



Market Position Statement – Direct Payments

February 2024

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Surrey's key messages to providers

The Direct Payment Strategy supports the [Community vision for Surrey in 2030](#), Surrey County Council has outlined its ambitions for all residents. These include:

- everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed
- everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing
- everyone gets the health and social care support and information they need at the right time and place
- communities are welcoming and supportive, especially of those most in need, and people feel able to contribute to community life

To support delivery of this vision, in Adult Social Care we will:

“Promote people’s independence and wellbeing, through personalised care and support that focuses upon their strengths, the outcomes they want to achieve and enables choice and control”.

Direct payments (DP) make an important contribution to this ambition, as they enable people to exercise more choice over who will deliver their care and how than services directly commissioned by the council. They seek to ensure people:

- have access to information, advice and support in the community to help themselves and each other
- build upon their strengths, with the same hopes and aspirations as everyone to work and to live independently
- are supported to regain their skills and confidence after an illness or injury, so they can do things for themselves and stay independent
- feel safe and experience health, social care and community partners working together to meet their needs

What are direct payments?

Once an individual has been assessed as eligible, under the Care Act, for help from Adult Social Care, they can opt to access their support through the council directly procuring services, through a direct Payment or, in some authorities, an Individual Service Fund (ISF) (see appendix one).

Direct payments are enshrined in the Care Act. Individuals should be routinely offered the choice between directly commissioned services or receiving all or part of their Personal Budget in the form of a direct Payment.

They can be used to purchase community services provision, including:

- home based care
- respite and short breaks
- community services such as outreach services and supported employment
- supported independent living
- transport to access support services

They cannot be used to purchase Nursing care or Residential care.

An individual who opts to receive a direct payment arranges and pays for their own care and support services (we offer managed accounts to support with associated financial responsibilities).

They offer individuals greater, choice and control over their care and support. They can be used to purchase a wider range of solutions to enable them to live in the most independent and rewarding way.

Direct payments are the council's preferred approach, wherever appropriate.

How do we know what makes a good direct payments offer?

Between 2021 and 2023, Surrey County Council undertook a strategic review adopting a 'One Council' approach: ASC working in conjunction with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Children with disabilities (CwD). The purpose of this review was to identify how better to support residents with eligible needs who opted to meet these needs through purchasing support themselves using direct payments. This review led to recognition that a reset of our approach to direct payments is required.

Themes with particular resonance for the market include:

- develop of a greater range of support and care available to direct payment clients
- greater clarity regarding what is and what is not available to direct payment clients
- equity of access to support, geographically across Surrey and for different population groups, for example for different age groups and ethnicities
- support for providers regarding good practice arrangements when contracting with direct payment clients
- likewise, support for direct payment clients in establishing contractual arrangements with their chosen support provider / Personal Assistant(s)
- support providers' interaction with technology and apps that can support people who have a direct payment to manage their own care
- increase the number of Personal Assistants available across Surrey with a focus on equitable access across Surrey, for example across different geographies, age groups, ethnicities and support needs. To this end we will be considering how better to promote recruitment and retention (continued professional development, opportunities for career progression)
- the trial of a Surrey Individual Service Fund (ISF), which is a new approach to accessing care for the market to accommodate
- work with voluntary sector and community interest groups to grow local support
- work at a 'place' level to ensure welcoming and accessible communities and neighbourhoods

The review culminated in November 2023 with publishment of a five-year All-Age Direct Payment Strategy was co-designed with stakeholders including direct payment clients, practitioners and providers.

About this Market Position Statement

What is a Market Position Statement (MPS)?

A Market Position Statement (MPS) is a vital part of what Surrey County Council must do to ensure that there is a choice of different types of service and support available to residents. This MPS focuses specifically on the support options for people who are eligible for adult social care and opt for direct payments.

The MPS outlines:

- the current uptake of direct payments
- the types of support currently purchased by people who use direct payments
- the types of support not available but need to be
- an overview of work underway to address the challenges for people who seek the greater independent, choice and control that direct payments offer

The main aim of this MPS is to encourage commissioners, people who use services, carers, personal assistants and provider organisations to work together to determine what is needed in each area and why.

The test of a good MPS is how well it is used. It will be regularly reviewed by providers and the council.

This document is aimed at existing and potential providers of adult social care who provide support to people of all ages that use direct payments to pay for their care. It continues the dialogue between the council, people who use services, carers, social care practitioners, providers and others about the vision for the future the direct payment market. This dialogue shaped the recently published Direct Payment Strategy 2023 to 2028.

