

# Personal Budgets

## A user's guide

Helping you to have more control  
over your care and support



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Visit [www.leeds.gov.uk/personalbudgets](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/personalbudgets) for downloadable information.

No web access? You can get copies of all booklets, fact sheets and other information from your care manager/social worker or by phoning Customer Services.

 **0113 222 4401**

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This publication can be provided in large print, Braille and audio.

 **0113 247 8630** to request a copy

If you do not speak English and need help in understanding this booklet, we may be able to provide a translation or an interpreter. Please contact Adult Social Care customer services to see if we can help.

 **0113 222 4401**

You are the best person to decide what's right for you. And a personal budget can do just that by giving you more choice, control and flexibility over the kind of support you use and how you use it.

## What is a personal budget?

A personal budget is money that is allocated to you by your local council to pay for care or support to meet the needs identified within your support plan.

### Who can have a personal budget?

Anyone, 18 or over, who is living in the community and entitled to social care support, can have personal budget. To find out if you are eligible, ask your social worker for an assessment.

Currently all local authorities decide what level of need they will support. Leeds, along with the majority of other councils, currently helps needs that are assessed as critical or substantial. Your assessment will show you at what level your needs are. For further information about how your needs will be assessed see [Step 02](#)



# How do you get a personal budget?

There are 8 steps involved in getting a personal budget:



**Contact  
Leeds Adult  
Social Care  
to ask for an  
assessment**



**Complete  
your needs  
assessment**



**Find out and  
agree your  
personal  
budget**



**Plan  
your support**



**Decide how  
to manage  
the money**



**Get your  
support plan  
agreed**



**Arrange  
your support**



**Review  
your support  
plan**

Your social worker will help and guide you through the 8 step process. Only you know what is best for you, so together with your social worker you can work to create your plan. They will help you identify the care and support which will help you most and best suits you and your lifestyle. Your social worker will give you information, advice and support that you need, when you need it.

# What can I use a personal budget for?

You can use your personal budget for a range of things to help meet your needs. You can suggest any service or item as part of your support plan – as long as it meets the needs identified in your assessment, and will help you to achieve the outcomes you want. You should make sure that what you are suggesting will work well and is cost-effective. If you are unsure or have any questions, please talk to your social worker, who will discuss your plan with you.

## You could use a personal budget for:

- ◆ **Services and support that you currently receive to meet your needs**
- ◆ **Paying someone to take care of you – employing a personal assistant**
- ◆ **Services or equipment to support you to live at home independently**
- ◆ **Support to attend and use local leisure activities**
- ◆ **A carer to support you to go on holiday**

## However you cannot use a personal budget:

- ◆ **to buy tobacco or alcohol**
- ◆ **to pay off debts**
- ◆ **to gamble**
- ◆ **anything against the law**
- ◆ **household bills, such as rent, gas or electricity**
- ◆ **petrol or travel expenses**
- ◆ **anything that does not meet your assessed needs**
- ◆ **meals and refreshments for you, family, friends and personal assistants**
- ◆ **long term care in a care home or housing costs**

"Before my daughter Lauren had to choose from what services were out there, that's all she could use. Now that she's actually got the funding herself, I can help her organise her own care. We can choose what we want that care to be - whether it's to use another person or service, an agency, a friend or family member, as long as everything is accounted for. It's much better."





## Advisors at asist

**Asist** stands for the Actively Seeking Independence Support Team. It is a free, independent, user-led support service for people using a personal budget or direct payments to employ a personal assistant in Leeds. It is free to access for any social care customer using a personal budget or direct payments. Your advisor can help you with:

- ◆ **recruitment, interviews and how to supervise your PA(s)**
- ◆ **arranging reference and Disclosure and Barring service checks**
- ◆ **support with disciplinary and grievance procedures**
- ◆ **arranging access to essential short courses such as moving and handling or child safeguarding, if applicable**
- ◆ **health and safety, forms and contracts**
- ◆ **managing your finances including providing a payroll administration service, advice on becoming registered as an employer with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and on setting up your own recording system.**

