



Option 1 – Direct Payment (DP)



What is a Direct Payment?

A Direct Payment (DP) gives you the control to manage and administer your own personal budget to purchase goods, activities and services. The DP will be paid into a bank account opened by you and managed separately from any other accounts you have. You can manage the budget yourself or your legal representative can support you.

You are in control and make all decisions relating to how and when you will be supported, deciding which goods, activities or services are best suited to meet your assessed outcomes and support needs. You are in control of how your personal budget is spent to meet your assessed outcomes and support needs.

A record must be kept of how the budget is spent. Where you or your legal representative require support to manage the financial aspect of the DP, you can discuss this with your practitioner who will advise and guide you to the best solution for your individual case.

You **can** employ a personal assistant when you choose a DP or you may choose to use the services of a self-employed worker. If you choose to use the services of a self-employed worker you will be asked to complete a disclaimer where the worker will be asked to provide you with evidence of their self-employed status with HMRC.

The reason that we ask you to do this is to ensure that the self-employed worker is registered with HMRC and is paying their taxes. If the worker is not you may end up with an unexpected tax bill as the employer.



What to do next if you decide on Option 1 - Direct Payment

Have conversations about whether or not you wish to become an employer and employ your own PA or PA's or to get support via goods, activities and services including an agency or a mixture. Your practitioner will advise and guide you and signpost you to relevant resources to help your thinking.



The Planning Stage

After your outcomes-focused assessment, where you are eligible for a personal budget, the planning stage for your support begins.

It is up to you to begin to think about how you want your outcomes to be met and what support you need to meet your outcomes. Have a conversation with your practitioner who will advise and guide you on what will best suit you. Some people know how they want to receive their support, others do not.



What if I disagree with my outcome focused assessment and support plan?

In the first instance you can discuss this with your practitioner. They can support you to resolve the issue. Where you continue to disagree this will be recorded in the assessment and support plan.



'Your' Personal Budget

The public purse becomes your personal budget to be spent to meet your agreed outcomes and support needs. Whilst this is 'your personal budget', the money remains the public purse and must be accounted for and audited in line with statutory responsibilities. This is one of the reasons that receipts, invoices and bank statements (vouchers) must be kept by you.

Your personal budget may vary based on your outcome focused assessment, support plan and changes in personal circumstances



There are a range of choices available

Aberdeen City Council advise you of your personal planning budget and then confirm your personal budget when you agree your assessed outcomes and support plan.



"I know what goods, activities and services I want"

Where you know of the goods, activities and services you wish to access now is the time to begin to make contact and enquire about the cost and availability of services. This is called 'shopping' for your support. Remember it is up to you who you would like to support you, and how and when, to meet your needs. For further guidance see Table 1: *Questions that will help your decision making* (page 3).



"I don't know where to start"

