

# Children's Personal Budgets

## A Guide to the Direct Payments Support Plan

This guidance is to help you, your family and those supporting you to draw up the best support plan in line with needs identified in your education, health and care plan. This will ensure you get the best out of the direct payment element of your personal budget.



## **Table of Contents**

What are personal Budgets? .....	2
Who is Eligible and How Much do we get? .....	2
What could we spend the personal budget on? .....	2
What is the Support Plan? .....	3
Completing the Support Plan .....	3
How Will I Manage the Personal Budget?.....	5
What Can I Spend my Personal Budget on? .....	5
What records Must I Keep? .....	6
How Will the Plan Be Monitored?.....	6

## **What are personal Budgets?**

Personal budgets are the amount of additional funding allocated to meet the needs of your child within their education, health and care plan. This approach puts children and their families in control, ensuring they have choice and flexibility around what support solutions make sense to them and who the best people are to provide these.

Families can request a proportion of their personal budget to be paid to them as a direct payment.

The budget that you could receive would be used to meet the needs and outcomes identified in your health, education and care (EHC) plan.

## **Who is Eligible and How Much do we get?**

Any family who has a child/young person with a disability and is eligible for an education, health and care plan, can request a personal budget and to have a proportion of that budget as a direct payment to meet relevant needs identified within the education, health and care plan.

If a request for direct payments is received and supported, an indicative budget will be allocated. This indicative budget gives you and your family an idea of the amount of money which may be available to support your child's needs. The budget is indicative, as you may need slightly more or slightly less money once the support plan has been completed and agreed.

## **What could we spend the personal budget on?**

The personal budget is an amount of money identified to meet your child's needs as identified in their education, health and care plan. These needs will vary from child to child and therefore there is no one prescriptive set of services/support.

It is important that the services/support purchases is personalised to your own child's needs and this is why it is important to complete the personal budget support plan to ensure that those needs within the EHC plan are met. Areas that could be used to purchase from your personal budget, could include:

- To give parents and carers a break from your caring responsibilities so that you feel able to continue to support your family
- To meet specific education needs that have been clearly identified within the education, health and care plan and that are not already provided.
- To help your child connect to local community activities and have the right support to spend time enjoying things that they like to do
- To provide additional support to meet the additional needs of your child due to their disability

A personal budget should support you to organise additional support on top of the support you may get already from family, friends, circles of support and other services that are already in place.

Please refer to the personal budgets policy for more detail.

## What is the Support Plan?

The support plan is a document, which you will complete with your family and identified support worker (if you require additional support) to outline how the direct payment element of the personal budget will be spent. The plan documents what is important to your child and you as a family in relation to additional support that you may need because of your child's disability. You will then complete the table with the things you would like to spend your personal budget on to meet your child's needs, how much this will cost and who will organise it. Again, this expenditure and the outcomes to be met need to directly relate to your child's individual education, health and care plan.

In order for the Disability Partnership to agree the direct payment element, they must be able to see and agree the plan.

It is important that you write down how the personal budget will be spent as this will:

1. Ensure that the money is being spent to meet your child's needs and in line with the EHC plan
2. That the spending of the money is planned over an agreed period of time and not spent too early, with no money left at the end of the year
3. Enable the council and where relevant health services to sign off the plan and release the agreed amount of money
4. The plan will make it easy for the council to monitor your expenditure

## Completing the Support Plan

The following table helps you to think about what needs to go into the personal budget plan and in what circumstances the plan would not be signed off.

Question	What this means	Support workers will look for....	Your plan will not be approved if...
The things that are important to me are...	This section is about the child. They should be able to say who they are and what their interests and needs are, that they are at the centre of the plan and not their family	Information about the child, what is important to them, what they enjoy doing and their hopes for the future and how they align to the needs identified in your education, health and care plan	The plan must outline more than just describing the child's disability. The plan will not be agreed if it is written in general terms and does not align to our education, health and care plan
The things that are important to my family are...	You should focus on the family around the child and what they need to support	Evidence that the areas of importance are to support their child and align to your	The plan will not be signed off if the needs of the family are not based around the