**Tel: 0113 2311125    minicom: 0113 230 8289    email: [asist@leedscil.org.uk](mailto:asist@leedscil.org.uk)**



# The Steps



## Contacting Leeds City Council Adult Social Care

Your first step is to contact Leeds City Council Adult Social Care and tell them about the difficulties you are experiencing. They will help and advise you, which could include, directing you to other services that could help you or arranging for you to have a needs assessment. It is important to understand that eligibility can only be established through having a needs assessment. Speak to your social worker or phone **0113 222 4401**



## Your needs assessment

Now you need to look in detail at what kind of support you need to live your life as independently as possible. The form used for your assessment is called a Self-Directed Assessment Questionnaire (SDAQ) it's called this because it's an assessment led by you. The questions on this form have a number of points attached to them. When these points are all added up, they will show how much money your personal budget will be.

You and your social worker will work together to complete your assessment. You will consider how you look after yourself, how you get around and how to stay healthy. You will agree your needs, with your social worker. To make sure that your assessment covers everything about your needs your social worker may ask for your permission to contact other people involved in your care or support, this could include your family.

They will also talk to you about what your personal budget can and can't be used for, how you want to receive and manage the money, and whether you are entitled to any benefits or other funding along with your personal budget.

If your assessment identifies that your needs are not eligible, your social worker will explain why this is and help you by directing you to other services. These services could include housing and employment services.



**Leeds Directory** can help you find services that will support you having a more independent life. It can help you put together your support plan, access local services and more. Call them on **0113 391 8333** or visit <http://www.leedsdirectory.org/>



### Finding out your personal budget

Your social worker will use the SDAQ to calculate how much your “indicative” personal budget is – this is an approximate amount that gives you a figure to go on while you put together your support plan. The final amount will only be agreed once your support plan has been approved.



### Plan your support

Making a support plan helps you work out what’s important to you and how to use your budget in the best way. This is your plan for what you want to do or achieve, and how you want to spend your budget. It is created by you, your social worker, family and friends. It’s OK to include things in your plan that don’t cost money, and even things that you are planning to pay for yourself, as well as the services or support your personal budget will pay for. The plan is made by completing a support planning form which will be given to you by your social worker.

“I have a young family and really enjoy spending time with them. In the past it’s been difficult. My personal budget has made it easier for me and my son to do things together which we couldn’t do before. The personal budget has improved the quality of life for all my family.”

You should also consider how you want to manage your budget, what to do if something goes wrong and how to manage risks. When you create your support plan you need to understand the kind of risks there may be and how to manage them. Examples of risks are, if your personal assistant needs to lift or move you but they are not trained to do so. So make sure they have the right training. Or someone supporting you with finance uses your money on something you haven’t agreed. To make sure your assistant is trustworthy use the Disclosure and Barring Service. At [www.leedsadultprotection.net](http://www.leedsadultprotection.net) you can get more information about how to keep safe.



# 05

## Decide how to manage the money

Personal budgets are flexible and designed to fit people's individual circumstances. How much you want to be involved in managing your actual budget is up to you.

Here are the ways you can choose to receive and manage your budget:

**Direct payments to you** – you handle the budget yourself.

**Direct payments to a suitable person** – if you need or want help to manage direct payments, these can be made to someone else who manages them on your behalf. This person must be someone reliable who will manage things in your best interest, such as a close family member.

**Direct payments to a Trust** – payments are made to a group of people who manage the money for you. The group is called a trust and is a small group of reliable people of your choice – close friends and family members.

**Individual Service Funds** – you can ask a provider to hold your budget and organise your support on your behalf

**Local authority-managed budget (LAMB)** – you can ask Leeds City Council to hold your budget and organise your support on your behalf. Through this option you can buy support from the council's own services or providers they already work with.

**A mixed budget** – is a combination of the above. You could receive part of your budget as a direct payment but ask the council to manage another part.

"Not having to be in for set visits, you've got your freedom to plan your life. You can organise your care to suit you and being able to decide who comes to help you makes such a difference. Since I made the change I've never looked back!" Linda

To talk to people already using a personal budget. Contact Free to Live, the Personal Budgets Peer Support Network on **0113 214 3599** or email [info@freetoliveleeds.org](mailto:info@freetoliveleeds.org)

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## Get your support plan agreed

The Council will need to agree your plan once it's finished. This is because social care funding comes from taxpayers' money and councils have a duty to make sure the money is used responsibly and well.

