Direct Payments & Brokerage Payment Options

Information for providers on the payment methods standing order, virtual wallet and pre-paid card.
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Information for Providers

What is a direct payment?
As a Council, Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) is committed to ensuring that service users and carers have choice and control of what, how and when support is delivered to meet their assessed eligible needs.

A Direct Payment (DP) is a sum of money given to service users and carers by the Council to purchase care outlined in their care plan. It is important for Service Providers to recognise that their contract is with the service user and not the Council.

The cost of care should be agreed at the care planning stage. The budget will then be agreed by the Council for 12 months. If the Service Provider wishes to increase their fees, the process is:

Obligations of Service Provider:
• To inform the service user in writing regarding any proposed changes, giving a notice period (usual length of time is 3 months).

• Receive written confirmation from the service user that any proposed changes have been agreed.

Obligations of the service user:
• The service user agrees to pay the increase in costs directly to the provider.

• Contact BCC on 01296 383204 to request a re-assessment and possible increase in Direct Payment before the end of the notice period. An increase will only be agreed if the DP is within the budget (i.e. does not exceed the commissioned rate). If the new costs are higher than what it would cost BCC to provide the service then the service user will be expected to ‘top up’ the difference from their own personal funds.

• To give notice, effectively ending their contract with the current provider and to source an alternative provider to deliver their care. The service user can contact BCC’s Brokerage Service who can assist in finding a new provider if required.

Obligations of the Council:
• To complete a reassessment and confirm if there will be an increase in the Direct Payment.

Any additional care required which is to be funded by the DP must be agreed by BCC. A client can have additional care if required but if this is not agreed following a reassessment then it must be paid on a private basis directly to the provider.

For more information please contact the Direct Payments Team 01296 383204.
Client Contribution
Each individual is financially assessed to see whether they have to pay a contribution towards their care costs.

If the DP is the only service the client receives then they will need to pay their client contribution into their chosen DP account by standing order. If the client receives other services in addition to their DP, then they will be billed directly every 4 weeks for their client contribution by BCC.

Client Top Ups
If a service user wishes to purchase their care via a DP and the cost of this care is higher than the cost of BCC's directly provided services, then the service user will be expected to 'top up' the difference from their own personal funds. This top up must also be paid into their chosen DP account via a standing order.

Payment Methods

Pre-paid card/Bank accounts. If the DP client has either a pre-paid card or bank account then you will need to send your invoices directly to the client for payment.

Virtual wallet. Provider responsibilities. If the DP client is using the virtual wallet then you do not need to send in any invoices. The client will have an account opened on the system and their care schedule entered which details who is providing the care and when.

The chosen care provider(s) will need to register onto the system (a link will be sent and guidance and support provided to ensure that this is completed). The registration includes provider details along with appropriate rates etc.

Every 4 weeks the provider will need to log onto the system and confirm the care that they have provided over that period. Once this approval has been submitted the system checks that everything is in order and pays the provider. The system will not allow providers to bill for more care than has been agreed or that there are funds available for.

If a provider does not register or confirm care provided, they will not receive any payments.

If you would like to know more you can contact our Brokerage team on 01296 383204