



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Information for direct payment holders and personal assistants

June 2020



Some people get money to pay for care and support. This is called getting **direct payments**.

A direct payment is 1 way of using a personal budget or personal health budget.

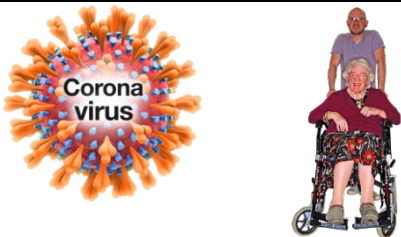






A **personal budget** is money from a local social care team.







A **personal health budget** is money from a local NHS organisation called a **clinical commissioning group**. Clinical commissioning groups decide what services are needed in an area. They make sure these services are provided.








Who this guidance is for







- Children, young people and adults who have direct payments.
- People who are employed through direct payments (like personal assistants).






<h2>How you can use your direct payment in different ways during COVID-19</h2>	
	<p>It is important you can get the care and support you need during COVID-19.</p>
	<p>You should try to do what is written in your care plan. If you need to use your direct payment in a different way this is ok.</p>
	<p>You should try to agree this with the council or the clinical commissioning group.</p>
	<p>If you can't talk to anyone you can still use your direct payment in a different way. The law says this is ok. To find out more about the law click here.</p>
	<p>Your council or clinical commissioning group might have their own guidance on using direct payments during COVID-19.</p>
	<p>If you can use the internet check their websites for information.</p>
	<p>To find your local clinical commissioning group click here</p> <p>To find your local council click here</p>

  	<p>If you have to adapt or change your care and support because of COVID-19, you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make a note of what you have done and why you have done it • keep receipts or evidence of how you have used your direct payments <p>You may need this for future reviews.</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Joy's story</h2>	
	<p>Joy uses a direct payment to do activities in the community and to pay for counselling.</p>
	<p>Joy's activities and counselling stopped because of COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Joy told her direct payment worker this made her feel lonely and worried.</p>

	<p>They made a plan for how Joy could join in social activities and do counselling online.</p>
	<p>Joy told the social worker she wanted to spend her direct payment in a different way.</p>
	<p>The social worker agreed Joy could use her direct payment to buy a laptop so she can access support online.</p>
	<p>Joy bought a laptop and paid for some online training.</p> <p>Joy is less lonely and anxious now she can talk to her friends and have counselling online.</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Zeenat and Eoin's story</h2>	
	<p>Zeenat and Eoin go to the pub every day to have their favourite meal for lunch. They pay for this themselves.</p>
	<p>When the pub closed because of COVID-19 Zeenat and Eoin became very concerned and anxious.</p>
	<p>The pub's landlord said he would deliver their favourite meal every day and leave it on their doorstep.</p>

	<p>The direct payments team said Zeenat and Eoin could use their direct payment to pay for the landlord's petrol.</p>
	<p>Zeenat and Eoin can still have their favourite meal every day.</p>
	<p>They feel less anxious and this helps them to stay happy and healthy.</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Hadid's story</h2>	
	<p>Hadid is 13 and lives with his family.</p>
	<p>Hadid will get very poorly if he gets COVID-19. This means his whole family are staying home and away from other people.</p>
	<p>Hadid usually gets support from his personal assistant. She can't come anymore in case she gives Hadid COVID-19.</p>

	The changes are making Hadid very anxious and he is also missing his friends.
	Hadid's mum talks to the social worker about ways he can keep in touch with his friends.
	The social worker agrees to Hadid using his direct payment to buy a games console.
	Now Hadid can play computer games and talk to his friends when he wants to, he is less anxious.

<h2>Using unspent direct payment money and how to get more money in an emergency</h2>	
	<p>You might have unspent direct payment money in your bank.</p>
	<p>You council or clinical commissioning group might let you use it to pay for extra support.</p>
	<p>If you need to use it make sure you keep a record of what you spent it on.</p>
	<p>Tell your council or clinical commissioning group straight away if you do not have enough money to pay for extra things you need.</p>
	<p>They should deal with people who need money for emergencies straight away.</p>

Paying for extra expenses your personal assistant has because of COVID-19



If your personal assistant has extra expenses because of COVID-19 you can pay them extra for this.



As their boss, you must decide if the expense is good value for money.



If you are not sure or need extra money, talk about this with your council or clinical commissioning group.

Using your direct payment to pay for activities at home instead of in the community



Your usual activities might have stopped because of COVID-19.



You do not have to pay for services you can't use.



If you have a contract that says you have to pay for something even though you can't use it, tell the council or clinical commissioning group straight away.



If you can't do your usual activities because of COVID-19, you can spend your direct payment in different ways.



Make sure you make a note of what you have done and why.
Make sure you keep receipts.

Miguel's story



Miguel usually uses his direct payment to go to an art class in a centre.



The centre has closed because of COVID-19.



