support, they **must** give you the choice of direct payments instead of council services. It's up to you if you say YES or NO to a direct payment.



Setting it up



There will be lots of paperwork that needs doing. But you don't need to do this on your own.

Ask your council if they have **direct payments support**. They can help you understand and run your direct payment. They can sort out hard things with you. 



Getting direct payments

Setting it up



You need to show the council that the services you want to buy with your direct payments money will give you enough support.

It is up to you to set up your own support services. You will also need to show how you are spending the money. Your local direct payments support can help you with this.

If you have direct payments and want to change your mind, that's OK. You just need to tell your council. Ask them to stop your direct payment and sort out services instead.




That's the end of the book

We hope it helped you find out about direct payments. On the next page are some **useful contacts** of groups that can help you find out more.



Useful contacts

Your People First or Speaking Up Group

There are People First or Speaking Up Groups all over the country. These are groups run by people with learning difficulties. People support each other to speak up and stand up for their rights. We have put a list of some of these groups on the CD-Rom. 

Your council

We have put a list of councils all over the country on the CD-Rom. 

National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL)

NCIL can tell you about direct payment support in the area where you live.

NCIL, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD

Tel: 020 7587 1663

Email: ncil@ncil.org.uk

Website: www.ncil.org.uk

Values into Action (VIA)

VIA have some books, leaflets and a video about direct payments.

VIA, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2 6HG

Tel: 020 7729 5436

Email: general@viauk.org

Website: www.viauk.org

Learning Disability Helpline

This is a helpline run by Mencap. You can speak to an advisor in the day, or leave a message day or night – someone will call you back. Or you can send an email.

Learning Disability Helpline, 123 Golden Lane,

London EC1Y 0RT

Tel: 0808 808 1111

Minicom: 0808 808 8181

Email: help@mencap.org.uk

Website: www.mencap.org.uk



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