The Direct Payment MPS should be read in conjunction with all published Surrey County Council MPS's as direct payments can be used to purchase services as described within these documents (with the exception of Residential and Nursing Care).

How has this MPS been developed?

Following consultation with Surrey Coalition of Disabled People during the strategic review, it was agreed that we should move from engagement and consultation to co-production as the method of exploring the issues further.

Consequently, we commissioned We Coproduce CIC, a social consultancy trading as a social enterprise, to provide guidance in developing a responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative process for identifying the barriers in the current approach to direct payments and developing a strategy that could deliver the change required.

This resulted in the gathering of experiences and insights facilitated through micro-community work and conversations with nearly 250 people in receipt of direct payments, social care practitioners and others working in the system, support providers, voluntary sector organisations. Methods of engagement included:

People who draw on support:

- core community group meetings

- interviews
- conversations with groups and organisations
- discussions at pre-existing meetings
- surveys
- case studies

Engagement with over 70 Surrey County Council practitioners:

- Adult Social Care (ASC) staff session in February 2022
- SEND staff session in March 2022

Market engagement:

- an online survey, sent to 248 providers in Surrey offering one or more of: transport, home based care, day centres, community outreach services
- Provider Market workshop: followed up on the survey for further discussion of what works well and what doesn't; how better to offer equitable access for direct payment clients

This culminated in a co-produced All-age Direct Payments Strategy 2023-2028 and shaped this MPS.

Key aim of the Direct Payments MPS

The document is designed to signal business opportunities for the care market and gives relevant information to inform market development and commissioning plans from 2024. It is an iterative document, which will be refreshed on a regular basis to ensure the inclusion of future plans and developments.

Where we are now, January 2024

Uptake of direct payments

As a percentage of all individuals with community packages, the average uptake rate is 23%. There have been 857 new people receiving a direct payment since April 21. This increase is offset by the direct payment packages that have ended, for example, in Q1 2023/24, 163 new direct payments started but these were netted off by 119 ceases. The net increase in direct payment clients since April 21 is 146 (7%).

DP take up		Older People	Physical & Sensory Disabilities 25+	Learning Disabilities / Autism 25+	Transition 18-24	Mental Health	Carers care packages	Total
Mid	Elmbridge	18%	29%				94%	24%
Mid	Epsom & Ewell	15%	40%				96%	28%
Mid	Mole Valley	15%	42%				86%	27%
SW	Guildford	11%	34%				100%	21%
SW	Waverley	11%	40%				100%	21%
East	Reigate & Banstead	14%	31%				100%	22%
East	Tandridge	14%	32%				100%	22%
NW	Runnymede	19%	36%				100%	26%
NW	Spelthorne	19%	38%				100%	26%
NW	Woking	19%	38%				100%	27%
NW	Surrey Heath	15%	33%				100%	21%
Transition 18-24 team			0%		42%		100%	41%
LD&A 25+ team				20%			100%	21%
Mental Health teams						13%	71%	14%
Grand Total		15%	35%	20%	42%	13%	96%	23%

Uptake rates differ across 'primary user groups'. Notably, Mental Health have the lowest uptake rate and Carers the highest. To some extent this is unsurprising given the nature of need however the scale of disparity is consistent with feedback through co-production of the Strategy. There is also geographical disparity.

We are exploring causality and how best to address these issues.

Direct payment spend as a proportion of community spend

£44m is currently spent in ASC via direct payments, which represents 18% of community spend. There are considerable differences by 'primary user group'. Notably, carers spend through direct payments stands at 63% whereas MH stands at 4%. This is not surprising, but some of the variance might reflect the choices available to our clients rather than choice per se.

Client group	2023/24 forecast gross expenditure		
	Direct payments	Community Care services (excluding Respite, Nursing, Residential)	Direct payments as a % total community care services (excl Resp/Res/Nurs)
Older People	£13.5m	£67.8m	20%
Physical & Sensory Disabilities 25+	£13.4m	£34.0m	39%
Learning Disabilities / Autism 25+	£11.2m	£106.0m	11%
Transition 18-24	£4.9m	£18.5m	26%
Mental Health and Substance Misuse	£0.5m	£14.7m	4%
Carers	£0.4m	£0.7m	63%
Total all client groups	£43.9m	£241.7m	18%

Supported Living (SL) is available to only four of the six care groups and can be costly. It is typically less likely to be purchased via a DP. Removing the associated spend therefore gives a more reflective picture of differential spend across client groups. As seen below, the variance is lessened when SL services are excluded.

