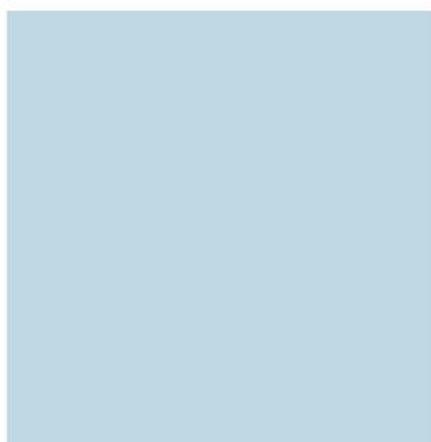
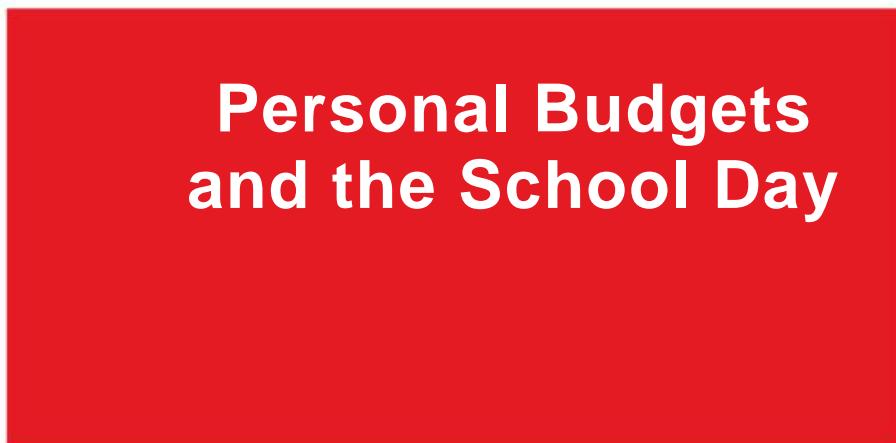
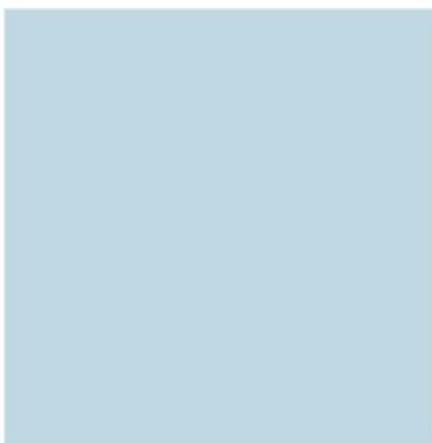


Support and Aspiration

Introducing Personal Budgets



Support and Aspiration, Introducing Personal Budgets Personal Budgets and the School Day

This briefing focuses on how personal budgets can play a part in supporting a child or young person during the school day. It provides examples to illustrate how personal budgets can work, and the benefits they can bring, as a basis for people to explore how personal budgets can be used to support other children and young people.

Written in partnership with NASEN, this paper highlights specific issues with regard to the introduction of personal budgets as part of the wider SEND reforms. It has been produced to complement the Support and Aspiration, Introducing personal Budgets ¹implementation guidance co-written by In Control and SQW with the support of the Department for Education

What is a personal budget?

The draft SEN Code of Practice defines a personal budget as an amount of money identified by the local authority to deliver parts of the provision set out in an Education Health and Care plan (EHC). Families will be able to request a personal budget as part of the planning process, i.e. when a local authority is drawing up an EHC plan or at the annual review.

A family can decide how they want it to be managed:

- As a direct payment. The funding coming direct to the family who will manage it to deliver support as set out in the EHC plan.
- As an 'organised budget' where the local authority manages the budget for the family.
- By a provider (for example a school or voluntary service).
- Or as a mix of the three options above.

A personal budget can include funding from education, health and social care. In education, a personal budget will be available where support provided by the school/college (including any special educational provision as set out in the local offer) cannot meet the student's support needs. The funding for this element of the personal budget will come from the local authority's 'high needs block'.

Some children and young people may also have a personal budget that includes funding from social care and/or for health services; in these cases it will be possible to bring the funding together to use as a single budget focused on holistic and child/family centred support to meet needs and outcomes.

Schools or colleges can choose to contribute some of their own budget to a child or young person's personal budget.

¹ Support and Aspiration, introducing personal budgets, Craston, M and Crosby, N. In Control and SQW, October 2013 <http://www.in-control.org.uk/what-we-do/children-and-young-people/publications/childrens-programme-publications/support-and-aspiration-introducing-personal-budgets.aspx>

The Pathfinder programme has highlighted the potential for personal budgets to deliver positive outcomes by helping to support pupils and students at school or college – their experience has highlighted that:

- Improving educational attainment, inclusion and participation in learning activities and the wider life of the school is not only down to personalising support and learning; it is down to whole school approaches, increased awareness and understanding of the challenges some pupils and students have and a ‘welcoming’ attitude to pupils and students with diverse abilities and skills.
- A person centred approach to planning support focuses on the many different ways a pupil or student may be supported to participate, achieve and enjoy life at school or college, which may include the use of personalised funding:
 - Personal budgets more widely have offered families a much greater opportunity to get more involved in how their son or daughter is supported.
 - Discussions between families and schools about a possible personal budget (as noted on the SEND Pathfinder pages) can yield positive developments for all parties; families have become much more aware of daily life for their son or daughter at school and schools have become far more aware of the daily life of the child/young person and family.
- It is important to be clear upfront about any possible personal budget; all parties need to know what may be available so that it can be used flexibly and creatively when it comes to putting the detail in to the plan.
 - Schools and colleges are well placed to manage a personal SEN budget for a pupil or student; there are examples of this already including where a school is managing a jointly funded personal budget from education and social care as a holistic support package for a family.

