



Customer Charter for the Direct Payments Team

About the Customer Charter

Our Customer Charter explains the standards you can expect from the Direct Payments Team and will outline our promises to you as a valued customer of the service.

The Direct Payments Team is here to assist you in receiving your direct payment so that you can be in control of the care and support you require to best meet your assessed support needs. The team will guide you through the process when you first choose to receive direct payments, and will then provide on-going support and advice to manage your direct payment effectively.

What you can expect from the Direct Payments Team

The Direct Payments Team will guide you through every step of the process, from the initial point of referral for a direct payment, outlining when payments are due, to explaining how payments are broken down, how you can make any assessed financial contribution towards your direct payment, and any general advice and support which you may require to manage your direct payment.

Once we have all your details and relevant information, we aim to have you set up to receive direct payments within four weeks of initial referral.

Once you have signed the direct payment agreement, we will aim to have your first payment with you within two weeks of all necessary documentation being received and signed by the Council.

The Direct Payments Team are committed to support you with the management of your direct payment and will aim to deliver a high standard of service at all times. There are a number of leaflets and literature available to help you manage your direct payment efficiently. You will find reference to these at the end of this document.

Contact us:

By post or email

You can write or email us at the details at the end of this charter.

We will acknowledge all emails and letters within two working days of receipt.

If we can't answer your query at this time, we will inform you of this and will explain when we will be able to give you a full response.

By telephone

You can call between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday –Friday on the numbers at the end of this charter.

We aim to answer your call within 5 rings. Our staff will answer your call in a polite and courteous manner, answering all your queries or refer you to someone who can help you.

If the team member you are trying to contact is not available, another team member will be able to help you. Alternatively, you can wait to speak to a specific team member when they are available.

If you are calling on behalf of someone, we will need their permission to discuss personal information before speaking with you.

Visits to the Civic Centre

You can make an appointment to see us in Merton Link at the Civic Centre so that we can support you with the effective setting up and management of your direct payment.

It is important to make an appointment with one of our staff before you arrive so we can see you promptly. You can call on any of the phone numbers listed at the end of this leaflet to book an appointment and to agree what documents you may need to bring with you.

Visits to your home

We can visit you at home to help with the effective setting up and management of your direct payment.

The Direct Payments Team aim to contact you to arrange a visit within five working days of receiving your request.

We will inform you of any documents you will need to provide before the visit and we will give you a phone number to call so you can check the identity of the visiting officer on arrival.

Our staff will aim to be on time for the appointment and will contact you if they are delayed. If the time is not convenient we will make another appointment that is better suited to you.

If you have a power of attorney or appointee (someone who can deal with your affairs for you) we will make an appointment with them. If you want to have a social worker present or have any other specific requirements such as a signer, please let us know so this can be arranged.

For your safety, our staff carry a photo identity card, which they will show you on arrival. If you have a visual impairment you will be given a password to confirm the identity of the visiting officer who will repeat this to you when they arrive.

Tell us what you think of our service

We are always trying to improve our service and therefore would like your feedback. We will look at all your suggestions and comments and consider them when we make changes or improvements to our service.

How to complain about our service

We aim to provide a satisfactory service at all times. However, occasionally things do go wrong.

If you are dissatisfied with the way we have handled your direct payment, please do contact us as we can usually resolve your concern immediately. If, however, you wish to make a formal complaint you may do so by using the Council Complaints procedure which can be found on the London Borough of Merton website at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/complaints-compliments-and-comments>.

How else can we help you?

If you have individual requirements please let us know so we can do our best to help you. We can arrange things such as:

- Wheelchair friendly rooms for meetings at our offices
- Translation services.

If English is not your first language we can arrange to have correspondence and forms translated.

If you are visually impaired, we can arrange for our forms to be put into large print, Braille or audiotapes.

If you have a hearing difficulty or use British Sign Language (BSL), we can provide appropriate support or a BSL interpreter to assist you with completing forms.

We can also arrange an interpreter for your appointment or, if you prefer, you can request a family member or friend to be present with you.

These services may take some time to arrange, so please let us know beforehand if you require any of the above.

You can expect us to treat you fairly and with respect. You will not be disadvantaged

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because of your age, race, sex, religion, disability or sexual orientation. We will respond efficiently and sensitively at all times to the feelings and needs of our customers.

Direct Payments Public Information Leaflets

All customer direct payment literature is available on the London Borough of Merton website <https://www.merton.gov.uk/social-care/adult-social-care/direct-payments>

How to contact us:

Write or visit:

Direct Payments Team
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
Surrey SM4 5DX

By phone:

Procurement & Direct Payments Manager: 020 8545 3043

Direct Payment Support queries: 020 8545 3109 or 3605 or 3928

Direct Payment Finance queries: 020 8545 3925 or 3708 or 0208 274 5736

Email: directpaymentsduty@merton.gov.uk