

# FACTSHEET 3 – WHAT CAN I SPEND MY DIRECT PAYMENT ON?

It is up to you in how you spend your Direct Payment, but you will need to show how you have met your care and support needs agreed with you in your support plan.

The benefit of a Direct Payment, rather than the Council arranging your care and support on your behalf, is that it will give you control and flexibility over what care and support you have and when you have it.

This also allows you to use the money in ways that suit you best, and to enable you to vary how your needs are met, provided you can show you have met your care and support needs.

There are different ways you can do this.

## Employing a Personal Assistant

You can employ Personal Assistants with your Direct Payment, often known as PA's, to provide your care and support. There are benefits in doing this but there are responsibilities you will need to consider too.

The main benefit is your PA will be your employee and you can choose who you want this to be. You may even know someone you trust who understands your needs, who speaks your language, who shares your interests who you would prefer to employ to provide your care and support.

There are some rules you will need to understand about employing PA's and these are outlined in our factsheet 'Employing Personal Assistants', which also covers your responsibilities as an employer that you will need to consider as well.

## Using a Care Provider

With a Direct Payment, you can use a care provider of your choice and not be limited to the care providers the Council works with.

This could allow you a wider choice of care providers and importantly, because you would be contracting directly with your chosen care

provider, you will have full say in how your care needs are met and when.

Our factsheet 'Using Care Providers' provides more information about using care providers as well as your responsibilities in doing so.

## Is there anything I cannot spend my Direct Payment on?

Your Direct Payment must be spent on meeting the needs in your Support Plan.

For example, help with personal care (such as washing and dressing, going to the toilet, etc.), help with cleaning, shopping or preparing meals, and support to access recreational and leisure activities, etc.

You cannot spend a Direct Payment on:

- Anything not related to your eligible care and support needs and not included in your care and support plan.
- Residential or nursing care (excluding respite – for periods of up to four consecutive weeks of residential care in any 12-month period).
- Anything illegal, including paying people cash in hand.
- Employing family members who already live with you (except where this has been exceptionally agreed).
- Household bills, clothes, food, paying off debt.
- Any services which should be provided by the NHS.
- Services normally funded through other benefits or schemes (for example, access to work, support for employment).
- Large pieces of equipment or adaptations to your house.
- Anything that places you at risk.
- Things that do not represent value for money (for example, when there is a valid cheaper alternative available)

For further information or if you are in any doubt about a particular purchase, contact our Direct Payments team. Their contact details are:

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