

A Direct Payment can only be offered to people who fit certain conditions which are set out in the Care Act Guidance 2014. Once a DP offer is accepted, along with choice and control with how support is arranged, the DP option also brings with it important responsibilities, but there are a range of support services available to help. **The key Direct Payment User responsibilities are listed below:**

1. Choosing support services and ensure the Direct Payment is used in a way which can meet the outcomes in a care and support plan.
2. Managing the money and paying for the support invoices, equipment, respite arrangements or PA wages
3. Managing the day-to-day work of the chosen support services, including any employed PA
4. Cancelling support services and finding and arranging new support providers and services
5. Implementing a contingency plan when services or employed PA’s are unable to provided support as planned

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| **Areas of DP User’s Responsibilities** | **Who Can Help?** |
| 1. **Choosing support services and ensuring the Direct Payment is used in a way which can meet the outcomes in a care and support plan.**   If you opt to use a Direct Payment you will have taken control with designing how support is provided to you and what or who will provide it. After you have chosen your services, if things don’t work out you will still have the control to change them. The important thing to remember is that whatever service you choose, it must be a type that will be appropriate to help you manage your difficulties.  It’s important you have **contracts and agreements** in place with your service providers so you understand the following:   * what they will provide and when * their charges and any additional fees * how they will invoice you * their complaints procedures and who you can contact for further help. | Your **Care & Support Plan** should set out the details of what services you have agreed you are looking to use and how often your will use them.  **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** is the organisation that any business such as a Care Agency who is providing regulated activities such as personal care needs to register with.  The CQC website has useful information available and reports with the quality and standards of these types of businesses.  **Website**: [**https://www.cqc.org.uk**](https://www.cqc.org.uk) |
| 1. **Managing the money and paying for the support invoices, equipment, respite arrangements or PA wages**   You will continue to be responsible for how you use your Direct Payment money even if you have an organisation administrating the DP money on your behalf.  **A DP user will be responsible for:**   * Receiving invoices and check these are correct. * Checking and authorising timesheets and any other payments due to be made to an employed PA. * Ending services, finding new ones | Use an **on-line pre-payment card** provided by the Council and buy services and pay care bills from this account.  Use a **Holding Account Service** to receive the money and pay the care bills on your behalf once you have chosen what services you will buy.  The **DP & Employer Helpline** can give further advice with your responsibilities with using a Direct Payment and provide tools to help you. |
| 1. **Managing the day-to-day work of the chosen support services, including any employed PA**   You will continue to be responsible for managing the day-to-day work of your chosen support services even if you have someone receive the Direct Payment money and pay care bills on your behalf such as a Holding Account.  **Contacting the Council or your Health Care Team if**   * Your difficulties change. * You need more help from your support.   services and more Direct Payment Money   * You have overspent your Direct Payment. * You have got into difficulties managing your Direct Payment money * You are having difficulties managing the services you are buying. * You want to stop receiving a Direct Payment or want to change how you receive it. | The **DP Helpline** can give further advice with your responsibilities as an employer and can provide you with an **Employer Responsibilities Checklist** template  **Skills for Care** have useful employer guidance on their websites to help manage your PA’s work performance. [**https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-retention/Employing-your-own-care-and-support/Employing-your-own-care-and-support.aspx**](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-retention/Employing-your-own-care-and-support/Employing-your-own-care-and-support.aspx)  An **employer insurance provider** is the first point of contact if you need to end your PA’s employment, have concerns with your PA’s performance or are in a potential dispute with them.  The **Employment Support from Connection Support** can help with undertaking any actions your insurance provider advises you to take. |
| 1. **Cancelling support services and dealing with problems and complaints**   In many cases, DP users build good relationships with their service providers or employees. But if things go wrong, as a DP user, along with the right to buy services yourself, you will need to provide a service provider or an employed PA with a period of notice (usually between 2 and 4 week) before you can cancel your service.  If you do cancel services without notice you may be charged for the notice period and it’s also very important to do things correctly when employing a PA, so you don’t put yourself at risk of being challenged in an employment tribunal. | **An Advocacy Service** can support people with complaints or addressing concerns they may have with a care provider.  **Employer Insurance providers** are the first point of contact for advice when looking to cease employment with a PA.  **Mediation Support –** can be helpful in having an impartial person help to find solutions for resolving disputes with services providers or employee’s. |
| 1. **Contingency Planning**   As a Direct Payment user is will be important that you consider how you will deal with planned and unplanned situations where your usual support is not available and when you need to make alternative arrangements. This may be by using informal support from family of friends, or from arranging for different service to help you.  Inform your Social Services team or Health care team if you are unable to find services and your care needs are being put at risk. | Our **Helpline** can be contacted fora **Contingency Plan** template to help manage this area. |

**DP & Employer Support Helpline**

**Tel:** 01908 101346 (answer phone facility available)  **Monday –** **Friday 9.30am – 2pm** Email: [**sdshelpline@connectionsupport.org.uk**](mailto:sdshelpline@connectionsupport.org.uk)

[**Free resources to help you navigate your care and support**](https://www.connectionsupport.org.uk/milton-keynes/projects/care-support-options/resources/?utm_source=Email%20signature&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=MK%20SDS%20Resources)