

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Guide about direct payments

(money to pay for care and support)

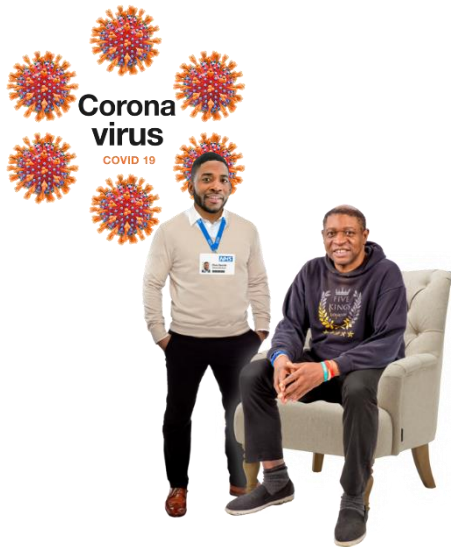
May 2020



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| An illustration of two women, one in a red and blue striped shirt and one in a black jacket, holding several banknotes (5, 10, and 20 pounds). Below them is a purple oval with the text 'Direct Payment' written in white. | <p>Some people get money from the NHS or their local social care team that is used to pay for care and support.</p> <p>This is called getting direct payments.</p> |
| An illustration showing a group of four people (two men and two women) standing in front of a large, classical-style building. In the foreground, there are stacks of banknotes and a woman sitting at a desk with a computer monitor. | <p>A direct payment is one way of using a personal budget or personal health budget.</p> <p>A personal budget is money from a local social care team.</p> |



A **personal health budget** is money from an NHS clinical commissioning group.



It is important that people are still able to get the care and support they need during the coronavirus outbreak.



1. What to do if you pay for a personal assistant (PA) using direct payments

- a) Look at the plan you already have for when your personal assistant can't work because they are poorly or taking holiday – this will be in your care or support plan.

Think about whether this plan will still work if your personal assistant needs to stay at home (**self-isolate**). They will need to do this if they or someone they live with have signs of coronavirus, or if they are someone who is more likely to get very poorly from coronavirus.

- b) If the plan you already have means you won't get the care and support you need if your personal assistant needs to self isolate, think about other ways you can get that care and support.



For example:

- If you get other paid support (as well as from your personal assistant), you can see if they can give you more support instead.
- Think of whether there is another personal assistant who could support you.

c) Make sure that the information about what care and support you need from your personal assistant is up to date.

d) If your personal assistant can't support you and you can't get support from anywhere else, you should contact the team who send your direct payments.

This will be-

- your **local social care team**
or
- your **NHS clinical commissioning group (CCG) team** (a clinical



commissioning group is a local NHS organisation that pays for health services)

These teams will help you to make other plans as quickly as possible to make sure you get the care and support you need.

e) Make sure your personal assistant has the PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) they need. This could include:

- Plastic aprons
- Masks
- Eye protection
- Gloves

Your personal assistant should wear PPE if they:

- support you with personal care
- support you in a way that means they are less than 2 metres away from you
- you have received a letter to say that you are in the [shielding](#) group



New gloves and aprons should be used each time your personal assistant supports you.

Eye protection and some face masks can be used more than once.

More information about PPE and when it should be worn can be found [here](#).



2. What you should do if you buy care and support through a service using a direct payment

You might use your direct payments to pay an organisation to provide your care and support at home. This is called using a **service**.

If you buy your care and support through a service like this, you should-

- Contact the service as soon as possible and make a plan about what to do if your usual care or support worker can't work, or the service is not available because of coronavirus.
- Make sure all the information the service has about you is up to date.

This includes your care or support plan.



- If you can't get your usual support and you can't get support from anywhere else, you should contact the team who send your direct payments.

This will be-

- your **local social care team** or
- your **NHS clinical commissioning group (CCG) team** (a clinical commissioning group is a local NHS organisation that pays for health services)

These teams will help you to make other plans as quickly as possible to make sure you get the care and support you need.



3. What should happen if you are showing signs of coronavirus

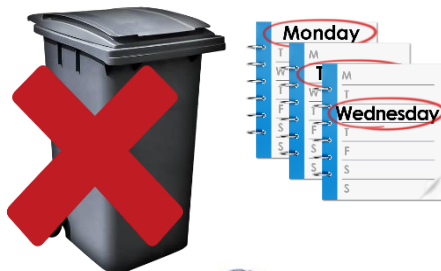
If you are showing signs of coronavirus, you need to take care not to spread the virus.

Signs of coronavirus are:

- a new cough, and you keep coughing or
- a high temperature

If you have signs of coronavirus:

a) When your personal assistant or care worker throws away used personal protective equipment (PPE), it should go into a tied bin bag that should go inside another tied bin bag.



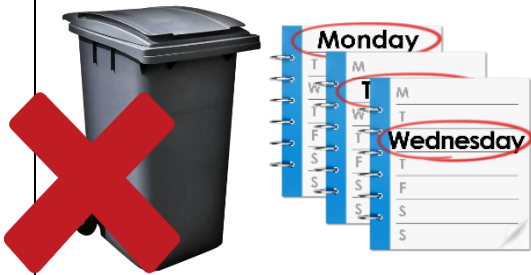
You should keep this away from your normal household rubbish for 3 days.



b) If your personal assistant or care worker does cleaning for you, they should use the usual household cleaners to clean surfaces regularly.