An example

A head teacher and parent reflect on the discussion about personal SEN budgets at a mainstream school in West Sussex; this discussion was part of the work of the West Sussex SEND Pathfinder trialling personal SEN budgets, the discussion is ongoing about the use of small personal SEN budget focused on ‘improving communication’.

Reflections from the head teacher

We worked closely with four families to try out ideas around personal budgets.

The initial debate was challenging because it gave us an active forum to discuss deep issues about how we plan for the whole of a young person’s experience in school and at the boundaries between home and school. When we looked at what might be improved using a personal budget it made us think about what we do with the core provision. I believe that this has helped us to improve the school’s practice for all of our students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Reflections from a parent

Doing our best to meet Jim and Peter's needs holistically, (physically, socially, emotionally and educationally) has been challenging as daily life sometimes does not allow us to focus on the extra things that are truly important in life for now and the future.

The personal budget for us has helped tremendously for our young men. We have twin 16 year olds. Finding creative solutions has been exciting and we've felt for the first time supported in finding solutions. I had someone with me making the plan that did not focus on needs alone.

Regarding school I always found it challenging when going into Annual Review meetings. I was 'defensive' but also ready to 'challenge'.

Sitting at a table having open and honest conversations, discussing things also from the school's perspective have allowed personalisation for our young men with mutual respect. Initially the school were concerned at how much money it would cost them. Surprisingly, it is mostly about good practice and getting closer to inclusion by simple strategies and changing the way young people/ children with learning difficulties and disabilities are viewed in the mainstream setting.

Jim and Peter's last Annual Review meetings were the best I had experienced in nearly 5 years at school. I found I was listened to and respected. This calmed me giving the result of an amicable and easier meeting.

These reflections come from people involved a pathfinder activity which set out to support four young people and their families and a mainstream school. Other pathfinder examples of where personal budgets have added to what is being offered through a school include:

- An iPad for a young girl which is focused on improving communication skills.
- Personal budgets being used as direct payments to support young people to access/trial different work experience opportunities or activities.
- A school releasing some funding enabling a family to employ a joined up support team (including support at school) for a young woman with complex health support needs.
- A school managing a joint funded personal budget delivering a continuity of support between school and home including over the school holidays.

Common questions about personal budgets and education

Schools and colleges are commissioned / receive funding to provide an identified level of additional support to pupils and students with additional learning support needs / identified learning difficulties.....where do personal SEN budgets fit?

Personal budgets are made available in addition to the support the school or college provides as part of the local offer. Personal budgets can be made available by a school or college if, through a person centred planning approach it is clear that this may be the best way to meet identified needs and outcomes.

Families can ask to take all or part of a personal budget as a direct payment....how would this work when this then funds support to a pupil or student whilst attending school or college?

The school or college must agree with plans to support a child or young person through the use of a direct payment where it is used to for equipment or a service that will be used or delivered on their premises.

Will every child or young person with an EHC Plan have a personal SEN budget? And if so won't this take funding away from schools....and make things even more confusing for families and others?

No, not every child or young person with an EHC Plan will have a personal budget; firstly personal budgets are an option for families and secondly the scope of personal budgets will reflect local commissioning arrangements and will not normally be used for services that a school or college provides, from its own budget, as part of the local offer. In practice this means that parents will need to be made aware that the scope for a personal budget will differ depending on school placement. It may be that the setting already provides the specialist provision required and in such a case a personal budget would not be available. . .

What would happen if the family have a personal SEN budget but they and the school can't agree on the best way to use it?

How a personal budget will be used to meet support needs and outcomes and how a personal budget will be managed will be part of drawing up an EHC plan. An EHC plan can only go 'live' when all parties agree.

Summary / Conclusion

- THE EHC plan will set out how a personal budget is going to be used to deliver support and outcomes.
- A school or college can release funding from its own budget and contribute to a personal budget if it chooses to.
- Personal budgets are allocated individually to children and young people where their needs cannot be met by the support the school normally provided by the school (as set out in the local offer and including any specialist support it provides).
- The education element of a personal budget will be allocated from the local authorities 'high needs block' of funding.
- The use of personal budgets should be informed by a person centred approach to planning hence ensuring that any personal budget is used in the most appropriate and efficient way.
- The whole approach needs to be simple, child and young person centred and to be focused on improving outcomes.

The personal budget available for a child or young person is a simple addition to the existing bank of opportunities, approaches and skills which feed in to the EHC plan. The scope of personal budget will vary depending on local commissioning decisions and what schools/colleges normally provide as part of the local offer. This means that the inclusion of education funding in a personal budget will most commonly be focused on supporting those children and young people with the most complex learning support needs.

Further sources of information and support

www.sendpathfinder.co.uk – website managed by Mott Macdonald as part of their work as support partner for the SEND Pathfinder programme.

SQW IB Pilot Programme Scoping and Evaluation reports –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individual-budgets-for-families-with-disabled-children-scoping-study>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individual-budgets-for-families-with-disabled-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-extended-individual-budget-pilot-programme-for-families-with-disabled-children-the-extended-packages>

SQW - <http://www.sqw.co.uk/services/personalisation>

Council for Disabled Children - <http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/our-partners-resources/personalisation-resources>: a library of resources that offers examples, experience and information about work underway across the country.

In Control - www.in-control.org.uk/children web pages hosted by In Control sharing resources, reports and stories of work to introduce and roll out personal budgets to children, young people and families, along with links to wider work across all ages and health services.