

# SOCIAL CARE BUDGET GUIDE

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Giving  
**disabled children**  
a brighter future

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# What is a social care personal Budget?

A social care personal budget allows you to receive any social care and support you may need. Your local authority decides if you are eligible for a social care personal budget to help with any social care and support you may need. This is determined through a needs assessment.

## How to get a social care personal budget?

You will have to apply to a needs assessment before the local authority will provide you with a social care personal budget.

The needs assessment will assess:

- What kind of care and support you need?
- How much it will cost?
- How much you're able to afford yourself?

If you think you, or someone you know, needs help to cope with day-to-day activities, apply to a needs assessment here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/getting-a-needs-assessment/>

# What is a direct payment?

If you are eligible for a social care personal budget, you can receive your budget as a direct payment. The parent/young person can be paid their budget directly, so they can arrange the social care provision themselves.

Local Authority must offer direct payments for social care services. However, they must be satisfied that the person who receives the direct payments will use them in an appropriate way and that they will act in the best interests of the child or young person.

[Find out more about direct payment regulations by contacting your local SENDIASS.](#)

# How much will you get paid?

The amount of money you will get will be determined on the needs assessment.

# What can you spend your social care personal budget on?

A personal budget can be used to meet the outcomes identified in your support plan, for example some outcomes may be in relation to:

- Personal care
- Preparation of meals
- Daily living activities
- Support to take part in educational, leisure or social activities
- Access to short breaks for respite
- Purchasing items of equipment.

During your support planning you will identify the outcomes that are personal to you and work out the best way to spend your budget.

# Being an employer

When you hire a carer or personal assistant yourself, you become an employer. Therefore you will have the responsibilities of an employer such as:

- Background checks or references
- Tax
- National Insurance
- Pension contributions

If you don't feel able to be an employer you can hire extra help through an agency. However there are some drawbacks like:

- It could cost you more money
- Removes benefits – such as having the same person provide your care.

To get more help on choosing an agency contact SENDIASS.

# Managing your social care personal budget

## Choosing how to receive your social care personal budget

You can ask your Local Authority to either:

- Manage your personal budget for you - the money in your personal budget will be spent for you by your local authority. They will arrange all your care and support based on your agreed care plan. They still need to check you're happy with the care they're arranging for you.
- Pay the money to another organisation – such as a care provider. Your chosen organisation will speak to the council and arrange the payments. Sometimes other organisations charge you extra money to arrange payments from the Local Authority.
- Pay the money directly to you or someone you choose – this is known as a direct payment.
- A combination of the above – the local authority could arrange some of your care but pay you the rest of the money in direct payments.

Contact your local SENDIASS to find out more information on how your social care personal budget can be provided.

# Benefits of direct payments

Direct payments give you more flexibility over how your care and support is arranged and provided, as long as you're spending your personal budget on things that meet your agreed care plan.

Most councils will ask for evidence of how you've spent your money every 3 months.

However you may decide that direct payments are not helpful if:

- You're worried about managing money or the people you employ
- You spend a lot of time in hospital
- You would rather the council arranged your care

You could also consider having someone else manage your direct payments, for example a friend or family member. You'll need to set up a trust for payments that are managed by someone else.

Find out more on how to manage your payments by contacting your local authority.