Client group	2023/24 forecast gross expenditure		
	Direct payments	Community Care services (excluding Respite, Nursing, Residential, Supported Living)	Direct payments as a % total community care services (excl Resp/Res/Nurs/SL)
Older People	£13.5m	£67.2m	20%
Physical & Sensory Disabilities 25+	£13.4m	£30.1m	44%
Learning Disabilities / Autism 25+	£11.2m	£26.4m	42%
Transition 18-24	£4.9m	£7.9m	62%
Mental Health and Substance Misuse	£0.5m	£2.6m	21%
Carers	£0.4m	£0.7m	63%
Total all client groups	£43.9m	£134.8m	33%

We are exploring potential reasons for the variance to identify what corrective action should be taken.

Current market overview

Services purchased using direct payments

Direct payments allow people to have choice and control of the services that they purchase to support them to meet their assessed needs. Surrey County Council therefore hold limited information regarding the provisions that are purchased, however we do know that the following number of services are purchased via a direct payment across all client groups:



Source: ASC Area finance DP Service Directory reconciliation Jan 2024

Proportion of direct payment clients who employ PAs

Of the 2,257 active direct payment (DP) recipients, 1,071 (47%) employ a PA to address all or part of their care and support needs.

June 2023 active numbers	Older People	Physical & Sensory Disabilities 25+	Mental Health	Learning Disabilities / Autism 25+	Transition 18-24	Carers	Total
Number of active Direct payments	592	641	72	550	217	185	2257
Number of DP recipients with a PA	182	400	24	302	158	5	1071
% of DP recipients with a PA	31%	62%	33%	55%	73%	3%	47%

There is variance in the proportion of each client group that employ a Personal Assistant. The highest proportion is in the Transition cohort and the lowest the Carers cohort. Neither of these is surprising given the nature of need.

The proportion of PAs that support different client groups

Unsurprisingly, the use of PAs, (as opposed to provider services) varies significantly by client group.

Count of PA's	Older People	Physical & Sensory Disabilities 25+	Mental Health	Learning Disabilities / Autism 25+	Transition 18-24	Carers	Grand Total
Elmbridge	23	32	0	0	0	0	55
Epsom & Ewell	16	36	0	0	0	1	53
Mole Valley	22	47	0	0	0	0	69
Guildford	10	41	0	0	0	1	52
Waverley	29	52	0	0	0	0	81
Reigate & Banstead	20	47	0	0	0	1	68
Tandridge	18	34	0	0	0	0	52
Runnymede	7	25	0	0	0	0	32
Spelthorne	13	28	0	0	0	0	41
Woking	14	33	0	0	0	0	47
Surrey Heath	10	25	0	0	0	0	35
Transition	0	0	0	0	158	0	158
LD Central Team	0	0	0	302	0	1	303
MH	0	0	24	0	0	1	25
Grand Total	182	400	24	302	158	5	1071
% of total PAs	17%	37%	2%	28%	15%	0%	100%

The largest number of PAs support people in the Physical or Sensory Disabilities 25+ client group (37%).

Carers as a group do not employ PAs, unsurprising given their circumstances.

Only 2% of all PAs support clients of 'primary user group' MH. This is consistent with the feedback that PAs with the expertise to support MH clients effectively are hard to find.

Market Challenges

Themes that arose during the co-production of the Strategy that have particular resonance for the market include:

- develop of a greater range of support and care available to direct payment clients
- greater clarity regarding what is and what is not available to direct payment clients
- equity of access to support, geographically across Surrey and for different population groups, for example for different age groups and ethnicities
- support for providers regarding good practice arrangements when contracting with direct payment clients
- likewise, support for direct payment clients in establishing contractual arrangements with their chosen support provider / Personal Assistant(s)
- support providers' interaction with technology and apps that can support people who have a direct payment to manage their own care
- increase the number of personal assistants available across Surrey with a focus on equitable access, for example across different geographies, age groups, ethnicities and support needs. To this end we will be considering how better to promote recruitment and retention (continued professional development, opportunities for career progression)
- the trial of a Surrey Individual Service Fund (ISF), which is a new approach to accessing care for the market to accommodate
- work with voluntary sector and community interest groups to grow local support.
- work at a 'place' level to ensure welcoming and accessible communities and neighbourhoods

The Surrey County Council Direct Payment Strategy

The strategy is relevant for people of all ages who are eligible for support from Adults Wellbeing and Health Partnerships or from Children, Families and Lifelong Learning.

