



One minute guide

Personal Budgets

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What is a Personal Budget?

Personalisation is at the heart of the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) reforms](#); starting with the person as an individual with strengths, preferences and aspirations, identifying their needs and making choices about how and when they are supported to live their lives. One way in which personalisation is put into action is by the child and their family having a Personal Budget. This is an amount of money or resources identified by the local authority to help support a child or young person and their family to achieve the outcomes stated in their assessment of needs.

Working with our health partners within the NHS, children and young people who are in receipt of continuing care may also benefit from a contribution of a Personal Health Budget to their [Education Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\)](#). In such cases the two funding elements are combined into one Personal Budget.

The aim of Personal Budgets is to give families more say in how children and young people are supported and to be more involved in organising that support. Having a Personal Budget gives families the opportunity to do things for themselves, be more in control and be more creative. For example, some families join together and share the overall cost of an activity for two or more children.

Currently in Leeds, a Personal Budget in the form of a Direct Payment is also available for [short breaks](#), where the child or young person might have an Early Help Assessment or a [Child and Family Assessment](#).

What does the law say about it?

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) gives a family the right to request a Personal Budget when an Education Health and Care Plan is being prepared or reviewed. As a first step, it gives the right to request an indicative budget; this is the amount of money that is needed to meet the child or young person's needs. The law describes a number of ways this budget may be made available:

A direct payment to the family;

A payment to a third party to organise on behalf of the family;

An arrangement where the local authority organises support in the way the family chooses; or

Any combination of the above.

The use of funds is regulated by the [Special Educational Needs \(Personal Budgets\) Regulations 2014](#). There are organisations who can advise on the legalities of managing a Personal Budget, for example, ASIST on tel: 0113 231 1125, email: assist@leedscil.org.uk or look on their website: www.leedscil.org.uk.

What is the difference between Direct Payments and a Personal Budget?

A child or young person has a Direct Payment when their local authority or health service provides them with cash instead of a service; families can purchase their child or young person's support directly.

A Personal Budget is more than this; it can be made up of a piece of equipment, directly provided service, a cash payment or a mix of these. Families will have already agreed the outcomes in the support plan and at that stage the family will be central to deciding how the plan will deliver their child or young person's identified outcomes and they will know how much money will be allocated to them.

What should practitioners do?

When a family is embarking on accessing a Personal Budget, practitioners should support them to think of creative ways to meet the child's needs when using the Personal Budget and to think differently from how needs have been met in the past.

Some examples of how Personal Budgets can be used include:

Support in the family home, whether it's equipment or help with personal and domestic activities;

Equipment to help communication or learning;

Support to join in with **local clubs or activities**;

Sports or cultural activities;

[Short breaks](#); and/ or

Someone to go with the child on a daytrip or short break.

Example of how a Personal Budget was used

Sarah is a 12 year old with cerebral palsy whose previous care plan included a set amount of agreed hours, delivered by a care agency to provide personal care and take her out on a short break. This worked ok, but didn't allow for the flexibility Sarah and her family needed.

Sarah and her family used a Personal Budget to employ their own Personal Assistants to work at times when they needed support the most and also to purchase a sand wheelchair so she can go to the beach with her family.

Further information

When working with a family who wants to access a Personal Budget, they should be advised to contact their allocated Social Worker or Lead Professional in the first instance.

The [Leeds Local Offer](http://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk) website at: www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk provides information about services, which are free or cost no extra for children with SEN and disabilities, and the services that all children can expect such as health and education.

The national [In Control](http://www.incontrol.org.uk) website provides a wealth of information about personalisation.