Staff from the centre have put art activities and ideas online for people to try at home.



Miguel wants to do art activities at home to help him stay well and happy.



Miguel asks his support service to help him use his direct payment to buy art materials online.

Miguel can keep developing his skills and keep his routine. This makes him less anxious and more confident.

Getting direct payments during COVID-19



How you get your care and support might change because of coronavirus.



Councils and clinical commissioning groups must try their hardest to make sure your direct payment carries on.



You might use technology to get some things at home instead of in the community



You might get a different amount of money than usual.



Some councils and clinical commissioning groups are paying 2 months money in one go.

Others are providing extra money.



You will be told about it before something like this happens.

Getting direct payments if you have to stay in hospital



If you have to stay in a hospital your direct payment should carry on as normal.



Usually only hospital staff would be allowed to support you.



If there are some things that only your carer or personal assistant can support you with this may be allowed.



Talk about this with the hospital team.

There is more guidance about family members and carers [here](#)



If your carer or personal assistant is able to support you in hospital, they **must** follow rules to stop infection spreading.



Any support you get from your carer or personal assistant **must not** get in the way of the medical treatment.

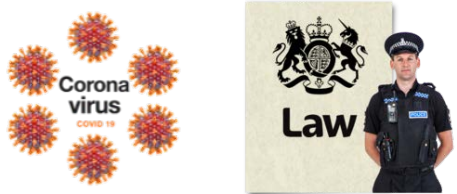




They must keep to the guidance from government and the hospital.




	<p>Carers and personal assistants will have a very important job to do supporting you when you leave hospital.</p>
	<p>You can read more guidance about leaving hospital during COVID-19 here.</p>
<h3>Marta's story</h3>	
	<p>Marta is 20, autistic and has learning disabilities. She lives with her family and is supported by a team of personal assistants.</p>
	<p>Marta doesn't use words to speak and relies on her Mum and personal assistants who really understand her.</p>
	<p>Marta can hurt herself and other people if she is not supported in ways that work for her.</p>
	<p>Marta becomes poorly and needs an operation. She goes into hospital with her Mum.</p>

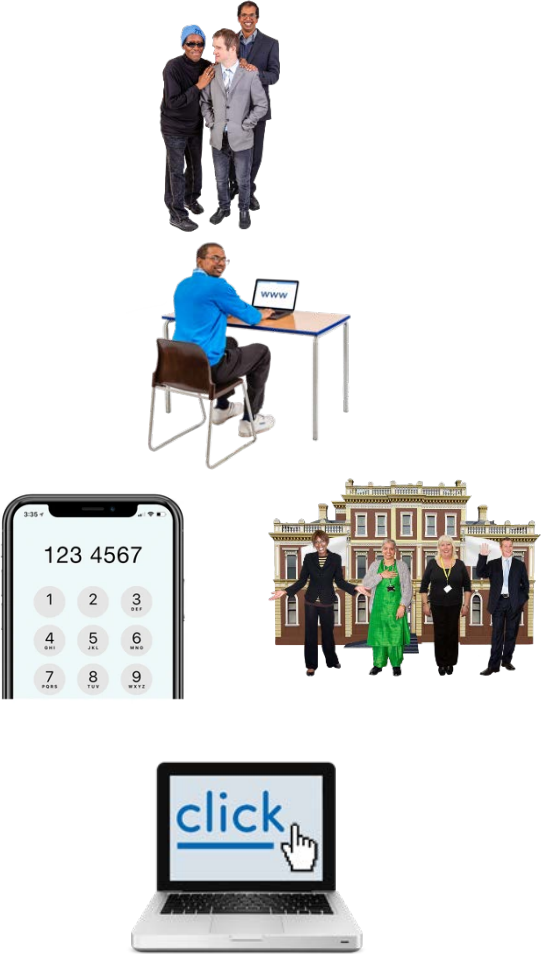
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	<p>Marta has a healthcare passport which is all about how she likes to communicate and be supported. To find out more click here</p>
	<p>The hospital team say 1 of Marta's personal assistants and her Mum can take turns supporting her.</p>
	<p>Marta has the operation and after a few days goes home.</p> <p>The experience was still difficult for Marta but everyone agrees it is the best it could have been.</p>

Rights to advocacy support during COVID-19

	<p>COVID-19 has made it harder for councils to do all of the things the law says they must do.</p>
	<p>To help councils provide care and support to people who need it the most the Government changed the law.</p>
	<p>The rights to advocacy support are not affected by the change.</p>
	<p>This means you still have a right to advocacy support during COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Easy Read information about advocacy can be found at the National Development Team for Inclusion's website. Click here</p>

Planning for emergencies	
	<p>Make sure you have a plan for getting the care and support you need during COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Try to get your council or clinical commissioning group to agree to your plan and then use it when you think you have to.</p>
	<p>Include things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what you will do if your paid supporters can't work in the usual way. • what you will do if you can't access your usual activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what extra support you might be able to get from friends and family• what extra training or support your staff might need.• someone in the council or the clinical commissioning group you can contact in an emergency. <p>To see an example plan click here</p>
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Personal protective equipment



If your personal assistant **does not** live in your home with you they may need to wear more personal protective equipment than normal.

