



## **An introduction to Direct Payments**

### **Who is eligible for help?**

Dorset County Council has a duty to assess anyone who is eligible for community care services but we have to work within the resources available to us each year. This means we are not able to offer services to everyone who contacts us. To make sure that services are provided fairly and used to support people in the greatest need, we use guidelines which we call 'eligibility criteria'. We assess people's needs individually to find out if their level of need qualifies for a service and, if so, at what level of priority.

### **What are Direct Payments?**

Dorset County Council provides community care services to a range of people who are assessed as needing them. 'Direct Payments' can be provided in place of services so that people can purchase their own care. These care services could be: home care services, day care services and/or short term breaks. Direct Payments offer more flexibility for people so that they can choose who to employ to deliver these services. Most people who use Direct Payments employ a personal care assistant, but other people choose to buy care from an agency.

**Please note that Direct Payments cannot be used to buy Health Care or long term residential care.**

### **Have you been assessed as needing care services?**

If so, you may be entitled to receive Direct Payments. This factsheet tells you about Direct Payments and how you can get more information.

### **Who can receive Direct Payments?**

Direct Payments are available to a wide range of people over the age of 18 and who are either currently receiving care and support services from Adult and Community Services, or have been assessed as needing them. Young people with a disability aged 16 to 18 can also receive Direct Payments, as can the parents of



children with disabilities of any age who want to buy services for them. In some circumstances, carers will also be eligible for Direct Payments to pay for services they need in their own right. People receiving Direct Payments must be willing to manage the payments provided, with help if needed. There is help available to get people started, and to recruit suitable staff.

### **How could Direct Payments benefit me?**

Direct Payments give more choice and control over the way people would like their needs to be met. They are intended to encourage and support independent living.

### **Will I automatically receive Direct Payments if I'm eligible?**

No, Direct Payments are not suitable for everybody, but if you are interested in Direct Payments, your Care Manager will tell you more about them (contact details can be found at the end of this factsheet). If you are not eligible to receive Direct Payments you will be told why you are not eligible.

### **How much will the payments be?**

The amount of payment will be calculated taking into account your assessed care needs.

### **What services will I be able to buy?**

You can use the money to purchase goods and services assessed by your Care Manager. The law does not permit you to buy services directly from the County Council with Direct Payments, but we will be happy to offer advice on possible alternatives.

### **Will I have any responsibilities if I receive Direct Payments?**

You will need to keep receipts for what you spend. If you employ a carer directly you will have the responsibilities of being an employer. This involves keeping wage records and paying tax and national insurance for your employee and other statutory duties. You have a duty to return any unused money to the County Council on a regular basis.

### **If I opt for Direct Payments, how does my Care Manager know that I have purchased care?**

When your Care Manager has assessed your care needs he/she will agree with you the outcome that is expected. He/she will visit



you on a regular basis to monitor the agreed outcome. In addition you may be asked to produce receipts for the care you have purchased.

### **How can I find out more?**

If you have any questions about Direct Payments you can ask your Care Manager or approach the advice and guidance service which has been set up specifically to help people deal with Direct Payments and contact information is provided on page 4 of this factsheet.

### **Compliments and complaints**

Adult and Community Services staff in Dorset are committed to providing quality services to our service users, their carers and families. We welcome comments from our service users as this helps us to understand what aspects of our service people like.

If you are unhappy about the service you have received and want to make a complaint, our factsheet 'How to complain' describes the procedure. Our Complaints Officer can give you advice on the process and can be contacted on 01305 224322.

### **Diversity statement**

Diversity is not about treating everyone in the same way, but about recognising and valuing difference, as well as recognising and addressing inequalities and disadvantage.

As an employer and service provider, Dorset County Council seeks to promote an environment that accepts and actively supports diversity in age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, culture, work style and the many other ways in which people differ from each other.

All our factsheets are available in large print and on audio cassette/CD, Braille, Easy to Read or alternative languages. Please contact the Information Office on 01305 224320.



## Information available

### Other Direct Payment Factsheets available:

- Managing Direct payments
- Independent Support Agencies
- How to help ensure your personal safety when recruiting your own staff
- Setting up an Independent Living Trust for Direct Payments

### Independent Support Agency:

Enham – Direct Payments and Support Planning Service

Tel: 0845 504 0726

Minicom: 0845 504 0723

Email: [directpayments.dorset@enham.org.uk](mailto:directpayments.dorset@enham.org.uk)

Web: [www.enham.org.uk/pages/dorset.html](http://www.enham.org.uk/pages/dorset.html)

### Support Agencies who can provide advocacy:

- **For people with a learning disability:**

Dorset Advocacy, Portfolio House, 3 Princes Street,  
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1TP

Tel: 01305 251033

- **For people with mental health problems:**

Dorset Mental Health Forum, The Old Warehouse,  
29-29a Durngate Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1JP

Tel: 01305 257172

Fax: 01305 261049

Email: [wdmf@dial.pipex.com](mailto:wdmhf@dial.pipex.com)

### Direct Payments Finance Team

Exchequer Services

Adult & Community Services

Dorset County Council

County Hall

Dorchester DT1 1XJ

**For further information and reference: [www.doh.gov.uk](http://www.doh.gov.uk)**



## **Social care local offices:**

### **Bridport**

St Andrews Road, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3BJ

Tel: 01308 422234

Fax: 01308 426044

Email: [bridportsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:bridportsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

### **Christchurch**

Loring Road (off Jumpers Road), Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2GZ

Tel: 01202 474106

Fax: 01202 478081

Email: [christchurchsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:christchurchsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

### **Dorchester**

Acland Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1SH

Tel: 01305 251414

Fax: 01305 251034

Email: [dorchestersocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:dorchestersocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

### **Ferndown**

Penny's Walk, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 9JY

Tel: 01202 877445

Fax: 01202 876604

Email: [ferndownsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:ferndownsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

### **North Dorset**

Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1DR

Tel: 01258 472652

Fax: 01258 473161

Email: [northdorsetsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:northdorsetsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)



**Purbeck**

19 Bonnets Lane, Wareham, Dorset BH20 4HB

Tel: 01929 553456

Fax: 01929 556319

Email: [purbecksocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:purbecksocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

**Sherborne**

Non-visiting office

Tel: 01935 814104

Fax: 01935 817207

Email: [sherbornesocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:sherbornesocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

**Weymouth & Portland**

Jubilee Retail Park, Jubilee Close, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 7BG

Tel: 01305 760139

Fax: 01305 774622

Email: [weymouthsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:weymouthsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

Further information on services provided by Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services can be accessed at [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com) or by calling Adult and Community Services Access Team on: 01305 221016.

