

# Self-directed support

## Organising support – do it yourself

This fact sheet tells you how you can organise your support yourself.

You don't have to organise your support yourself, but the DIY approach suits some people.



**To get more help**  
contact In Control.  
Tel: **0121 4745900**  
Email In Control  
[help@in-control.org.uk](mailto:help@in-control.org.uk)

**Find more fact sheets at:**  
[www.in-control.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.in-control.org.uk/factsheets)



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## The basic facts

Some people decide they don't want self-directed support because they think they have to organise everything themselves.

But you definitely don't have to organise your own support. There are a number of people who can organise it for you. (There's another In Control fact sheet about organising support.)

However, some people prefer the DIY approach.

**If you do it yourself, you, or someone you trust, will be in control of all of your money for support:**

- You get your money as a direct payment straight into your bank account – usually once a month.
- You need a separate bank account so the money doesn't get mixed up with personal money.
- You may get some of your money from social services and some from another funding source, like the Independent Living Fund or Supporting People.

## More information about organising it yourself

**A DIY approach has advantages:**

- you can organise things exactly as you want. You have a lot of control over your support.
- it gives you flexibility to try different things.
- if you employ staff, you are the boss.
- you will probably save money. If you use an organisation to arrange things, they charge management fees.

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### A DIY approach doesn't suit everybody:

- it takes up more of your time. There is paperwork to do – especially if you recruit and employ your own staff.
- there's more responsibility. Some people like this and some people don't.

But DIY doesn't actually mean you have to do **everything** yourself.

### There are people you could pay to help you organise things, for example:

- an accountant to pay your support staff (if you have any)
- a solicitor for employment contracts
- a specialist insurance agent
- an advisor on employment issues
- friends and family may have useful skills.

Even if you have support staff, you don't always have to become an employer.

It depends how many hours someone works for you and if they have another job. If someone works for you on a self-employed basis, it means you don't have to worry about holiday and sick pay, or tax and insurance.

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## An example

Deb says: 'After having major neuro-surgery three years ago, it was very hard for me to imagine life could ever get better. Before I had my personal assistants (PAs), it was Roger and I merely surviving. Having several medical conditions between us, it was unbearable at times.'

An individual budget turned out to be the right solution for me but I didn't understand the process and, having never really engaged with social services, I was scared to death of starting the ball rolling. My fears were unfounded and the process was straightforward.'

An organisation called SAIL provided an independent mentor to help Deb through the whole process. In fact this led to Deb joining their board of directors!

The difference to Deb's life has been enormous. Two PAs have the responsibility of supporting her. One of the PAs spends 20 hours covering household tasks, shopping or helping Deb with her wheelchair on public transport. The other PA provides 10 hours' help with correspondence and filing.

'Through the patience and understanding of both my PAs, I'm regaining some of the skills I'd lost as well as gaining new ones. Also I'm not wasting valuable energy on things my PA can do for me, leaving me energy for the things I want and need to do.'

In conclusion, I would say do not rush this process.

Think carefully about what support you need – do not leave anything out! Be prepared to haggle a little but not too much and be sure you know what you are getting into. I had some great support!'



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**There is a lot of information about self-directed support on In Control's website:**  
[www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

**Here is a selection of things that tell you more:**

**Free to download or you can buy a copy from:**

In Control Support Centre, Carillon House  
 Chapel Lane, Wythall, B47 6JX  
 or [www.in-control.org.uk/shop](http://www.in-control.org.uk/shop)

**Top Tips** and **In the Driving Seat**,

Helen Sanderson, Suzanne McStravick and Carl Poll

**How to be in control**, DVD

**Printed publications for sale at:**

In Control Support Centre, Carillon House  
 Chapel Lane, Wythall, B47 6JX  
 or [www.in-control.org.uk/shop](http://www.in-control.org.uk/shop)

**The Essential Family Guide: how to help your family member be in control**, Caroline Tomlinson

**Keys to Citizenship: a guide to getting good support for people with learning disabilities**, Simon Duffy

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#### **About the In Control and Me project**

A three-year project to produce accessible information for everyone who wants to direct their own support, funded by the National Lottery through the BIG Lottery Fund. You can find out more at [www.mencap.org.uk/incontrol](http://www.mencap.org.uk/incontrol) or [www.in-control.org.uk/icandme](http://www.in-control.org.uk/icandme)