Normally, as long as you spend your budget on support that matches the eligible social care needs you identified during your assessment, and it is within your indicative budget, your plan should be agreed.

If your plan is agreed, you will then find out the final amount of your actual personal budget and you can start using it to buy services and support.

If your plan is not agreed, your social worker will work with you to make any changes that are needed before sending it for approval again.





## Arranging your support

Now that your plan has been agreed, it's time to arrange your support. If you chose to use your personal budget to buy services and support, shop around carefully. Buying services and support is no different to buying anything else; some providers will be more reliable than others.

Here are some tips to help you get value for money and avoiding poor quality products or services:

- ◆ **Compare deals – write down the names and numbers of three or more suppliers or agencies and compare what you will get for your money.**
- ◆ **Get independent advice – talk to family, friends and your care manager/social worker, especially if you are buying something expensive, or if you are signing a contract.**
- ◆ **Search for services and agencies in reliable places – use directories such as the Leeds Directory [www.leedsdirectory.org](http://www.leedsdirectory.org) or call **0113 391 8333**. You can see customer ratings and feedback and search by service, postcode or area of Leeds.**
- ◆ **Use regulated providers – only use agencies providing personal care that are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk) or call **03000 616 161**. This may help protect you if the supplier lets you down or is difficult.**
- ◆ **Ask questions such as 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 are unhappy with the service? Take as long as you need to get all the answers you need. A reliable supplier will not try to rush or pressure you.**
- ◆ **Keep any correspondence, emails you send the supplier or agency, all contracts, receipts and other important documents they send you and records of any payments you've made.**

Here are some questions suitable to ask an agency:

- ◆ **What qualifications and experience do the care workers you employ have?**
- ◆ **What kind of training do you, as an agency, provide for your care staff?**
- ◆ **What is your confidentiality policy?**
- ◆ **How often are your staff checked by someone from your agency?**
- ◆ **What happens if I'm not happy with one of your agency workers?**
- ◆ **How is holiday cover arranged?**
- ◆ **What happens if the care worker doesn't show up or is late?**
- ◆ **Are your staff employed directly and do you pay their National Insurance and tax?**
- ◆ **What does your insurance cover?**
- ◆ **Do you carry out a risk assessment at my home?**
- ◆ **Can you provide copies of timesheets for my agency worker?**
- ◆ **What is the hourly rate for the kind of person I need?**
- ◆ **Can you put information about all fees and charges in writing, including any extras?**





## Reviewing your support plan

Once a year, you and your social worker need to check if your support plan still works and if anything needs to change. This is called a review. You can ask other people such as family, friends, your carer or support provider to help you.

### A review is about:

- ◆ **checking whether your needs and circumstances have changed**
- ◆ **does your plan help you achieve the goals and aims you agreed, and if not, how can it be fixed?**
- ◆ **talking about any changes that you feel would make your plan work better**
- ◆ **checking the budget is still being used for the purpose for which it was provided**

### Before the review takes place consider:

- ◆ **Do you feel more in control of your life?**
- ◆ **Can you do the things you wanted to do?**
- ◆ **How is it working out?**
- ◆ **What do you want to do next**

### Can anyone else be involved in the review?

Yes, you can involve family members, friends, your carer, an advocate or a support provider. After the review you and your care manager/social worker should have a good idea of what works and what doesn't and what changes need making.

### What happens after the review?

After the review, you and your care manager/social worker should have a good idea of what's going well and what isn't. You will have also agreed whether or not you want to make any changes, and if so, what you need to do.

So the next step is to start making any changes so your plan works the way you want it to.



# Carers and personal budgets

If you care for someone, you may find that a personal budget can help the person you care for live more independently, which will also help you.

## What do personal budgets mean for carers?

Personal budgets don't mean more work for carers, unless you want to take on more responsibility for helping the person you care for.

There may be some extra paperwork to do if the person you care for decides to receive their personal budget as a direct payment, and you agree to help them manage this.

However, there is a lot of other support available to help people do this, such as Leeds Centre for Integrated Living (Leeds CIL) which provides support for disabled and older people using a personal budget. You can contact them on **0113 231 1125**

If the person you care for is interested in directing their own support, talk to them about what this could mean for you both.



# FAQs about personal budgets

## **Q What if I am happy with my current care package and don't want to change?**

A personal budget does not mean you have to change the care you receive. If you are happy with some – or all – of your current support, that's great. You can use your budget to buy the same services you use now. You can also ask the council to manage your budget for you if that's what you want.

## **Q What if I'm not sure a personal budget is for me?**

Your social worker/care manager will be able to answer any questions you may have. Or you can speak to people in Leeds who direct their own support already by contacting the Leeds Centre for Independent Living on **0113 231 1125** or visit [www.leedscil.org.uk](http://www.leedscil.org.uk)

## **Q What is the difference between a personal budget and a direct payment?**

Personal budgets and direct payments are not the same thing.

A personal budget tells you:

- ◆ **how much money is available to you to meet your social care needs**
- ◆ **how much money you will receive from your support plan**
- ◆ **and how and when your budget is spent**

What are direct payments?

A direct payment is the means in which you receive the money. You decide who gives the care, and how and when they work with you.

You can receive a direct payment personally or:

- ◆ **it can be paid to a suitable person on your behalf**
- ◆ **it can be paid to a trust**
- ◆ **it can be held by a service provider on your behalf**
- ◆ **Leeds City Council can hold them on your behalf or**
- ◆ **a mix of the above.**

**Q What if I don't want to – or can't – manage my personal budget myself?**

You don't have to. There are various ways you can receive your money see above. When deciding on your support plan you can discuss how to handle your money.

**Q Problems with a supplier – what do I do?**

Get in touch with the supplier and give them a chance to put things right. If the supplier offers to fix the problem or give you a refund, make a note of how long it may take. Unless the complaint was minor, and you feel it's now been resolved, follow it up with a signed, dated letter; don't forget to keep a copy.

If the problem is with a council social care provider speak to Leeds Adult Social Care complaints on **0113 222 4405**

If the problem is with an NHS health provider speak to the Patient Advocacy Liaison Service (PALS) on **0113 206621** or **0113 206 7168** or email **patient.relations@nhs.uk**

If you are still unhappy with the situation get in touch with the Local Government Ombudsman on **0345 0154033** or visit **www.ombudsman.org.uk**

Speak to your local Citizen's Advice Bureau on **0113 223 4400** or visit **www.leedscab.org.uk** or **www.adviceguide.org.uk**. They can advise on complaints about all types of provider.



# Contacts for help and advice

## A buying checklist



- ◆ shop around. Compare prices and offers to get a good price
- ◆ ask friends and family for their opinions
- ◆ use regulated suppliers and members of trade associations
- ◆ read the small print
- ◆ complain to the supplier by phone and in writing if you're not happy
- ◆ keep copies of any correspondence and keep them close to hand.

- ◆ deal with a supplier who tries to rush or pressure you too much
- ◆ pay cash in advance
- ◆ sign a contract you feel uncertain about, without support from your friends, family, your care manager or someone else from Citizens Advice for example
- ◆ send any original documents in the post – such as proof of identity
- ◆ call numbers starting with "09" as they are usually charged at a higher rate.



## Personal care and health services

### Leeds City Council Adult Social Care

**Complaints** about council-funded social care services.

☎ **0113 222 4405**

[www.leeds.gov.uk/socialcare](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/socialcare)

**Carers Leeds** aims to support all unpaid Carers in Leeds by providing information, advice, social and emotional support.

☎ **0113 380 4300**

[www.carersleeds.org.uk](http://www.carersleeds.org.uk)

**Care Choices Directory** provides a free public information service to help you find out more about care options and providers.

☎ **0800 389 2077**

[www.carechoices.co.uk](http://www.carechoices.co.uk)

### Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Regulates all health and adult social care services in England. The website lets you search for a home care agency in your local area and includes inspection reports so you can see how providers measure up.

☎ **03000 616 161**

[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

**Leeds Directory** Use the directory to help find services and support in your area.

☎ **0113 391 8333**

[www.leedsdirectory.org](http://www.leedsdirectory.org)

**UK Home Care Association** this website lets you search for a home care agency in your local area.

☎ **020 8661 8188**

[www.ukhca.co.uk](http://www.ukhca.co.uk)

## Equipment for daily living

### Care and Repair

A home improvement agency for Leeds. Can advise on home adaptations and equipment to help daily living.

☎ **0113 240 6009**

email [enquiries@carerepair-leeds.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@carerepair-leeds.org.uk)

[www.care-repair-leeds.org.uk](http://www.care-repair-leeds.org.uk)

**DIAL (Disabled Information and Advice Line)** A network of local disability information services run by and for disabled people.

☎ **0113 378 2990**

text phone **18001 0113 378 2990**

[www.dial-leeds.org.uk](http://www.dial-leeds.org.uk)

### Disability Equipment Register

A not-for-profit service for buying and selling secondhand disability equipment.

☎ **01454 318818**

[www.disabreg.pup.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.disabreg.pup.blueyonder.co.uk)

### Disabled Living Foundation

A charity that provides impartial advice and training on daily living aids.

☎ **0845 1309177**

helpline **0300 990 004**

email [helpline@dlf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dlf.org.uk)

[www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

### Leeds City Council Adult Social Care

Download information from the website or speak to your care manager.

☎ **0113 222 4401**

[www.leeds.gov.uk/mobility-equipment](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/mobility-equipment)

**William Merritt Disabled Living Centre** is a local charity which provides advice and free assessments for equipment. Can also provide a list of equipment suppliers.

☎ **0113 350 8989**

email [info@wmdlc.org](mailto:info@wmdlc.org)

[www.wmdlc.org](http://www.wmdlc.org)



## Consumer protection and legal advice

**Advice Now** an independent website providing information on rights and legal issues.

[www.advicenow.org.uk](http://www.advicenow.org.uk)

### Age UK

Supporting people in Leeds to love later life. It offers useful advice on protecting consumer rights when you're buying services.

☎ **0113 389 3000**

information and advice **0113 389 3004**

email [ageconcern@leedssilversifiers.net](mailto:ageconcern@leedssilversifiers.net)

[www.ageconcernleeds.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernleeds.org.uk)

### ASiST (Actively Seeking Independence Support Team)

☎ **0113 231 1125**

minicom **0113 230 82889**

email [assist@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:assist@leeds.gov.uk)

### Citizens Advice Bureau

Offices located throughout the city. Provides free advice face-to-face including advice about consumer protection. To find out where your nearest office is call **0113 223 4400** or check the website [www.leedscab.org.uk](http://www.leedscab.org.uk) or [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

### Disability Law Service

National charity providing legal and consumer protection advice to disabled people.

☎ **020 7791 9800**

email [advice@dls.org.uk](mailto:advice@dls.org.uk)

[www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)

**Local Government Ombudsman** will look into complaints about services run by the local authority if you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint.

☎ **0300 061 0614**

[www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint](http://www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint)

## Help with mediation and resolving disputes

### Citizen's Advice Bureau

☎ **0113 223 4400**

[www.leedscab.org.uk](http://www.leedscab.org.uk) or

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

Home visits may be available for people with mobility difficulties.

### Patient Advocacy Liaison Service (PALS)

Can help with complaints about a health service provider.

☎ **0113 206 6261** or **0113 206 7168**

## General information about social care

### Free to Live Leeds

Leeds Peer Support Group People who use personal budgets offer informal advice based on their own experiences of choosing and buying services and support.

☎ **0113 231 1125**

email [info@freetoliveleeds.org](mailto:info@freetoliveleeds.org)

[www.freetoliveleeds.org](http://www.freetoliveleeds.org)

### Leeds Centre for Integrated Living

provides information and support to help disabled and older people in Leeds live more independently.

☎ **0113 231 1125**

email [leedscil@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leedscil@leeds.gov.uk)

[www.leedscil.org.uk](http://www.leedscil.org.uk)

