

Self-directed support

Support brokers

Many people can plan and organise their own support without any help. Others want help from 'support brokers'.

This factsheet tells you about what support brokerage is and who you might choose as a support broker.



To get more help
contact In Control
Tel: **0121 474 5900**
Email:
help@in-control.org.uk



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I will manage my own support.

The basic facts

Some people can plan and organise their own support without any help. Others want help.

The help people get to plan and manage their support is often called 'support brokerage'. The people who help in this way are called 'support brokers'.



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Support broker

I will use a support broker.



I will ask my family and friends.

The word 'broker' sounds like it must be a professional – someone paid to help with a specialised area, like an insurance broker. So the name 'support broker' is a little misleading, because a friend or family member could be your support broker.



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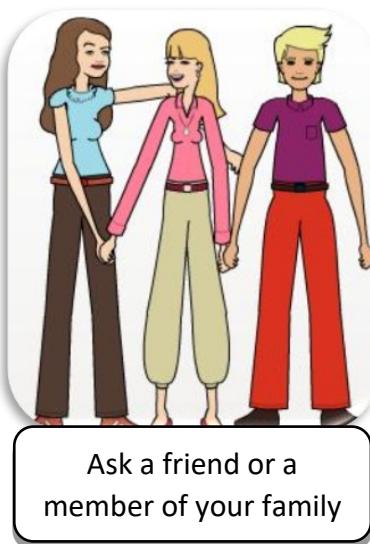
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More information about brokers and brokerage

A support broker:

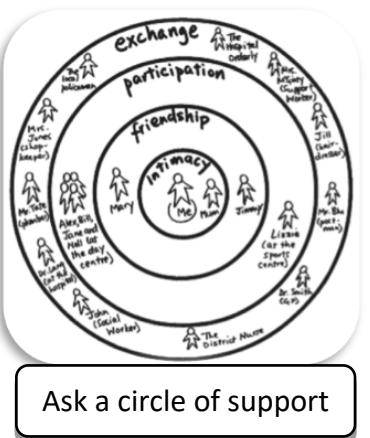
- Is someone you choose to help you plan and manage your support.
- Can help to action your plan.
- Can help you work out your choices and arrange the support you need to make things happen.
- Should listen to you and work in partnership with you. You are in charge.



Ask a friend or a member of your family

A support broker does not have to be a paid professional. They can be anyone you trust:

- Someone in your family, a friend or neighbour.
- A circle of support.
- A worker for a voluntary organisation.
- Advice and information organisations, such as Centres for Independent Living.
- An independent, professional broker.
- A support provider organisation – as long as the role of broker is separate from the provider's other activities. They have to remain impartial: the broker should not recommend all their organisation's own services.



Ask a circle of support



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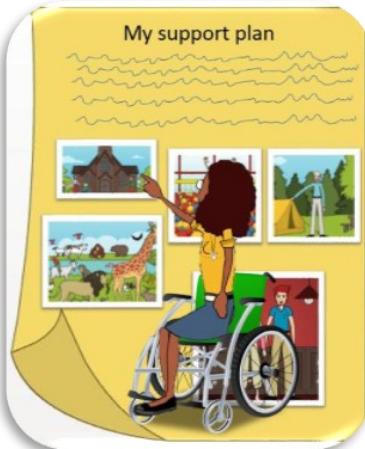
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What a support broker does



A support broker:

- Should help you to think about, plan and organise support that is tailored just for you.
- May help you with one or several areas of planning or organising your support.
- Can help you for a short time or a longer period – it all depends on what you want.
- Can act as your agent and hold your personal budget for you.



A support broker can help with many tasks, for example:

- Designing and costing your support package.
- Finding creative ways to plan and organise your support.
- Telling you about what services you can use.
- Negotiating with organisations on your behalf.
- Helping you to make connections in the community.
- Placing personal advertisements.
- Recruiting staff.
- Payroll or accountancy.
- Co-ordinating your support.
- Tapping into local networks and funding opportunities.
- Keeping track of how your support is going.



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Finding a support broker

If you want a support broker who is not a friend or family member, let social services know.



Many councils are starting to offer brokerage services or are making lists of local brokers.



Thank you for managing my support

If you want to use a professional broker, remember that their fee usually comes out of your personal budget.

You do not have to use a broker commissioned by your Council. You can choose who you want to support you. (See Care Act Requirements 11.3)

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Ken has had a life of being moved around. He is now 45. He has been in just about every hospital in East Anglia. He had his first experience of long-stay hospital when he was 15. He says he was kept in hospital on a section under the Mental Health Act. Ken has lost his temper with staff in the hospitals he has lived in. But in all the years that Ken's friend Tony has known him, he has never done anything like that outside the hospital.

Whilst he was living in another institution in Devon, Ken said he was not allowed to go to the toilet alone. He had to ask for toilet paper and wasn't allowed things like razors, batteries, bottles and beakers at night. 'If I was dry I could not get a drink,' he says.

Going out was a rare event. When he needed new clothes for his move back to Essex, a staff member went to buy them for him. His care at the institution cost almost £3,000 per week. (To stay in the Savoy Hotel for a week costs £2,800!)

Tony had the idea of Ken being part of the In Control project, with a view to him moving to supported living and a place of his own. Ken was desperately unhappy where he was living. He longed to move to Essex.

It was decided to do a halfway plan. When Ken was on holiday in a cottage with Tony in Essex, Tony invited Nicola, a social worker, for a cup of tea. She read the report about Ken but couldn't match what she had read with the person she met. She started looking for somewhere suitable in Essex. This is how Ken came to be where he is now – in his flat, able to organise his life as he chooses.



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