



PfA Factsheet: Personal Budgets for Post-16 Provision and FE Colleges



Introduction & Background

The Children and Families Act 2014 brings in a number of duties around personal budgets in relation to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Young people with an EHC plan have the right to request a personal budget which could include elements of education, health or care provision.

In Control and SQW developed [Support and Aspiration Introducing Personal Budgets](#). The Preparing for Adulthood team (PfA) have worked in partnership with In Control, AOC and Natspec to build on this document and to focus on sharing and developing good practice in implementing personal budgets in post-16 provision.

Although the number of case studies and examples remain relatively small across the SEND Pathfinders, personal SEN budgets have already shown positive outcomes. In this factheet we will explore some examples and scenarios of how personal budgets can be implemented in FE colleges and post-16 provision and provide some ideas and suggestions of how to get started. There will be an update to this factheet in March 2015 to share further learning from local areas.

What is a Personal Budget?

A personal budget is a sum of funding available for young people where it is clear that they need additional provision, compared to that available to most young people through local services.

It is not the sum total of all the resources that are available to support a young person and the EHC plan does not need to list all the costs associated with supporting a young person. Rather, it should provide a detailed explanation of how a personal budget will be used to deliver agreed provision, the needs and outcomes it will meet, and explain how the money will be used, spent and managed, including arrangements in relation to any direct payments¹

There are a number of ways that a child's parent and/or a young person can be involved in securing provision through a personal budget:

- 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;
- An arrangement where the local authority, school or college holds and manages the budget to secure the support specified in an EHC plan for the family (also known as an individual service fund or 'notional budget');
- A third party arrangement where funds are held and managed by an individual or organisation on behalf of the child's parent and/or the young person;
- Or as a mix of the three options above.

The aim of a personal budget is for young people and families to have greater choice and control over their life and the type of support they want.

Person-centred planning helps people think about how they want to use their personal budget and to develop a support plan in order to achieve their outcomes.

1 Implementing a new 0 to 25 Special Needs System: LAs and partners – July 2014

What elements can it include?

Social care: This element of a personal budget will be linked to the social care provision detailed in a young person's EHC plan. For young people in transition aged 14 to 25 this could be funded through children's social care (14-18) or adults' social care (18+).

For more information on flexible use of personal budgets and the impact on young people and their families you can watch [Matthew's Story: http://www.media19.co.uk/production/matthews-story/](http://www.media19.co.uk/production/matthews-story/)

Health: This refers to the personal budget that will be made available should a young person have complex,

long-term and/or a life-limiting condition/s. A personal health budget may also be made available to help with equipment costs or other health services. Children and adults, who are supported through 'Continuing Care' or 'Continuing Health Care' funding, have had the right to request a personal health budget from April 2014, this will become a 'right to have' in April 2015. From August 2013, the NHS has had the legal power to give direct payments.

For more information you can view Andrew's story via People Hub. Andrew was aged three when he had a minor operation which left him with a severe brain injury. Through a personal health budget Andrew and his family were able to manage his care. Read their story at the [People Hub website.](#)

Education: In education a personal budget would be available for a young person with an EHC plan to secure parts of the provision set out in their plan. It cannot be used to secure all of the provision because this will include a college place, and funding for this cannot be released as a personal budget. The funding for a personal SEN budget may come from the local authorities 'high needs block', alternatively a college can choose to release funding from their own budget to contribute to a young person's personal budget.

For more information please see [Chapter 9 of The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25](#)



Above: Matthew

Extract from Wigan example of integrated budgets for a young person with complex health needs - from the [SEND Pathfinder information pack](#):

The young person and family were offered a personal budget as a pathfinder family. The aim of this was to explore whether outcomes could be met more efficiently by an integrated and personalised approach to assessment, care planning and commissioning. In addition they wanted to test the potential for personalisation, and a personal budget, to offer creative, innovative solutions to best meet his outcomes and improve the family's quality of life.

The personal budget used in this case was funded by the Children's Social Care budget (direct payments budget), SEND budget (non-delegated special schools funding) and Continuing Care budget (NHS budget).

The young person wanted to be more independent and access more learning opportunities and fun activities in the community. This was achieved through person-centred planning and using a personal budget, which has helped develop an integrated approach to the care plan.

The outcome of this is increased PA support to enable medically trained PA's to support the family and this has increased confidence in the young person independently accessing activities.

How has this helped improve outcomes for the young person and their family?