If they throw any wipes or personal waste (like tissues) they should put them in a bin bag and put that bin bag into another bin bag and tie it up.

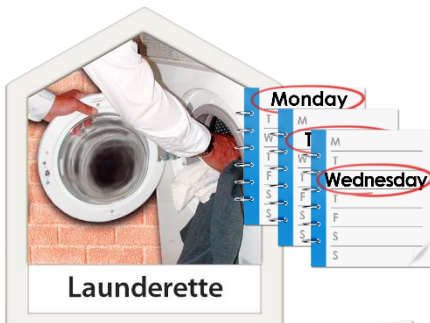


You should keep this away from your normal household rubbish for 3 days.



c) If your personal assistant or care workers help you do your washing (laundry), they shouldn't shake your dirty washing before they put it in the washing machine.

All your dirty washing can be washed together.



If you don't have a washing machine, wait until you are allowed to leave the house, then wait 3 more days before you go to the laundrette.



This is 7 days from when you started having signs, plus 3

extra days – so 10 days altogether.

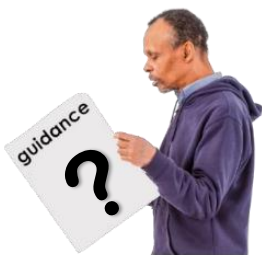
[More information about throwing away rubbish and doing the washing safely \(not easy read\).](#)

Personal assistants and care workers should follow [advice on keeping hands clean.](#)

d) If you get direct payments and you normally buy personal protective equipment (PPE) yourself, you should carry on doing that.

If you can't get PPE in the usual way, or your direct payment isn't set up to pay for PPE, ask for help from the local social care team or NHS CCG that provides the direct payment. They will support you to get and pay for the PPE that is needed.





4. What to do if your personal assistant (PA) is worried that they might have coronavirus

If your personal assistant is worried that they have coronavirus, they should follow [NHS advice](#).

If they are advised to stay at home (self-isolate), they should not visit you until it is safe to do so.

In a case of emergency, you should be allowed to put some suitable care and support in place for a short time (for example 4 weeks).

After you have put your emergency care or support in place, you will need to show why it was needed.

More information on this can be found in this [question and answer document](#).

What NHS community health services are doing to help you if you use direct payments

You might get support at home or close to home, for example from a community nurse. This is called using community health services.

Anyone who you get community health services from should:

- a) Make sure their list of people who get care at home support is up to date.
- b) Work out how much other support you have, for example from your family.
- c) Share the information they have with other places you buy care and support from (with your permission).





d) Change the times staff work, or link to other teams (like the out-of-hours GP) to make sure you carry on getting the right care and support.

e) Think about different ways they could support you, for example over the phone, if needed.

f) Make plans with the social care team, primary care providers (like your GP), and other people or organisations who support you.

This plan should be for how and when to put any back-up plans into action.

g) Think about how voluntary groups (like charities) can help if needed.



5. Extra support from the government if you pay for a personal assistant (PA)

There is some extra money available from the government to deal with coronavirus.

This means that the government will pay for **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)** for your personal assistant if they can't support you because of coronavirus.

Not everyone can get Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). If your personal assistant can't get Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), they might be able to get **Universal Credit** or contributory **Employment and Support Allowance** (these are two other types of benefits).

[More information about getting paid from the government if you can't work because of coronavirus.](#)



6. What social care teams and the NHS are doing to support you if you use direct payments to pay for care and support

To help support you during coronavirus, social care teams and NHS clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) should-

- a) Make sure that their list of everyone who gets direct payments is up to date and includes how much informal support (e.g. from families) you have.

- b) Make sure they have a record of all care and support plans paid for by direct payments, to help them plan. They should also help providers to keep a record of which care is paid for by direct payments.

- c) Contact everyone who uses direct payments, to check you have the right information and advice to make sure you carry on



getting the care and support you need.

They should also tell everyone getting direct payments who to contact, and how, if there is a problem with you getting the right care and support.

d) Make a plan for how and when to work with local community services and primary care providers (like your GP) to support you if you need it.

e) Think about how voluntary groups can support you if you use direct payments and help link you up to **voluntary sector** (charity) groups.

f) Think about how to make sure everyone gets the care and support they need, including if someone needs to get different care and



support from normal during coronavirus.

g) Think about how technology can be used at home (for example, technology to keep an eye on seizures or breathing problems) to give some extra support and put less pressure on staff.

h) Keep a list of the people they think are most at risk. This includes if your support is most likely to break down, or if you are likely to be very vulnerable if you can't get support.

They should also be making back up plans for you if you are one of these people.



7. Making sure you are still getting your direct payments when you need them

The people or organisations that pay for your services (sometimes called **commissioners**) need to make sure you can still get your direct payments even if there are problems during coronavirus.

For example, they should think about providing longer-term payments (for 2 months, rather than one) to make sure you are still getting the money you need.



8. More information

The Department of Health and Social Care and other organisations have made a [list of frequently asked questions about direct payments.](#)

This is on the Skills for Care website and it will be updated regularly.

There is also an easy read guide about:

- [staying safe if you are someone who is more likely to get very poorly from coronavirus \(shielding\).](#)

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