

Adult Social Care Direct Payments Strategy 2024-29



Coventry City Council

ONE
COVENTRY

Updated 17 Jan 2025

Direct Payments, how do they help and what difference do they make – what people in Coventry say...

I can tailor my care totally to my needs

Excellent, freedom to choose care providers, more involved in decision making

To maintain person centred care for my son

Appreciate the flexibility

I think I should be able to choose my care for myself

It gave me more control over who I could employ

I can personally find care staff for my son, which means the care he receives is more person centred and suitable for him and his family

I can choose the carer instead of a stranger coming to my house

I chose a direct payment as it gives me control of my care needs and who I wish to receive it from

More in control of payments and choice of care providers

Direct payments are brilliant and completely manageable

Direct payments have worked extremely well

Introduction and Context

We want people in Coventry to live full and active lives in their local communities, this being a key element of our Coventry Adult Social Care Offer.

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/ascoffer>

This Direct Payments Strategy sets out our ambition for people who wish to be in control of the support they are eligible to receive from Adult Care Social Care and professionals that arrange, deliver or have a supporting role in this. We want to ensure people have power and control over their lives and see 'self-directed support' being essential to achieve this.

Direct Payments, including via an Individual Service Fund are ways to receive self-directed support and are available to people who have been assessed as being eligible for support from Adult Social Care.

A Direct Payment is an agreed sum of money that is paid to a person (or someone acting on their behalf), so they can arrange their own care and support instead of the Council. A Direct Payment is one way to receive a Personal Budget, which is a budget allocated to a person by the Council to pay for support to meet assessed, eligible care needs. Another way to receive a Personal Budget is through an Individual Service Fund where a care provider, chosen by the person, manages the budget on their behalf.

Direct Payments – Our Approach

The principle behind Direct Payments is that people can have choice and control over the care and support they are entitled to. A report by Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) 'Better Direct Payments – From insight into Action (2022) brought together our findings from a review of the available research and identified some of the barriers and enablers that contribute to the effective delivery of Direct Payments.

<https://thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/resources/better-direct-payments-from-insight-to-action/>

The report also identified what factors influence the success of Direct Payments. It is these factors that we are using to shape our approach to developing Direct Payments.



● Influencing the success of direct payments

- 1** Commit to long-term strategic leadership to improve direct payments
- 2** Acknowledge direct payments can work for all
- 3** Listen to people through the assessment and planning process
- 4** Recognise the vital role of social workers and practitioners
- 5** Provide good support, information and regular training for practitioners
- 6** Share clear expectations on purpose and use of a direct payment
- 7** Develop people with the right mix of skills and values in support services
- 8** Encourage peer support
- 9** Offer practical support to personal assistants and people with direct payments
- 10** Use technology where it can help people
- 11** Shape the market through commissioning
- 12** Promote alternative and innovative models of personalised support

● Information, Advice and Guidance

People that are eligible for social care in Coventry need to have information and advice on the options available to receive their personal budget, including Direct Payments and Individual Service Funds (ISFs). Information needs to be available in accessible formats and communicated in an understandable, consistent way from Adult Social Care and our Direct Payment Support Service (a service funded by the Council that provides people receiving support and carers information and guidance). Information and advice will support people and those acting on their behalf to be confident in understanding their responsibility in managing their Direct Payment.

We have produced promotional videos talking to people who receive a Direct Payment

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/money-legal-matters/direct-payments>

We have also updated all our public information so that information regarding Direct Payments is available in 6 main languages used in Coventry – Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Romanian and Tigrinya. We have also translated our Direct Payments leaflets into Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic and Gujarati.



<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/ASCpublicinformation>

Care providers will understand their Individual Service Fund obligations and how to meet them in line with any agreements. People and those acting on their behalf will know what support is available should they struggle with these responsibilities.

We will work in collaboration with people receiving Direct Payments to refresh the information we provide about self-directed support to ensure it is accessible and delivered in a range of formats. We will also review our Direct Payment templates and letters to ensure information is understandable, accurate and accessible.

