

Self-directed support

Living the life you want

The whole point of self-directed support is that people can be in charge of their support so they can live the life they choose.

This fact sheet tells you about ways that you can make the most of your personal budget so you can live your life your way.



To get more help
contact In Control

Tel: **0121 474 5900**

Email:

help@in-control.org.uk



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Self-directed support



You are a citizen
with rights.



Everyone is
different.



Get the right
support.



Live the life you want.

The basic facts

Whoever you are and whatever support you need, you are a citizen – someone with the right to live your life as you choose.

Everyone is different – an individual.

Most people, though, want some of these things in life:

- A nice place to live.
- To feel safe.
- To have fun in their spare time.
- A job or something interesting to do in the day.
- To be part of their community.
- Friends and relationships.
- Holidays.

You can use your personal budget to get the things in life that are important to you. A personal budget is not about getting services, it's about getting the support you need to live the life you want.



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You don't have to spend it all on traditional services.

More information about living the life you want

You don't have to spend your personal budget on traditional services such as residential or domiciliary care, a day centre place or a specialist placement.

You can spend the budget in creative ways that can often be very cost-effective:



Choose your own personal assistant (PA).

- **Personal assistants (PA)** – someone you choose to support just you. They can help you at home or in the community in the way you choose. A PA could help you, for example, to get involved in community activities or go out in the evenings and at weekends.
- **Community support** – think about what your friends, family and neighbours can do and use your money to pay expenses or reward them in other ways. For example, if you want a lift to and from home football games, and support to get in and out of the ground, you could buy a season ticket for another supporter. This would be cheaper than paying for support from an agency.
- **Live-in support** – find someone to live with you who can offer you help as well – in exchange, perhaps, for free accommodation.



Community support.



Live-in support.



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Join clubs and activities.



Move house or adapt your home.



Use your money to find a job.



Use your money to buy equipment.

- **Get involved in the community** – use your money to join in community groups, pay membership fees or help you get support while you're there – anything from art classes to gym membership.
- **Housing** – move house or adapt your home so it better suits you and the people you want to live with. You could even use some of your money for a deposit on a house.
- **Work** – use your money to find a job and get support while you're at work if find you need it. For example, if someone wants to learn how to be a decorator, they might use their support money to pay a local decorator to teach them on the job.
- **Community**—use your money to help you contribute to your local community or church.
- **Equipment** – you could buy specialist equipment or perhaps tools of the trade you want to practice. Someone with a respiratory problem used part of their budget to buy an air-conditioning unit so they could breathe better when the weather is hot. This helps them stay at home and reduces the number of times in a year when they have to go to hospital.



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Pay for support to go on holiday instead of respite care.



Help to live in your own home.



Use your money to pay for therapists.

- **Skills** - use your money to learn new skills and improve your independence. One person paid for somebody to teach them how to cook so that they didn't have to pay for someone to come in and cook for them anymore.
- **Shared costs** – get together with people who share the same needs or interests. For example, three friends who all like working outdoors club together to pay someone to support them in work as volunteers for the National Trust.
- **Take a break** – people have used some of their money to get support to go on holiday, rather than using traditional respite care.
- **Setting up a business** – some people have used their budgets to get support to start up a business based on their skills and experience.
- **Supported living** – support to live in your own home or stay in your own home
- **Therapists and specialists** – for example, speech therapists, counsellors, massage, aromatherapy.



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An example:

Josephine

Josephine, a 'young, retired' woman, worked as a graphic designer until 2000, when her rheumatoid arthritis meant she could no longer carry on working.



She now has an individual budget and she says: *'It has changed my life – I thought that I was lucky having a neighbour to help me but I always felt beholden – now I feel liberated. Having an individual budget has transformed my life – it has given me my power back and put me back in control.'*

The initial allocation was for £156 per week, but this soon proved not to be enough and it was increased to £324 per week. Josephine uses the money for massage, acupuncture and pedicures.

Employing three personal assistants who provide an average of



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30 hours' support a week, they work flexibly according to Josephine's needs: personal care, housework and meal preparation. Two of them drive and are able to drive Josephine to do her shopping.

'It's so good to choose what you want when shopping and now I can go to Chichester or Brighton if I want to.'

'What I really like about having an individual budget is having the flexibility to spend the money on what I think fit. Before this happened, I hardly ever went out and had begun to feel really trapped.'



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