

# Design your own social care

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**People all over Northern Ireland are taking control of their own social care and deciding how their care is to be delivered.**

Around 30,100 adults were in contact with the social services in Northern Ireland during 2014/15 due to issues such as physical disability, learning disability, mental health and old age. Not all would be assessed to be in need of care, however when they do, the Health and Social Care Trusts will put together a plan to deliver the necessary support. Instead of accepting the provision of care issued through the Trusts, more and more people are opting to receive a cash sum that the person will use to customise and pay for their own social care. This service is called *Direct Payments*.

## *How does this work?*

Direct Payments are designed to help people decide when and how services are provided and who provides them, who comes into their home, and who becomes involved in very personal aspects of their lives. For example, the home help that the Trust has arranged to help a client to get out of bed in the morning may be unable to come at a time that suits the client. The client may rather

*Direct Payments are cash payments, made in lieu of social service provisions, to individuals who have been assessed as needing a social care services.*

use another service provider, or even employ their neighbour to help out. By receiving Direct Payments, the client can arrange and pay for this service.

Although Direct Payments are intended to increase choice and help people stay independent, they also put responsibility on the individual, such as legal responsibilities when employing staff to help with their care. Also, the size of the payment is based on the Trust's assessment of what it will cost to deliver the care, however the specific care that the individual is considering may cost more. In such circumstances the individual would need to subsidise with his/her own money to pay for the service.

## **Direct Payments can be**

### **paid to:**

- disabled people aged 16 or over
- older people who receive a service from the Trust
- carers
- people with parental responsibility for a disabled child
- 16 and 17 year old disabled children

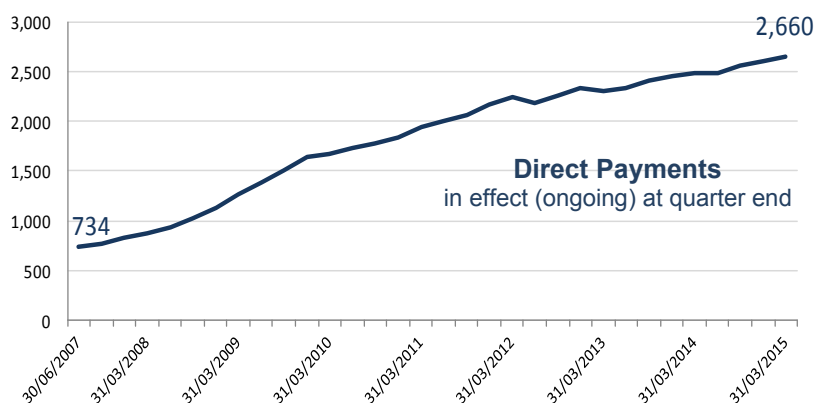
### **used for:**

- Personal social services in their own home
- help around the house
- getting out and about, going shopping or to new social settings

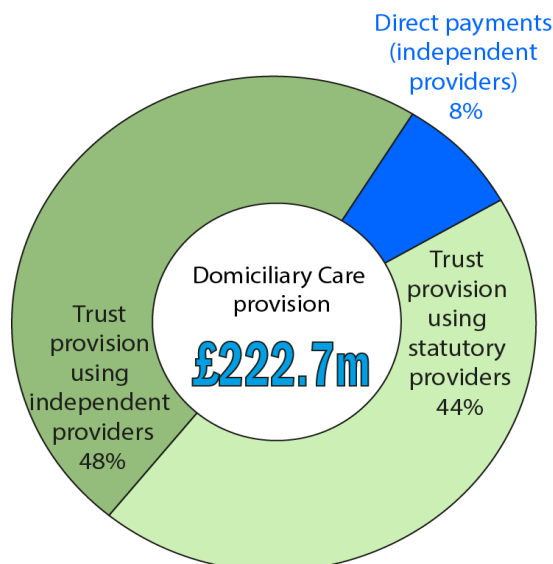
*There are control mechanisms in place to ensure that Direct Payments are not misused by clients.*

## *Who takes direct payments?*

Direct Payments were introduced in Northern Ireland in 2002, and after a slow start, the number of people availing of the scheme has steadily increased to 2,660 regular clients at the quarter ending 31 March 2015. In addition, a small number of one-off payments are also made to clients during each quarter.