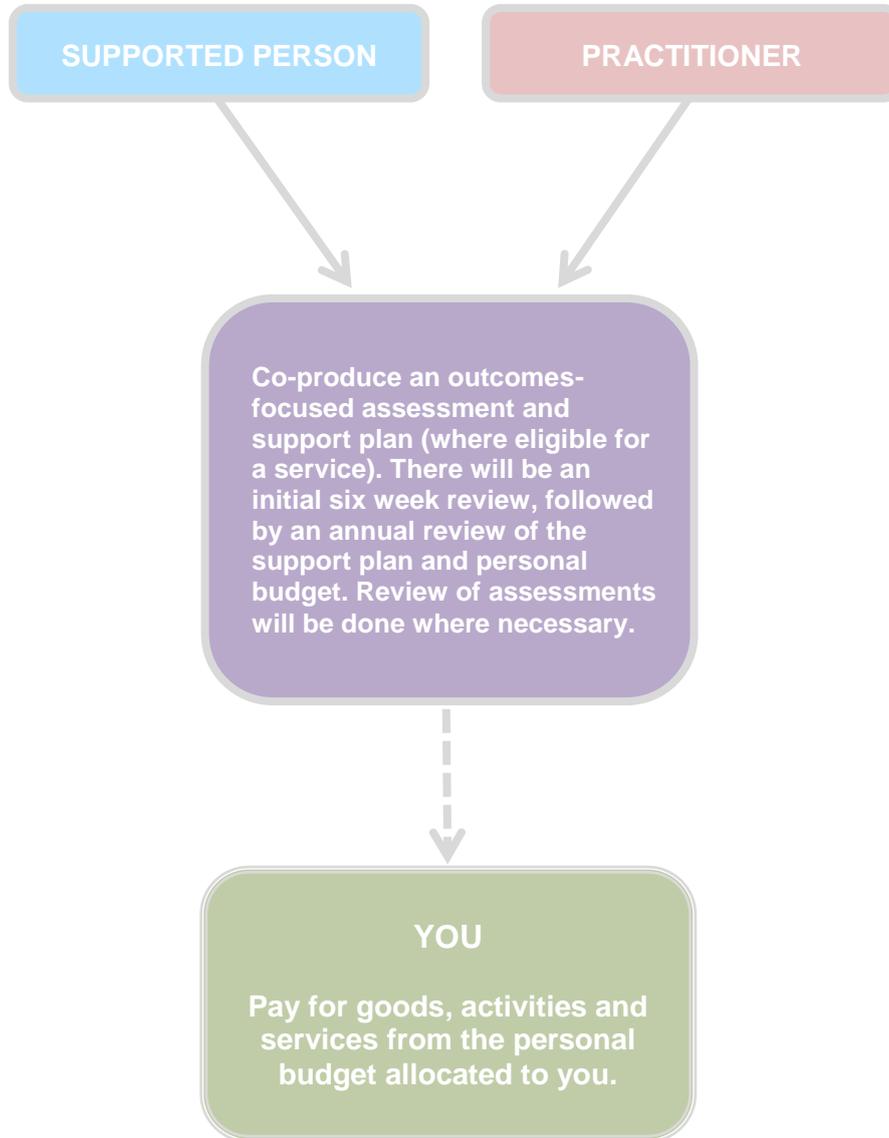
If you are unsure how to start this process your practitioner will give you advice and guidance. Remember it is up to you to decide who you would like to support you, and how and when, to meet your needs. First steps could include visiting the MyLife Web Portal at <https://aberdeencity.mylifeportal.co.uk> where some goods, activities and services are listed, speaking to friends, family and colleagues and having further conversations with your practitioner.

.See Table 1: *Questions that will help your decision making (below)* to guide your thinking.



‘Shopping’ for your support

Questions that will help your decision making (this list is not exhaustive):	
Paying for services, activities and support Negotiation must take place with providers to ensure that the cost is not excessive.	
Goods, Activities and Services	Becoming the Employer of a Personal Assistant
Questions to think about when approaching providers:	Questions to think about when becoming the employer of a Personal Assistant:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This is my weekly budget – what can you supply for this? ✓ What are the costs for this activity, can this be negotiated? ✓ What will I get for this amount? ✓ How can I pay you? ✓ How can I cancel? ✓ How will you support me? ✓ How often will you support me? ✓ Can I be involved in interviewing a suitable person to support me? ✓ Can I meet the people to see if I think they are suitable to support me? ✓ These are the times I want to be supported, can you make this happen? ✓ Tell them where, when and how you want to be supported. ✓ How will they ensure your choices are always listened to? ✓ How can you raise concerns and issues when you are not happy? ✓ How can you let them know that you are happy with the services? ✓ What happens if the goods, activities or services are not meeting expectations? ✓ What happens if the goods, activities and services are no longer suitable for you? ✓ How will you ensure the invoices have the correct information on them e.g. hours of support, costs and who will you contact when these are not correct? ✓ What happens when things go wrong? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What services do you want your PA to provide you with? ✓ Where will the PA work? In your home or at an alternative location? ✓ What happens when things go wrong? ✓ What are your responsibilities as an employer? ✓ What are the PA's responsibilities? ✓ How will you ensure that your choices are always listened to? ✓ Where can you find more information on becoming an employer? ✓ Who can support you with Payroll services? ✓ What happens when the worker is off sick or on holiday?
Table 1: Shopping for goods, activities and services and becoming an employer.	





