

Personal budgets frequently asked questions

Q. What is a personal budget?

- A. A personal budget is an amount of money identified by the local authority that can be used to deliver all or some of the provision set out in an Education Health and Care Plan.

Q. Who is eligible for a personal budget?

- A. A parent/guardian or the young person themselves can request a personal budget if the local authority maintains an Education Health Care plan, or is preparing an Education Health Care plan for a child or young person.

Q. How much money is available?

- A. The amount of money provided as a personal budget is dependent on the identified outcomes for the child or young person as agreed in the Education Health Care Plan. It will take into account the activities, services or support required to achieve those outcomes.

Q. What can personal budgets be used for?

- A. Personal budgets may be used to pay for a range of care and support services as well as equipment. They should be used to meet a child or young person's assessed needs and have clear outcomes.

Q. What cannot be covered by a personal budget?

- A. Personal budgets can't be used for:
- Emergency, acute, and most primary healthcare services already provided on the NHS.
 - To employ a family member living with the child or young person, except in exceptional circumstances.
 - Anything for everyday living, e.g. food, rent, etc.

Q. What are the different ways in which personal budgets can be managed?

- A. There are three main mechanisms to manage personal budgets. A family can choose to use any of these or a combination of them. These mechanisms are:
- The local authority manages the funds and buys in the agreed support
 - Direct payment made to parents or young person to buy in support
 - A third party or nominee (an individual or another organisation) manages the funds on behalf of the parents or young person

Q. What are the conditions for a direct payment to parents or a young person?

- A. Direct payments should not have an adverse effect on other services which the local authority provides for children or young people with an Education Health Care Plan. Additionally, using direct payments to secure services must be an efficient use of local authority resources.

Q. What information must local authorities provide about personal budgets?

- A. Local authorities have a duty to ensure that information is being provided on the following areas:
- What the conditions for direct payment are.
 - What a personal budget is available for.
 - Details of organisations that provide advice and assistance about personal budgets.