

# TOP TIPS

**A workbook to help me  
plan my support.**

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## What this booklet is for

Some people decide their own route through life – make their plan without help.

But **some people need support** to do this. Family members, friends, advocates and paid workers can **help people get the support and services they need** to:

- \* **live the life they want**
- \* **be in control of their support.**

In this booklet there are **tips on how you can support people to plan.**

The booklet follows the same route as  
In the Driving Seat, the planning booklet.

**In the Driving Seat** has two parts - **Deciding Where To Go** and **Getting There**. This booklet has the same parts. In this booklet you can get more detail, **more ideas** and **some examples**.

## **About this guide**

This guide was written by Helen Sanderson and Suzanne McStravick and edited by Carl Poll for in Control publications.

Some of the information in this guide comes from Simon Duffy's book, Keys to Citizenship.

## **in Control publications**

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Published in 2007 by in Control Publications

in Control Publications, PO Box 45377,  
London SE14 5JU

Distributed by in Control Publications

Design and production by know what I mean  
Printed by Moor Print

A catalogue record for this book is available from the  
British Library

ISBN: 978-0-9554119-3-9

For more information visit the in Control website at  
[www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

## **Feedback**

We really want to know what you think about this guide.  
Please email comments and suggestions to:

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# Part 1

## Deciding where to go

Top tips for helping  
people do the first part  
of their plan.



## 1 What money can the person get for their support?

Planning for anything in life is easiest if we know how much we've got to spend.

In support planning, too, you can make a better plan if you know how much you have to spend.

That's why in Control has worked with councils to make a resource allocation system – a way of people knowing up-front how much money for support they are likely to get.

Your own council will tell you what their system is. When you know how much the person is likely to get, you can start planning.

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## 2 Who can help someone make important decisions? The Decision-Making Agreement

Some people may need help in making decisions. They should have a Decision-Making Agreement which makes clear who is helping them and what those people are helping with. Someone might have different representatives to help with different things.

The person should agree the Decision-Making Agreement. But if they can't, then they need a lead representative – an Agent – to say the Agreement is ok. The Agent takes on the legal responsibility of the contract for the person's self-directed support.

### An Agent:

- \* can't be an employee who is also paid to provide the person's support
- \* is a fit person – is trustworthy
- \* won't use their position to abuse the person they're helping in any way
- \* always does their very best to understand the person's interests and works to do the best thing for the person
- \* is likely to be around for a good few years.

## Here is an example of a Decision-Making Agreement:

Important decisions in my life	How I must be involved	Who makes the final decision
Setting my household budget and claiming benefits	I want my mum to talk to me about my benefits and my budget when it is set up – my supporters will need to know from my mum what is in the budget.	Mum
Buying my food at the shops	One of my supporters should help me to make a shopping list before we go – at the shops I will pick and choose everything.	Me
Managing my support funding	I want my mum to talk to me about my support funding and help me understand how it is used.	Mum
Collecting my benefits	I will collect my own benefits and put them in the bank and handle my money in accordance with the budget – with reminders from my supporters about what money I have available.	Me
Recruitment of new staff	All staff will be recruited to a person specification drawn up with me. I will meet all staff before appointment and nobody will be employed I do not like. My team leader will also be given the chance to meet possible new recruits.	Mum

## 3 Who can help someone put the plan together? Finding the right people

**Some people will need help to plan.**

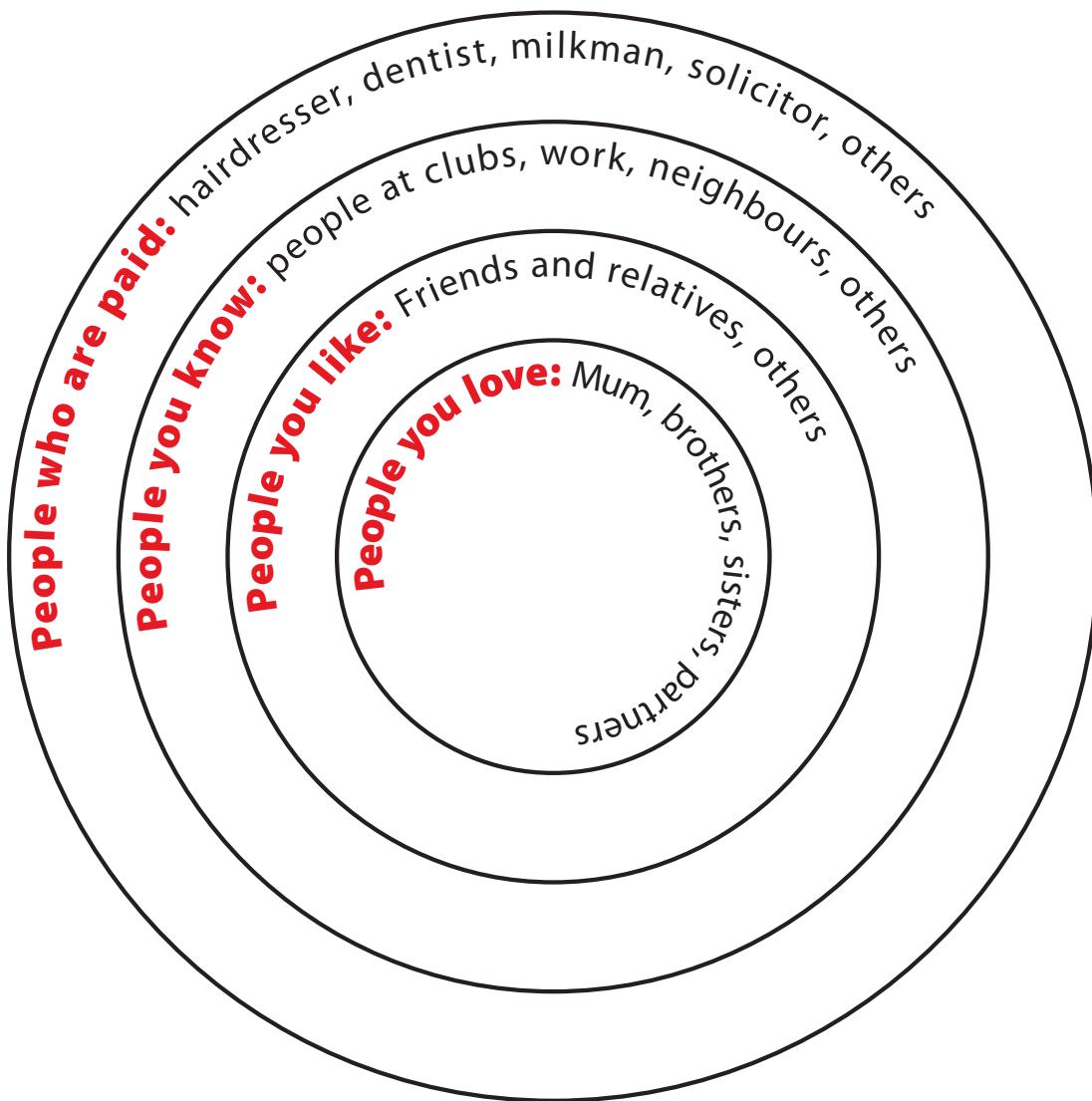
**People who help with the plan should be those who:**