- In addition to college, he now accesses a full programme of activities including multiple sports clubs, active choices sessions, relax and self-esteem group, and has been clothes shopping. Importantly, from the family's perspective, this was supported entirely by PAs.
- He also recently travelled home from college independently with PA support.
- The one to one learning support in college is now also used as part of this overall PA package. If he is not in College, the agreement is that the support is provided outside of the learning environment. In the past, there has been a significant reliance on the family to assist with meeting his needs, and there was a recognition within the person centred planning work that this was not sustainable.

The PA package has enabled his family to take a step back from directly providing care with increased confidence, which has improved the balance of commitments in their life.

What do we know so far?

How Personal SEN Budgets can support students at college:

So far personal SEN budgets have been used to enable young people to have a more personalised package of learning and support that can be delivered across 5 days, in different settings and where appropriate by different staff. For example, some young people have pooled their personal SEN budget and their social care personal budget and used direct payments to fund an assistant who can support them at home and in college. This approach has enabled them to have better continuity of learning and support across their week.

In one pathfinder young people have received a small part of their high needs funding to help them develop the skills required to use personal budgets, direct payments and manage PAs. This has been important for young people whose support will be delivered by a personal budget in the future (especially if they choose to use direct payments), such as young people eligible for adult social care.

In other instances the personal budget that is being used to deliver the post-16 provision is managed by the education provider as an individual service fund (ISF) (For more information on implementing ISF's see the Groundswell Partnership publication – [Choice and Control for All](#)). The young person and their family knows what the amount is, have more choice and control of how it is used but do not have to manage the money themselves.

Personal SEN budgets are one way of personalising learning and support. Colleges and post-16 providers have been developing the use of personalised learning approaches over the past decade². Personalising both the learning activity and the support offered to students leads to more positive outcomes in attainment, participation within college, and to better life outcomes. A number of colleges currently use and are developing skills in person-centred planning, such as one-page profiles and person-centred reviews, to help develop study programmes and support.

For more information you can download PfA's case study from [Leicester College](#). You can also download the Valuing People [Person-Centred Transition Reviews report](#).

A person-centred approach to planning support need not simply focus on the use of funding but the many different ways a student may be supported to participate, achieve and enjoy life at college or in other post-16 learning activities or provision.

The young person should be given an indication of the level of funding that might be required to meet the proposed provision in an EHC plan. As part of a person-centred approach to developing an EHC plan, the local authority should help the parent and/or young person to decide whether they want to take up a personal budget and agree the provision to be made in the plan.

This enables all parties to be more flexible and creative when it comes to putting the detail in the EHC plan. The final allocation of funding for the personal budget must be sufficient to secure the agreed provision specified in the EHC plan and must be set out as part of that provision.

Colleges are well placed to manage a personal SEN budget for a student. An example of how a school is managing a jointly funded personal budget from education and social care as a holistic support package for a family can be found in the main publication '[Support and Aspiration, Introducing Personal Budgets](#)'.

2 For example: http://www.tlpr.org/documents/personalised_learning.pdf

Personal budgets have offered families an opportunity to get more involved in how their son or daughter is supported and enabled young people to have more choice and control. Although currently the largest bank of evidence for this is in social care it is crucial to acknowledge and learn from the positive outcomes from this, and from the growing number of examples where health funding has been used as a personal health budget.

Personal budgets are focused on improving outcomes where a young person needs additional and individual support, i.e. where it is not possible to offer the required level of support from a college or local children’s services, universal and targeted services. Personal budgets have to support the outcomes in the young person’s EHC plan. From age 14 EHC plans and reviews should support young people to prepare for adulthood and include the following outcomes - employment, independent living, community inclusion and good health.



Frequently Asked Questions

There are already many web pages devoted to answering questions about personal budgets and much has been explained in this and the main document. However here are a few questions specific to personal budgets and FE colleges/post-16

Q providers:

If a young person uses a personal SEN budget to employ personal assistants (PAs) using a direct payment where does the accountability sit if the PAs are meant to be working with the young person whilst at college?

A

It is clearly set out in the [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) that a school or college will retain responsibility for permitting people come on site, i.e. the school or college must agree to let PAs come on site and in so doing have a clear agreement about accountability whilst they are on site. This agreement does not affect the fact that where a family (or a young person over 16) is employing the PA through direct payments they will retain liability as an employer. Ultimately, the local authority retains responsibility for ensuring the special educational provision specified in the EHC plan is secured even where this is through a personal budget or direct payment.

Q

Can a young person choose not to attend a college and use all the funding available to fund a place at an independent provider?

A

This is not a question about personal budgets but one about preference for learning. It would be made clear what funding may be available accompanying a place at a school. In the same way any information about post-16 provision, whether local or residential / specialist, would include information about what funding may be available as a personal budget.

Q

It is not possible to use 'place' funding as a personal budget.

A

Can a personal budget be used to buy provision from a college?

