



Nottinghamshire  
County Council

# Social care factsheet

## Having a personal budget as a direct payment

### What is a direct payment?

A direct payment is:

- a cash payment from Nottinghamshire County Council to help you meet your social care needs rather than having council services
- paid direct to you or someone acting on your behalf.

### Contact us

For more information about services available and copies of factsheets.

**Web** [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk)

**Telephone** 08449 80 80 80

**Email** [enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk)

**Fax** 01623 43 49 90

**Minicom** 01623 43 49 93

### What are the advantages of having a direct payment?

- A direct payment is the most flexible way to meet your assessed social care needs.
- It gives you the most choice and control over how you meet your needs.

### How do I get a direct payment?

If you are eligible for long-term social care (under the Fair Access to Care Services guidelines) you will be offered a personal budget which you can choose to have as a direct payment.

Your social care worker will help you to write a support plan that describes how you will use your direct payment to meet your assessed needs. We call this 'achieving your outcomes'.

### What can direct payments be used for?

The money **can** be used to help you to meet the outcomes identified in your support plan. For example, this could be getting support or services to:

- help with washing, showering, dressing, toileting and getting in and out of bed
- help with things you do in the day
- get practical help, for example: shopping, collecting pension, essential cleaning and preparing a meal
- have a short break for yourself
- buy equipment.

The money **cannot** be used for:

- services provided by Nottinghamshire County Council
- accommodation/housing costs
- services for your health care needs
- long-term residential or nursing care
- employing your husband, wife, partner or a close relative that you live with (except in exceptional circumstances which you would need to discuss with your social care worker).

## What am I responsible for?

You are responsible for managing your direct payment and for arranging the support you need. This will involve:

- opening a separate bank account
- arranging the services you need
- buying any equipment agreed
- sorting out any problems with the service
- recording and showing the way you use the money.

If you have a contract with an agency, they will be accountable to you, not to Nottinghamshire County Council.

## Employing staff

If you use the money to employ your own staff:

- you have the legal responsibilities of an employer
- the staff you employ will report directly to you.

See the Department of Health's website for further information and guidance on employing your own staff [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

## Can I get help managing my direct payments?

If you need help managing your direct payment, we can give you the contact details for a direct payment support service. They can help you with things like payroll services and recruitment. They can also manage a bank account for you. The cost for this will come out of your personal budget.

For a list of direct payment support services, call our Customer Service Centre on telephone **08449 80 80 80** or see our website [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/directpaymentssupportservices](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/directpaymentssupportservices)

If you need help arranging your support, the social care worker will be able to help you.

## Who does the money in my direct payment account belong to?

The money in this account belongs to Nottinghamshire County Council and you will have agreed what you are going to spend it on as part of your support plan.

We will ask you to show how you are spending your direct payment to do the things agreed in your support plan at least once a year. You should therefore keep all bank statements and receipts or invoices.

## What if I don't use all of my direct payment?

If you meet all the outcomes identified in your support plan and did not need all of the direct payment then we would look at this as part of your review. We may adjust the amount of your personal budget for the next year.

We recognise that you may have ongoing costs and expenses as part of managing a direct payment or because of your responsibilities as an employer.

Part of your direct payment is expected to build up to pay these costs. For this reason, you will be allowed to keep up to six weeks worth of money in your bank account before we ask you to pay it back.

If you are saving up your direct payment to meet an outcome agreed in your support plan, we are likely to agree to let you keep more than six weeks worth of direct payments.

If the direct payment is stopped for any reason, we will ask you to pay back any unspent money.

### **Will I receive any information about the money in my direct payment account?**

You should expect to receive regular statements from the bank where you have opened your direct payment bank account. We will expect to see these bank statements, so please keep them safe. If someone else is managing the bank account on your behalf, for example, a direct payment support service, you should be able to request this information.

### **What if my circumstances change?**

If there is a change in your needs or circumstances and this means you require either more or less support, please let us know as soon as possible. We will need to review your support with you.

### **What if I have to go into hospital?**

Please let your social care worker know if it is likely to be more than a two week stay.

### **What if I want to change some of the arrangements?**

You can make minor changes that still meet your outcomes and do not affect your overall personal budget. For example, what time you need someone to come to support you. Major changes should be discussed with your social care worker. If in doubt, please contact your social care worker.

### **Will I have to pay a financial contribution?**

You will be assessed to see if you need to make a financial contribution. If you do need to make a contribution you will be told how much this is and you will be expected to pay it into the direct payment bank account.

### **Is a personal budget taxable and will it affect any benefits that I might receive?**

No. A personal budget does not count as income for tax or benefit purposes. A personal budget is specifically to use for your care and support; it is not a loan.

### **What if I am not happy about the service?**

If you are not happy about the services being provided by an agency or an individual, you should complain to the agency or take it up with the individual concerned. Direct payment support services may be able to help you with this.

If you are unhappy with any action, decision or process of the council then you can complain to the Nottinghamshire County Council Customer Relations Service.

Tel: **08449 80 80 80**

Web: [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/complaintsformasch](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/complaintsformasch)