

## Direct Payments Advice Sheet

### For people living with dementia attending a Liverpool Meeting Centre for Dementia Support & Social Activities in Liverpool

#### What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are **money from the local council** that you control to buy your own care and support. They give you choice and flexibility so you can spend the money on what helps you live well — like support to attend social and support groups. ✨

#### Can Direct Payments be used to attend a Meeting Centre?

Yes! Direct Payments **can be used** to pay for support that helps you get to and participate in a Meeting Centre.

This might include:

- Covering costs to attend.
- A personal assistant (PA) to support you to attend
- Transport to and from the centre

This means you stay involved in activities that help your wellbeing, friendships, and confidence.

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#### How to use Direct Payments for this purpose

##### 1. Know your support plan

Before you get Direct Payments, the council will help you create a **support plan** that says what you need support with — including going to the Meeting Centre.

 Make sure the plan explicitly says you want help to **attend the Meeting Centre**.

This is Liverpool City Council's website for Direct Payments:

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/adult-social-care/already-receiving-care-services/direct-payments/>

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##### 2. Agree what the money can be spent on

Direct Payments are meant to meet the needs in your support plan. They can be used for:

- ✓ Paying a carer or **personal assistant** to support you
- ✓ Transport (taxi, community transport, travel support)
- ✓ Equipment or adaptations you need to attend safely
- ✓ Any extra assistance that helps you take part fully

If you're unsure, ask your social worker or contact the Meeting Centre Manager (Elaine 077824827330 for help explaining your needs.

### 3. Keep records

You must keep a record of how Direct Payments are used:

- ✦ Receipts for care or transport
- ✦ Timesheets if you employ a PA
- ✦ Notes about how services helped you meet your goals

This is called **accountability**, and your council will check periodically.

### Your rights and choices

You have the right to:

- ✦ **Be involved** in decisions about your support
- ✦ **Choose** who supports you
- ✦ **Decide** where and how you use your Direct Payments (as long as it meets your care needs)
- ✦ **Get help** if you find managing the money difficult

If you want support managing Direct Payments, you can ask for a **managed account** or an **amendment to your support plan**.

### Tips specifically for Meeting Centre attendance

- **Plan your weekly schedule** so transport and support are booked ahead
- **Talk to the Meeting Centre** about your needs (mobility, communication support, breaks)
- If travel costs are high, ask your council about **additional funded transport support**
- If your needs change, ask for a **review of your Direct Payments**

### Useful contacts (Liverpool)

Here are places that can help you understand and use Direct Payments:

📍 **Liverpool City Council – Adult Social Care**

Phone: *Contact through the council website or adult social care team*

📍 **Meeting Centre Liverpool – Elaine is the Meeting Centre Project manager – TEL: 07782482733**

(They can advise how Direct Payments can support participation)

📍 **Advocacy & Support Organisations**

- Alzheimer’s Society – local support and information
- Citizens Advice – help with benefits and Direct Payments guidance

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### **Common Questions**

**Q: What if I can’t manage the money myself?**

A: You can choose someone you trust to help you, or your council can set up a **managed account**.

**Q: Can Direct Payments pay for the Meeting Centre attendance fee?**

A: Yes, if attending the group is part of your support plan.

**Q: What if my needs change?**

A: Ask for a **review of your care plan** and Direct Payments amount.

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Using Direct Payments to help you attend a Meeting Centre can make a **big difference** to your social life, confidence, and wellbeing. You don’t have to do it alone — talk to your support worker, carer, family, and the Meeting Centre team to make a plan that works for you. 🤝💙