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What are the steps?	
1	<p>You have a conversation with your practitioner and decide which outcomes are most important to you for the year ahead (all outcomes may not be met each year depending on the decisions you make).</p> <p>You agree your outcome-focused assessment with your practitioner.</p>
2	<p>You and your practitioner develop a support plan and agree how your personal outcomes will be met. You can invite others to this meeting. You will talk about what support would be best for you.</p> <p>You will consider your circles of support, what unpaid and paid support you have and need. This is called co-producing your support plan. The co-produced support plan will form the basis of your six-week and annual reviews to ensure that your outcomes are being met.</p> <p>The support plan will be shared with whomever you wish and can be shared with your chosen provider.</p>
3	<p>Your practitioner will guide you to the MyLife Portal where you can find information to assist you with accessing goods, activities and services (this section is regularly updated). The MyLife Portal web address is: https://aberdeencity.mylifeportal.co.uk</p> <p>Your practitioner will guide you on how to plan and source goods, activities and services (this is called 'signposting').</p>
4	<p>You 'shop for your support' (see <i>Table 1, page 3</i>) and choose what goods, activities and services you would like to meet your outcomes and support needs. You have the opportunity to negotiate with providers.</p> <p>You can use any agency which can meet your assessed needs as long as they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. You will be asked to provide evidence of their registration at your 6 week review.</p> <p>Alternatively, you may wish to consider becoming an employer. This allows you to employ your own Personal Assistant to meet your assessed outcomes and support needs. You can find further information about this on the MyLife Portal.</p>
5	<p>Contributing To Your Support:</p> <p>Where you are assessed as being eligible to contribute to your support we will pay your personal budget minus your contribution. You will have to pay your contribution directly into the Direct Payment account you have set up.</p> <p>See Page 6: 'Contributing to your support'.</p>



6	<p>At six weeks you will have a conversation with your practitioner to ensure your support needs are being met. This is known as a 6-week review.</p> <p>You decide who will be invited. The review is to talk about how your personal budget is being spent, to consider your support plan and to give you the opportunity to talk about what is working, what is not and what you may want done differently.</p> <p>You can discuss any proposed changes with your practitioner. Your support plan will then be amended to reflect those changes.</p> <p>Where your support plan is not meeting your needs or changes to the plan are required, you will discuss this with your practitioner.</p>
7	<p>You and your practitioner will then review the support plan annually to ensure that personal outcomes are being met.</p> <p>It may be that not all outcomes will be met annually depending on the choices you have made.</p>

Contributing to Your Support

Financial Assessment

A non-residential financial assessment will be completed with you where appropriate to find out if you are in a position to make a financial contribution towards your support. Your practitioner will support you to complete the initial financial assessment. This is known as 'Contributing to Your Support'.

Payment of your contribution (if applicable) is your responsibility. You must pay this into your dedicated Direct Payment bank account to ensure that your goods, activities and services are paid.

Financial Monitoring and Audit

Dedicated direct payment bank account

You will be required to open and maintain a separate account, to be used only for direct payment transactions and your contribution (if applicable).

All expenditure must be used to meet your agreed outcomes and the bank account is administered and managed by you to purchase your support. All support is bespoke to you and it is about supporting you to achieve what is most important in your life to meet your assessed outcomes.



Monitoring

You are responsible for the money you receive and are accountable to Aberdeen City Council's Direct Payment Finance Department to complete monthly financial monitoring statements for the account and be responsible for how you spend the money.

You or your legal representative will be responsible for completion and return of financial monitoring statements to the council. You must keep all receipts over £10 as per the DP Agreement to support the completion of financial monitoring returns to the council. You must ensure that any invoices are correct and/or that the support you have received is reflected in the timesheets that your PA will be required to complete.

Audit

The council will write and tell you when your audit is due. The letter will be sent 28 days in advance of this date.

Issues and risks

Where you have any queries about your support and you have an allocated practitioner or you are allocated to a team, please contact them in the first instance.

Is the support meeting your needs? Do adjustments need to be discussed? Where you are not happy with any aspect of your support or services you are receiving it is important to talk about it with your practitioner.

Your practitioner will be able to provide you with further information about SDS and the 4 options.