- \* know and understand the person well
- \* have love and respect for the person
- \* can talk about their past or what is in their life now
- \* know what they like and don't like about their life – anything they would like to change
- \* can help the person think about their future – what they would like to happen so they get the life they want.

## Relationship circles

Use the relationship circles to work out all the people in the person's life.

Write the names of the people in the different circles. You should also think about people who have a valuable contribution to make in the person's life.



**Asking these questions may give you an idea of how close these people really are:**

- \* How long have you known the person?
- \* How much time do you spend together?
- \* When did you last have fun together?
- \* What do you like, admire or respect about the person?

After you have thought about the important people in the person's life list those who would be helpful and how they can be contacted.

Help the person to fill in the table on page 6 of **Deciding where to go**.

## 4 What's working in the person's life now? What's not working?

When we make a plan it is often because we want something in our lives to change.

Here are some examples for Janet.

Things that work -- create interest, enthusiasm, motivation	Things that don't work – create boredom, upset, frustration
Anything to do with drama – being able to act and perform in front of others	Running out of money at the end of the week for the things that are important to me
Being able to go to the pool and swim like a dolphin	Having to come home after a nice day and do housework
Being able to spend time with my family and still have time for myself	Having to get support from people I don't know or trust

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## 5 Who is the person? What are the great things about them, their skills and gifts?

A good place to start gathering this information is from the **person's history**.

**Focus on the person** – not their inabilities or any illness. This makes it easier to get to know them and their history.

**Life history includes** achievements, interests, hobbies, holidays and life events. It includes **anything that has been of importance to the person** – including negative experiences. The **more information** the person collects, **the better others can understand** what is important to the person and why.

**A person's life history and personal information comes from all the different stages of their life:**

- \* childhood – birth place, home life, parents/grandparents, brothers/sisters
- \* adolescence – school, favourite subjects, friends, sports/hobbies
- \* young adulthood – further education, jobs, relationships, family, clubs
- \* middle age – grandchildren, work, family role
- \* later years – life achievements, travel
- \* favourite things – food, clothes, pets
- \* other information – religion, skills, awards.



You can help the person gather this information in photos, letters, tickets, mementos and other items.

People sometimes bring up painful or upsetting memories. Don't ignore these. They are an important part of someone's experience. Listen to the person and allow them to express their emotions.

## 6 What would be a great day for the person? Thinking of things without saying 'But...'

One way of getting into the plan is to think about a single day and what makes it enjoyable.

Start by finding out which is the best day of the week. Then ask questions about what makes this a good day. What do you have for breakfast? When do you leave for work? Who do you spend time with? How do you feel at the end of the day? Then help the person think if there are any other things that they would like to add to this day that would make it even better or perfect.

**Here is Janet's example of what a great day would be:**

Saturday would be the best day of the week because I could start the day with a lie-in. I don't have to do any household chores.

I would just enjoy the day instead of having to worry about the washing and ironing.

I would take my time to get ready for the day and dress up in comfy but fashionable clothes. Maybe put a bit of make-up on.

Then I'd head into town and have brunch before I do some shopping.

After I have shopped till I drop I would come home and get a quick bite to eat before going out to the pub.

## 7 What would be an awful day for the person?

Finding out what makes a good day can provide really useful planning information – so can finding out what makes an awful day.

- \* Start by finding out about the worst day of the week.
- \* Ask plenty of questions to find out what makes it a bad day.
- \* What would be the things which would make it even worse?

**Here is Janet's example of an awful day:**

Monday would be my worst day as this means no more lie-ins for 5 days. A bad start to my day would be sleeping in and then having to rush round getting ready and doing all my cleaning after a lazy weekend - then getting to work.

I like work but sometimes things make it less enjoyable like when the computer breaks down or other people are in a bad mood. That makes me uncomfortable. It would be awful to finish work and for my bus to be late so I have to stay longer than I need to.

