

Carers Direct Payments

What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are cash payments made by Social Services to enable people to purchase the care for themselves they have been assessed to need. If you have been assessed by Social Services and you are offered support you will be offered the option of a direct payment so that you can arrange the help you need in ways that best suit you.

How would a Direct Payment help me?

There are two types of Direct Payments which can offer you support as a carer.

1) Direct Payments for Short Breaks

If you currently get a Carers Break Voucher or if you have had a carers assessment and have been offered a short break (sometimes we call this respite care) you can, if you want, choose a direct payment so you can arrange a break in ways that you couldn't do any other way. You can for instance use it to pay a friend or relative or someone you recruit yourself to provide care for the person you normally look after. You can even use a direct payment to pay for the transport costs of friends and family to come and provide you with a break if you need to. But these direct payments do come with some extra responsibilities attached.

You (or in some cases the person you care for) will be asked to sign an agreement and to keep simple records of how the money is spent. In addition if you want to employ someone to provide care, you will need to arrange to pay tax and national insurance. The Rowan Organisation offer a free payroll service to people using direct payments and can help you set yourself up as an employer. It might sound a bit daunting at first but most people who use direct payments tell us it's worth the effort and the support available makes it easier than you might expect. You can contact The Rowan Organisation on Free phone **0800 7831 755** or contact the project manager Jackie Jones by email Jackie@therowan.org

2) Carers Direct Payments

In addition to offering carers the opportunity to take a break from their normal routine, Councils have powers to offer Carers services in their own right. There are a lot of services aimed at helping carers which are already funded by the Council including The Young Carers Project and The Black and Minority Ethnic Carers Support Project. In addition the Council is now offering carers a one off direct payment of up to £250 per year which you can use very flexibly to pay for things which will help you to keep well and manage your caring responsibilities. For instance, you could use it to pay for some help around the house or a gardener, or you could spend it on a gym membership, or even put it towards buying a computer. The aim is to encourage you to find creative ways of improving and maintaining your health and well being.

If you or the person you care for has had an assessment within the last twelve months you can apply for one of these direct payments. Carers direct payments have less paperwork. There is

Richmond Carers Centre Fact Sheet



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a very simple and short form to complete and that's it. The only other thing we ask is that you tell us how the money helped you (we'll send you a form for this). In partnership with the Richmond Carers Centre we will publish the most creative responses on the Carers Centre website so that other carers can take inspiration from your experiences.

We know from experience that giving people direct payments can inspire them to find much more effective ways of meeting their needs that we could ever have dreamed of. The question is how will you use yours?

If you would like to apply for a Carers Direct payment please call our Carers Direct Payment Co-ordinator Elaine Davies on **020 8891 7669** or you can email her directly e.davies@richmond.gov.uk

How to contact Richmond Carers Centre

If you **wish to register as a carer** or would like further information please contact the Richmond Carers Centre on **020 8744 3900** or email info@richmondcarers.org or visit www.carers.org/richmond

You do not have to be specifically seeking guidance or help to register.

If you need this information in another format please contact the Richmond Carers Centre on **020 8744 3900**

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