

# What are personal budgets?

## 1 What is a personal budget?

Personal budgets are available for support which is individual to the child or young person. Personal budgets offer parents and young people more choice and control over the support they receive.

Personal budgets (some of which can be taken as a direct payment) are available to children and young people who

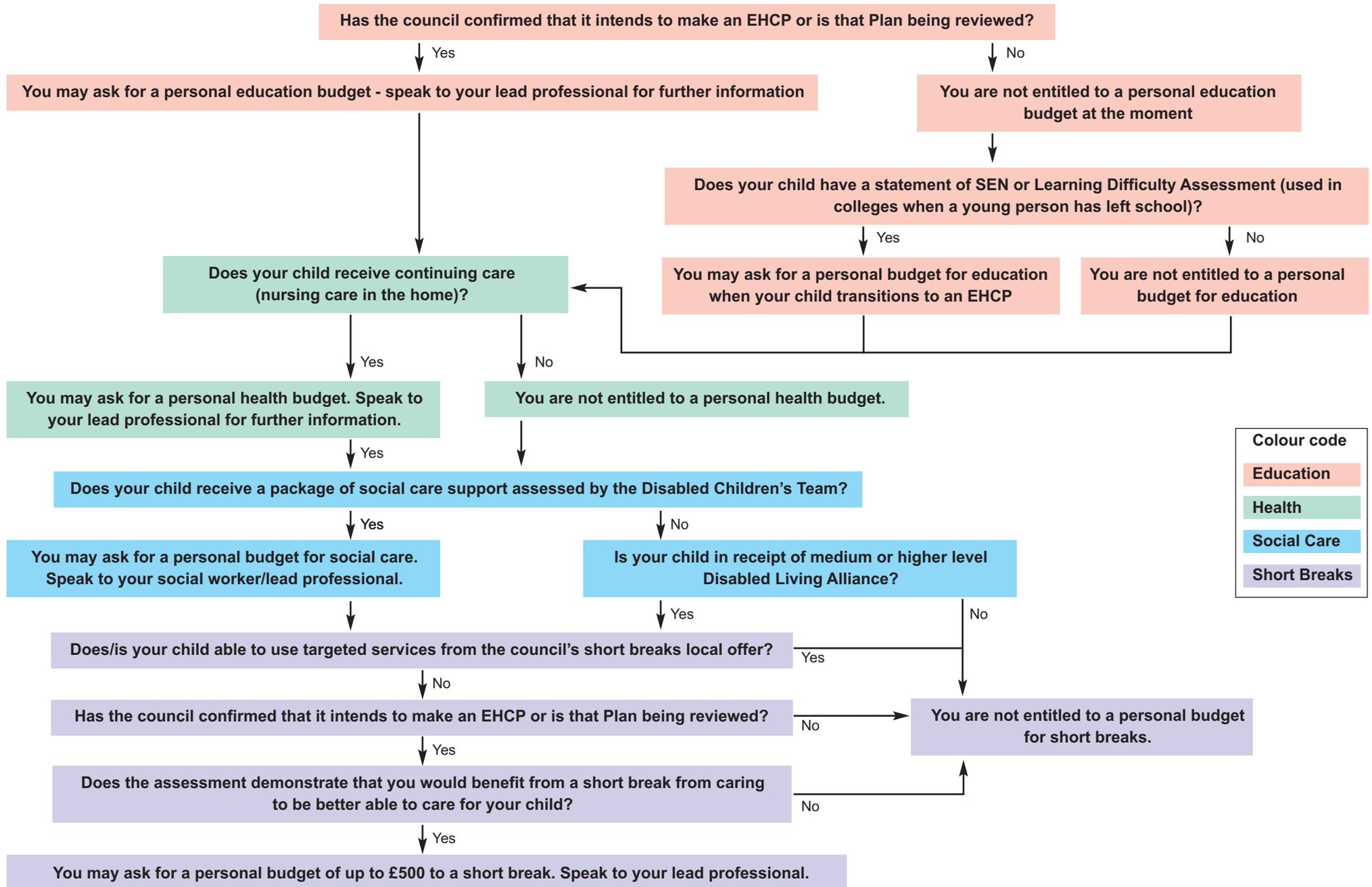
- have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan; and/or
- have been assessed by adult services or the disabled children's team as needing social care services; and/or
- are entitled to Continuing Health Care services

Some children and young people will only be eligible for a personal budget for their special educational needs (SEN). If their needs are more complex they may also be eligible for a personal budget/direct payment from social care or the health service. The council and health service are expected to work together to look at how personal budgets might be delivered jointly.

