

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON SELF DIRECTED SUPPORT



***Everything you've always
wanted to know about Self
Directed Support***

Guide for Individuals/Carers
September 2008



Leicester
City Council

Questions and answers are grouped under these headings:

1. Self Directed Support
2. Money issues
3. Support Available
4. Risk
5. Other income streams
6. How to find out more

1. SELF DIRECTED SUPPORT

What is Self Directed Support?

Self directed support means that people who use social care services have support that is personal to them and that they have more control over how this is arranged. This can be through increasing the number of people going through the Individual Budgets process, increasing take-up of Direct Payments, Person Centred Planning and having an outcome based approach to all service provision.

What are Individual Budgets?

The term 'Individual Budgets' is used to describe a new process on how to assess and plan social care needs of individuals. Key elements of an Individual Budget include:

- giving an early indication of funding available to support eligible individuals
- individuals developing Support Plans showing how needs will be met.
- Individuals deciding on how services to meet needs should be arranged. This can be either managing services through a Direct Payment, have them arranged for them by the Council or a mixture of these.

What are Direct Payments?

A Direct Payment simply means giving someone an amount of money to arrange and purchase their care and support services themselves, instead of a Care Manager arranging services for them. People still have to have an assessment to see if they are eligible. Local Authorities have to offer the choice of taking a Direct Payment to anyone 'willing and able' to manage them, with or without help from someone else.

What is the difference between Individual Budgets and Direct Payments?

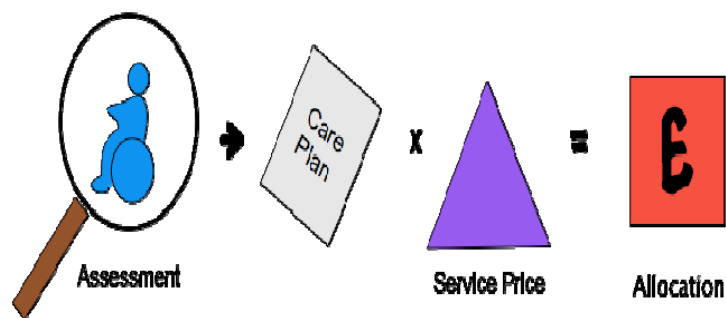
A Direct Payment simply means giving money directly to the person so they can arrange their own support. Individual Budgets is about a whole new process that changes the way assessments and care plans are done.

As part of the Individual Budget process people may choose to take all or part of their budget as a Direct Payment. There are other options, including social care still providing or arranging services for them. The person would still, however, know how much funding there was available if they chose in the future to arrange all or some of the support themselves.

What is the difference between the Individual Budgets and our current assessment processes?

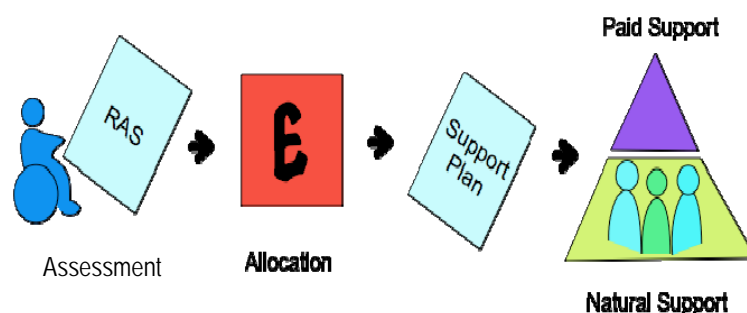
Under the current process a Care Manager (Social Worker) is responsible for doing an assessment of needs and for those eligible, devising a Care Plan showing how their needs will be met. In some cases individual have had limited choice and control in this process. Also how much the service will cost is normally only known when the Care Plan is put together.

Current assessment & planning process



Through Individual Budgets there is a mediated self assessment process. Eligible individuals are then told how much funding there is available to meet their needs (through what is called a 'Resource Allocation System') and a Support Plan rather than a Care Plan is written showing how needs will be met. New roles called Support Brokers are also expected to help individuals develop Support Plans.

Individual Budgets assessment & planning process



What's the 'Resource Allocation System'?

This is the system local authorities have to devise to be able to tell individuals, after an assessment, how much funding is available to meeting their eligible needs. Councils start by examining how they spend their money at the moment in order to devise a Resource Allocation System that can follow current patterns of spending.

What is the difference between a Care Plan and Support Plan?

Care Plans mainly concentrate on how services will meet eligible individual care and support needs. They tend to be task focused (e.g. need support getting out of bed at 8am). Support Plans are more person centred and whilst covering the above also tell you more about the person, what is important to them and what they want to change in their lives. They also include how informal networks and community support can be built-on to meet outcomes.

What is the difference between and Individual Budget Support Plan and a Person Centred Plan?

Very Little. However with Individual Budgets you will know how much funding is available before the planning starts and will look at how this will be spent.

What are Support Brokers?

