



# Personal Budgets

## An Introduction to Direct Payments

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### What is a Personal Budget?

If you think you need help with daily living, the Council will undertake what they call an assessment of need and a financial assessment.

If it is determined that you have eligible needs and meet the financial criteria, the Council will calculate how much money is needed to meet your needs and how much you must contribute.

The amount of money needed to meet your needs is called a Personal Budget, which you may decide to have as a Direct Payment. This will be made up by money from the Council and usually money from you.

### What is a Direct Payment?

The Council can arrange to provide the support you need but it can be far more personalised and flexible to organise the support yourself. When you arrange the support yourself the money is provided to you and called a Direct Payment. You do not have to take this on by yourself, you can delegate someone to do it for you or use an organisation that provide support with managing direct payments.

### There are benefits of having a Direct Payment, these include:

- Having greater choice and control over the support you receive
- Greater flexibility about how and when your needs are met.
- Choosing your own provider or to employ your own Personal Assistant(s)
- Choosing another person or an organisation to support you to manage your Direct Payment.

### How is a Direct Payment paid?

The Council's preference is to set up an account for your needs on a Payment Card, although you may be able to use a dedicated account from your banking provider.

The Council will pay the Direct Payment amount, minus your contribution every 4 weeks. You must pay your agreed weekly contribution onto the card or into your dedicated account (see factsheet 4 for information on what to do) to ensure there is sufficient money to pay for your care and support.

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This information sheet is for guidance only.

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health>



## What are your responsibilities when having a Direct Payment?

It is important that you and your helper, if you have one, understand the responsibilities you are undertaking when receiving a Direct Payment. These include:

- signing an agreement that sets out the responsibilities between you and Leicestershire County Council
- managing the Direct Payment and spending it only to meet your needs and agreed outcomes as identified in your Support Plan
- keeping some records to show us how your money has been spent
- paying your weekly assessed financial contribution following a financial assessment
- understanding that if you employ a personal assistant (PA) you will become an employer which comes with responsibilities

There is support available to help you – please ask about anything you are unsure of.

## How can you use the Direct Payment?

Your Direct Payment can be used in a wide range of creative ways if it is safe, legal and meets your assessed eligible needs. You will receive a copy of your Support Plan which details how we have agreed your Direct Payment should be spent to meet your care and support needs.

## Audit and Review of your Direct Payment Expenditure

We will audit your Direct Payment account around 8 weeks after you start to receive the money to make sure you are managing, keeping the necessary records and everything is working well. We will then audit every year as part of your Care and Support Annual Review or as part of any further review if your circumstances change.

A range of Factsheets are available from your Adult Social Care Worker if you are considering taking a Direct Payment which explain

What support you can get to manage the Direct Payment

What is a Direct Payment Card?

Will you have to pay towards your Direct Payment?

What you need to know about Homecare

Employing a Personal Assistant

Audit and review of your Direct Payment