

# Let's talk: Direct Payments at their best

In partnership with ADASS East



Think Local Act Personal is a partnership of people and organisations working to make health and social care more personalised, so that more people can live their life their way.

The National Co-production Advisory Group is a membership body made up of people who draw on care and support. we ensure that co-production – and what matters most to people – is at the heart of TLAP's work.

# Today's speakers

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- Stuart Mitchelmore, ADASS East
- Isaac Samuels and Paula Sardinha, NCAG members
- Jessica Shutt, Peripatetic Team Manager, Sheffield City Council

# About today's session

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- Fun, interactive, reflection, re-invigorating
- Where we are as a region and what people here say about direct payments
- Hearing what's possible elsewhere and reflecting on it
- Deciding together what we can do to shift the dial



# Making the best of direct payments across the East of England

Stuart Mitchelmore, Chair of the Regional Putting People at the Heart of Care and Support Working Group

September 2025



FOREVER  
OPTIMISTIC

## Championship Table

<div> <div></div> <div>Enter a team or competition</div> </div>										
Position	Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	GD	Points	Form
1	<b>Sunderland</b>	15	9	4	2	25	11	14	31	W W W D D D
2	<b>Sheffield United</b>	15	10	3	2	19	7	12	31	L L W W W W
3	<b>Leeds United</b>	15	8	5	2	24	9	15	29	W W D W L L
4	<b>Burnley</b>	15	7	6	2	18	6	12	27	W D D D L D
5	<b>West Bromwich Albion</b>	15	6	7	2	16	9	7	25	D D D D D D
6	<b>Watford</b>	15	8	1	6	23	22	1	25	L L W W L L
7	<b>Middlesbrough</b>	15	7	3	5	23	17	6	24	L W D L W W
8	<b>Millwall</b>	15	6	5	4	18	13	5	23	D W W W W W
9	<b>Blackburn Rovers</b>	15	6	4	5	19	17	2	22	W D L L L L
10	<b>Bristol City</b>	15	5	7	3	20	19	1	22	W D D W L L
11	<b>Swansea City</b>	15	5	4	6	11	10	1	19	L D L W W L
12	<b>Derby County</b>	15	5	4	6	19	19	0	19	D D D L W W
13	<b>Stoke City</b>	15	5	4	6	18	19	-1	19	D D L W W W
14	<b>Norwich City</b>	15	4	6	5	23	22	1	18	D D D L L L
15	<b>Sheffield Wednesday</b>	15	5	3	7	17	25	-8	18	L D W L W L
16	<b>Oxford United</b>	15	4	5	6	17	18	-1	17	D D L L W W
17	<b>Coventry City</b>	15	4	4	7	20	21	-1	16	L D W W L L
18	<b>Plymouth Argyle</b>	15	4	4	7	15	26	-11	16	L L D L W W
19	<b>Hull City</b>	15	3	6	6	16	20	-4	15	L D D D L L
20	<b>Preston North End</b>	15	3	6	6	15	23	-8	15	W D D L D L
21	<b>Luton Town</b>	15	4	3	8	17	26	-9	15	W L L D W L
22	<b>Cardiff City</b>	15	4	3	8	14	23	-9	15	W W D W L L
23	<b>Portsmouth</b>	15	2	6	7	16	28	-12	12	W L L D L L
24	<b>Queens Park Rangers</b>	15	1	7	7	12	25	-13	10	L D D D L L



**Fact or Fiction**



## National statistics – 2023/24

“Stats not improving and a mixed picture”

- The number of direct payments in England were 117,737, very small increase of 0.2% since 2022/23 but still way below the peak of 129,975 in 2016/17
- Mixed picture – The proportion of people who access long term support and who have a DP fell to 25.5% (2022/23 this was 26.2%). Likely to be due to a fast increase in the number of people accessing care
- Age 18-64 tends to increase year on year but 65+ group decreases
- Top take ups were seen in: Enfield, East Riding, Leicester, Lincolnshire and Oldham

# Regional statistics 2023/24 show a huge range

“Not the  
lowest region  
but room for  
improvement”

People receiving SDS ranged from 73.6% to 100%  
(Eastern. average 88.2% - 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest region)

Carers receiving SDS ranged from 38.7% to 100%  
(Eastern average 87.8% - 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest region)

Proportion of service users accessing long term support  
receiving Direct Payments ranged from 12.3% to 34%  
(Eastern average 22.8% - 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest region)

Proportion of carers accessing long term support  
receiving Direct Payments ranged from 19.1% to 100% -  
(Eastern average 68.4% - 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest region)

? Impact of ISF take up on DP figures?