● Adult Social Care Workforce

We are continuing to deliver and develop training and guidance regarding self-directed support. This is to ensure that staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create personalised care and support plans. In this way people will be supported to fully understand the options available to them in receiving, managing and spending their personal budget.

People receiving self-directed support will be able to access care and support from a range of provisions including national, private and voluntary sector organisations that can respond to their eligible needs and desired outcomes.

A social care workforce which could be developed further is through increasing the number of Personal Assistants and community social care enterprises. The development of these will improve social care options available to people who choose self-directed support as well as those who fund their own care. Commissioning and workforce development officers will work with partner organisations and stakeholders to increase and diversify the social care workforce.

● Direct Payment Support Service



Coventry City Council have a Direct Payment support service provided by Penderels Trust that can provide information and guidance in areas such as;

- **Information and advice about Direct Payments**
- **Recruitment and employment support**
- **PA register to improve recruitment and support for PAs themselves**
- **Payroll support service**
- **Managed Accounts**

A managed account is where a third party (such as Penderels Trust) holds the Direct Payment money on a person's behalf and make sure care bills, including agency invoices and staff wages, are paid correctly and on time. Penderel's Trust will monitor the account to make sure it doesn't go overdrawn and highlight any unexpected income or outgoings. The person themselves still has responsibility for their own personal money.

<https://www.penderelstrust.org.uk/coventry.php>

We want the support that is currently in place to continue and to be available to even more people than use it now. Coventry City Council and the Direct Payment Support Service will give a wider range of people considering a Direct Payment, information that can help them make an informed decision on whether to use one. Guidance will continue to be developed, including supporting people to develop contingency plans, so they continue to receive care and support when their circumstances change, for example their PA is on annual leave or goes off sick.

● Personal Assistants (PAs)

When someone receives a Direct Payment, they can choose to employ someone to assist them with the support they need. The people they employed are referred to as Personal Assistants.

If a person decides to employ their own support rather than having services directly commissioned by the council, then employing a Personal Assistant (PA) can be the best option as it enables the person to lead an independent life in their own home. It gives a more flexible and tailor-made package of support.

The person has control to instruct their own staff (PA's) to carry out the tasks that they require assistance with. People have a say in choosing the PA who will provide the support. It is very empowering for many people to employ PA's but it does come with some responsibilities. If a person decides to employ a Personal Assistant, they need to ensure they follow employment legislation.

Penderels Trust provide support and assistance with understanding employment issues such as payroll and contracts.

The Council and the Direct Payments Service work together to grow the availability of Personal Assistants.

● Individual Service Funds

Individual Service Fund (ISF) are one way of managing a Personal Budget, where someone who needs care and support (and/or their family, advocate or carer) chooses an organisation to manage the budget on their behalf and works with them to plan care and support services and activities that will help them to achieve their identified outcomes.

When someone makes the decision to use an ISF to manage their Personal Budget the agreed Personal Budget is paid from Coventry City Council to a care provider, the Council will set up an ISF agreement with the individual and provider.

The provider will talk to the person about the care and support they need and will organise these services on their behalf and manage the budget. The Council will still be involved to ensure that services and/or activities meet people's eligible care needs.

This arrangement requires person-centred care and support planning to ensure that individuals are offered choice and control in deciding how the money will be spent, to achieve the personal outcomes that meet their individual needs. It's important to ensure that everyone involved is confident that this is the best option for the individual.

● Safeguarding

Our safeguarding duties apply equally to people who receive self-directed support. People receiving a Direct Payment are entitled to make their own decisions and to take risks in the same way that any other person is entitled to. Where appropriate, safeguards will be put in place to prevent any potential abuse and to support the person in making decisions and managing any associated risk as a result of that decision. The Council will support adults receiving a Direct Payment so that together we can minimise the risk of abuse from anyone they employ, because these people are not employees of the Council and are not monitored by them. Adults directly employing a personal assistant or a person to manage or administer a Direct Payment can be placed at greater risk of abuse, depending on how rigorous the pre-employment checks carried out during recruitment were. We will continue to recommend that Direct Payment holders who employ a Personal Assistant should take up the offer of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at no cost to themselves. DBS checks help people make better-informed decisions about whom they employ to provide their care.