	you.	education, health and care plan	needs of their child and their caring responsibilities as highlighted in your education, health and care plan
What the money will be spent on	This section is to list the actual items you will buy with your personal budget, e.g. to help your child access activities or membership to a club	The items must meet the needs of the child and relate back to what is important for the child and their family delivering in line with your education, health and care plan	If it is not clear how or on what the money will be spent or if important aspects are missing. This may include if there are concerns about the child's safety or if their health needs are complex and how they can be supported are not part of the plan.
This is important to me because...	Here, the need for the item must relate back to what is important for the child or family.	Evidence that the suggested item meets the needs of the child and/or family	The plan will not be agreed if just the disability is described.
How will this be arranged and by who?	Here you will identify who will be arranging and buying the identified item/service. This could be the family or an organisation on your behalf.	Clarity on who will organise this to ensure it happens and that the expectations are realistic	If it is not clear who is responsible for what. The plan must take into account employment laws. If somebody is managing the budget on your behalf, it is important to write how they will be accountable to you
How much will this cost?	This will be the cost of the item	Unit cost per hour for a worker or annual membership fee for example	It will not be agreed if the service costs more than the amount agreed or it is clear that the

			service is not value for money
Total cost to March 31st	This is the total cost over the funding period to help you budget for the whole plan	Clear budgeting, i.e. total cost over the funding period	It will not be agreed if the service costs more than the amount agreed or it is clear that the service is not value for money
People that helped write the plan	The plan must have the child's input in addition to their family	A responsible adult has supported the child to make choices in the plan. The child's best interests are evident	It is not clear who has written the plan or the child's interests have not been taken into account

## How Will I Manage the Personal Budget?

We recognise that all families are different, with varying needs and support to manage the personal budget.

If you are under 16, you cannot receive funding in your own right from the Local Authority, You will require a representative to manage how you spend the money in the personal budget. Your representative could be:

1. A member of your family
2. A nominated agent who could manage this budget on your behalf (this could include someone from your circle of support, a service you know well or an organisation who is set up to do this)
3. You can speak to your social worker who can purchase items on your behalf
4. A service provider who could hold the money on your behalf (this would be called an individual service fund)
5. You could also have a combination of the above for different items identified in your support plan.

## What Can I Spend my Personal Budget on?

Your personal budget is to meet the needs of your child and to support you as a family in continuing to care for your child. There are lots of things you can spend your money on and you are not limited to personal assistants or providers. You may have new and innovative ways that you feel would support and meet the needs of your child more effectively. Forgetting any respite support you may have at present, a good question to ask yourself is:

“In the next week, if I could plan everything myself to meet the needs of my child, what would I put in place?”

You could spend your money on support for your child to access a local youth group, or provide additional training for those staff running the youth group or activity. Support can also include transport, accommodation, day trips, short

breaks or small aids or adaptations. The education, health and care plan will outline what needs should be met.

## **What records Must I Keep?**

1. A separate bank account must be opened in which only the personal budget may be held. If there are two or more young people receiving a personal budget within the family, they should each have separate bank accounts.
2. Bank statements from this account must be held by the main carer (designated personal budget holder)
3. You need to know why money was withdrawn from your account and you will need to explain how money was used on every activity.
4. You will need to provide receipts for all your expenditure
5. If you employ someone through your personal budget, you must have a copy of their wage slip, Inland Revenue payment detail, employee liability insurance and payroll invoices and all CRB/DBS checks must be up to date.
6. If you employ an agency you must keep a copy of agency invoices.

## **How Will the Plan Be Monitored?**

Reviews will be carried out by your designated support worker; the first review will happen 3 months after your plan has been agreed. They will then review the plan every 6 months. The review will look at what has gone well, what has been difficult and explores whether the plan can be improved.

This is a discussion to support you and your family to get the most from your support and check that it is working well for your child.

You will be required to submit records to the Choosing and Purchasing Team on a monthly basis. A member of this team will check your expenditure against your plan to see that the council's money is being spent properly. This will be an on-going check. If it appears that the money from the personal budget is being spent fraudulently, this will be formally investigated by the council.

Your support plan tells the local authority and other funders what you want to spend the money on and when we agree the plan, you can be confident in spending the money to meet the needs of your child as you have our approval