# Recent regional example of good practice

“Coproduction  
group  
dedicated at  
improving the  
uptake of  
direct  
payments”

Milton Keynes – As part of the coproduction, the “Stronger Together Board” has developed a coproduced group dedicated to increasing the use of direct payments and tackling the barriers/challenges. The “Working Together for Change” coproduction methodology has been used as part of the coproduction approach.

The conditions for success were identified as being:

- Truly coproduced
- Empowering and inclusive
- Full trust and engagement
- Finding innovative solutions together
- Sustainable
- Leadership commitment
- Straightforward systems
- Learning and development/Reflective practice
- Good communication
- Clarity of usage

What did  
people say  
about the  
opportunities?

“key messages  
from people  
following Over  
a Brew in  
2024”

Develop commissioning network to use coproduction and SDS offers

Encourage micro-providers

Change language to less punishing nature

DPs centred around hope, opportunities, purpose and meaning in people's lives

Less time for monitoring fraud and have trust

Clearer processes

Review policies to ensure they're not out of date and fit for purpose

Coproduction

When Direct  
Payments  
work well,  
they provide

“Hope,  
connection,  
meaning,  
fulfilling life”



Hope



Opportunities to lead a  
fulfilling life



Choice



Control

What did  
people who  
access care  
and support,  
carers and  
families tell  
us about  
direct  
payments

“Challenges”

Challenges associated with Personal Assistants  
Rates of pay differ in every LA area  
No way of recording pay for Pas  
Difficulties with recruitment

We need better support for people who wish to take up a DP  
Practitioners don't promote DPs as its too hard  
Dealing with payroll can be difficult with people employing Pas  
Unless you know about DP's you are not going to know about them  
Systems too complicated  
Lack of consistency and knowledge

<https://youtu.be/dLV4FbND5Uo>

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# CREATIVE SUPPORT PLANNING – CREATING ENVIRONMENTS TO HAVE DIFFERENT CONVERSATIONS

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# TODAY'S AGENDA OVERVIEW

- Person-Centred Planning
- What are we doing in Sheffield
- Creative Support Planning Tools in Practice
- Outcomes and Goals, why they matter
- Direct Payments and Individual Service Funds (ISFs)



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# WHY IT MATTERS?



- Having a different conversation.

Don't ask.....

- Would you like tea or coffee?

Instead try

- Are you thirsty?
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# PERSON-CENTRED PLANNING

GOING BACK TO WHAT WE KNOW WORKS—AND MAKING SURE IT'S NOT JUST  
TALKED ABOUT BUT IS TRULY LIVED.

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# PERSON-CENTRED APPROACHES: REDISCOVERING WHAT MATTERS



- These ideas aren't new—they've been around since the 1980s and 1990s, shaped by the inclusive education and disability rights movements. But somewhere along the way, they've often been forgotten or sidelined.
  - At their heart, person-centred approaches are grounded in:
  - The **Social Model of Disability** – removing barriers, not trying to “fix” people.
  - **Values-Based Practice** – putting dignity, respect, and choice at the centre.
  - **Person-Centred Thinking** – developed by pioneers like Helen Sanderson Associates and The Learning Community.
  - They're also backed by policy, with legislation like the **Care Act 2014** and the **SEND Code of Practice** reinforcing the importance of personalised support across health, education, and social care.
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# TOOLS THAT EMPOWER: VOICE, CHOICE, AND CONTROL

- These tools aren't just forms to fill in—they're powerful when used with purpose. When fully embraced, they help people take ownership of their support, promoting **voice, choice, and control** in planning.
  - **Designed for Personalisation**  
A wide range of tools is available, allowing you to choose what works best for each individual. They help us understand the **whole person**, not just their diagnosis or service needs.
  - **Flexible and Collaborative**  
You don't need to use every tool—just the ones that make sense for the person. This flexibility supports **better, more meaningful outcomes** through truly collaborative planning.
  - These tools are here to help us do things differently—and better.
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# CREATIVE SUPPORT PLANNING TOOLS

UNLOCKING SUPPORT THAT'S FLEXIBLE, CREATIVE, AND TRULY CENTRED ON  
WHAT MATTERS MOST.