Safeguarding is everybody's business, and so it is essential that staff working for the Council, partnership organisations, agencies, third-party providers and members of the public remain alert and vigilant to the potential for abuse and can easily find the way that they can report safeguarding concerns.

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults-1/worried-someone-know-harmed-neglected/2>

● Personal Health Budgets

A Personal Health Budget is an amount of NHS money that is allocated to support a person's health and wellbeing needs. If you're eligible for it, the person (or someone who represents them), will work with the local NHS team to plan how you spend the money and get the care you need.

A Personal Health Budget allows people to manage their healthcare and support such as treatments, equipment and personal care, in a way that suits the person. It works in a similar way to Personal Budgets and Direct Payments which allow people to manage and pay for their social care needs.

In Coventry some people have used Personal Health Budgets to organise their own support to meet their assessed healthcare treatments, equipment and personal support needs.

In line with government expectations, our health partners are working to broaden the availability of Personal Health Budgets (PHBs) to people with health care needs.

We will continue to work with our health colleagues to ensure effective transition from Direct Payments to Personal Health Budgets where this is required and to explore continued opportunities for the development of integrated personal budgets for people who have social care and health care needs.

● Co-Production and Engagement

In Adult Social Care we place adults and their carers at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to ensuring that people with care and support needs and their carers can be equal partners in planning and shaping future developments in Adult Social Care. But we know we've still got some way to go with this. We've been working hard to try and develop our own approach to co-production and ensuring that we are involving people in the development of services, something as simple as ensuring we get feedback along people's journeys, to being part of recruitment decisions to helping shape and create new services. We have developed the 'Engagement, Involvement and Co-Production Our Approach', a document which outlines our key commitments to making this happen. We want to ensure that the involvement of people with care and support needs and carers becomes standard practice.

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/39258/adult-social-care-engagement-involvement-and-co-production-it-s-our-approach>

For people who access Direct Payments we have developed a new survey to get feedback on people's experience <https://forms.office.com/e/nRFwBUFTTr>

**Direct Payments Survey -
Coventry Adult Social Care**



Scan QR Code



● Performance and Good Practice

We are committed to ensuring excellent self-directed support practice and performance to benefit people who access our support.

We continue to monitor performance including the uptake of Direct Payments, comparing this nationally, regionally and with comparable Local Authorities. We now have a live demographic dashboard which tells us who is accessing Adult Social Care including Direct Payments compared to the city population and we are using this information to inform approaches to developing our Direct Payment offer.

Coventry City Council continues to be part of the the ADASS West Midlands Direct Payment Network Group which meets quarterly to discuss any updates relating to Direct Payment practices, legislation and research and answer questions/queries that people are dealing with.

There is also an Adult Social Care Direct Payment Steering Group in place which considers how we can support our teams to enable people in Coventry to have more choice and control via a Direct Payment and a surgery with Penderels Trust that workers can access to discuss any questions or queries they may have regarding Direct Payments.



● Summary and Next Steps

This strategy sets our approach to self-directed support in coming years. We want to support more people and carers who access support services to have more choice and control over the services they receive through self-directed support. Direct Payments and Individual Service Funds will be our two options for self-directed support in Coventry and will remain a core part of our Adult Social Care Offer.

We will work with people who access Direct Payments, service providers, partner organisations and the wider community. We will use action plans to maintain a clear focus for our work to ensure we have in place the structures, systems, and support needed to achieve good quality self-directed support and address the factors which influence the success and uptake of Direct Payments.

For more information on Adult Social Care and Direct Payments please see our webpages

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/money-legal-matters/Direct-Payments/2>

If you would like more information on this strategy, please contact our Independent Living Team. Email independentliving@coventry.gov.uk

○ Contact Adult Social Care Direct

Call **024 7683 3003**

or email ascdirect@coventry.gov.uk

or visit www.coventry.gov.uk/health-social-care

Speech impairment, deaf or hard of hearing? You can call using Next Generation Text (also known as Text Relay and TypeTalk): **18001 024 7683 3003**

If you require this information in another language or format, please email ascdirect@coventry.gov.uk

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