

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND HELP**

This leaflet is only an introduction to the Highland Direct Payments Scheme. If you would like to know more about direct payments or have questions about the Scheme please contact the Direct Payments Support Officer.

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TEL: 01463 703 536

If you would like to request an assessment of need or get in touch with your local Social Work Service Office contact:

Social Work Service

TEL: 01349 886 606

# ARE DIRECT PAYMENTS RIGHT FOR ME?



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## CAN I EMPLOY MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY?

No.

You can not employ a partner or member of your family as a PA.

A close relative would be a parent, parent-in-law, aunt, uncle, grandparent, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson or stepdaughter, brother or sister. This would also apply to a partner or civil partnership.

The Highland Council however has discretionary powers to allow the employment of a close relative. The Council would have to be satisfied that securing the service of this person was necessary to meet the needs of the client.



## WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD I HAVE?

Everyone who receives a direct payment will have certain things they must do.

For example you would have to:

- Sign an agreement with The Highland Council setting out what your direct payment can and cannot be used for
- Open a separate account with a bank or building society to manage your payment
- Complete a monitoring form, every 13 weeks, to show how you have spent your direct payment (including all your original paperwork such as: receipts, bank statements and invoices).

## WELCOME

Ordinarily when the Social Work Service identifies people are in need, it organises the help (services) they require.

However a direct payment can be paid to you as an alternative to you receiving Council-arranged services.

The aim of this pamphlet is to give an introduction to direct payments and, we hope, help you decide -

## ARE DIRECT PAYMENTS RIGHT FOR ME?



*Some people like direct payments as they are a good way of giving you control of your own life. You are in charge. You choose what services you use, when you use them and who you get them from.*

## WHAT ARE DIRECT PAYMENTS?

Direct payments are money given to people as an alternative to their getting services from the Council. The Social Work Service can give you the money as an alternative of providing or arranging the services you, or your child, have been assessed as needing.

You take the responsibility to spend that money on getting the support that meets you or your child's needs, such as employing personal assistants (PAs) or buying in care from an agency.

You can have a direct payment for all your support, or for part of it. If you only want a direct payment for part of your support the rest can be organized by Social Work in the usual way.

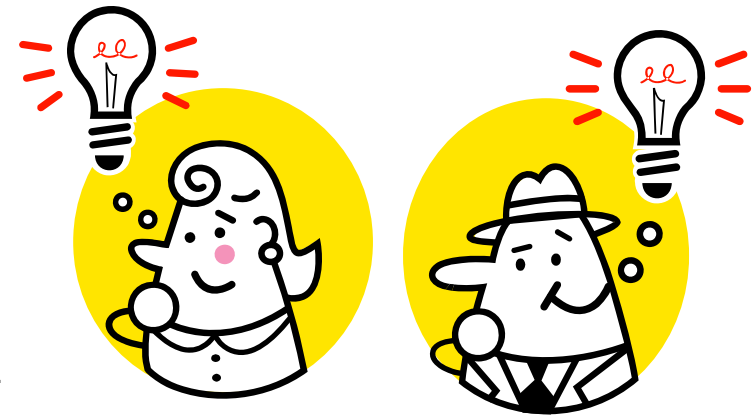
Deciding if direct payments are right for you is a big decision. You do not have to agree to a direct payment if you do not want one.

*You do not have to run your direct payment alone. You can choose who you would like to help you. Your PA however cannot care for you and also help you run your direct payment.*

## OPTION 2 CHOOSE AN AGENCY OR SELF EMPLOYED PA

You tell the agency or self employed PA what you want and they will tell you if they can provide that service and how much it will cost. If you can agree terms you should then formally contract with them

The agency or self employed PA will take care of their own Income Tax, insurance and training needs. An agency will also usually make arrangements for sickness and holiday cover.



*If you have any difficulties with your PA it will be your responsibility to manage the situation. With the independence of direct payments comes responsibility.*

## HOW DO I GET A PERSONAL ASSISTANT (PA)?

There are 2 different ways that you can get a PA. You can either:

### OPTION 1 CHOOSE TO EMPLOY YOUR OWN STAFF

You decide when you need your PA to work, what you need them to do and how much you can afford to pay them.

You would have to advertise for your own staff, interview them and become their employer.

Being an employer means that you provide staff with their terms and condition in writing (contract of employment), pay their wages on time and make alternative arrangements to cover for staff sickness and holidays. You would also be required to ensure any staff employed have been properly checked by completing an enhanced disclosure. Appropriate insurance would also be required.

*You will have to think very hard about the way that you would like to get your PA. There is a lot more responsibility involved if you employ your own PA than if you use an agency or self employed PAs.*

## WHAT CAN I USE DIRECT PAYMENTS FOR?

You can only use direct payments to buy the help we have agreed you, or your child, need.

An assessment of need is the first stage in receiving any service or direct payment and it is usually carried out by someone from the Social Work Service.

The assessment will result in a Care Plan which is a summary of the help we have agreed that you, or your child, needs.

The amount of your direct payment is based on the reasonable cost of providing services to meet your, or your child's, assessed needs, less any personal contribution you have been assessed as having to pay.

(With help for children we don't ask for a personal contribution)

Direct payments can be used for help with:

- I. **Personal care** or one-to-one help with everyday tasks such as: bathing; dressing and getting in and out of bed.

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- II. **Respite or Short Breaks.** This gives the person who cares for a disabled person, an opportunity to take a short break from their caring role. The direct payment will pay for a PA to take over their caring role for a short time.

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- III. **An alternative to day services.** Direct payments can be used to provide assistance for you, or your child, to take part in community activities. This will often be instead of attending a Council Day Service.

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*Direct payments are for support only, and cannot be used to pay for activities. E.g. If you decide to go horse riding direct payments will pay for the assistance you need not for the activity itself.*

## WHO CAN HAVE DIRECT PAYMENTS?

Not everyone will be able to receive a direct payment. The list below shows the main groups who can apply for a direct payment.

To receive a direct payment you must be:

- Aged 16 years or over and
- A parent of, or somebody with parental responsibilities for, a disabled child; or
- Have a social work assessment that says you, or your child, needs support.
- Be able to agree (consent) to direct payments; and
- Be able to run a direct payment (with as much help as you need).

*You can contact the Direct Payments Support Officer for full details of who is eligible. The contact details are at the back of this leaflet.*