Getting home and finding that no one could go to the gym or the pool with me to help me unwind would make me really cross and frustrated and probably put me in a mood for the rest of the night.

## 8 What would be the best future ever?

You've helped the person to think about **best** and **worst** days. Next help them to express desires and dreams for the future – to make a picture of the best future ever.

This should be a picture of the experiences the person wants to have in their life in terms of a home, a job, friends, a social life, and so on.

You can build on what you have heard about what a great day would look like – and what opportunities exist to make this happen – and what an awful day would be like – and how this can be prevented.



### Here is Janet's example:

In my best future ever I would have my own home - a safe place where I have all my favourite things around me.

I would live close to my family and not too far from town so I could go shopping and go to my favourite pub.

I would like to have time and support to do all my housework in the morning - except at the weekends when I would like to be out enjoying myself and doing the things that make me happiest. In my best future ever I'd have times arranged in advance that I could go to the gym and the swimming pool. I would never be let down because there was no one to take me.



## 9 What is most important to the person? Making priorities

Here is an idea you can use to think about what is really important.

People, places and activities that are **important** to the person – and **not**.

Sometimes things that are most important to us are linked to people we know, places we go and activities we do.

People contributing to the plan should think about the people, places and activities that bring enjoyment and fulfilment to the person's life.

Then they think of the people, places and activities that create boredom or frustration for the person.

Places the person likes to go	People the person likes	Activities the person likes
Places the person doesn't like to go	People the person doesn't like	Activities the person doesn't like

## 10 How can people support the person well?

This section needs to have detailed information about what others need to know to support the person well.



### What can you tell people in 2 minutes?

Imagine you have an emergency and you have to suddenly leave the person.

Someone who will support the person has just arrived and you have 2 minutes to give them advice, suggestions or tips about how to support the person.

### Routines and rituals

If the person has very special routines or rituals, look at these in detail.

Be as exact as possible and put them in order of importance to the person.

Think about some of these routines and there may be others:

- \* morning routine
- \* work routine
- \* evening routine
- \* celebration routines
- \* holiday routines
- \* weekend routines

### Interests and hobbies

It's clear that people need support to get the things they really need. But it's just as important that people get support to pursue interests and hobbies, because these are part of well-being and a fulfilling life.

It's easy for interests to slip off the agenda without anyone noticing.

So, record things the person enjoys doing now or has enjoyed in the past. Think about which of these things are still important to them – even if no one is sure how to make them happen.



## 11 How can we communicate? Understanding more than words

Some people find it difficult to use speech or to understand what is said to them. They rely on non-verbal communication – body language, ways of behaving, sounds – to express their views.

This section is designed mainly to use where people don't use words to communicate. Filling in the charts on page 12 of **In the Driving Seat** can help us get to a better understanding of someone's behaviour – and help **us** to communicate better.

### How people can communicate with me

At this time or in this situation...	when you want me to know this or do this...	you do this and/or say this...

**I can write down clear information so people can help me in the right way.**

At this time or in this situation...	when you want me to know this or do this...	you do this and/or say this...

## 12 How do we keep people healthy and safe?

When the plan is being written you need to think about any possible **significant** risks. Don't forget that it's impossible to live a life without risk. If someone's dream is to go horse riding, then saying the person shouldn't do it because they might fall off, means **we** fall at the first planning hurdle! The job is to figure out how falling off can be made less likely.

**Use these 7 steps to work out what to do about those risks.**

### 1. Identify risks

Be specific about anything harmful that you think might feasibly happen. Pay special attention to any problems that have happened before.

## 2. Imagine responses

Figure out what you could do to reduce or remove the risk of it happening. At this stage think of as many responses as you can. Be imaginative!

## 3. Evaluate options

Think through the results of any feasible response to check whether it does actually reduce risk. Then decide on the best overall response to the risk.

## 4. Consult

Where possible discuss it with all the people who are directly involved. Make sure that you listen carefully to everyone's point of view.

## 5. Act.

Carry out the actions. (You will need to keep explaining to people why you are doing what you are doing.)

## 6. Make a record

If an issue is likely to carry on for some time, then it is important to make a record of the action in either the Support Plan, or some other easily available document.

## 7. Review

You must regularly review any policies that are in place to ensure that (a) they are necessary and (b) they are effective.

### Here is Janet's example:

To keep me healthy and safe, you need to know this...	and do this...
<p>1. I have epilepsy and occasionally have grand mal seizures. My epilepsy is well controlled with medication. I must take it three times everyday. I have warnings (a ringing sound in my ear) if I am going to have a seizure.</p>	<p><b>1(a)</b> Remind me to collect my prescription for the chemist on the 2nd of each month.</p> <p><b>1(b)</b> When I tell you I hear ringing in my ears take me to a safe place to sit down and protect my head with cushions or something soft.</p> <p><b>1(c)</b> When I go to the pool remember to tell the pool attendant that I have epilepsy just in case I need assistance.</p>



