
DIRECT PAYMENTS for CHILDREN

What are Direct Payments?

Direct payments are a way of increasing choice and flexibility in how your child's needs are met.

A Direct Payment is a cash payment made by Social Work Services to parents to purchase services for their disabled children. Your child must have first been assessed as needing those services. The Highland Council must offer the choice of a Direct Payment to anyone who is eligible.

What can it be used for?

A direct payment is money for you to use to arrange the services that Social Work Services has assessed your child as needing. You choose who provides the care, when, where and how you want it. You will have more control and choice. However, if you prefer to receive local authority services to meet some of your child's needs this can be arranged and a mixture of direct services and payments can be provided.

In order to secure the services your child needs you can make arrangements yourself and employ your own staff who will report directly to you or they can be purchased from an independent provider e.g. private or voluntary organisations. The amount you receive will be equivalent to the costs of services which would have been provided by the local authority: if you decide to employ someone directly you will need to meet, among other requirements, tax and National Insurance costs.

As of November 2007 Direct Payments cannot be used to purchase personal assistance from any partner or close relative. This applies irrespective of where they live.

If you employ your own staff they will need to be police checked (Enhanced Disclosure) and you are required to also take up two references. Currently the Council acts as the Umbrella body to process Enhanced Disclosure checks.

Are they for me?

Whilst direct payments can offer more choice and flexibility, they are not for everyone.

By accepting a direct payment you take on the responsibility of managing the money and arranging the services that meet your child's needs. However, you do not have to employ your own staff but could instead contract an agreement with an agency or voluntary organisation to provide the service and local payroll companies can take care of the financial side of being an employer. The cost of this help will be included in the calculation of the amount of direct payment you will receive.

Who do I need to talk to in order to find out more?

If your child already receives a Social Work service speak to your normal contact about eligibility. If no services are currently provided contact your local Social Work office about obtaining an assessment. (see over). There is a Direct Payments Support Officer, although the post is currently vacant. In the meantime contact Gail MacMillan on 01463 703536.

HIGHLAND COUNCIL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES CHILDREN & FAMILIES TEAMS

Badenoch, Strathspey & Nairn

Area Social Work Team,
60 King Street,
Nairn,
IV12 4DN.
Tel: 01667 453746

Aviemore Area Office,
Schoolhouse,
Milton Park,
Aviemore,
PH22 1RR.
Tel: 01479 810251

Caithness & Sutherland

Area Social Work Office,
125/127 High Street,
Wick,
KW1 4LR
Tel: 01955 605040

Thurso Area Office,
16 High Street,
Thurso,
KW1 4LR.
Tel: 01847 893835

Olsen House,
Main Street,
Golspie,
KW10 6RA
Tel: 01408 634040

Inverness

Merkinch Area Team,
Carsegate House,
Glendoe Terrace,
Inverness,
IV3 6ED.
Tel: 01463 724040

Culloden Area Team,
Culloden Shopping Centre,
Keppoch Road,
Culloden,
IV1 2LL.
Tel: 01463 791338

Lochaber

Lochaber East Team,
Fulton House,
Gordon Square,
Fort William,
PH33 6DX.
Tel: 01397 707025

Skye & Lochalsh

Children & Families Team,
Tigh na Drochaid,
Bridge Road,
Portree,
IV51 9ER.
Tel: 01478 613921

Ross & Cromarty

Suie House,
Brigend,
Alness,
IV17 0UD.
Tel: 01349 882609

Slioch,
Castle Street,
Dingwall,
IV15 9HU.
Tel: 01349 865262

Scotsburn Road,
Tain,
IV19 1PR.
Tel: 01862 893021