

## Personal budgets: money to pay for your support

All our information sheets are available on the **My Care North Tyneside** website – [mycare.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://mycare.northtyneside.gov.uk) – or you can ask your social care worker to give you a copy.

After Adult Social Care has worked with you to find out about your situation, your support needs, and your finances, we will make a decision about whether you are entitled to ongoing support from the council.

This process is explained in the information sheets:

- **Discussing your care and support needs**
- **Financial assessments**
- **Planning your support.**

This information sheet explains more about how the council decides how much money it can contribute towards the cost of your care.

### What is a personal budget?

A personal budget is the total amount of money you have to spend on meeting the care needs listed in your support plan.

### What is the process of deciding a personal budget?

1. Your social adult social care worker will find out about your care needs by completing a needs assessment. They will then decide whether you have needs for support which the council must ensure are met. This is written up in a document called 'Conversation 3'. This is explained in the information sheets **Discussing your care and support needs** and **Ways to Wellbeing**.



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2. You will agree how your 'eligible needs' will be met with your worker. This is set out in your support plan and is explained in the information sheet **Planning your support**.
3. Sometimes, meeting needs will not cost anything, if family, friends, community or voluntary services can do this.
4. If money is needed to pay for services to meet your needs, your worker will calculate an approximate amount needed to meet your needs. This is called an 'indicative' personal budget. In everyday language, this means a rough idea of what your budget might be.
5. The indicative personal budget is not binding, but will help with planning. Your agreed personal budget might be more, or less.
6. Your worker will ask for permission to provide a personal budget from their managers. This is often called 'going to funding panel'.
7. The manager(s) will look at your support needs, and the proposed plan. They must decide whether the personal budget requested will meet your needs, and whether it is good value. The council has a duty to make sure it is using public money fairly and wisely, so the manager will agree an amount of money which will pay for support to meet your needs, in the best value way available.
8. Once the personal budget is agreed, you will be informed by your worker.
9. More details about the decision making process works is in the information sheet **Calculating personal budgets**.

## **How much does the council pay towards a personal budget?**

You will pay the amount you can afford according to our charging policy and is decided by your financial assessment. The **Financial assessments** information sheet gives more detail about what this involves.

If the personal budget is more than the amount you are asked to pay, the council will pay the difference. If the financial assessment says you can afford to pay more than your personal budget, you will only pay what your care costs.

If you want to spend more than the personal budget, you or someone else must be willing to pay the extra.

## **How can I use my personal budget?**

Once your personal budget is agreed, your worker will finalise your support plan, supporting you to decide how to meet your care and support needs. Your personal budget can be managed in three main ways:

### **Direct payment**

- **What is a direct payment?** You manage the personal budget yourself, organising how you meet the needs listed in your support plan.
- **What are the benefits?** You can recruit your own staff, and pay for goods and services that the council does not have a contract with.
- **What are the drawbacks?** Some people are unable or do not want the responsibility of keeping records, though a friend or relative can do this, and there are payroll agencies who can deal with most of the paperwork for you for a reasonable fee. You cannot pay for permanent residential care using a direct payment.

For more information, start by reading the **Introduction to direct payments** information sheet.

### **Individual service fund (ISF)**

- **What is an ISF?** The personal budget is paid to a care provider who will use this flexibly. Any support hours not used will be 'banked' to give you more time in future.
- **What are the benefits?** An ISF is useful if you want to 'save up' support hours for things like trips out, but do not want the responsibility of managing a direct payment.
- **What are the drawbacks?** Only certain organisations can manage your ISF, so you have less choice of who provides your support than with a direct payment.

### **Managed personal budget**

- **What is a managed personal budget?** The council arranges support on your behalf. This could be residential care, home care, or day care.
- **What are the benefits?** Some people prefer this as you don't need to keep receipts, paperwork, or keep on top of how many hours of support you have used.
- **What are the drawbacks?** Managed personal budgets provide less flexibility, e.g. homecare will be at a set frequency, and you have more limited choice about who provides your care.

You can split your budget using a combination of the ways above.

## **Do I have a choice about how my personal budget is managed?**

We want people to have as much choice and control over their lives as possible. In the majority of situations, your worker will fully support you to set up your personal budget in the way that suits you best.

However, if you want a direct payment, the council needs to be confident you are able to manage the responsibilities, or have enough support from friends or family to do this.

If you cannot make informed decisions about how to meet your care needs, and you do not have someone with legal powers to make the decision for you, your worker will decide how your support should be managed. You can find out more about this in the information sheet **Making decisions on someone's behalf**.

## **How to challenge a decision**

If you disagree with a decision about your personal budget, you can ask us to reconsider, or complain if you think you have been treated unfairly. This is explained in the information sheet **Feedback, reconsidering decisions & complaints**.

## **Alternative formats**

If you need us to do anything differently (reasonable adjustments) to help you access our services, including providing this information in another language or format, please contact the Social Care Contact Centre on 0191 643 2777, or email: [childrenandadultscontactcentre@northynteside.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandadultscontactcentre@northynteside.gov.uk)

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