The Trusts commission care services for people in their own home (domiciliary care) using a mix of both independent and statutory care providers. The total spend on domiciliary care provision was £222.7m in 2013/14. Direct Payments covered 8.3% of this budget (£18.5m), which represented an increase of close to two percentage points from 2010/11.

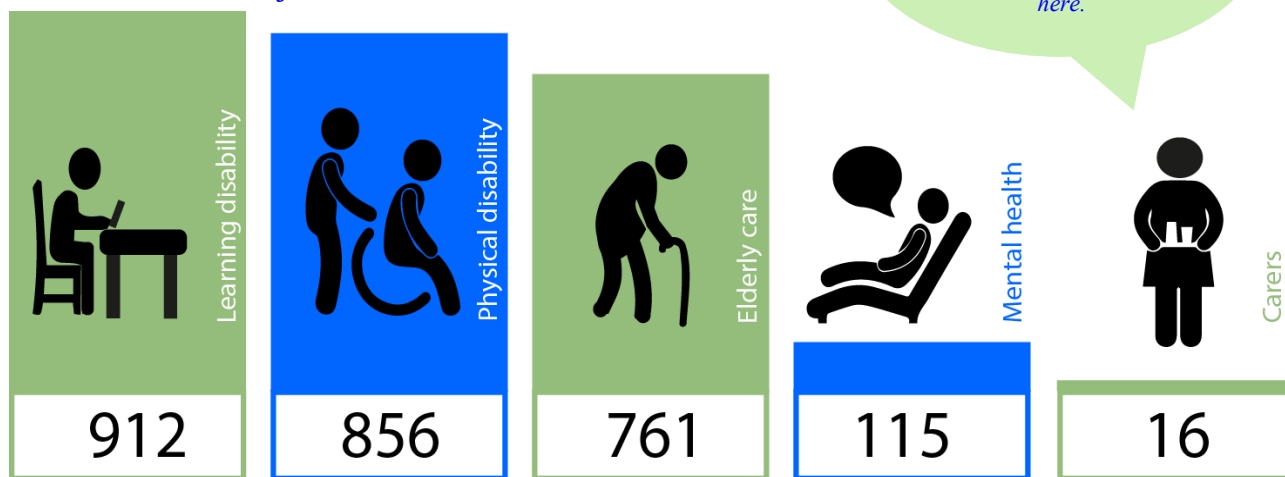


Payments are paid to clients with learning disability (34%) and physical disability (32%). This may be a reflection of the profile of the clients in the different care groups, where those with learning and physical disabilities may be younger and they - or their carers - therefore may have greater confidence in managing a budget and sourcing their own care suppliers. It may also reflect the type of service that is needed, as elderly clients may need more intense care (several times a week) compared to maybe once a month, hence organising elderly care may involve substantially more work.

A survey carried out by DHSSPS in 2014 has shown that four fifths (80%) of clients receiving domiciliary care services were elderly care clients, one in nine (11%) had a physical disability, one in twenty (5%) had a learning disability and one in twenty five (4%) had

mental health needs. Although 80% of domiciliary care provision is for elderly care, less than one-third (29%) of regular Direct Payments are paid to elderly care clients; the highest number of regular Direct

**Number of Direct Payments in effect (ongoing) by programme of care at 31 March 2015**



*Carers can also receive Direct Payments. These tend to be "one-off" payments for respite purposes and not ongoing payments as shown here.*

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has embraced Direct Payments and has established a target of 10% growth in the uptake of these during 2015/16. It is however important to remember that Direct Payments will not suit everyone and can never be the only solution to social care but must coexist with traditional social care provision.

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/statistics/socialcare/direct-payments.htm>

With the backdrop of an aging population, **Transforming Your Care (TYC)** is a programme of work aimed at changing Northern Ireland's health and social care system so that it can meet its needs in the future. TYC is focusing on less care in hospitals and more care at home, enabling people to live independently and healthily for as long as possible. *Direct Payments* is endorsed by TYC and has been included under the umbrella of *Self-directed Support* as a way an individual can exercise choice over their personal social care budget.

<http://www.transformingyourcare.hscni.net/>