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# CREATIVE SUPPORT PLANNING

This isn't our first rodeo, so how do we make it different?

- How can we make this accessible?
  - How can we change the conversation?
  - How do we improve co-production?
  - How do we enable choice?
-

INSERT PICTURE HERE

WHAT PEOPLE LIKE AND ADMIRE ABOUT ME

WHAT MATTERS TO ME (IMPORTANT TO)

HOW BEST TO SUPPORT ME (IMPORTANT FOR)

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# THE POWER OF THE ONE PAGE PROFILE

- For someone who needs support, being able to share a **One Page Profile** with a provider can be transformative. It's a simple but powerful tool that helps others see **the person behind the diagnosis**.
  - **Captures Personal Qualities**  
It offers a clear summary of what people like and admire about the individual—building a picture of their strengths, personality, and values.
  - **Focuses on What Matters**  
It highlights what's important *to* and *for* the person, helping providers offer support that's truly personalised and meaningful.
  - When used well, this tool helps build understanding, trust, and better relationships from the very start.
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# UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES A GOOD DAY

GOOD DAY

BAD DAY

WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT WHAT MATTERS TO ME?

WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT THE SUPPORT I NEED?

- Tools like the **Good Day / Bad Day** and **Perfect Week** are simple but powerful ways to explore what really matters in someone's daily life.
  - The **Good Day / Bad Day Tool** helps us understand the difference between days that go well and those that don't. By analysing this, we can work together to **increase the number of good days**—identifying what needs to be in place and what to avoid.
  - The **Perfect Week Tool** supports planning and reviews by mapping out what a fulfilling week looks like. It helps shape support around the person's goals, routines, and preferences.
  - These tools give us insight into the person's lived experience and help us design support that genuinely improves their day-to-day life.
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# DECISION MAKING PROFILE: SUPPORTING CHOICE AND CONTROL

- For people who may not always be able to clearly express their wishes and feelings, the **Decision Making Profile** is a vital tool. It helps us understand how someone prefers to make decisions—ensuring their voice is heard.
  - **Clarifies Preferences**  
It captures how the person wants decisions to be made, how they want information shared with them, and when I'm best able to make decisions.
  - This tool helps us move beyond assumptions and deliver support that truly reflects the person's values and choices.
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Decision Making Profile

How I like to get information	How to present choices to me	Ways you can help me understand	The best time for me to make decisions	The worst time for me to make decisions

# USING THE TOOLS

GOOD DAY	BAD DAY
<p>See my friends Dancing Going to the pub  I prefer work experience day to college days</p> 	<p>Getting up early Having a bad night's sleep/ Nightmares.</p> 
WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT WHAT MATTERS TO ME?	WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT THE SUPPORT I NEED?

Perfect Week

	 Morning	 Afternoon	 Evening
Mon	working	chill out	dancing
Tues	working	chill out	drama
Wed	Mess about with friends		
Thurs	PA	PA	Under the Stars at the headmill <small>every other month</small>
Fri	Art works	Artworks	Go to the pub
Sat	trampolining		
Sun	Swimming	Seeing family	

# GOALS AND OUTCOMES

PUTTING THE PERSON AT THE CENTRE—NOT JUST IN  
PLANNING, BUT IN MEASURING WHAT MATTERS.

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# WHY OUTCOMES MATTER

- Setting clear goals and outcomes is essential—not just for planning support, but for understanding whether that support is truly making a difference.
  - Historically, we considered support successful if it was delivered and accepted. But now, we're asking deeper questions:  
**Is it helping the person move forward? Is it meaningful? Is it making life better?**
  - Outcomes help us:
  - **Define Success** – What does a good result look like for this person? What would we see if things were going well?
  - **Understand Impact** – What difference has the support made? What's changed in their life?
  - **Open Up Possibilities** – What new opportunities has this created? How does it feel to achieve it?
  - This shift is about putting the person at the centre—not just in planning, but in measuring what matters.
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# SMART CRITERIA FOR PERSON-CENTRED OUTCOMES



Using SMART criteria helps ensure that outcomes are:

- **Specific** – Clearly defined and tailored to the individual.
- **Measurable & Achievable** – Quantifiable and realistic within the person's abilities.
- **Relevant & Time Bound** – Personally meaningful with a clear timeframe.
- **Clarity of Purpose** – Everyone understands what success looks like and how to get there.

