

## **Direct payments for children with disabilities**

Direct Payments are monetary payments in lieu of Section 17 services by Central Bedfordshire Council direct to parent and carers of children with disabilities under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and Section 17a for 16- and 17-year olds, who have been assessed as being eligible for social care services. A Direct Payment involves people making their own arrangements, with assistance if necessary, to obtain the services which Central Bedfordshire Council would otherwise have arranged or provided.

### Direct payments - frequently asked questions

Q. Can I employ a relative or partner as a personal assistant or sessional Worker?

A. Yes, they must be over the age of 16 and NOT living in the same house.

Q. Will I be supported in setting up and managing a direct payment?

A. Yes you will – the commissioning team support you in setting up and managing the Direct Payment account.

Q. What happens if something goes wrong with the services I am purchasing with a direct payment?

A. It will depend on what has gone wrong.

If you are not satisfied with a service, you should address any issues yourself with the person/organisation providing it. If you would like some help to do this, please talk to your social worker.

If the council is not satisfied with the service, it has a right to withhold a direct payment, and may terminate the agreement in the event of any serious concerns.

Q. Do I have to make any contribution towards direct payments?

A. No, though you may purchase additional or more expensive services if you wish to do so.

Q. What happens if I do not wish to continue with direct payments at any time?

A. The Direct Payment Agreement that both you and a council representative will sign requires that you give notice in writing if you do not wish to continue with direct payments.

Q. What happens when my son/daughter reaches the age of 18?

A. You will not be able to receive direct payments to meet the needs of your child once he/she has reached the age of majority (18th birthday), in the capacity of the 'person with parental responsibility'.

If you are to continue to care for your son or daughter into adulthood, you may be entitled to receive direct payments or a Carer's Voucher from Adult Services to purchase carers' services, in the capacity of a 'carer'. There are some very helpful leaflets on the website

Your son/daughter may receive a direct payment in their own right, provided they are able to manage the payment. Assistance in managing direct payments is available.

Q. Can my son/daughter receive a direct payment in their own right before their 18th birthday?

A. A young disabled person aged 16 or 17 may, as part of the transition to adulthood, take control of parts or all of the direct payment.

The wishes and views of both the young person and his/her parents would be taken into consideration before any decisions were made, and the council would need to be satisfied that the young person was capable of managing the direct payment him/herself, or with the appropriate assistance.

Q. If I receive direct payments, can my child use local council services as well?

A. Yes, if a combined 'care package' is required to meet your child's assessed needs.