## Part 2

# Deciding how to get there

**Top Tips for helping  
people do the second  
part of their plan.**

## 1 Where does the person want to live?

**When you're supporting the person to think about where they want to live:**

Do	Don't
Do support the person to think about whether they want to live with other people. Would they benefit financially or socially from sharing their home with others?	Don't assume all disabled people want to live together. Sometimes it is even important to some people that they don't live with another disabled person.
Do think about what kind of house would be suitable. How many rooms are needed? Will the person have many visitors or guests? Will the house need to be accessible for someone in a wheelchair?	Don't assume adaptations can't be made to properties. Would their existing home form a good base? Could they buy it or take it over from their parents?
Do help the person to choose who they want to live with. If they do want to live with other people, how are they going to be involved in selecting their housemates?	Don't assume people won't want to live with someone with a learning difficulty. Have they got a friend, boyfriend or girlfriend they would like to share their house with?  Remember people are allowed to make decisions that they might come to regret – as long as they can split up and move on (as anyone else would do).
Do enable the person to choose where they want to live. Is there a neighbourhood they already like and are familiar with? How will they be involved in house-hunting?	Don't assume that they must live close to other disabled people or existing services. Do they want to link up with any particular support organisation?
Do support the person to think about their financial situation. Is it important that they build up any capital in the form of property or that they spend cash that would otherwise affect their benefits?	Don't assume that there is no value in owning property. Home ownership would give them additional opportunities in the future and is a relatively safe way of receiving assets from another family member.
Do think about flexibility. How likely is it that this will be a long-term home or does the person expect to move again quite soon?	Don't assume people will always want to live in the same place forever – most people don't.
Do look at the neighbourhood. What kinds of things will the person be doing with their life? Who or what will they be visiting regularly? Are there likely to be any problems with neighbours?	Don't assume there's one kind of right environment for disabled people: Some people like quiet areas, some people like the bustle of the town. What would be right for the person?

# Housing choices

Then talk about what is possible.

## Four of the main ways that the person can get a home are:

- \* renting from the public-voluntary sector
- \* renting in the private market
- \* buying your own home
- \* staying in your family home.

In the following table you will find pros and cons covering the main ways of getting a home

### Some more detail:

Type of Housing	Pros	Cons
<b>Council Housing</b>	Affordable. Eligible for Housing Benefit. Secure tenancy. Right to buy. Maintenance costs low.	Limited choice and control over locations or house types. Long waiting lists for more desirable areas or properties. Can be difficult to move.
<b>Housing Association</b>	Affordable. Eligible for Housing Benefit. Secure tenancy. More likely to be 'barrier free'. May specialise in housing for people with particular needs. Maintenance costs low.	Limited locations. Limited choice. Limited house types. Long waiting lists for more desirable areas. Can be difficult to move. May have a restrictive allocation policy.
<b>Private rented</b>	Choice. Some Housing Benefit. Can be quick. Flexible, easy to move.	Not secure. Can be expensive. Tenancy terms generally limit control.
<b>Owning/buying</b>	Choice. Control. Financial asset. Income Support Mortgage Interest (ISMI).	Initial costs – deposit, fees. Maintenance costs.
<b>Shared ownership</b>	Financial asset. Housing Benefit (if local authority/housing association).	Limited choice. Maintenance costs. Less control than outright ownership.

Type of Housing	Pros	Cons
<b>Family buying to let</b>	Choice. Control. Financial asset. Housing Benefit.	Initial capital outlay or capital tied up. Maintenance costs. More limited sense of independence.
<b>Trust owning and/or letting</b>	Choice. Control. Financial asset. Housing Benefit if applicable. Can be very secure.	Initial capital outlay or capital tied up. Maintenance costs. More limited sense of independence. Management dependent on quality of Trustees.

### If you want more information and advice you could talk to:

- \* housing officers of the Local Authority and any local Housing Associations
- \* local representatives of national housing organisations like the Housing Corporation
- \* advocacy or advice organisations like the Disabled Persons Housing Service or Housing Options
- \* estate agents and letting agents.

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## 2 How will the person spend their time?

There's an example of a timetable below. It sets out the amount of paid support Janet needs at different times of the day and the kinds of things she needs help with. When Janet is not getting paid support she is getting unpaid support from her mother or father.

Day	Morning (8am to 1pm)	Afternoon (1pm to 6pm)	Evening (6pm to 11pm)
<b>Monday</b>	Get up and have breakfast. Do some ironing. Do some clothes washing. Other housework. Have lunch.	Go out to work. Come home and have tea.	Go out to gym.
<b>Paid hours</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

Day	Morning (8am to 1pm)	Afternoon (1pm to 6pm)	Evening (6pm to 11pm)
<b>Tuesday</b>	Get up and have breakfast. Do some ironing. Do some clothes washing. Other housework. Have lunch.	Go to theatre rehearsals. Have tea out.	Acting in the evening. Out with friends after show.
<b>Paid hours</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Get up and have breakfast. Go out and do weekly food shopping.	Go out to work. Come home and have tea.	Go out to Time Capsule and enjoy jacuzzi facilities.
<b>Paid hours</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	Get up and have breakfast. Go to activities at the Headway Group. Have lunch with group.	Some more classes and work at Headway Group. Go home and do some tidying and housework. Have tea.	Go out to theatre. Out with friends after show.
<b>Paid hours</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Friday</b>	Get up and have breakfast. Do some ironing. Do some clothes washing. Other housework Have lunch.	Go out to work. Come home and have tea.	Go out to the pub with friends.
<b>Paid hours</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	A long lie-in in bed. Go into town for lunch.	Go shopping for clothes. Come home for tea.	Dad comes and picks me up to go to his place for the evening. Go out to the pub with dad.
<b>Paid hours</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	A long lie-in in bed. Get up and have brunch with dad.	Go out to play rehearsals.	A quiet evening at home.
<b>Paid hours</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>



## Tips for filling in the timetable

- \* Don't underestimate how much the person can do for themselves. It can undermine their development if they rely too much on other people to do things for them.
- \* Think carefully about whether they really need other people around to keep them safe or not. Many plans have too much support. We don't want people to be at risk of harm because they don't have enough support. But, also, we don't want to end up with supporters hanging around doing nothing if there is no real danger of anything bad happening.
- \* Work out what effect different levels of support will have on benefits and entitlement to Independent Living Fund (ILF). In some situations it may pay to err on the higher side, in other situations it may pay you to err on the more modest side. You may need help from a benefits expert or an expert in the ILF to work this out.