These are relatively new roles to Social Care. These posts have a good knowledge of what Departmental support and community provision is available for disabled people and with this knowledge are able to play a key role in supporting individuals to produce Support Plans, directing them to appropriate

services and exploring how Assistive Technology and other provision could promote their independence.

A wide range of people could take-on the Support broker role including Care Managers, voluntary & independent sector organisations, person centred planning facilitators or family and friends.

2. MONEY ISSUES

Will I have to make a contribution for my support?

The Council is required to work out if you should make a contribution towards some of the assistance you need (e.g. help with personal care and domestic support). Therefore the Council may ask you information on your personal income and saving in order to work out whether you should make a weekly contribution. This is called 'fairer charging'. Your Care Manager will be able to give you more information on this area.

What can the Individual Budget allocation be spent on?

It is very hard to give a full list of what Individual Budget can be spent on but the money will normally be spent on personal care, domestic support and traditional or alternative social and leisure activities. Everything must be decided on an individual basis and must show that it meets the outcomes and needs identified in the support plan, be able to show how it will keep the individual healthy, safe and well, and be of a reasonable cost and a proportionate amount of their Individual Budgets.

Attached is a separate spend guidance which gives examples of what Individual Budgets could be spent on.

Will people just keep any Direct Payments money they don't spend?

No. Individuals have to spend their funding on meeting the social care needs identified in their assessments. We do currently allow them to keep a 4 week surplus of funding to allow flexibility in support and to meet fluctuating needs. Any surplus above this not set aside for specific purposes has to be returned to the Council.

Through Direct Payments can I save up money for one off activities?

Yes. Any one off activities or spending that may occur needs to be clearly stated in the support plan so that the monies will be allowed to accrue. For example if you are planning to save money up for days out on the train to London or to theme parks then that must be stated in the support plan.

Will the money from Individual Budgets affect my benefits?

An Individual Budget allocation is to pay for assistance and support to meet your social care needs. It is not personal income for the individual it will not need to be declared for tax or Benefit purposes as income.

3. SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Who can support me if I decide to manage my own Individual Budget through Direct Payments?

Support can be provided by the Direct Payments Support Service based at a voluntary organisation called Mosaic. This service is funded by the Council. They can advise about employment law, tax, and National insurance contributions as well as providing support to help with financial monitoring

If I have any difficulties with my care who can I speak to?

Your can contact your Care Manager (social Worker) to if you have any difficulties with the care and support you receive. They are also responsible for reviewing your support arrangements on a regular basis.

If you are managing your own package through Direct Payments then Mosaic can provide support with managing the funding, employing staff or using agencies.

What happens if I decide things aren't working for me?

If things do not work out it can always be changed to something that is more appropriate. Some times these changes can happen quickly and other times you might have to wait for new services to start due to referral systems and waiting list.

4. RISK

How is risk managed and what may the council have concerns about?

Part of the self directed support approach is to ensure disabled people have the opportunity to live more fulfilling lives and in particular be able to participate in events and activities they are interested in. This may mean you want to do things that your Care Manager might have concerns about. Individuals will need to look at risk and how they manage them as part of their Support Plans.

The Government has also recognised that this may mean individuals will want to do things which traditionally the Council would have been reluctant to support. It is important to think that:

- Choice and control of the person must be promoted & sometimes making a choice involves some element of risk.
- The rights of individuals and their family carers must be promoted and individuals must be supported to understand their responsibilities and the implications of their choices, including the risks involved.
- Everyone involved must acknowledge that it is neither possible nor desirable to eradicate all risk, and that attempts to do this often result in a less fulfilling life.

5. OTHER INCOME STREAMS

What about Health services?

Currently NHS health funding is not included within the Individual Budgets pilot unless the care or support is arranged by the local Council under jointly funded arrangements.

The Government has said it will keep this position under review and in the future part of health provision which is closely support social care provision.

6. HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

For further information contact John Singh Individual Budgets Project Officer on 0116 2526964 e-mail john.singh@leicester.gov.uk ,
Claire King Individual Budgets Support Broker on 0116 2526962 email Claire.King@leicester.gov.uk ,
or Laura Clifford Individual Budgets Support Broker on 0116 2422742 email Laura.Clifford@mencap.org.uk.

Or Contact

Care Manager Contacts

If you need to contact your Care Manager then their address and telephone number is in your assessment. If you are unsure who they are then please contact:

Adult & Housing Department
1 Grey Friars,
Leicester LE1 5PH
Tel. (0116) 2531191
Minicom (0116) 2518040

Direct Payments Support Service

Mosaic: Shaping Disability Services
2 Richard III Road, Leicester LE3 5QT
Tel: (0116) 2515565
Fax: (0116) 2519969
Minicom: (0116) 251009

Website: www.mosaic1898.co.uk

Websites

www.ldicn.org.uk (local information on Individual Budgets)

www.individualbudgets.csip.org.uk (national information on Individual Budgets and case studies)

www.in-control.org.uk (information about the In-Control programme and case studies)

Acknowledgement is given to information from Barnsley Council and 'in Control' which has helped to produce this guide.