

Consultation on a draft Direct Payments policy

Southampton City Council (SCC) is consulting on a draft Direct Payments (DP) policy, co-produced with a range of people including those who receive or manage a DP and their carers, health and social care providers, Adult Social Care (ASC) practitioners, and other key stakeholders.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the proposals and any impacts or alternative suggestions you would like us to consider. Now is your opportunity to have your say.

An online version of this questionnaire can be found on Southampton City Council's website at www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations.

You can also email your consultation feedback or queries to yourcity.yoursay@southampton.gov.uk.

This consultation closes **Tuesday 23 December 2025**.

Aims & key changes

Our goal is to co-produce a new draft Direct Payment (DP) Policy by working in partnership with a wide range of people, including those who receive or manage a DP, their carers, providers, Adult Social Care (ASC) practitioners, Healthwatch, and other key stakeholders.

Together, we want to:

- > Create a policy that is meaningful, accessible, and fit for purpose;
- > Ensure individuals are paid fairly and in line with legislation, and;
- > Simplify how we review and uplift payments, so that people's Direct Payments keep pace with the cost of services.

Based on this, we are proposing to update our policy with the following key changes:

- > The draft policy has been co-produced with service users and staff, using clearer language to improve clarity and accessibility, so people can better understand their rights and our responsibilities, and;
- > The proposed introduction of standardised rates - to simplify payments and ensure they keep pace with the cost of services.

The proposed standard rates are:

- > An hourly rate for people using agency providers;
- > An hourly rate for people employing Personal Assistants, and;
- > An hourly rate for people employing self-employed Personal Assistants.

You can read the full draft policy at www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations.

Our journey so far

We've already taken big steps forward through co-production sessions with DP recipients, carers, providers, Healthwatch, and ASC practitioners.

Coproduction is a way of working, whereby everybody works together on an equal basis. They create a service or come to a decision which works for them all. It is built on the principle that those who use a service are best placed to help design it.

We have completed an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment for the draft policy, which outlines the key changes and considers how they may impact both existing and future direct payment recipients, and what measures the council needs to take to mitigate this impact. The ESIA can be found in the consultation documents on our website at southampton.gov.uk/consultations.

Through co-production, people told us that the proposed Direct Payments policy should include the following:

We were told the draft policy should...	Our response...
Be clear on its commitments, stating what a Direct Payment should be used for, promote independence, flexibility and freedom of choice.	<p>Our commitments are outlined in the draft policy, where we have stated that a Direct Payment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer freedom of choice. It should ensure that people can choose the type of support they receive, who delivers it and when.• Promote independence and recognise that the person, and/or their carers, often know how to meet their support needs best.• Provide flexibility to acknowledge that a person's care and support needs may vary day to day.
Be concise and easy to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The draft policy uses clear, consistent language and avoids using jargon and legal terms where possible.• Where this is unavoidable, simple definitions and explanations have been provided.
Include an Easy read version.	We have developed an easy read version which has been included in the documentation.
Make it clear that reviews are annual but can be requested earlier if needed.	Information on reviews can be found in the councils Adult Social Care and Support Planning Policy. The proposed Direct Payment Policy refers to this as the Coproduction group agreed that we should avoid duplication. I'd just shorten to "The DP policy refers to this policy to avoid duplication" Partially updated - keen to include reference to coproduction
Align funds with service costs, including yearly uplifts due to inflation.	<p>The draft policy introduces standardised rates, which can be uplifted each year in line with the criteria set out. This will help the council ensure that an individual's direct payment continues to keep pace with the cost of services.</p> <p>It is important to highlight that standard rates are only one aspect of calculating an individual's personal budget, and so the amount an individual receives for their direct payment will still be individualised and person-centred, as per their care and support plan.</p>
Provide better guidance/training, including resources for invoice management and record keeping.	Our first step is to consult on this draft policy. Following this and if the draft policy is formally approved, we will be coproducing a range of guidance documents to support individuals.

In addition to this survey, we will also be hosting both in-person and virtual engagement sessions, so you can speak to our team directly to ask any questions on the proposed changes:

In-person consultation engagement event

Wednesday 03 December, 10:00 - 14:00
Civic Centre, Committee Room 1

Virtual consultation engagement event

Thursday 11 December, 10:00 - 14:00
Via MS Teams - [link here](#)

Your feedback

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the overall draft policy?

☐

Strongly agree

☐

Slightly agree

☐

Neither

☐

Slightly disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"The draft policy will allow the Council to ensure that an individual's direct payment will keep pace with the cost of services"

☐

Strongly agree

☐

Slightly agree

☐

Neither

☐

Slightly disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

☐

Very positive

☐

Fairly positive

☐

No impact at all

☐

Fairly negative

☐

Very negative

☐

Don't know

Why do you feel this may impact you, your business or your community in the way described?

Reading the draft policy

Have you read the proposed draft policy?

☐

Yes, all of it

☐

Yes, some of it

☐

No

If you have read the proposed draft policy, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
"The draft policy is easy to understand"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"The draft policy provides sufficient information"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If there were parts of the draft policy that you did not understand or you feel need more information, please provide further details:

About you

Are you...

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
...someone that receives a direct payment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...responding on behalf of a health or social care provider, such as a voluntary or community organisation, home care agency, or support service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...a personal assistant (PA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...a health or social care professional, like a nurse, therapist, social prescriber or social worker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...someone considering a direct payment but not currently receiving one?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...a resident of Southampton?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...someone that works, visits or studies in Southampton?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...responding on behalf of a business or organisation that isn't a health or social care provider?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is your postcode? *This is used for geographical analysis only and will not be used to contact or identify you.*

What is your sex?

☐

Female

☐

Male

☐

Prefer not to say

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Prefer not to say

If no, please write in your gender identity:

What is your age?

☐

Under 18

☐

35 - 44

☐

65 - 74

☐

18 - 24

☐

45 - 54

☐

75+

☐

25 - 34

☐

55 - 64

☐

Prefer not to say

How would you describe your ethnic group?

☐

Asian or Asian British

☐

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

☐

White other

☐

Prefer not to say

☐

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

☐

White British

☐

Other ethnic group

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or impairments, lasting 12 months or more, that have a substantial effect on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Prefer not to say

The following three questions are for those responding on behalf of a business or organisation only.

Can the name of your business or organisation be attributed to your response?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Can we contact you about your response to this consultation?

☐

Yes

☐

No

If yes, please provide us with the following details:

Business or organisation name:

Contact name:

Contact email:

What happens next?

The consultation closes on **Tuesday 23 December 2025**. After this date, all feedback will be analysed and considered before a final decision is made.

Please return completed surveys to:

*Consultations,
First Floor, West Wing,
Civic Centre,
Southampton,
SO14 7LY.*

Alternatively, please hand completed surveys back to any Southampton City Council-run library.

The information collected about you during this survey will only be used for the purposes of research. We may use it to contact you about this. We will only share your information with other organisations or council departments if we need to. We may also share it to prevent, investigate or prosecute criminal offences, or as the law otherwise allows. Please be aware that any comments given on this form may be published in the report. However, the council will endeavour to remove any references that could identify individuals or organisations. Our Privacy Policy (<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/contact-us/privacy-cookies/privacy-policy/>) explains how we handle your personal data, and we can provide a copy if you are unable to access the Internet.