Yes, in the same way that you may buy provision from a social care or health care provider.

Q

Can parents use all the funding available and top-up with their own money enabling a young person to attend a private/independent college or school?

A

No, this is not possible (we sought both legal and DfE advice).

Q

Can a young person use a personal budget to buy speech and language therapy (SLT)?

A

A young person's plan will comprise of different provision which may include a place at a college, therapeutic support and individually allocated funding for SEN. Some elements of this will be available as a personal budget; this will be explained in the local offer. The local offer should include a policy on personal budgets that sets out a description of the services across education, health and social care that currently lend themselves to the use of Personal Budgets, how that funding will be made available, and clear and simple statements of eligibility criteria and the decision-making processes. A young person has the right to request a personal budget for provision specified in their EHC plan (apart from 'place' funding for a school or college). A personal budget can build on the support being given to the young person by the SLT and focus on specific communication related outcomes.

Q Does the college or learning provider have to offer some of its own budget to a young person as a personal budget?

A No, it does not *have* to offer funding but it can if it chooses to and there are many examples of this happening in Pathfinder work.

Q A young person and their family do not want to have direct payments but they do want a personal budget....what other options are there for a young person being able to have control over their support?

A The personal budget can be managed by a local authority or a provider service on behalf of the young person and their family. This is often called an individual service fund or a notional budget. For example a school in Oldham manages two personal budgets for two pupils where the families do not want to take a direct payment.

Q Will a young person and their family have to manage each personal budget (if eligible) from health, social care and education separately or will they be able to use it as a single personal budget?

A Current guidance around EHC plans requires clarity about how funding is being used to deliver the provision needed / identified to meet agreed outcomes. However this is an area of much work and development, many families and services find it does not make sense to work in a segregated way when setting out to meet the holistic support needs of a child, young person and/or family. The code sets out an aspiration of working towards a pooled budget i.e. a budget contributed to by SEN, social care and health. As such the family would manage it as one budget and all that would be needed is a plan which sets out how support needs are being met by funding and services available to the child or young person.

Q How can colleges support young people to use personal budgets to prepare for adulthood?

A Colleges have a key role to play in supporting young people to think about their aspirations for the future, and helping them identify what support they need to achieve their ambitions and good life outcomes. Part of this includes identifying how personal budgets and support can help them achieve this. Pathfinders already have examples of how personal budgets have been used for services such as; work experience with job coaches, independent travel training, support to make friends in their local community, take part in social action and support to live in Independent Living. The NDTi has recently carried out research into good practice in using social care personal budgets to increase employment outcomes for disabled people. One of the key ambitions of the SEND reforms is that more young people with SEN will achieve paid employment. The NDTi SSCR research sets out key conditions that make this more likely (<http://www.ndti.org.uk/blog/personal-budgets-and-paid-work>)

Links to FAQ pages, glossaries of terms and case studies are included in the list at the end of this factsheet.

Next steps

The local authority's approach to personal budgets across SEN, health and social care, including eligibility must be set out in the local offer. The local offer is a key part of the SEND reforms and means that every local authority, with their health partners, will be publishing a statement about what support is available to disabled young people and those with SEN (including those with an EHC plan).

PfA and SE7 have produced a [guide to developing the preparing for adulthood section of the local offer](#) and SE7 have also shared information on [personal budgets and the local offer](#).

Key messages:

- A college can release funding from its own budget and contribute to a personal budget if it chooses to.
- Person-centred practice should be used to support the young person to plan for the future and should consider personal budgets in the context of this.
- The whole approach needs to be simple, person-centred and to be focused on improving outcomes for the young person.

There are many colleges who have already embraced person-centred approaches to planning and reviewing; this creates a good basis for developing person-centred EHC plans and the potential to include a personal SEN budget. For more information see this example from [Leicester College](#). The personal SEN budget available for a young person is simply an addition to the existing bank of opportunities, approaches and skills which feed into the EHC plan. There are unlikely to be many personal SEN budgets; most funding for additional support is already within college budgets, but where there is a personal budget available then it can be used flexibly and creatively to improve learning and outcomes for young people preparing for adulthood.

Key Resources

Department for Education - SEND: guide for further education providers -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-further-education-providers>

Mott MacDonald - site managed by Mott MacDonald as part of their work as support partner for the SEND Pathfinder programme - www.sendpathfinder.co.uk

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>

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/childrenandyoungpeople webpages 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.

Preparing for Adulthood - www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk

National Development Team for inclusion - www.NDTi.org.uk

Council for Disabled Children - www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources

Association of Colleges – www.aoc.co.uk

NATSPEC – www.natspec.org.uk

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