This leaflet is a short introduction to personal budgets to help families and young people decide if they want to find out more about having a personal budget. Expressing an interest does not mean that you are committed to having a personal budget. Parents that have been involved in discussions about personal budgets say that one of the most beneficial effects has been the opportunity to discuss the aspirations that they have for their child and how services might be personalised to meet their aspirations, rather than a specific budget.

The diagram on the next page shows eligibility for different types of personal budgets.

# Entitlement to a Personal Budget for Children and Young People aged 0 to 18 years with SEN and Disabilities



## Which services are the council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) making available within a personal budget and for direct payment?

### 2 Personal Special Educational Needs (SEN) budget

The Department of Education describes a personal SEN budget as follows:

“A personal budget is a sum of funding available for children and young people where it is clear that they need additional provision above that available to most children and young people through local services. It is not the sum total of all of the resources that are available to support a child or young person.”

Where a personal SEN budget has been agreed Section J of the EHC plan will include a detailed explanation of how the personal budget will be used to deliver agreed support and the outcomes it will meet. It will also identify any arrangements in relation to direct payments. It does not need to list all of the costs associated with supporting a child or young person.

#### Key facts

- Parents/carers and/or young people who have an EHC Plan have the option of requesting a personal budget.
- Parents/carers and children and young people do not have to take up this option.
- Personal budgets may provide an alternative way of securing support that might otherwise be provided by the council.
- Funding for personal budgets is only available from within the current budget and must not cost more than other ways of providing the support.
- A personal budget must be used to help the child or young person to achieve the outcomes that are set out in the EHC Plan.

(N.B. Personal SEN budget will only be available when an EHC Plan is being drawn up. It is not available with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.)

Possible options for a personal SEN budget are given below:

#### 2.1 Top-up funding in a mainstream school/college

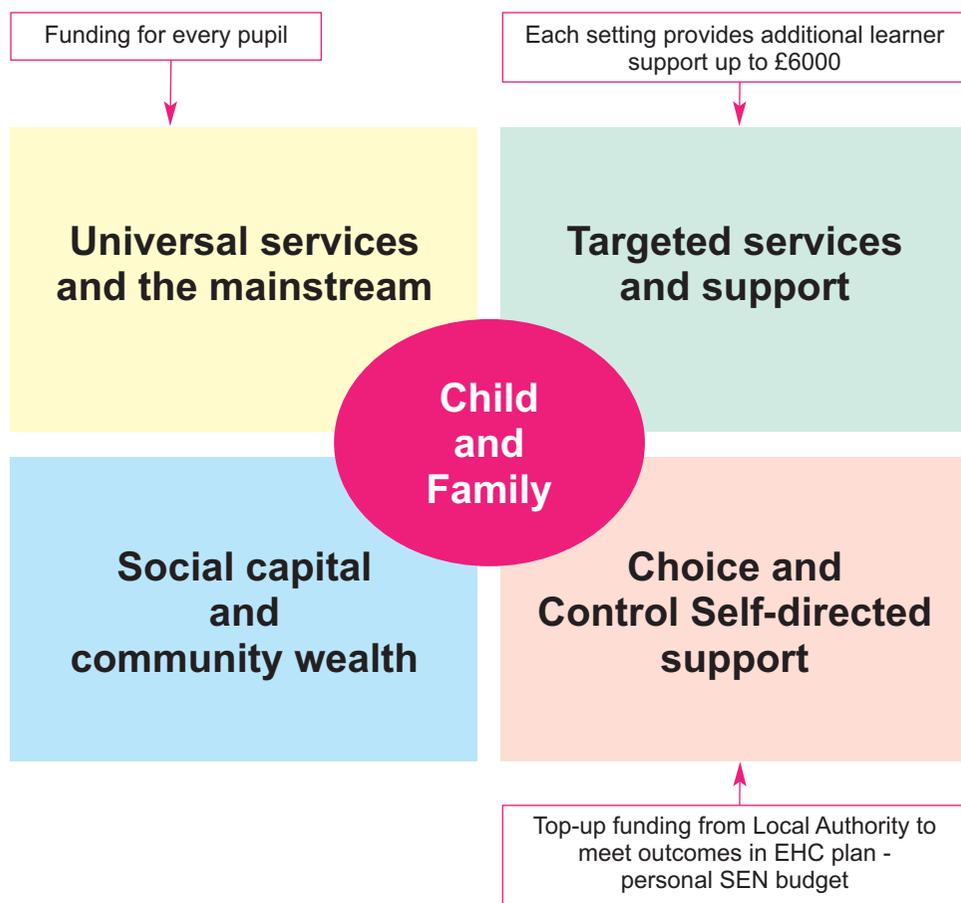
If a child with an EHC Plan attends a mainstream school or college the cost of the child or young person's place at the school/college and the cost of the first £6,000 of the provision in the EHC Plan are met by the school/college. If the Headteacher agrees, elements of this provision can be included in a personal budget.

