

Personal Budgets and Direct Payments for children and young people with SEN and/or a disability

Personal Budgets

Children and young people with special educational needs or who are disabled, and their families can have more choice, flexibility and control over the services that they are assessed as needing from education, health and social care to help them achieve the outcomes agreed in their support plans.

One way of doing this is through a Personal Budget.

What is a Personal Budget?

A personal budget is a sum of money made available for children and young people who require additional support over and above what is available to most children and young people through local services. A Personal Budget is not the overall total of all the money that is available to support a child.

Personal Budget resources may come from education, health or social care which families can use to support their disabled child or young person's assessed needs.

You do not have to have a personal budget if you do not want one.

Who can have a Personal Budget?

Education and Social Care

To be eligible to receive a Personal Budget from North Yorkshire County Council, children and young people must be assessed as requiring social care and / or have special educational needs.

The Children and Families Act (2014) sets out that the child's parent or the young person has a right to request a Personal Budget when the local authority has completed an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment and confirmed that it will prepare an EHC plan. A Personal Budget can also be requested during a statutory review of an existing EHC plan.

Health

A personal health budget is an amount of money to support your identified health and wellbeing needs, planned and agreed between you and your local NHS team.

The aim is to give people with long-term conditions and disabilities greater choice and control over the healthcare and support they receive.

Personal health budgets work in a similar way to the personal budgets that many people are already using to manage and pay for their social care.

You can find more information on the NHS choices website
<http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Yourchoices/personal-health-budgets/Pages/about-personal-health-budgets.aspx>

Some of the benefits of a Personal Budget

A Personal Budget offers children, young people and families the freedom to plan how support or services are best delivered to them in order to meet the agreed outcomes that are identified in the child or young person's care plan or EHC Plan.

This supports a more personalised service, putting children, young people and families at the centre of planning and support.

Allocation of a Personal Budget will not affect any benefits that your child, young person or family are receiving, as it is not classed as additional income.

What can a Personal Budget be used for?

A Personal Budget may be used for provision or service that has been identified as a need in the child or young person's care or EHC plan. It can be used in creative and new or different ways to develop the support you need, when and how you want it.

Some examples of how personal budgets can be used:

- support in your own 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
- someone to go with you on a daytrip or short break
- support for you on work experience or a work-based learning opportunity.

What can't a personal budget be used for?

There are some things that you can't use your personal budget for, that include:

- anything illegal; gambling; debt repayment or to purchase alcohol and tobacco;
- to purchase a school place
- to access private healthcare

As a general rule, you can't use a personal budget to employ a family member who lives with your child, but there may be exceptional circumstances where this will be agreed.

Managing a Personal Budget

There are four ways to manage a personal budget:

1. As a direct payment where you receive the money to buy and manage services yourself,
2. The Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group can manage it for you, organising your child's support,
3. A third party can manage it for you. For example, the cash can be paid to another individual such as a family member or a friend.
4. You can use a combination of these options.

For example, the Local Authority could provide a short break service, while you use a direct payment to pay for a personal assistant to support your child to make and meet friends at the local youth club

Direct Payments

What is the difference between a personal budget and a direct payment?

A personal budget is the amount of money allocated for your additional support.

A direct payment is where you receive some or all of this money to buy and manage services yourself.

Who can have a Direct Payment?

If you have an education, health and care plan, you have the right to request direct payments for education, health and care services.

If you have a care plan, local authorities must offer direct payments. If you are eligible for continuing health care or have a long term health condition then you may be offered a personal health budget.

For education and health care, there are some conditions. These include:

- local authorities have to consider the impact on other children;
- an agreement from your child's school if you want to use a direct payment for a service that will be delivered at school;
- a named person who will be responsible for managing the healthcare that's been agreed in the plan;
- that you can only spend your direct payments to achieve the outcomes that have been agreed in the EHC or support plan.

Some of the Benefits of a Direct Payment

You will be at the centre of decision making about your support. There will be no decision about you, without you.

It gives you the opportunity to do things for yourself, with support available if you need it.

Being in control means you can also be more creative. For example, some families join together and share the overall cost of an activity for two or more children.

You can vary the amount of support and how much you spend from week to week or month to month and may be able to 'bank' any spare hours or money for a short time.

Managing a Direct Payment

If you choose to have a Direct Payment you will be personally responsible for how the money is used.

You must have a separate bank account and keep bank statements, receipts and invoices.

North Yorkshire Direct Payment Support Services will help you with education or care direct payments.

The Direct Payment Support Service (DPSS) can assist with the following:

- information on Direct Payments
- assistance setting up a bank account
- advice on the responsibilities of being an employer
- assistance with recruitment
- access to employment law and payroll services
- help to create and maintain paperwork
- information about specialist organisations
- assistance with budgeting the Direct Payment
- support with administrative/practical tasks
- support and advice about what to do in an emergency.

If you are eligible for and you choose a personal health budget, your local NHS team will organise your advice and support.

If you choose to have a direct payment from the county council, the DPSS will explain how to record what you spend the money on and how they will check that you are buying the support that has been agreed.

If North Yorkshire County Council is unable to meet a request to include certain education or social care provision in a personal budget as a direct payment the reasons will be provided in writing. The letter will also tell you about your rights to a formal review.

I'm interested - what can I do next?

- Education and Social Care

Look on the Local Offer website for more information

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/23542/SEND---local-offer>

If you already have a social care worker or a continuing health care worker please contact them and they will be able to talk to you about Direct Payments.

If you are going through an assessment or already have an Education, Health and Care plan talk to the Assessment and Review Officer who is managing the process.

If you haven't been in touch please contact the North Yorkshire County Council Customer Services Centre on 01609 534527 or go on line at

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/24230/Contact-us>

- Health

Visit the NHS choices website <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>