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## 3 Support – who will support the person?

Talk through the four very different types of support that disabled people can use to get on with their lives.

### Specialist support providers

Specialist support providers are services specially designed to serve disabled people. There is a wide range of these services, but they share a common purpose in having been set up to offer support to disabled people and must therefore serve several different individuals.

### Individual support services

These are support services that are developed to serve an individual. They are designed for and delivered to one individual and, ideally, that individual controls them.

### Family and friends

This is the support that is provided from love – by friends and family. It is support for a particular individual from the people who value them.

### Natural support

This is the support that occurs naturally within the community. It is not special help for disabled people but is support that is available to anyone taking part in the community.

**These different types of support can all be valuable.  
There are some pros and cons for each type of support:**

	Pros	Cons
<b>Specialist support providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The person can get the chance to meet other disabled people.</li> <li>* The person has no personal responsibility for the service.</li> <li>* The support provider may have some useful expertise.</li> <li>* The support provider will be regulated by Social Services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* It marks the person out as being different from other people.</li> <li>* Their needs may be hard to meet when there are lots of people getting help at the same time.</li> <li>* They will have less control over the service and who is recruited.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual support services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The person gets the maximum possible control over their support – who supports them, when, where and how.</li> <li>* They can meet new people through their supporter. It is easier to change things over time.</li> <li>* It is easier to mix paid and unpaid supports.</li> <li>* They may have more flexibility about how their support money is spent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Others may think that the supporter is in charge of the person.</li> <li>* Their supporter can cut them off from other citizens.</li> <li>* They are responsible for controlling and changing the service.</li> <li>* They are likely to be accountable to Social Services and others for their actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Family and friends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The people supporting the person are people they love and trust.</li> <li>* Their family will keep them connected to other family members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* It is hard to control when someone gets this kind of support without using guilt.</li> <li>* It is hard to control how the people they love support them.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* They are treated just like everybody else around.</li> <li>* They are seen to be present for their own sake.</li> <li>* People supporting them are expert in doing their particular job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The support ends when their involvement ends.</li> <li>* There may need to be adaptations for them to join in.</li> <li>* They may have to get people supporting them in the community to learn about their special needs.</li> </ul>



## The main kinds of support services

Here are the different types of support service. See if any options fit with what the person wants and needs. Remember that many services are only offered to groups. There's a section coming up later on how to organise individual support.

**Adult Placement Services** Some people want to live with a family even if their own family can no longer support them. So Adult Placement Services have been set up to link people into family homes and then provide the family with some ongoing additional support.

**Resource centres** Day Centres or resource centres provide a continuation of school-time support. The quality and nature of the support available varies enormously from place to place, but it is hard for these services to be very individualised when they typically have to provide support to many different people at the same time.

**Community networks** KeyRing, one particular organisation, has pioneered the development of networks of people with learning difficulties. Each person has their own ordinary place to live but is linked together with other members and supported by a Community Living Volunteer. This service is very successful at offering people their own place combined with support 'around the corner', mutual support and community connections.

**Domiciliary services** Local Authorities and service providers tend to offer home help services where workers go into someone's home to provide limited support services. Although these services vary from locality to locality they tend to be more focused on supporting older people and doing things for people in their own homes.

**Local authority hostels** In addition to Adult Training Centres the main service that Local Authorities tend to provide directly is Hostels. As their name suggests these are often large buildings in which many people live. Support is usually provided but the amount of support that can be offered within a Hostel can be limited.

**Long stay hospitals** There are still a few hospitals left, although a number have been renamed Residential Campuses. Government policy since the 1970s has been to close hospitals following the discovery of serious human rights abuses and research which has consistently shown that hospitals do not offer good support to people with learning difficulties.

**Registered care homes** This is the most common support option for people with learning difficulties and it means that someone's home and support are controlled by an organisation and that they will live with a number of other people they haven't chosen to live with. Homes are registered and monitored by national care standards organisations but many people find such homes far from 'home-like'. The support is normally shared in ways that often limit what the person can do.

**Registered nursing homes** These are similar to Registered Care Homes, except that nurses must give some of the support and the rules that govern them are slightly different. There are Registered Nursing Homes for the elderly that take in some people with learning difficulties although these homes seem to have little to offer them. There are also specialist nursing homes for people with learning difficulties that take people who other services have found too challenging.

**Residential respite services** Respite services are generally support services for families to give them a break from supporting their children or adult sons or daughters. In general these services offer people the chance to stay for a short period in a building along with a number of other disabled people. Although these services are often highly valued by people with few choices, those in control of their resources often do much more imaginative things for respite.

**Residential schools** Some children and young adults end up getting support in residential schools. These schools have grown up because some people get excluded both from mainstream schools and from their local special schools.

**Sheltered communities or village communities** There are a number of organisations that have set up Village Communities in the countryside. Many of these communities were developed as a progressive alternative to mental handicap hospitals in the post-war years and they foster an ethos that is less institutional than a hospital within a country village setting.

**Sheltered workshops** A Sheltered Workshop is a working environment that is mainly for disabled people. Some people really value these work places, although workshops that cater only for people with learning difficulties sometimes offer only the most boring or anti-social forms of work.

