

Factsheet 7 – 9 August 2010 (2 Pages)

Personal Budgets – Your Money, Your Choice

Why are people being offered a Personal Budget?

The idea of a Personal Budget is to make you aware of the value of your care and support. We will work with you and offer you the opportunity to make choices about how your care and support is provided, or you can even take total control.

Who will get a Personal Budget?

A Personal Budget will be available to people who, following an assessment of their needs and financial position, are **eligible** for support and assistance from us. We can discuss this with you at the time, or you can read the factsheet **FS1 Assessment and Fair Access to Care**.

What is a Personal Budget?

It is money that is allocated by us (Devon Adult & Community Services) to you. This money can be used to arrange your own care and support, after your assessment or your review.

What can I spend my Personal Budget on?

It is your choice about how you spend the money but your Personal Budget must be spent on meeting the needs and achieving the objectives (your '**outcomes**') we have agreed in your support plan. Your Personal Budget cannot be spent on anything that is illegal or would endanger you or another person. Some people may use their money to employ a personal assistant to help with everyday tasks such as washing and getting dressed. Others may choose to use the money to buy support, or services from organisations or individuals. You may also want to spend your money on transport or local services such as a day centre. We will give you help to complete a plan and understand what is appropriate to meet your needs.

Managing my money and support worries me, what help is available?

If you think you need help to manage your support or your money, a suitable organisation, a family member or a friend could help you. We are here to help you too – members of our Direct Payments team can offer you advice and support. Or, you can nominate an agent to act on your behalf who can help you manage the Direct Payment including any employment and payroll responsibilities.

Organisations that provide social care and support have to ensure that they take reasonable steps to ensure that they do this safely. This includes making sure that they have carried out Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on their staff. Individuals who want to provide social care but are not part of a social care organisation do not have to have CRB checks but you can decide to ask them to have one if they are going to help you. We all have some risks in our lives and we try to plan how to manage these risks in ways that enable us to do the things we want, as much as possible. We will make sure, with you, that any risk is properly managed.

Why do you give me an estimated amount?

It gives you an approximate idea of the money that we may be able to offer you to cover your care. This is helpful because it allows you to make a realistic plan. We will work with you to complete an assessment to identify your care and support needs and then **estimate** the amount of money we will offer you. The actual amount allocated to you may differ according to the plan you make for your support.

How much will my Personal Budget actually be?

The actual amount of your Personal Budget is determined by your support plan. You can choose how your support will suit your situation in the best way; we will agree the plan and manage your expectations. As a result, your actual Personal Budget may be more or less than your estimated amount. When you receive a Personal Budget, you may be asked to pay towards the cost. This is a contribution which will be based on an assessment of your financial circumstances. Any contribution due will be offset against the value of your Personal Budget.

What is a Support Plan?

Following a conversation about your life we will work with you to make a support plan. Your support plan is a document which outlines the outcomes you want to achieve, the support you need and how you want to receive it. It forms an agreement between you and us (the Council) indicating the amount of your Personal Budget and what it will be spent on. You can develop your support plan yourself, with the help of someone else, use an organisation to help you, or we can help you. When the support plan is finished it will need to be agreed by us before we release any money to you.

Is a Personal Budget taxable and will it affect any benefits that I might receive?

No. A Personal Budget does not count as income for tax or benefit purposes. A Personal Budget is specifically to pay for your care and support; it is not a loan.

What are the options for managing my Personal Budget?

There are currently three ways to manage your Personal Budget:

Option One: Direct Payment

You can have your Personal Budget sent direct to a bank account set up to manage your Personal Budget. This is called a Direct Payment. You can use the money to be creative about how you organise, buy and manage your agreed support. You are responsible for paying for your support from this money, and record everything you spend to show the Council. For more information please read the factsheet **FS8 Direct Payments**.

Option Two: Managed Personal Budget

We (the Council) can organise, buy and manage your agreed support in the traditional way and manage the Personal Budget for you.

Option Three: Combination Personal Budget

You may choose to use a combination of the previous two options. You could choose to receive some of your social care support as a Direct Payment, while other things could be paid for directly by the council. We can discuss this with you.

How do Direct Payments relate to Personal Budgets?

A Personal Budget is the total cost of all the social care support that you might need, regardless of how that support is provided. A Direct Payment is one way of receiving all or part of your Personal Budget.

For more information

Find our useful range of leaflets and factsheets online at www.devon.gov.uk/factsheets including:

Leaflet 1 – Social Care for Adults Explained

FS1 – Assessment and Fair Access to Care

FS2a – Charges for Home Care, Day Centres and Community Meals

FS2b – Charges for Residential and Nursing Care

FS8 – Direct Payments

FS18 – Guide to Personal Brokerage

Also Personal Budget Frequently Asked Questions can be found online: www.devon.gov.uk/puttingpeoplefirst

A large print version of this factsheet is available online:

www.devon.gov.uk/largeprint-factsheets but if you would like it in a different format such as Braille or audio, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email customer@devon.gov.uk.

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