Make sure they have the personal protective equipment they need.

This could include:

- Plastic aprons
- Masks
- Eye protection
- Gloves

Your personal assistant should wear personal protective equipment 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.

Unpaid carers and family members who live with you should not wear more personal protective equipment than usual.

If they don't live with you and provide care and support they should follow the same guidance as personal assistants who don't live with you.

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

Getting and paying for personal protective equipment for personal assistants



If you normally buy personal protective equipment yourself using your direct payment, you should carry on doing that.



If you can't get personal protective equipment, ask for help from your local council or clinical commissioning group.

They will support you to get and pay for the personal protective equipment that is needed.

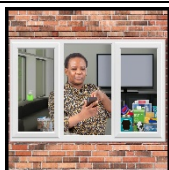


Remember personal protective equipment is only safe if it is used properly. To find out more about stopping infection spreading click [here](#)



To see a video about how to use personal protective equipment safely click [here](#)

Employment of individuals



There are times when your personal assistant should stay at home and not visit you (**self isolate**):

- If they show symptoms of coronavirus
- If they have been told that they have been close to someone who has coronavirus

If this happens you are allowed to arrange emergency care for a short time (for example 4 weeks).

If you arrange emergency care you will need to show why it was needed.

In an emergency you may be able to use your direct payment to pay a relative who is providing more care and support than usual.

You should talk about this with your council or clinical commissioning group.

If you think you might have to do this you should put this in your emergency plan.



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	You can also pay a personal assistant who used to work for you in the past.
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Financial or employment support for direct payment holders



You should continue to get the same amount of money as usual.

The government might pay for sick pay for your personal assistant if they can't support you because of COVID-19.

If your personal assistant can't get sick pay, they might be able to get **Universal Credit** or **Employment and Support Allowance** (these are 2 other types of benefits).

To find out more click [here](#).

Testing



Anyone who has a direct payment and has symptoms can refer themselves for a test. To find out more click [here](#)

Your personal assistant is classed as an essential worker. This means if they have symptoms they can get a test straight away. Click [here](#)

They can apply online themselves or you can apply online for them. To find out more click [here](#)

Keeping Safe



If your personal assistant thinks they have coronavirus they must stay home. They must not give you ANY face to face support.



If they have symptoms and still want to come to work tell your local council or clinical commissioning group straight away.



Your insurance company might be able to give you information and advice too.



ACAS respond and advise on issues like this. They can be contacted at **0300 123 1100**.



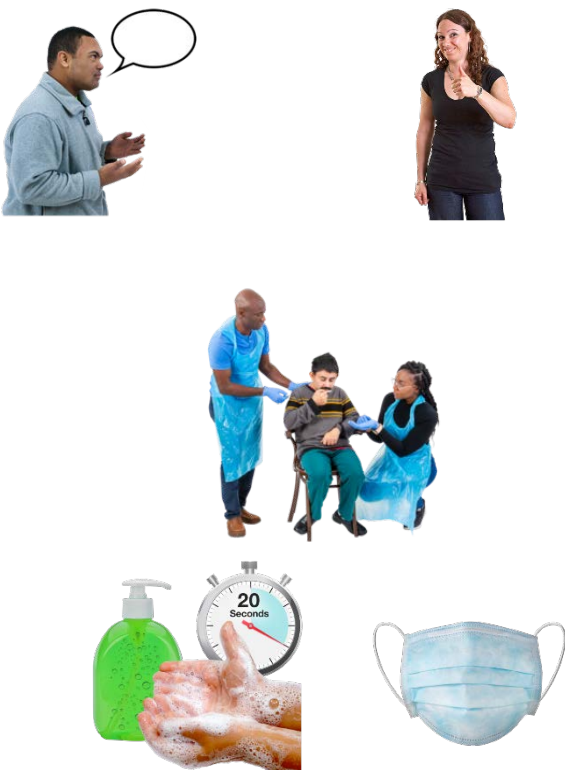
If you are worried your personal assistant is not following the rules about keeping safe talk to them and write down what you said and what was agreed.



If your personal assistant does not do what was agreed you might not want them to work for you anymore.



Your personal assistant might not want to come to work because they are worried they can't keep their distance.

	<p>Talk to them and tell them the things you are doing to keep safe. Talk to them about how they can support you safely.</p> <p>There are some things like personal care that can't happen at a distance.</p> <p>Personal assistants who help with personal care must wear the right personal protective equipment and make sure they follow the rules about stopping the virus spreading.</p> <p>Talk to your local council or clinical commissioning group if you are worried.</p>
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