**Social business** Some disabled people have set up their own businesses or co-operative efforts and operate within the commercial world (sometimes with a subsidy). Some people with learning difficulties, for example Swindon People First, have even entered the care business.

**Supported employment** Some organisations support people to take up ordinary jobs while helping the employer to provide support on the job (and back-up support). This service has proved successful even with people with very significant disabilities and is largely constrained by the poverty trap created for many people by the existing benefits system.

**Supported living services** A few support providers will only provide support to people living in their own homes. Registered Care Homes have also started to provide some support to people in their own homes. Often these services are provided to people with more significant disabilities or complex behaviour because the provision can be individualised and doesn't put people into complicated group settings.

**Therapists and other specialists** There are a number of specialists who offer advice, therapy or other one-off services to people with learning difficulties. They include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>psychiatrists</b></li> <li>* <b>speech and language therapists</b></li> <li>* <b>art, drama or music therapists</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>psychologists</b></li> <li>* <b>psychiatric and community nurses</b></li> <li>* <b>counsellors.</b></li> </ul>
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There are many skilled people working in these roles. There can be advantages in using their expertise.



## Finding out more

Start by talking to the person about how much they want to find out about different providers.

### There are lots of ways to find out about local service providers:

**Through the local authority** However, do not just ask the person's social worker. Ask for a directory of local services and the list of authorised service providers. (Someone's social worker may themselves be unaware of all the options available.)

**Through a local advocacy service** If there is a local advocacy service in the area, ask them who the local service providers are. They will not only know many of the providers, they may also be willing to tell the person something about their reputations.

**Ask other disabled people** and their families People who have had good or bad experiences of different services are good sources of advice and information.

**Use the Yellow Pages or the Internet** Information about local services may also be available by standard methods of sharing information.

You have thought about the services that are available. Now support the person to think about who is already in their life and may be able to offer paid or unpaid support.

### Here is an example from Janet's plan:

Who do you know who will support you?	When will they support you?	What will they support you to do?	Will they get paid to support you?
Mum	When I go to the hairdressers	Mum will support me to get to my appointments on time, help me pay and make sure I get home safely.	No
Anne (my friend)	Comes round on a Sunday night	We will go and get a take-away and watch TV.	No
Nicola	Wednesday before tea for 2 hours	Nicola helps me sort out my bills, helps me budget my money and sorts out any benefit queries I have.	Yes
James	Flexible hours over the week but no more than 20 hours	James will help me with the general day-to-day things around the house and will help me get to the places I need to be each day.	Yes

## 3 Support – what kind of person?

### Now you've supported the person to:

- \* see if there are local services that suit them
- \* think about the people in their life and how those people can support them.

You may discover now that there is still a need to recruit some new supporters to fill in the gaps or do the jobs that others are unable to do.

### Here is a table that may help the person to think about who would be right for the job.

Supports wanted and needed (1)	Skills needed (2)	Personality characteristics needed (3)	Shared common interests (would be desirable to have) (4)
Support needed to go swimming.	A swimmer.	Energetic. Motivated.	Scuba diving. White water rafting.
Theatre	Drama.	Outgoing. Likes performing in front of crowds.	Previous acting experience.
Gym	Knowledge of gym equipment and safety features. Knowledge about dietary needs of a person actively involved in sports.	Healthy and fit (no current limiting sports injuries). Willing to take on a fitness challenge.	Have an interest in charity fun runs, sponsored events, etc.

From the information you have gathered in column 2 and column 3 you need to now decide which of these skills and characteristics are essential (what you can't do without) and which of these skills are desirable (someone can do without these if they have to as they may get this support from existing friends, etc.)

### Here is a table where you can capture this information. This is often called a person specification

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* swimmer</li> <li>* experience of gym equipment / knowledge of safety features on gym equipment</li> <li>* moderate level of fitness</li> <li>* in good health with no limiting sports injuries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* be outgoing</li> <li>* be interested in taking on new sporting challenges</li> <li>* have past experience of charity and sponsored events</li> <li>* be motivated and be able to motivate others through enthusiasm.</li> </ul>



## 3 Support – what will the supporters do?

### Help the person to decide what roles they want their supporter to play

The roles that the person wants their supporters to play will depend on their goals.

#### Here are just some of the different kinds of roles that people might want a supporter to play:

**Benefits adviser** Some people specialise in helping with benefits and personal finances. Local Authorities or local voluntary organisations often employ these people and their services are usually free.

**Circle of support** This term describes a situation where a group of people come together to offer support and advice. The Circle is normally based around a group of people who care about the person and then others might be invited to join the group.

**Come-in supporter** This describes the role of someone who is paid to provide support and who comes into the person's home to help them there or to help them participate in ordinary community activities. There are different ways they can support the person. They can:

- \* do tasks for the person
- \* do tasks with the person
- \* offer guidance or support as the person does the task.

**Community connector** Some people specialise in helping others make better use of their own community networks and in helping build better community resources for them. For example, LEAF is an organisation in Scotland that specialises in helping people improve their relationships with others.

**Good neighbour** These are people who live nearby and who can offer specific support. This can be a paid or volunteer role. KeyRing's 'living support networks' use this kind of support in two ways – (a) first by engaging a Community Living Volunteer who lives locally and (b) by making it a requirement that members of the Network offer neighbourly support to each other.

**Job coach** Job Coaches help people to work their way into ordinary jobs by offering on-the-job support. They help the person to do the job bit by bit and can do the parts of the job that are too difficult at first.