The remainder of the cost of implementing the Plan will be met via “top-up” funding provided by the Local Authority. In mainstream schools/colleges this is sometimes known as the “banding amount”. This would normally be paid to the school/college which uses it to make up the balance of the provision set out in the child's plan, as agreed with the child/young person and their parents or carers.

The top – up can be requested as a personal budget. This can only be agreed when the following criteria are met:-

- The school/college and the council agree that arrangements will enable the educational outcomes in the EHC Plan to be met
- Any arrangements made using a personal budget are not detrimental to the efficient education of other children or young people
- If a direct payment is used to secure services or employ staff on school/college premises the school/college must agree to the arrangements
- Any arrangements must be an “efficient use of resources”, that is they must not cost more than other ways of providing the services.

The approach to mainstream school funding is shown in the diagram below:



\*This diagram is based on work carried out by In Control - [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

## 2.2 Top-up funding in a special school or a specialist resource base or unit in a mainstream school

Special schools and special resource bases in mainstream schools are funded to offer a specific number of places and then receive a “top-up” for every child on roll. If a child is placed in a special school or base the additional specialist facilities that they require will be part of the school’s targeted offer and the top-up is used to pay for these. Therefore, if a parent/carer chooses to place a child in a special school or base it is unlikely that there will be any funding that can be made available as a personal budget.

There may be exception to this such as where a child or young person is assessed as needing individual support over and above that normally provided by the special school or specialist resource base to meet their educational outcomes. For example, an increased staff to child ratio of support, or additional therapy input. In that case the criteria in (2.3 i) above would apply.

## 3 Travel Assistance Budgets

Where a child or young person is entitled to transport to school as a result of their SEN the council will discuss with parents different ways to support them to get to school rather than simply using council-provided transport. The aim is to support families to take their own children to school, reduce journey times, and/or to support the independence of the young person and enable them to become independent travellers. The council will consider paying a travel assistance budget calculated using an enhanced mileage allowance based on distance to school, with an additional rate if an escort is required. The budget may be used in a variety of ways for example driving or cycling a child to school, purchasing a travel pass for a parent or trusted escort, paying an escort or travel buddy, sharing transport with another parent, or purchasing childcare for siblings. Rather than monitoring expenditure payment of the budget will be determined by the child’s attendance and punctuality at school.

## 4 Social Care needs

### 4.1 Children and young people assessed as needing social care services

Where a child or young person has been assessed as requiring social care services by the Disabled Children's Team they or their family may choose to take those services as a personal budget, including a direct payment. The use of direct payments by families receiving social care services is already well – established in the Borough. For example families may choose to employ a personal assistant themselves and have more choice and control about when the support is available.

If a young person is eligible for Adult Social Care Services, unless the young person is using residential services, these services must be provided via a personal budget. It is the law to offer a Direct Payment (to meet eligible care needs) and a separate Carer's Assessment but not compulsory to take these up.

### 4.2 Short breaks

There are many children/young people with disabilities who do not meet the criteria for an assessed children's social work service but whose families will nevertheless benefit from a break from caring. The council supports a wide variety of after school, weekend and holiday short break activities as part of its targeted offer for children/young people with disabilities. Further information about these can be found in the Local Offer.

