

A guide to

Direct Payments

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



What are direct payments?

A direct payment is money paid to an individual who has chosen to organise their own care instead of receiving services arranged by Aberdeenshire Council. The direct payment can be used to purchase services from an agency that is registered with the Care Commission or to employ personal assistants.

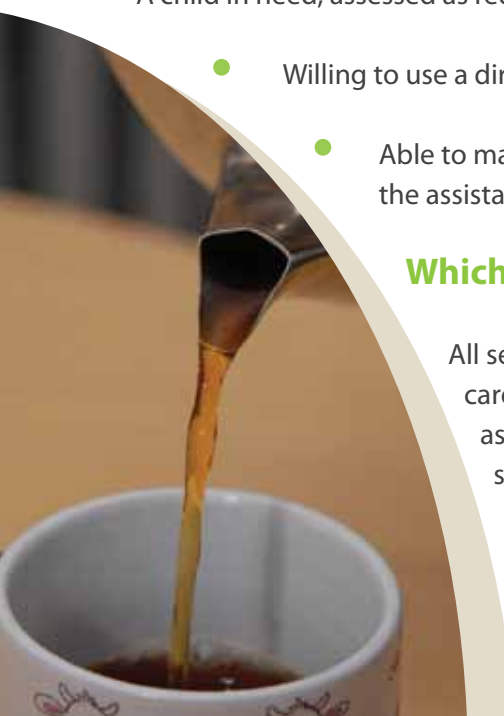
Who can receive direct payments?

To be eligible for a direct payment you have to be:

- Assessed as being in need of community care or housing support services (which can include aids or adaptations)
- A disabled person aged 16 or over
- A child in need, assessed as requiring support
- Willing to use a direct payment
- Able to manage the direct payment (alone or with the assistance of others)

Which services are included?

All services are included apart from residential care. You may have to complete a financial assessment depending on the type of care services you need.



Will direct payments affect my benefits?

Direct payments will not be taken into account when assessing income for social security benefits. Direct payments are not liable to income tax.

What are the advantages of direct payments?

Direct payments offer people who need services greater choice and personal control. Some people may not always find social care services flexible enough to respond to their needs. For example, you may find that the carer arranged by the local authority cannot always come at the times you want. If you direct your own support you can negotiate times to suit you. Any staff you employ will report directly to you.

What am I responsible for?

If you accept a direct payment you will employ your own staff and you will have the responsibilities of an employer. To assist you, Aberdeenshire Council has a contract with an independent support organisation to provide advice and information, employment support and a payroll service for people using direct payments. You can choose whether or not to use this service. We will need to check regularly that you are using the payment for the purpose intended, including achieving agreed outcomes.

Can I use direct payments to employ my relatives?

As a general rule, a direct payment is not paid to a relative to act as an employee. However, changes in legislation relating to direct payments now means the local authority can exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances.

How can I find out more?

To obtain further information, contact Aberdeenshire Council and ask about direct payments. You can contact your local social work office or speak to the person who is already involved in assessing your care and support. You can also email us. Our contact details are as follows:

- Email us at social.work@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- Phone us on 0845 608 1206

If you would like this information in large print, braille, audio tape or a language other than English please contact Housing and Social Work on 0845 608 1206 or social.work@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.