**Life sharer** A Life Sharer is a person who is recruited to share a large part of their life with the person. They may or may not live with the person but spend a lot of time together. This is a really good system of support if someone doesn't want a lot of chopping and changing.

**Skills trainer or tutor** Some people specialise in helping others develop specific skills.

**Service brokers** Brokers specialise in helping to organise and purchase support. They don't offer any further support than that. This service is like an independent form of care management. There are a growing number of such services in the UK. (See the information about brokers on in Control's website.)

**Support tenants or supportive flatmates** Support Tenants are people who are recruited as a flatmate and who offer some support in exchange for a subsidised rent or some other form of payment.

This is a really good way for someone to pick who they live with and to get support around the house in a less structured way than with come-in supporters. It can work really well and lead to good, long-lasting friendships.

But, like any such arrangement, the person may find they don't get on with their flatmate and may need to ask their flatmate to leave. If the person wants to stay in control of this arrangement, they need to give them a licence to live in the house, not a tenancy. **A tenancy makes it harder to end the arrangement at the right time.**

Help the person to think about how their support can be arranged to suit them. What role do they want their supporters to play?

Some roles will work better for the person than others. In particular, it's important to work out if support is to be based in the house – maybe using a Support Tenant – or whether the person wants their support to be on a 'come-in' basis.

## Job description

### Here is an example:

Job title	Main purpose of the job	Who the supporter is directly accountable to	The main tasks of the job
Come-in supporter	Daily one-to-one support	Me and my parents	Day to day co-ordination of events and travel. Guidance with tasks I'm not confident about.
Live-in supporter	Minimal support and reassurance	Me	Make sure you are able to help during the night in the event of an emergency or illness.



4

## How will we manage the support?

Getting the right support is important. Making sure the support stays good – by managing it well – is also important.

### Some of the things to think about are:

- \* recruiting people
- \* making sure they understand the job
- \* making sure they do what they are supposed to do
- \* supporting them to get satisfaction in their work and developing their abilities and work interests
- \* who will pay them and how.

There is a table to fill in In the Driving Seat.

### Here's an example:

Who will find my supporters? – recruit them	Who will manage them? – make sure they know what to do – and make sure they do what they are supposed to do	Who will pay them and manage my support money?
I will advertise with the help of my mum and dad and we will interview together.	I will give the supporters a plan which will tell them the support I need and me and my mum will have monthly meetings to make sure we are all happy with the support.	My mum will manage my support money and make sure the supporters get paid but she will also show me every two months what I have spent to help me understand my money.

## 4 How will we manage the support? Recruitment

Now the person is clear about the job they have created and the kind of people they are looking for. So, it's time to think about the best process for finding them.

### These are some ways:

- \* place job advert in newspapers
- \* contact recruitment agencies and job centres

- \* ask family and friends and ask them to ask around
- \* use the Internet
- \* post advert in newsagents, college notice boards, etc.

Once the person has got their message out there, you need to think about how they can select someone from the people who come forward.

A good person specification should help because you can, in relation to each of the qualities on the specification, ask the question: **'How will we find out if they have that quality?'**

There are different ways of finding out those answers depending on what the person is looking for.

### Here are some possibilities to explore with the person:

- \* having an interview, where you can ask specific questions. (Think of putting in 'scenario questions' – 'What would you do if...?')
- \* getting people to fill out an application form that asks them certain questions
- \* spending time with the person where you can observe them and how they operate
- \* getting references from others who have worked with the person
- \* setting people tests.

If the person doesn't speak, then they need people around to help them be involved as much as they can.

In particular, they may want the chance to spend some time with the person, then have people who know them well to help them weigh up whether the candidate would be a good person for them.



## 4 How will we manage the support?

### Managing supporters

Finding supporters is not the end of the task. It is the beginning. The person needs to manage their supporters.

### This is not always easy as they need to constantly ensure that:

- \* the support is right and changes to suit the person and how their life is going
- \* the supporters are satisfied in their jobs.

Some people with learning difficulties will be able to employ their own supporters if they can understand what the responsibilities involve.



Some people may be able to co-employ their supporters with an organisation or another individual. Some people will not be able to employ or co-employ their supporters. Rather, they will need a representative to employ their supporters for them. This could be an individual or a Trust acting for the individual.

## 4 How will the support be managed? The support of friends and family

The final kind of support is the support from those who love and care about the person.

For many people a plan that suits them will be one where they are not just getting support from paid people. Fortunately, there are lots of ways that money can be used to get support besides employing support staff.

**Paying someone their expenses** It's ok to pay someone their expenses for travel, eating, entrance fees, etc. Expenses are also not taxable and so are a good way to reward someone who would have to pay taxes if they were a paid supporter.

**Buying something they can share** If someone wants to do something that involves the purchase of some equipment then they could reward a supporter by letting them borrow or share that equipment. One family bought a mobile home by the sea as a flexible and affordable form of respite. This caravan also gave them something they could share with others.

**Paying for a holiday** It's ok to pay all the costs of someone supporting the person to go on holiday. For example, one young man has paid for the rent on a holiday cottage so that he and his brother can go fishing together. This is a fraction of the cost of a week in respite care. Another lady paid for a holiday abroad and the costs for her two sisters. This was much less expensive than paying paid supporters to go with her on holiday.

**Paying for treats** It's ok to buy people treats like getting dinner after a day out. This is a nice way of thanking people for their help and letting people know they are not taken for granted.

**Employing family or friends** Many disabled people much prefer to employ people they already know as family or friends to give them support. You may need to talk to your local authority about when it's OK to do this.

