

Direct Payments

Information for mental health professionals working with people using Mental Health services

This leaflet gives information about direct payments and outlines the support available from ASIST. ASIST is based in Leeds CIL and supports people using direct payments.

The leaflet is aimed at professionals who assess people for community care services.

What are direct payments?

Direct payments are for people who are eligible for care services from Leeds Adult Social Care such as community support services. Instead of providing a service the local authority can give them the money. They can use this money to buy support to meet their assessed needs in the way and at the times that suit them best.

Who can have direct payments?

Direct payments are for people assessed as having needs under Fair Access to Care criteria (FACs)

Fair Access to Care is a framework developed by the Government to help decide who should receive adult community care services from the Adult Social Care Department. All local authorities have to use the same criteria.

The criteria used are:

critical, substantial, moderate and low.

These criteria are used to describe how a person's independence is at risk if they do not receive help. Leeds City Council will provide services to people whose needs are either **critical or substantial**.

If someone only uses a walk-in service, they may not have been assessed for Community Care Services. If a person thinks their needs are not being met they can ask for a Community Care Assessment to see if they are

ASIST

actively seeking independence
support team

eligible to receive support from Adult Social Care. If they are eligible to receive a service they may choose to have their needs met by a direct payment.

Remember, direct payments are not extra to or separate from other social care services. It is simply one way of delivering services to meet the assessed needs of a person.

Also remember that direct payments must be offered to most people eligible for support from Adult Social Care Services, ideally before other options are discussed. This includes people who have learning difficulties and/or mental health problems.

Other people who might benefit are:

- People looking after a person with a mental health problem
- People looking after a disabled person, who need a service to help them carry on providing care
- Parents or guardians of disabled children who need care services

They will also need to be:

- Over 16
- Willing and able to receive payments and able to give their agreement to this
- Able to manage the direct payment either alone or with help

What can direct payments be used for?

Direct payments can be used to pay for any support the person has been assessed as needing, to enable them to live independently in the way that they choose.

For example, they can employ people as support workers or personal assistants whose job could be to assist them with:

- Support in their daily routine
- Help them to get out and about, for example accessing services, which they might not feel ready to do on their own
- Support them to reach goals as part of a recovery plan they might be following
- Support them with communication
- Support them to access services in the community such as leisure
- Administrative support, to help with record keeping, paying bills or dealing with correspondence

The worker could vary the type of support they provide depending on how well the direct payments user is.

Direct payments may be used to purchase care services from an

agency rather than employ someone privately.

Direct payments can also be used to pay for respite or short breaks, or to support people to access community facilities instead of using a local authority day centre, where a particular need has been identified in an individual's care plan.

Direct payments can be used to buy a one-off item of equipment, for example, to allow them to start an activity. Direct payments have been used to:

- Purchase exercise equipment.
- To have a short break at a Buddhist retreat
- To continue leisure activities
- To assist the person to leave the house and do some shopping when they would not have been able to do that without support

Direct payments cannot be used to pay for:

- Permanent residential or nursing care
- Services run by the local authority
- Employment of a close relative or other person living in the same household, unless in exceptional circumstances agreed by the local authority

What do I have to do to enable a person to have a direct payment?

NB if the need for a service is urgent you may need to put an interim direct service in place.

- Ensure that a community care assessment has been completed to identify eligible needs
- Explain to the person that direct payments is one way of meeting their needs that will put them in control
- Refer them to ASIST to arrange for an initial contact meeting to take place with you, the ASIST adviser and the service user, so that important information can be provided
- Finish off the care plan. The ASIST adviser will be able to support and advise you how to do this as you may need to use a template as well.
- Send the care plan and template for approval to your manager and the budget holder. The approval panel meets on a regular basis.
- Send the approved care plan and template to the ASIST adviser who will help the service user to arrange their support and ASIST will continue to support them for as long as they continue to use direct payments

If you are working with people with mental health problems, think about the advantages of direct payments. They are:

- Flexible and allow the person to use the support in the way that best

meets their needs

- They put the person in control of the way their needs are met

Direct payments do have real potential to help people with mental health problems.

If you are a professional who doesn't do assessments but you think that direct payments could help an individual, then make sure you refer them to the social work team who will be able to carry out the correct procedure.

Remember that as well as helping the service user, ASIST is there to help you as well. We can provide the following support for assessors:

- Assistance with giving information to the service user about direct payments and Independent Living Fund
- Information about additions to care plans
- Checking care plans if required
- Assistance with completing SSD1000 forms for ILF
- Assistance with setting up user-led trusts (This can be of particular use to people who lack capacity)
- CRB checks
- Requesting finance to start making the direct payment
- Authorisation of additional expenses forms in line with the agreed care plan

For further information see the Leeds City Council Intranet
(search site index for the documents "Fair Access to Care" and "FACS Eligibility Adult Assessment and Review Staff Guidance")

The leaflet "Eligibility for Social Care Services for People in Leeds" is available from the above sites or from the Social Services Stationery store
tel 2478924 .

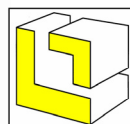
For more information and to speak to the support team, contact ASIST at:

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Leeds Centre for Integrated Living
Choice and control for disabled people