

## Guide to Direct Payments

### What Are Direct Payments?

Direct payments are cash payments given to parents or caregivers to buy services directly for a child with social care needs. They offer flexibility and control, allowing families to choose the services and support that work best for them.

### How Do They Work?

- 1. Eligibility Assessment:** The local authority assesses the child's needs and determines if direct payments are a suitable option.
- 2. Agree on a Care Plan:** Once eligible, families work with the local authority to create a care plan that outlines the support needed.
- 3. Receive Payments:** The local authority provides regular payments directly to the family, based on the agreed plan.

### How Can the Money Be Used?

Direct payments can be used for services like hiring a personal assistant, paying for activities that support the child's development, or purchasing specific equipment. Spending must align with the care plan.

### Important Information to note:

- Families must keep records of how they spend the funds
- The local authority may review spending to ensure it benefits the child's care and wellbeing
- Direct payments give families the freedom to choose the best support for their child's unique needs

### How Can I Learn More?

To learn more about direct payments, talk to your child's Social Worker or Early Help Practitioner and/or Direct Payments Officer when discussing options for support.