



Direct Payments to purchase equipment and/or minor adaptations

Information sheet



What is a Direct Payment?

Direct Payments are a different way of getting the daily living equipment or minor adaptations you need to promote your independence that would otherwise be provided by social services. Instead of having equipment provided, you would receive the money for the equipment you need, enabling you to purchase it for yourself.

The advantage of a Direct Payment is that you may wish to purchase equipment from a different supplier to the one that the Council uses, or you may choose to put the direct payment towards a more costly higher specified model. You can choose the option best for you.

Direct Payments must be spent on meeting your assessed needs. The Council must be satisfied that what you spend the money on, will meet your assessed needs adequately. Direct Payments cannot be used to purchase items that you would normally receive from other organisations (e.g. NHS Westminster or the housing department). We will only give money towards equipment that social services would normally have a responsibility to provide.

Who can apply for a Direct Payment?

If following an assessment, you are eligible for provision of equipment to meet your assessed needs through Westminster's Community Equipment Service, and you can manage to purchase the equipment alone, or with some help, you could get a direct payment. You may prefer the control and choice that direct payments offer, but they are not for everyone and you may prefer the Council to organise for you to receive the items.

How much is a Direct Payment?

The Direct Payment will be based on the cost to the Council of purchasing the item(s) that we would have provided to meet your needs. You will need to sign a user agreement that confirms how the Direct Payment should be used to meet your assessed needs. Any unauthorised expenditure may be reclaimed from you.

Ownership and responsibilities

Equipment purchased by a Direct Payment will belong to you and therefore you will be responsible for its care and maintenance. If the item needs regular servicing we will usually give you additional money as required (e.g. once a year) to pay for this. When the equipment is no longer useful to you, it is yours to dispose of, though it may be possible for us to arrange for it to be collected. We will not buy the equipment from you.

What do I do if I decide I would like a Direct Payment for equipment?

- Talk in more detail to your assessor about how a direct payment for equipment might meet your needs. All Direct Payments have to be authorised by a designated officer in the Council
- You will need to sign an agreement form – this gives the details about the type of equipment required to meet your assessed needs, how much money you will receive, and your responsibilities
- Once all the paperwork has been completed and authorised, the Council's finance team will normally be able to pay the agreed amount of Direct Payment into your bank account within 14 days. We strongly advise that you do not purchase the equipment until after the money is available in your account
- You will need to buy the appropriate equipment for your needs within two months of receiving the money
- Organisations such as the Disabled Living Foundation can assist in providing information about equipment that is available on the market. Your assessor will advise on whether an item may meet your needs
- You will need to let your assessor know when the equipment has arrived. They will visit you to confirm the equipment meets your needs
- You will need to provide details of any insurance policy or warranty
- You will need to provide a copy of the invoice/receipt to the finance team.

How do I get more information?

Talk to your care manager, social worker or occupational therapist about your particular needs. If you do not have contact with one of these workers, then you can request an assessment by contacting Social Services Customer Service Centre on 020 7641 1175