It outlines the how the council will address the challenges highlighted during co-production of the Strategy and improve the support available for individuals and families that choose direct payments, identifying six objectives.

Objectives:

- ensure there is clear, accurate and accessible information for internal and external use
- ensure quality support from social care practitioners through workforce development
- ensure equitable access and support in establishing a direct payment, including the potential pilot of an 'Individual Service Fund' offer
- ensure streamlined systems and administration, including consideration of in-house / external arrangement
- develop the Provider Market – organisations and Personal Assistants
- develop a direct payments communications plan, tailored and targeted towards the different stakeholder groups

The strategy document outlines the council's action plan for delivery of these objectives.

Commissioning Intentions

For the Direct Payment Strategy to be delivered, it is essential that Surrey has a local vibrant provider market that meets peoples' needs, offers personalised support towards the realisation of individual's outcomes and is good value.

Specific activity to deliver objective 5, 'Develop the Provider Market'

Ensure a good range of support is available to direct payment clients

- contract management discussions will include the extend to which providers do or might support direct payment clients and any related issues
- the council's in standard contract stipulates that direct payments clients should not be charged any additional fee above the agreed rate for directly (the council) procured support
- we will be working with providers to develop good practice arrangements to support contracts with direct payments clients
- we will identify gaps in models of support available and target activity to address them. Providers are requested to distinguish between self-funders and direct payment clients and to provide the number direct payment clients they support (as distinct from self-funders) in all contract performance returns
- we will explore what support Providers might welcome in relation to their interaction with technology and apps that can support people who have a direct payment to manage their own care
- we will be exploring how best to ensure micro-providers and other providers not familiar to the council are able to promote their offer
- we will work with voluntary sector and community interest groups to grow local support. Community development is recognised as a key process through which the overall wellbeing of a community can be improved and health inequalities affecting those who experience disadvantage are addressed

Clarity regarding what is and what is not available to direct payment clients

- we will develop a webpage presenting good quality, cost effective support options for direct payment clients

Increase the number of Personal Assistants active in Surrey

- we are considering the procurement of external Service to manage PA market: recruitment, support to potential and actual PAs with all employment related matters and continued professional development, opportunities for career progression
- we are looking at the appropriate remuneration of PAs with a view to recognizing the skills and expertise required to provide more complex support

Procurement of support for direct payment clients

The Care Act 2014 encourages local authorities to commission an independent user led organisation (ULO) to provide people with advice and support around direct payments, and to support individuals with all aspects of managing their direct payments and the employment of personal assistants.

The current contract for the provision of support will terminate in July 2025. During the coming months we will be considering the options for future delivery. It is anticipated that this will lead to procurement activity against a refreshed specification.

Ensure equitable access: trialling an Individual Service Fund offer

One of the key themes that arose in discussion with people who draw on services and practitioners was concern about using direct payments in the context of needs that can fluctuate and the absence of an Individual Service Fund (ISF) offer in Surrey. The common view was that this might enable people with reduced capacity or fluctuating conditions to benefit from greater independence, choice and control.

Through ISFs, an individual with care and support needs (with their family, carer, advocate as appropriate) can work with an organisation to manage their personal budget and help them to plan their support and activities.

In the first year of the five year Direct Payment Strategy October 2023 – September 2028, we will be commissioning an organisation to undertake a review of the available evidence and approach taken to ISFs in other local authority areas and to make recommendations as to most appropriate Adults Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP) might trial a Surrey ISF offer.

Pending the outcome of this review, we will commission a ‘proof of concept’ ISF pilot.

Procurement activity that relates to direct payments

Objective one of the strategy is “Ensure there is clear, accurate and accessible information for internal and external use”. As stated above, one of the tools will be a webpage presenting good quality, cost effective support options for DP clients. Further consideration will be given to the form this will take however we will be transparent regarding the providers that have joined commissioning frameworks, for example Dynamic Purchasing Systems, Approved Provider Lists. As these are a tool for a commissioning body to assess providers against quality and cost effectiveness metrics, individual direct payment clients might opt to access support from providers that have successfully joined one or more of the local commissioning frameworks.

In the light of this, Providers are advised to refer to other published Surrey County Council MPS’s as they will indicate relevant commissioning frameworks and intentions. As a reminder, direct payments might be used to purchase a range of community support.

Next steps: further discussion with the market

Specific engagement sessions with local providers of support and care were undertaken to inform and shape the Direct Payments Strategy. We will be re-establishing these forums to explore elements of this Market Position Statement. They will feed into the formal governance arrangements for direct payments in Surrey.