

Title of policy / procedure / function / project / decision:	Direct Payment Improvement Project
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Evidence based equality analysis

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

People who are assessed as eligible to receive adult social care services can choose to receive a monetary payment from the Council to purchase the support they would like to help them achieve the outcomes set out in their support plan, this is known as a Direct Payment. A Direct Payment can be chosen as an alternative to the Council arranging support from their commissioned/contracted providers. A Direct Payment is provided to a person in line with the statutory requirements set out in the Care Act 2014 and the Council's Direct Payment Policy.

Compared to other neighbouring Councils we have less people who choose to have their care and support needs met by a Direct Payment. An improvement project to improve Direct Payments, making them a more attractive option for people has commenced using a co-production approach. The co-production work has led to a series of recommendations which aim to improve how Direct Payments are delivered in Cheshire West and Chester focusing on:

- Updating the Direct Payment Policy
- Updating the Direct Payment Agreement
- Improving the information and advice offer
- Improving internal processes
- Reviewing the support service
- Delivering a training offer for employers, personal assistants and staff
- Improving finance and audit processes
- Developing the personal assistant market

Increasing the number of people who receive a Direct Payment is in line with the Draft Adult Social Care Strategy – Enabling Great Lives allowing us to enable people who live within our communities to live great lives in communities that thrive.

This Equality Analysis Form provides the potential impacts of delivering improvements to Direct Payments, focusing on the implications for different protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act.

Lead officer: Matthew Emerson

Stakeholders: People working in adult social care, people who receive adult social care services

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Target group / area			
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.)	As part of premium linguistics service offer, people whose first language is not English will be able to access written and verbal information through translation, telephone/ video interpreting or face to face interpreters where required. In addition to using other translation services with	Direct payments will be more accessible as more information will be available, in easier to understand formats for everyone. Where videos are used a transcript will be available to enable easier translation. Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.	Medium impact Transition to new ways of working may pose challenges for some current users – mitigated through communication and engagement plan.

	<p>no cost such as google translate where appropriate.</p>	<p>Enhancing our Direct Payment offer with more personal assistants, the growth of micro-enterprises and other non-traditional options will increase potential for people to be able to choose to receive their support tailored to their race and ethnic needs.</p> <p>A greater use and availability of Direct Payments allows people to employ carers/ PAs directly from their community networks allowing a better understanding of cultural sensitivities.</p>	
<p>Disability (as defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</p>		<p>Direct payments will be more accessible as more information will be available, in easier to understand formats for everyone.</p> <p>Where videos are used a transcript will be available to enable easier translation as well as subtitles/ BSL included in videos.</p> <p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p> <p>Staff training will reduce risk of bias when identifying if a person is suitable for a Direct Payment</p>	<p>Medium impact</p> <p>Transition to new ways of working may pose challenges for some current users – mitigated through communication and engagement plan.</p>

		particularly those with cognitive impairments.	
Sex (male or female)		Both males and females will benefit from the improved approach to Direct Payments which will give them more choice and control.	
Gender identity (gender reassignment)		<p>People of all gender identities will benefit from the improved approach to Direct Payments which will give them more choice and control.</p> <p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p> <p>Enhancing our Direct Payment offer with more personal assistants, the growth of micro-enterprises and other non-traditional options will increase potential for people to be able to choose to receive their support tailored to their gender identity.</p>	
Religion and belief (including lack of belief)		All religions and beliefs will benefit from the improved approach to Direct Payments which will give them more choice and control.	

		<p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p> <p>Enhancing our Direct Payment offer with more personal assistants, the growth of micro-enterprises and other non-traditional options will increase potential for people to be able to choose to receive their support tailored to their religious and cultural practices.</p>	
<p>Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and others)</p>		<p>People of all sexual orientations will benefit from the improved approach to Direct Payments which will give them more choice and control.</p> <p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p> <p>Enhancing our Direct Payment offer with more personal assistants, the growth of micro-enterprises and other non-traditional options will increase potential for people to be able to choose to receive their support tailored to their sexual orientation.</p>	
<p>Age (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults 25 – 50,</p>		<p>All ages will benefit from the improved approach to Direct</p>	<p>Medium impact</p>

<p>younger older people 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. Age bands are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs)</p>		<p>Payments which will give them more choice and control.</p> <p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p> <p>Training will reduce risk of bias when identifying if a person is suitable for a Direct Payment particularly older people.</p>	<p>Transition to new ways of working may pose challenges for some current users – mitigated through communication and engagement plan.</p>
<p>Care Experienced (all young people and adults who have been in the care of Cheshire West and Chester Council - for a period of 13 weeks or more - from the age of 14 years. This includes those children/young people for whom the Council currently or have previously held corporate parenting responsibilities)</p>		<p>Direct payments will be more accessible as more information will be available, in easier to understand formats for everyone.</p> <p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p>	
<p>Carers (people who care for others, informally or formally)</p>		<p>Improvements to direct payments will support carers to navigate the system more easily, which will enable them to get the person they care for the support they need.</p>	<p>Medium impact</p> <p>Informal carers may not know about Direct Payments – mitigated through comms and engagement and other</p>

			workstreams which focus on support for carers.
Rural communities		<p>People in these communities will benefit from the improved approach to Direct Payments, which will give them more choice and control.</p> <p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p> <p>Enhancing our Direct Payment offer with more personal assistants, the growth of micro-enterprises and other non-traditional options will increase potential for people to be able to choose to receive their support tailored to their needs, particularly in rural communities where traditional care provision can sometimes be difficult to access.</p>	
Areas of deprivation (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived)		<p>People in these communities will benefit from the improved approach to Direct Payments which will give them more choice and control.</p> <p>Processes will improve to enable people to access Direct Payments more easily.</p>	

		Enhancing our Direct Payment offer with more personal assistants, the growth of micro-enterprises and other non-traditional options will increase potential for people to be able to choose to receive their support tailored to their needs.	
Human rights (see guidance note for key areas to consider)	Direct Payments are delivered under the Care Act 2014 which is aligned to human rights. All improvements will be made in line with the Care Act 2014.		
Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities (consider the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services)		Direct Payments give people more choice, control and flexibility on how their outcomes are met and as such lead to better outcomes for individuals. Direct Payments offer people a diverse range of ways to access the support they need which can positively impact health and wellbeing and health inequalities. Improvements to Direct Payments in Cheshire West and Chester will	

		mean more Direct Payments are easier for eligible people to access.	
Procurement/partnership (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Evidence:

Action plan:

Actions required	Priority	Outcomes required	Officer responsible	Review date
Develop communications and engagement plan to support delivery of improvements ensuring impacted groups are considered	High	<p>Communications and engagement to ensure that people potentially impacted are not negatively affected by the changes e.g. because information has not been provided in a way they understand.</p> <p>Communications and engagement will ensure that carers are aware they may be eligible for support (carers workstream).</p>	Nathan Meech	July 2025

Review at regular points in project to ensure delivering against identified impacts	High	Review in project team meeting	Nathan Meech	July 2025
Develop a report to demonstrate change in uptake of Direct Payments in impacted groups	High	Report providing a baseline position and current position	Nathan Meech	October 2025

Sign off	
Lead officer:	Nathan Meech
Approved by Tier 4 Manager:	Simon Smith
Moderation and/or Scrutiny	
Date: 21 October 2024	
Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	October 2026