



# West Northamptonshire Council

## EHC Team:

### Personal Budgets for Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plans

An EHC Plan defines the special educational needs of a child or young person. It lists the education provision necessary to support them. The Plan should also detail any health provision social care provision deemed necessary (following assessments).

During the EHC process, there will be an opportunity to discuss the allocation of a Personal Budget. A Personal Budget is not additional funding. It is the same amount of money that would normally be spent on supporting the child to meet the agreed outcomes from their EHC Plan. The Personal Budget uses the existing funding in a different way.

The needs and outcomes agreed in the EHC Plan will not be affected by the parent or carer's decision on whether or not to apply for a Personal Budget. All of the child or young person's assessed needs will be met by the Local Authority or the health service Integrated Care System (ICS) regardless of whether a Personal Budget has been agreed.

### What is a Personal Budget?

A Personal Budget is the amount of money set aside to fund support for a child or young person who has an EHC Plan. A Personal Budget is not the total money available to support the child. For example, it does not include the cost of the child's school place. However, having some of the money in the form of a Personal Budget might suit some families.

### How Do Personal Budgets Work?

Personal Budgets for education, health, and care were introduced by the [Children and Families Act 2014](#). They are for children with EHC Plans who have access to additional funding to meet their needs.

For education budgets, the funding allocated to a child or young person might be available to be used as a Personal Budget. The Local Authority has to get agreement from the child's school or setting for a Personal Budget to be arranged (or approved).

For social care, children are eligible if they need support beyond universal and targeted services. Examples of how a Personal Budget might be used include providing the family with a short break or individualised support.

For healthcare, children and young people with 'Children's Continuing Care' are entitled to a Personal Health Budget (PHB) from the NHS. From April 2015, health service Integrated Care System (ICS) must consider requests for a Personal Budget for other specialist health services detailed in an EHC Plan.

## How Does This Fit With the EHC Process?

- If it has been agreed that an EHC Plan is required, you can request an 'Indicative Budget' to give you an idea of the cost of support. You can do this by asking the caseworker.
- You can begin discussions with your caseworker about the idea of an Indicative and Personal Budget in the family meeting.
- You will be given an indication of the level of funding likely to be required to meet your child's needs. This will be worked out through a Resource Allocation System (RAS). This Indicative Budget will be used at the 'Draft Plan' stage. It can be used at the multi-agency meeting to help plan the child's support. It is not a formal agreement for the Local Authority or health body to provide this amount of money.
- Once the EHC Plan has been agreed (and the school place is known), parents can request a Personal Budget for some (or all) of the outcomes in the Plan. A Personal Budget request form must be completed and sent to the EHC Team in the Local Authority for consideration.

There are three ways to manage a Personal Budget:

1. It can be taken as a Direct Payment by parents or young people.
2. It can be taken as a Direct Payment and managed by a third-party (such as a family friend, an agent, or a voluntary sector organisation).
3. You can use a combination of these options.

Young people have the right to control the Personal Budget from the end of the school year in which they turned 16. However, they might choose to authorise another person to manage it for them (because of mental capacity).

## Direct Payments

A Direct Payment is one way of receiving the Personal Budget. It is a cash payment to a discrete bank account so that young people or parents/carers can buy and manage services themselves. Alternatively, people can nominate someone they trust to manage the Direct Payment on their behalf.

If a young person or parents/carers are interested in Direct Payments, the Local Authority will talk to them about:

1. Who the money can be paid to.
2. How to record what the money has been spent on.
3. How the Local Authority will check that the young person or parents/carers are buying the support that has been agreed.

The young person or parents/carers must have a separate bank account and keep their bank statements, receipts, and invoices safe. The Local Authority can help set this up and manage it. The young person or parents/carers will be told how much they will get and how often it will be paid into their bank account. Certain conditions must be met before a Direct Payment can be agreed, and these will be discussed at the time.

If Direct Payments are agreed, the Local Authority will schedule reviews. The reviews will check how the young person or parents/carers are getting on, if they want to continue managing the Personal Budget, and whether they need any help with it. The reviews will also check if the money has been spent on the things agreed in the child or young person's EHC Plan.

## **What If I Already Receive a Health or Social Care Direct Payment / Personal Budget?**

If you already receive a Direct Payment and/or a Personal Budget for health or care, it will continue. It will be incorporated (as needed) into the child or young person's final EHC Plan.

## **What Can't Personal Budgets Be Used For?**

There are some things that young people or parents/carers can't spend a Personal Budget on, including:

- School placements
- Vaccinations or immunisations
- NHS health checks
- Services provided by a GP
- Prescriptions
- Dental charges

## Reviews

Young people or parents/carers can request a Personal Budget when an EHC Plan is being reviewed or re-assessed.

## Further Information

For help and advice about Personal Budgets and Direct Payments, please phone the [Information Advice and Support Service for SEND in Northamptonshire \(IASS\)](#) on 01604 364772 or email [contact@iassnorthants.co.uk](mailto:contact@iassnorthants.co.uk).

- [West Northamptonshire Council Personal Budgets Policy for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) (PDF 424KB).