

# An introduction to direct payments

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[www.merton.gov.uk](http://www.merton.gov.uk)



If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown in the box below.

Albanian Nese deshironi me shume informacion ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi te na kontaktoni ne adresen e dhene ne kutine me poshte.

Arabic إذا أردت معلومات إضافية بلغتك الأصلية الرجاء الاتصال بنا في العنوان المدون ضمن الإطار أدناه.

Bengali যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় লেখা আরও তথ্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, তলার বক্ সে আমাদের ঠিকানা রয়েছে।

Chinese 如果你需要用中文印成的資料，請按低端方格內提供的地址與我們聯系。

Farsi اگر مایل به اطلاعات بیشتر به زبان خود هستید، لطفاً با ما از طریق آدرس زیر تماس بگیرید.

French Pour tout renseignement complémentaire dans votre propre langue, veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse figurant dans l'encadré du bas.

Polish Jeśli życzy sobie Pan/i więcej informacji w swoim języku, proszę się z nami skontaktować pod adresem podanym w dolnej ramce.

Punjabi ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਵਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Somali Hadii aad u baahan tahay faahfaahin intaa kabadan oo ku soobsan afkaaka hooyo ama Af Somali fadlan lana soo xiira cinwaanka hoos ku qoran.

Spanish Si usted desea más información en su propia lengua, por favor contáctenos en la dirección al pie del formato.

Tamil உங்கள் மொழியில் மேலதிக தகவலைப் பெற விரும்பினால், அடியிலுள்ள பெட்டிக்குள் தரப்பட்டுள்ள விலாசத்தில் எம்முடன் தொடர்பு கொள்ளுங்கள்.

Urdu اگر آپ اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہم سے اس پتے پر رابطہ قائم کریں جو کہ نیچے کے بکس میں درج ہے۔

You can also get this information in large print, in Braille and on audiotape.

Direct Payments Team, 5th Floor,  
Civic Centre, London Road,  
Morden. Tel: 020 8545 3632

# An introduction to direct payments

This guide explains what direct payments are, who can get them and how they work. If you would like direct payments but you need more help or advice, please contact us. We can visit you at home to discuss direct payments in more detail.

## **What are direct payments?**

Direct payments are payments made to you by your local council. To be eligible for direct payments, you will need to have been assessed as needing community-care services and you will want to have more control over the support you receive. In other words, you can choose who provides your support and how they deliver it. Direct payments are a way of allowing people to have more control, flexibility and choice over the way their needs are met and how they live their lives.

## **Who can get direct payments?**

You can get direct payments if:

- you have been assessed as having a social-care need and you are aged 16 or over; or
- you are the parent or carer of a disabled child who has been assessed as having a social-care need.

If you want to get direct payments, you must also be able and willing to manage them. However, if you have any questions or need any help at any time, you can contact the Direct Payment Support Officers and Direct Payment Finance Officers (see 'How to contact us' for details). You can get this support during the set-up period and all the time that you are getting direct payments.

### **Do I have to use direct payments?**

No, you don't have to use the Direct Payment Scheme. We offer it to all our service users as a way of managing their own care, but you must decide if it is the right thing for you. If you do not want to use direct payments, social services can still arrange and manage your care. Or, you can have a mixed package of care with some care provided by social services and some care that you arrange yourself.

### **How do direct payments work?**

Direct payments are payments from the council that you must use to buy your own care as agreed in your care plan. If you need help with your personal care (such as washing, bathing and getting dressed), you can either choose to have this care provided through an agency or by using your direct payments to employ your own personal assistant.

Direct payments are paid into a separate bank account every four weeks. We ask that you keep a record of the money going into and out of the account and what you use it for. We will ask to look at these records from time to time. If you need any help and support with managing this account, you can contact the Direct Payment Team.

### **What can I use my direct payments for?**

You can use direct payments to buy the care and support that you need and that has been agreed in your care plan.

This kind of care and support includes:

- personal care (for example, help with bathing and getting dressed);
- help at home (for example, shopping, dusting and vacuuming);
- some respite care (for example, a temporary stay in a residential or nursing home, but there are limits to this);
- equipment (for example, a stairlift); and
- other ways in which we have agreed to meet your care needs (for example, helping you to get involved in social activities, in getting out and about or even going on training courses).

As your needs change, you can buy different types of care, as long as social services agree. For example, if it says in your care plan that you need three hours of personal care each week and two hours of shopping each week, you can use your direct payments for this.

You cannot use direct payments to buy:

- permanent residential or nursing care;
- equipment or services normally provided by the local health authority; or
- in-house services provided by Merton Social Services.

If you decide to employ your own personal assistant, you cannot employ anyone who lives with you, such as your partner, husband, wife or a close relative (unless there is no other way to give you the care that you need). If they do not live with you, you may be able to employ them as a personal assistant.

## **What will I need to do?**

There are certain things you will need to do to start receiving direct payments.

- You will need to set up a separate bank account that you only use for direct payments.
- You will have to sign an agreement between you and us to show that you agree to the terms of the scheme.
- When you are on the scheme, you will have to fill in and send us a monitoring form so that we can make sure you are using the payments properly and as agreed in your care plan.

