

Buying services and support

If you choose to use your personal budget to buy services and support, here are some things you can do to stay safe and make the most of your money ...

One of the best things about using a personal budget is having the freedom to shop around and choose who provides your support.

But buying services and support is no different to buying anything else on the high street: some providers will be more reliable than others. Here are some tips to help you get value for money and avoid putting yourself at risk by buying poor-quality products or services. Don't forget – help is always available should you need it. See the foot of this page and overleaf for details.

Tips for buying services and support

Compare deals. Write down the names and numbers of three or more suppliers and compare what you will get for your money.

Get independent advice. Talk to your family, friends and care manager especially if you are buying something expensive, or where you will be signing a contract.

Search for services in reliable places – use directories such as Leeds Directory (see below and overleaf) which include customer ratings and feedback so you can see other people's opinions of a service before you use it.

Use regulated providers – for example, agencies providing personal care must be registered with the Care Quality Commission. This may help protect you if the supplier lets you down or is difficult to contact.

Ask questions – for example, what exactly will you get for your money? If you need to sign a contract how long does it run for? What are your rights if you're not happy with the service? Take your time and make sure you fully understand the responses. If the supplier is reliable, they will not try to rush or pressure you.

- See the council's *Guide to buying services and support* for more advice and suggestions. See also the factsheets 'Using a personal assistant' and 'Staying safe and managing risks'. Information on how to get copies is overleaf.
- Visit www.leedsdirectory.org to browse local services or call the Directory helpline on 0113 391 8333.

Turn over
for further
information



Find out more about personal budgets and directing your own support

personal budgets and employing PAs

- **Fact sheets** – find the rest of the series at www.leeds.gov.uk/personal_budgets
- **Booklet: *Your Personal Budget*** – more detail about the different steps to getting a personal budget.
- **Short film: *Personal Budgets in Leeds*** – people in Leeds talk about using personal budgets to live more independently. Watch it online at www.leeds.gov.uk/personal_budgets.
- **Peer support** – talk to people who already use a personal budget! Contact Free to Live, the Personal Budgets Peer Support Network, on 0113 214 3594 or visit their website at www.freetoliveleeds.org.
- **Employing personal assistants (PAs)** – if you're going to be recruiting and employing your own PAs, ask for a copy of the *Leeds Guide to Becoming an Employer*. If you're using an agency, see 'Choosing services and support', below.
- **Further information** – visit the council's website www.leeds.gov.uk/personal_budgets for loads more information including frequently asked questions, a glossary of terms, and more.

No web access?
No problem. You can get copies of all booklets, fact sheets and other information from your care manager, or by phoning Customer Services on 0113 222 4401.

choosing services and support

- Visit www.leedsdirectory.org to find local services online. Search by service, postcode or the area where you live. Or phone the Directory Helpline on 0113 391 8333 for advice or a paper copy.
- **Booklet: *Guide to Buying Services and Support*** – tips on making the most of your budget when dealing with suppliers.

Collect the factsheet series!

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