

Direct Payments Project Evaluation

What are direct payments?

Direct payments is the transfer of an agreed amount of funding to a person with a disability or support person to use to purchase services and supports in line with an agreed plan.

Direct payments will be one option in the future for people with a disability to *choose* to administer their funding. The other options available are funding to a financial intermediary or to a service provider or a combination of options.

Direct Payments Project

The Direct Payments Project developed and trialled direct payments in partnership with a group of people with a disability, family members and carers in the Southern Metropolitan Region. The project was evaluated by Liz Dimitriadis Consulting Group.

What did direct payments users say about direct payments?

‘You are treated with more respect when you control the funds.’

‘Benefit of doing your own quality control.’

‘It is about getting the best value for money.’

‘Direct payments is about making value purchases and payment management.’

‘Ability to plan/negotiate arrangements/better deals.’

‘Knowing you don’t have to accept what has been dished out. It is empowering knowing that one does not have to be trapped in the old situation.’

Once you have had direct payments: ‘There is no going back!’

Key findings of the evaluation

Direct payments users:

- changed supports because of the increased **flexibility**
- purchased a **greater range of services** from a greater range of service providers
- changed support to get better **value for money**
- were able to use direct payments to gain **more support**
- were less stressed and **less fearful of poor care**
- felt **more in control** of their lives, participated more in the lives of their family, and were more engaged with friends and the wider community
- planned to continue using direct payments and were **confident** of their ability to use direct payments independently
- were **accountable** for the use of public funds.

Key recommendations

The evaluation report made eight recommendations and a series of proposed actions. Two key recommendations are that:

- direct payments be expanded to a larger trial with 100 direct payments users
- direct employment of support workers by people with a disability be trialled.

More information?

For more information about the Direct Payments Project visit

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/direct_payments