

Questions and Answers about Direct Payments

What can Direct Payments be used for?

Direct Payments can be used in many ways to help meet the needs of a child or young person. Here are some examples:

- **Short Breaks:** You can use Direct Payments to pay for short breaks, like play, leisure, and respite activities. These activities are listed in the council's short breaks statement and offer.
- **Play, Youth, and Leisure Services:** You can use Direct Payments to pay for services that are not available in the short breaks offer but are agreed to meet an outcome in a support plan.
- **Hiring People:** You can use Direct Payments to hire people like a PA, mentor, tutor, or other professionals. You must follow legal requirements, including a DBS check, employment contract, and compliance with tax, NI, and pension regulations.
- **Equipment:** You can use Direct Payments to buy equipment if a professional, like an Occupational Therapist, recommends it.
- **SEND Educational Services:** You can use Direct Payments for educational services to meet outcomes in a child or young person's EHCP.
- **Overnight Short Breaks:** You can use Direct Payments for overnight short breaks, but there are limits. You cannot use Direct Payments for more than 17 nights in a row or more than 75 days in a year.

What can't Direct Payments be used for?

Direct Payments cannot be used as extra income or benefits for the family. There is a list of items that cannot be purchased with Direct Payments in the personal budgets policy.

Other Questions

- **Hourly Rate of Pay:** Weekday is £13.50, Weekend is £14.70 and for Overnights £65.00. This information will be included in the letter parents and carers receive when Direct Payments are agreed. It is acknowledged that parents and carers may find it difficult to recruit PA, if you experience any difficulties with this please speak to SCDS.
- **Surpluses in Direct Payment Accounts:** Surplus funds in supported bank accounts are a cause for concern. If more than 8 weeks surplus has built up, the council is likely to suspend any further payments until a conversation with the family about why the surplus has occurred has taken place. The council

approach will be to suspend accounts whilst discussions take place rather than claw back funds. In some cases it may be necessary to ask for repayment if a solution cannot be found in the short term.

- **Contact Information:** If you do not know the name of your child's named worker, you can contact the duty service on 01273 296317 or email SCDS.0-24Duty@brighton-hove.gov.uk.
- **Recruiting PAs:** There are no approved agencies for recruiting PAs. We will only pay the Direct Payment rate for PAs, but this rate is being reviewed.
- **Additional Support:** If you are need of additional support above and beyond your family's allocated package please speak to SCDS.
- **Contact for Over 18s:** If your son/ daughter is aged 18 - 24, contact the duty service on 01273 296317 or email SCDS.0-24Duty@brighton-hove.gov.uk.
- **Direct Payments Advisor:** For under 18s, contact Childrens.DirectPayments@brighton-hove.gov.uk. For over 18s, contact ASC.directpayments@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- **Adult Processes:** 18-24 year olds with a Learning Disability are open to the SCDS 14-24 team. At 25, they will be transferred to the SCDS 25+ team.
- **Holiday Support:** Requests for holiday support for your young person please go through the SCDS team.

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The social work team are kept up to date with all of this information.

I hope this helps! If you have any other questions or need further assistance, feel free to ask.