If you use an agency carer or employ your own personal assistant, you will have other responsibilities. However, if you need help and support in any of these areas, you can contact us.

## **What help will you give me with my direct payments?**

We have a team of Support and Finance Officers. A Support Officer can visit you at home to explain what direct payments are and how you can apply for them. The Support Officers can also help and advise you while you are on direct payments and help you start on the scheme. The Finance Officers arrange for the payments to be made once you are on the scheme.

If you want to employ your own personal assistant, we can give you help and advice about putting job adverts in the local press and interviewing those who apply. We can also give you contact details for agencies who can help you with tax, National Insurance and payroll enquiries.

Even if you are just thinking about direct payments at this stage and you have any questions or concerns, please contact us and we will arrange a visit with you to discuss the scheme.

## **Will I need to pay anything towards my care?**

We charge for any social-care services we provide. We will assess your financial situation to see whether you need to pay towards the care that you receive. A member of our Financial Assessment Team can visit you at home to help you fill in the form and they can also check whether you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to. If you would like to know more about financial assessments, the Financial Assessment Team's details are at the end of this leaflet. We can visit you or send you the information by post, or you can find it on our website ([www.merton.gov.uk](http://www.merton.gov.uk)).

## **What should I do next?**

If you would like direct payments, please contact your social worker or social services team (see contact details), who can arrange for a Support Officer to visit you. They will explain the direct payments process and what you need to do to start.

## **If you answer 'Yes' to any of the following questions, direct payments could be right for you!**

Do I want to be more in control of the support I receive?

With help and support, do I feel that I can manage my direct payments?

Would I like more independence in choosing the care that I receive?

## What people have said about us

“Direct Payments has given me more control over my own life and enabled me to lead the life that I choose. I employ my own PA’s so I manage who works for me. Because of this, my PA’s are people who I get on well with and are good at their job supporting me to do the things that I need and want to do in life. Importantly, this support is given in the way in which I want it to be done. Direct Payments give me more choice and control to do the things that are important to me, in the way in which I want them to be done”. It has so far changed my life for the better. If you are thinking about it, go for it, there are lots of people to help you do it and others who are doing it willing to share how.”

### **John Kelly**

Direct payments service user

“As I am involved in the community within many groups of people with different impairments I do need help in many ways through employing my own P. A. and getting Direct Payments has given me a new outlook within the community as I can now really concentrate and trying to encourage more people to take up Direct Payments and be more independent and improve their outlook in life.”

### **Patrick Daly**

Direct payments service user

## How to contact us

**Website:** [www.merton.gov.uk](http://www.merton.gov.uk)

### **Direct Payments Team**

**Write to:** Fifth Floor  
Merton Civic Centre  
London Road  
Morden  
Surrey  
SM4 5DX

**Phone:** 020 8545 3632

**E-mail:** [directpaymentsduty@merton.gov.uk](mailto:directpaymentsduty@merton.gov.uk)

### **Financial Assessment Team**

**Write to:** Fifth Floor  
Merton Civic Centre  
London Road  
Morden  
Surrey  
SM4 5DX

**Phone:** 020 8545 3109

**E-mail:** [financial.assessment@merton.gov.uk](mailto:financial.assessment@merton.gov.uk)

## Other organisations and useful contacts

### Adult Social Services

#### Older people (over 60)

**Write to:** Gifford House  
67C St Helier Avenue  
Morden  
Surrey  
SM4 6HY

**Phone:** 020 8545 4430 or  
020 8545 4431

#### Adults (under 60)

**Write to:** Russell Road  
42-44 Russell Road  
Wimbledon  
London  
SW19 1QL

**Phone:** 020 8545 4529

### Children, Schools and Families Departments

**Write to:** Children's Services  
Worsfold House  
Church Road  
Mitcham  
CR4 3FA

**Phone:** 020 8545 4232, 020 8545 4260 or  
020 8545 4227

### Carers' Support Merton

**Phone:** 020 8543 0347

**E-mail:** [info@carerssupportmerton.org.uk](mailto:info@carerssupportmerton.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.carerssupportmerton.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.carerssupportmerton.org.uk/index.htm)

### Age Concern

**Phone:** 020 8648 5792

**Website:** [www.aclondon.org.uk/index.cfm](http://www.aclondon.org.uk/index.cfm)

### Merton MIND

**Phone:** 020 8648 6565

**E-mail:** [merton.mind@virgin.net](mailto:merton.mind@virgin.net)

### Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC)

**Phone:** 020 8685 0249

**E-mail:** [info@mvsc.co.uk](mailto:info@mvsc.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.mvsc.co.uk/](http://www.mvsc.co.uk/)

### National Centre for Independent Living

**Phone:** 020 7587 1663

**Fax:** 020 7582 2469

**E-mail:** [info@ncil.org.uk](mailto:info@ncil.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.ncil.org.uk/default.asp](http://www.ncil.org.uk/default.asp)

### Mencap

**Phone:** 020 7454 0454

**E-mail:** [information@mencap.org.uk](mailto:information@mencap.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.mencap.org.uk/](http://www.mencap.org.uk/)

### Direct Gov

**Website:** [www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm)