



# One minute guide

## Personal Budgets

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### What is a Personal Budget?

Personalisation is at the heart of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) starting with the person as an individual with strengths, preferences and aspirations, identifying their needs and making choices about how they are supported.

One way in which personalisation can be put into practice is through a personal budget: an amount of money identified by the local authority or the NHS to help support a child or young person and their family to achieve the outcomes stated in their assessment of needs. The aim of personal budgets is to give families more choice in how children and young people are supported and directly involved in organising that support.

An education personal budget enables the family to make different support arrangements to that a school or college would have put in place. Education funding that can be used as a personal budget is that which is normally paid to settings to provide support for a specific child or young person. Settings also use their own budgets to provide support by setting funds that are not available as a personal budget. To receive an education personal budget, a child or young person must already have funding that can be used in this way and an [education health and care plan \(EHCP\)](#).

Children and young people who are in receipt of continuing care from our NHS health partners may request a personal health budget; the two funding elements may be combined into one personal budget linked to the EHCP.

A personal budget in the form of a direct payment is also available for [short breaks](#). Direct payments for short breaks do not require an EHCP.

### What does the law say about it?

The Children and Families Act 2014 gives a family the right to request a personal budget when an education health and care plan (EHCP) is being prepared or reviewed. In Leeds we are happy to discuss Personal Budgets at any point. The law gives the right to request an indicative budget; this is the amount of money that is needed to meet the child or young person's needs. The law describes a number of ways this budget may be made available:

A direct payment to the family;

A payment to a third party to organise on behalf of the family;

An arrangement where the local authority organises support in the way the family chooses; or

Any combination of the above

The use of funds is regulated by the [Special Educational Needs \(Personal Budgets\) Regulations 2014](#).

## What is the difference between Direct Payments and a Personal Budget?

A child or young person has a Direct Payment when their local authority or health service provides them with cash instead of a service; families can purchase their child or young person's support directly.

A Personal Budget is more than this; it can be made up of a piece of equipment, directly provided service, a cash payment or a mix of these. Families will have already agreed the outcomes in the support plan or EHCP and at that stage the family will be central to deciding how the plan will deliver their child or young person's identified outcomes and they will know how much money will be allocated to them.

## What should practitioners do?

When a family is embarking on accessing a personal budget, practitioners should support them to think of creative ways to meet the child's needs when using the personal budget that may be different from how needs have been met in the past.

Some examples of how Personal Budgets can be used include:

- Support in the family home e.g. equipment
- or help with personal and domestic activities;
- Equipment to help communication or learning;
- Support to join in with local clubs or activities;
- Sports or cultural activities;
- Short breaks or someone to go with the child on a trip or short break;
- Hiring specialists or support staff in school;
- Buying specific therapies or approaches not included in the [Leeds local offer](#)

### Example of how a Personal Budget was used

John is a young man with multiple medical needs. He receives intimate personal care both at home and in education.

He wanted to employ his own support staff to have more control of his daily timetable, choose the staff he prefers and have consistency.

John combined a Health Personal Budget with an Education Personal Budget to create a combined budget he could use flexibly.

## Key contacts and further information

When working with a family who wants to access a Personal Budget, they should be advised to contact their allocated SEN Casework Officer, Social Worker, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or Lead Professional in the first instance.

More information about Personal Budgets is available on the Leeds City Council [short breaks service statement](#). In addition, you can read the [Direct Payment procedures](#) (for Care), which includes a link to frequently asked questions.

The Leeds Local Offer website at: [www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk) provides information about services for children with SEN and disabilities.

The national [in Control](#) website provides information about personalisation.