Once disabled people believe they will not be punished for using resources flexibly, they will quickly seek imaginative ways of using those resources. They are then likely to get many times more value out of the same pound as a human service organisation that doesn't work as flexibly.

## Here is a summary of the main things someone has to think about when making their support plan:



Do	Don't
<b>Do</b> ask people if they would like to help. It is hard to ask for help sometimes, but people often need 'permission' to help.	<b>Don't</b> assume that nobody wants to help. People are often more than willing to help out and will often see helping as a pleasure not a burden.
<b>Do</b> identify all the people the person knows. Important sources of support are: family, friends and their friends.	<b>Don't</b> be limited to getting support from staff or 'volunteers'. The best person to help someone learn a trade or develop computer skills is someone who is an expert in the relevant field.
<b>Do</b> use your contacts to find supporters. There are lots of ways of advertising and recruiting staff or other supporters.	<b>Don't</b> assume that there is only one way to recruit support. Not everybody needs to be recruited by answering an advert in a newspaper.
<b>Do</b> think about possible shared interests and enthusiasms. If someone is a big fan of the Beatles, wouldn't it be more natural to be supported by a fellow fan?	<b>Don't</b> assume 'work' must be a burden. Look for people who will enjoy working with the person.
<b>Do</b> help the person to choose their own supporters. For some people this will mean doing much more than just having an interview. They should try to spend real time together.	<b>Don't</b> rely on professionals alone. Professional skills can be great but the fundamental issue is whether someone has the right personality that suits the person.
<b>Do</b> think about paying for support. Can the person employ staff or is it better to have someone employ the staff on their behalf?	<b>Don't</b> assume everyone has to be paid by an organisation or by a Local Authority.
<b>Do</b> be prepared to pay. There's nothing wrong with paying for support. There may even be people who will support someone to learn a job, e.g. paying a carpenter to support the person as an apprentice.	<b>Don't</b> assume certain types of people must be paid and others must never be paid (although it's clearly good to make sure that the person has people in their life, like their parents, who are only there because of love).
<b>Do</b> sell the person's strong points. There will be people out there who would really like to work with someone just like them, e.g. a real Beatles enthusiast.	<b>Don't</b> let the person define themselves just by their disability. If someone has autism, this is important, but it doesn't define who the person is.
<b>Do</b> tell the truth. Don't kid people about how difficult things might be. You only want to see people recruited who will stick by the person.	<b>Don't</b> just let the person use jargon or labels to describe themselves – plain speaking will work much better.
<b>Do</b> be clear about what exact help the person is looking for. To support the person well supporters need to know how and when support is needed.	<b>Don't</b> expect one person to do everything. Just as a family needs help so does a paid supporter. If a supporter has nobody to talk to about things, then the responsibility of supporting someone can lead to conflict and stress.

Do	Don't
<b>Do</b> provide written information. Plans and policies should be written and agreed to by all the important people.	<b>Don't</b> leave everything vague. People need guidance and often bad support comes from not providing people with adequate information.
<b>Do</b> let people say 'no'. It is better to ask somebody to help and be rejected than to miss the chance of somebody good being involved.	<b>Don't</b> use guilt. It's hard to do a good job if you don't really want to do it.
<b>Do</b> make sure the support makes sense. Get support that fits well with the person's goals and ambitions.	<b>Don't</b> ignore the person's own dreams. If they want to live in their own home then it doesn't make sense to be looking for support in a registered home.
<b>Do</b> use the community. The community is full of resources: good people, groups of all kinds, schools, leisure centres, shops, places of work, museums and galleries.	<b>Don't</b> rely on segregated services. Institutional services cut people off from the community and all it has to offer. The person can get out of touch and be isolated.
<b>Do</b> make sure the support makes the person stronger. It should help the person be in control, have a plan, earn money, have a home and be part of the community.	<b>Don't</b> let the support take over the person's life, keep them poor, homeless or isolated.



## 5 How much will the support cost?

Below is a table to help budget the money that will come in and go out.

In the future there will be a version of this on the In Control website that will add everything up. It's not ready yet.

Use a pencil so that you can keep rubbing out till the figures add up.

## Support Budget for:

Money in	
Social Services	
Health Authority / Primary Care Trust	
Supporting People	
Independent Living Fund	
Other money in	
Money out	
Team Leader	
Pension	
National Insurance	
Support Worker	
Pension	
National Insurance	
Basic Salary Cost	
Holidays	
Sickness	
Training	
Team Meetings and Supervision	
Sleep-ins	
On Call	
National Insurance	
Expenses	
Expenses	
Travel costs	
Telephone	
Training	
Total Direct Cost	
Management Charge	
Other expenses	
Total Cost	
Left over / Not enough	



## 6 How will the person stay in control of their support?

At the very beginning of the person's plan they thought about the people who could help them to make decisions. This was called a Decision-Making Agreement.

### It is essential that the person:

- \* is treated with respect
- \* is involved in discussions and major decision making
- \* stays in control.

The Decision-Making Agreement may be the same as the one at the beginning of this plan so the same information can be used at this point.

However, you may by now have thought of people who will help with very specific things in managing the support overall. Help the person to include them now.

Important decisions in my life	How I must be involved	Who makes the final decision



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**This guide was produced by in Control:**  
**[www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)**

ISBN 0-9554119-3-9

A standard 1D barcode is positioned in the center of a white rectangular box. The barcode represents the ISBN number 0-9554119-3-9. Below the barcode, the numbers are printed vertically: 9, 7, 8, 0, 9, 5, 5, 4, 1, 1, 9, 3, 9.