

# Self-directed support

## Personal health budgets

Thousands of people already have personal budgets for social care.

Now, some people are getting personal budgets for their health care.

This fact sheet tells you about personal health budgets.



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## The basic facts

Personal budgets for social care have been around for some time.

Direct payments started in 1996. The Government approved personal budgets and individual budgets as a new way of organising social care in 2007.

### The majority of people with personal budgets say:

- their lives have improved
- they have more control over their support.

Until recently, people who got their support from the NHS did not have the same choice. But things are changing. In 2009, the Department of Health introduced personal health budgets.

In Control has produced a number of fact sheets about personal budgets in social care. You can find them at:

[www.in-control.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.in-control.org.uk/factsheets)

## More information about personal health budgets

### A definition: what a personal health budget is

In Control says a personal health budget is an allocation of resources made to a person with an established health need (or an immediate representative).

### Someone with a personal health budget must:

- know much money they have in that budget
- be able to spend the money in ways and at times that make sense to them
- agree the outcomes that must be achieved with the money.

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**The budget must:**

- be used in ways that help someone achieve predefined outcomes
- be targeted towards people with specifically defined needs.

**A short way of putting all that is:**

- you know how much money you can have to deal with your health problems
- you can spend the money in ways that suit you
- you have a plan that says what you expect the result to be.

**What you can spend a personal health budget on**

You know how much you have to spend and you can decide how to spend it.

You may want to pay for therapies or medical equipment. You may want to pay for personal care. You can choose who comes into your home and when you need your care and support.

We don't know exactly how people will use their budgets because it's still early days.

**But we do know what you **can't** spend it on:**

- gambling
- paying off debts
- alcohol
- tobacco
- anything illegal
- emergency care or care you normally get from a GP.

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### Planning

You need a good plan. If your needs change, you should be able to agree a new care and support plan and a change in your budget.

#### Someone from the Primary Care Trust has to agree:

- how you intend to spend the money
- who holds and manages your budget.

### There are three main ways of holding and managing the budget

#### 1. Notional budget:

- No money changes hands.
- You find out how much money is in your budget and talk to a doctor, care manager or nominated person about how to spend the money.

#### 2. Real budget held by a third party:

- Money is held by an organisation or a trust on your behalf.
- You make a support plan. This says how you (and the people who support you) think your budget should be spent.

#### 3. Direct payment. Available in some Department of Health pilot sites in 2010:

- You hold the budget yourself.
- Whatever you need is paid for directly from your budget including personal care services.
- You can employ your own personal assistants.
- You need to show how you are spending your budget.

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## What's happening

People are enthusiastic about personal health budgets because they bring decision-making closer to the individual.

Twenty-five primary care trusts are working with In Control alongside individuals, families, providers and commissioners to find out how personal health budgets could work best. You can find out who is taking part in the In Control Health Programme – Staying in Control – at the end of this fact sheet.

The Department of Health is also running a pilot for personal health budgets that ends in 2012.

## An example

Self-Direction in Health is new and there are only a handful of examples of how people and families are using a personal health budget.

The real-life story below shows how a personal health budget can improve people's lives. You can find more real-life stories at [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk). Staying in Control is gathering video stories to share.

### Mary

As someone who enjoys spending time with her family (who live some distance from her), Mary found a new way to meet her complex health needs. She previously had personal assistants funded using continuing healthcare money, provided through a nursing agency. This arrangement did not work well because it meant she couldn't travel to visit her family as the personal assistants were not allowed to work outside the county in which she lived.

A personal health budget allows Mary to use a third party to employ her personal assistants. This arrangement means that she is able to travel to see her family and stay overnight if she wants to. She is also able to use her personal assistants in a much more flexible way and choose who comes to support her and when.

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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)

## Information about personal health budgets

Personal health budgets – first steps:

[www.dh.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dh.gov.uk/publications)

Understanding personal health budgets: introductory information for people who want to know about personal health budgets: [www.dh.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dh.gov.uk/publications)

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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)

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