

Direct Payment Handbook Final Version 2025 How it can be updated or adapted specifically for parents and carers of children or young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities):

Key Areas to Update or Add for SEND Context

1. Eligibility Criteria

- The current handbook focuses on adults. For children and young people with SEND, eligibility should reference:
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years)
- Clarify how Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) relate to Direct Payments.

2. Legal Framework

- Add a section summarizing:
- Children Act 1989
- Care Act 2014 (for transitions to adulthood)
- SEND Code of Practice
- Direct Payments under Section 17 of the Children Act for disabled children.

3. Support Planning for Children

- Replace or supplement adult-focused “support plans” with:
- EHCPs
- Short Breaks Statements
- Parent/carer-led support plans for children’s social care needs.

4. Use of Direct Payments for SEND

Expand examples to include:

- **Therapies** (e.g., speech and language, occupational therapy)
- **Specialist equipment**
- **Short breaks/respite care**
- **Transport to special schools or activities**
- **Tutoring or educational support**

5. Parental Responsibilities

- Clarify that **parents/carers** are the legal employers if they hire a Personal Assistant (PA).
- Include guidance on:
- DBS checks for working with children
- Safeguarding responsibilities
- Employment law tailored to child care

6. Managing Payments

- Include options for:
- **Parent-managed accounts**
- **Third-party managed accounts** (especially for parents who prefer not to handle payroll)
- Support from SEND-specific advisory services

7. Transition to Adulthood

- Add a section on **transition planning** for young people turning 18:
- How Direct Payments may change
- Role of adult social care
- Preparing for independent living

8. Case Studies

- Include relatable examples:
- A parent using Direct Payments for a child's sensory

therapy

- A young person with autism using payments for social skills groups

9. Contacts and Resources

- Add SEND-specific contacts:
- Local **SENDASS** (SEND Information, Advice and Support Services)
- **Parent Carer Forums**
- Local Offer website links

Suggested Format Changes

- Use **child-friendly language** where appropriate.
- Include **visual aids** or flowcharts for parents navigating the system.
- Provide **checklists** for hiring PAs for children.