## Case Example: Building Friendships

*Goal:* To make new friends who like the same things as me.

### SMART Outcome:

- **Specific:** I want to make three new friends who enjoy hiking.
  - **Measurable:** I will attend two hiking club meetings per month.
  - **Achievable:** I'll introduce myself to at least one new person at each meeting.
  - **Relevant:** Making friends with similar interests will improve my social wellbeing.
  - **Time Bound:** I aim to achieve this within six months.
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## BELLA'S STORY



- Bella is a young woman with autism, learning difficulties, and a hearing impairment. She doesn't identify as disabled and was feeling lost after college ended, unsure of what came next. There were also significant safeguarding concerns at the time.
  - Her worker took the time to explore what really mattered to her—Bella shared that she wanted to become a DJ. She wasn't interested in traditional day services and was hesitant about accepting support.
  - After exploring her options, Bella chose to try an **Individual Service Fund (ISF)**. The provider worked with her to plan support and matched her with a support worker who had experience as a DJ. Bella now uses her budget to learn new skills she's passionate about, and she's keeping part of her budget aside to explore informal group activities in the future.
  - She's also secured another year at college and is really happy with how her support is working for her.
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# DIRECT PAYMENTS AND INDIVIDUAL SERVICE FUNDS (ISF)

A SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR YOU

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## SHIFTING THE APPROACH TO SUPPORT

Historically, support was often delivered through council-arranged services.

Now, the emphasis is on **direct payments as the default**, empowering individuals to manage their own budgets with the right support.

This shift enables more **flexible and creative solutions**, opening up access to **non-traditional, person-centred options** that better reflect individual needs and preferences.

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## FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE BUDGETING OPTIONS

**Indicative Budgeting** - An indicative budget offers an upfront view of available funding, shaped around your needs, goals, and desired outcomes. It's a starting point for planning personalised support.

**Direct Payments:** Empowering Choice - Direct payments give people the freedom to manage their budget creatively—adapting support as needs change and exploring non-traditional, person-centred solutions.

**ISF:** A Supportive Alternative - For those who may find managing a direct payment challenging, the Individual Service Fund (ISF) offers a flexible and supportive way to access personalised care, without the administrative burden.

**Ongoing Budget Review** - Budgets are regularly reviewed and refined throughout the planning process to ensure they continue to meet evolving needs.

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# EXPLORING BUDGET OPTIONS: WHAT WE'RE HEARING



While some individuals have expressed that managing a direct payment feels overwhelming at the moment, we've seen a growing number choosing to access their personal budget via the Individual Service Fund (ISF) route.

**The feedback has been consistently positive**, with people appreciating the flexibility and support it offers.

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# CONCLUSION: EMPOWERING PERSON-CENTRED SUPPORT PLANNING

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## **Person-Centred Principles**

Using person-centred principles ensures support is tailored to individual needs and preferences effectively.

## **Creative Support Tools**

Creative tools enhance engagement and help design practical, impactful support strategies.

## **Funding Options Understanding**

Knowledge of funding options enables effective resource use to maximise support outcomes.

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# ANY QUESTIONS?

Jessica Shutt – Peripatetic Team Manager

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Eyes down for a full  
house



# What can be funded with DPs?

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In principle the money can be spent on anything that is **legal and lawful**, is meeting the **eligible need**, and is helping to achieve the person's **outcomes**.

# Examples of what can be funded with DPs

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**Personal  
assistants**



**Care and  
support  
services**




**Equipment**




**Activities**



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## 'Understanding Direct Payments' learning series

Welcome to our Understanding Direct Payments series, which has been created for people working in adult social care.

These modules are designed to help you to learn about Direct Payments, and how you can use them to make a huge difference to people's lives.

**These resources have been created with the support of the South West Direct Payments Network, National Co-production Advisory Group, and Independent Living Group.**



# The modules

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**1. What are Direct Payments and how do they support choice and control?**

**2. Key principles behind good Direct Payments**

**3. What can and cannot be funded with Direct Payments?**

**4. The Direct Payments Process**

**5. The role of outcomes in Direct Payments**

**6. Reviewing Direct Payments**

**7. Responsibilities of Direct Payment recipients**



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