There are a small group of children and young people where the council's targeted offer may not be appropriate to their needs. In these cases the council will make available a personal budget of up to £500 per annum for an agreed package of alternative short breaks activities. To receive the budget a child or young person must meet the following criteria:

- Be in receipt of middle or higher level Disability Living Allowance

- Be aged under 18 years (once a young person is aged 18 years they will be assessed on adult social care criteria)
- The council must have confirmed that it intends to make an EHC Plan or the EHC Plan is being reviewed
- The assessment/review must confirm that the child/young person is unable to access or gain benefit from short breaks activities that are funded as part of the council's targeted local offer
- The assessment/review must confirm that the child/young person's disability means that their parents/carers would benefit from a short break from caring in order to be better able to care for their child/young person in the longer term

Please note that the council's targeted offer includes services which it funds but which are run by other agencies (such as Lady Allen Playground, or after-school and holiday schemes). In addition to information on the Local Offer, the Family Information Service (020 8871 7913) can provide advice or ask your lead professional if you need help.

## 5 Personal Health Budgets (PHBs)

A Personal Health Budget (PHB) is an amount of money to support a person's identified health and wellbeing needs, planned and agreed between the person and the CCG.

### Who is entitled to a PHB?

From October 2014 all families receiving NHS continuing care have been entitled to have a PHB if they wish. A continuing care package is offered when a child or young person has needs arising from a disability, accident or illness that cannot be met by existing universal or specialist services alone. A small group of children with complex medical and health needs are entitled to specialist care in the home. This is currently provided by the Wandsworth Children's Continuing Care Team commissioned by the CCG.

From April 1 2015 PHBs will be available to a broader cohort eg people with long term conditions. The CCG is currently looking at options for different services for the extension of PHBs.

### **Key facts about PHBs**

The young person or their carer/parent with the personal health budget must:

- be able to choose the health outcomes they want to achieve
- know how much money they have for their health care and support
- be enabled to create their own care plan, with support if they want it
- be able to choose how their budget is held and managed
- be able to spend the money in ways and at times that make sense to them, as agreed in their plan

A PHB cannot be spent on universal services such as GP services, accident and emergency, surgery, medication including prescription charges or vaccination or screening services.

### **What happens if I am interested in a personal health budget?**

Young people or their families who receive continuing care can ask for a personal health budget by discussing this with the Children's Continuing Care Nursing Team. The CCG are working with parents who are interested in PHBs to set up a family friendly process that will cover:

- Making contact and getting clear information
- Understanding the young person's health and wellbeing needs
- Working out the amount of money available

- Making a care plan
- Organising care and support
- Monitoring and review

## **6 How are personal budgets managed?**

There are four ways that a personal budget can be managed:

- a An organised or notional arrangement – the council keeps the funds and organises the services that the child or young person receives. The family or young person is involved in deciding what services they want. For example it is agreed that a child needs to access holiday provision at a club which is not part of the council's targeted offer. The child is entitled to a short breaks budget of up to £500. The club bills the council directly for the days the child attends.
- b Third party arrangements/nominees – funds are paid to an individual or other organisation to manage on behalf of the parent/young person. For example the parent of a young person with learning disabilities might manage their funds for them but the young person would be fully involved in deciding how their funds were spent.
- c Direct payment – the young person or their family receives the funds and buys and manages services themselves.  
For example at the moment some families prefer to receive funds to employ their own support assistants or to fund equipment.
- d A combination of the above.

## **7 What happens if a personal budget is refused?**

If a personal budget is not agreed by the council or the CCG you must be given the reasons in writing and asked whether you want the decision to be reviewed. You will be asked for your views. The professionals who made the original decision will not carry out the review.

If a school/college refuses permission for services secured by a direct payment to be provided on their premises the council will work with parents and the school/college to try to reach an agreement. Where agreement cannot be reached the council will be unable to go ahead with the direct payment. The final decision rests with the school/college.

## **8 I am interested in considering a personal budget – what do I do next?**

Once an EHC needs assessment has been agreed your lead professional will ensure that information has been provided about the option of a personal budget and will discuss this with you.

If a child or young person does not have a statement the first EHC Plan team around the child (TAC) meeting will have a focus on identifying the outcomes for your child/young person. During this meeting you will be given the option of requesting a personal budget. If your child is transferring from a statement to an EHCP the request for a personal budget should be made at the transfer review meeting. If you wish to request a personal budget, the meeting will discuss an indicative budget, with estimated costs that will be needed to achieve those outcomes. This request will be considered by the local authority when they consider the assessment and whether or not to progress with a Plan.

A personal budget remains notional or proposed until the support and funding set out in the EHC Plan has been agreed by the local authority and health commissioners.