

Direct Payments information for adults and their families.

Communication Support and Accessible Information

- **What's missing:** No mention of how people with complex communication needs (e.g., non-verbal, AAC users) can be supported to understand and participate in decisions.
- **What to add:**
- Use of **communication aids**, symbols, or Makaton.
- Involvement of **speech and language therapists** in support planning.
- Accessible formats (audio, video, Easy Read with symbols).
- **2. Health and Clinical Support Integration**
- **What's missing:** No guidance on how Direct Payments can be used for **health-related support** (e.g., PEG feeding, epilepsy care, behavioural support).
- **What to add:**
- Clarify how **Continuing Healthcare (CHC)** or joint-funded packages work.
- Explain how to hire **trained PAs** for clinical tasks.
- Include links to **NHS-funded personal health budgets**.

3. Support for Families and Carers

- **What's missing:** Limited recognition of the **emotional and practical load** on family carers of people with complex needs.

- **What to add:**
- Dedicated section on **carer wellbeing** and respite options.
- Clearer explanation of **carer assessments** and how they link to Direct Payments.
- Peer support or **carer forums** for shared learning.

4. Transition Planning for Young People with Complex Needs

- **What's missing:** No section on transition from children's to adult services.
- **What to add:**
- Timeline and steps for transition planning (from age 14+).
- How Direct Payments can support **education, employment, or community inclusion**.
- Role of **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)** in transition.

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5. Safeguarding and Risk Management

- **What's missing:** No tailored advice for safeguarding adults with high vulnerability.
- **What to add:**
- How to ensure **safe recruitment** of PAs for people who may not be able to report abuse.
- Role of **advocates** or **independent visitors**.
- Clearer guidance on **risk assessments** in home settings.

6. Flexibility and Creativity in Support Planning

- **What's missing:** Limited examples of **creative or sensory-based support** for people with complex needs.
- **What to add:**
- Examples like sensory rooms, hydrotherapy, rebound therapy, or music therapy.
- How to fund **specialist equipment** or **adapted transport**.

7. Legal Frameworks and Decision-Making

- **What's missing:** Only brief mention of **mental capacity** and legal roles.
- **What to add:**
- Clearer explanation of **Best Interests decisions** under the Mental Capacity Act.
- Role of **Court of Protection, Deputies, and Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCAs)**.

Would you like me to draft a **new section** or **add-on page** for the handbook specifically focused on complex needs? I can also help create an **Easy Read supplement** or **visual guide** tailored for families and carers.

Key Improvements for Accessibility and Relevance

1. Simplify Language and Use Plain English

- **Current issue:** Some sections use formal or bureaucratic language (e.g., “statutory leave,” “authorised person,” “eligibility criteria”).
- **Improvement:** Use simpler, everyday language. For example:
- “Statutory leave” → “paid time off like holidays or sick

days”

- “Eligibility criteria” → “rules to check if you can get help”

2. Add Easy Read or Visual Summary Versions

- Include an **Easy Read** version with:
- Short sentences
- Large text
- Pictures or symbols
- Add **infographics** or **flowcharts** to explain:
- How to apply
- What a Direct Payment can be used for
- Who can help manage the money

3. Include Real-Life Stories from SEND Families

- The current case studies are helpful but could be more **diverse**.
- Add stories from:
- Young people with SEND using Direct Payments for independence
- Parents managing payments for adult children with complex needs

4. Clarify Support for Parents and Carers

- Add a **dedicated section** for parents/carers of adults with SEND:
- What happens when a young person turns 18
- How to become an “Authorised Person” or “Nominated Person”
- Transition from children’s to adult services

5. Use More Visual Aids

- Add:
- Icons for each section (e.g.,  for payments,  for

care)

- Step-by-step diagrams for processes like hiring a PA or setting up a prepaid card
- A glossary with icons or images

6. Make Digital Access Easier

- Provide:
- A **QR code** linking to an audio version or video explainer
- A **web-friendly version** with clickable sections
- Translations or subtitles for key languages spoken in the borough

7. Highlight SEND-Specific Resources

- Include:
- Local SEND support groups
- Advocacy services for people with learning disabilities
- Contact details for transition workers or SEND social workers

8. Tone and Reassurance

- Use a **more reassuring tone** for first-time users:
- Emphasize that help is available at every step
- Normalize asking for support or feeling overwhelmed

Would you like me to create a **revised sample page** or **Easy Read version** of a section to demonstrate these changes? Or would you prefer a checklist for updating the whole document? Great question, Jaimie. While the **Direct Payment Handbook** is thorough in many areas, there are some **notable gaps** when it comes to addressing the needs of people with **complex needs**, especially those with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), autism with high support needs, or significant physical and communication challenges.

Here's what's missing or underrepresented:

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