



Your Care, Your Choice

**A guide to self-directed
support and personal budgets**



*Working for
Warwickshire*

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/yourcareyourchoice

Introduction

The way that people receive social care has changed recently. One of the main changes is the introduction of self-directed support.

This leaflet provides you with information on how social care support can be arranged using the self-directed support process. The new arrangements allow you to have more flexibility and choice in arranging the services you need, for example, who provides them and when they are provided. We recognise that you are in the best position to know what kind of support will enable you to live as independently as possible. It's your care... and your choice.

We have to make sure that we help those people with the greatest need for support. To do this we use the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) eligibility criteria. We only arrange support for those people with critical or substantial needs.

Information on eligibility for adult social care can be found on our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/eligibility

Or in our leaflet: Adult Social Care in Warwickshire. Copies can be ordered by calling: 01926 410410.



Contents:

	Page
What is self-directed support?	3
Steps to self-directed support	3
Step 1: Completing a supported assessment questionnaire	4
Step 2: Developing “My Support Plan”	6
Step 3: Agreeing “My Support Plan”	7
Step 4: How do I use my personal budget?	8
• Direct payments	8
• A personal managed budget	10
• A combination budget (a mixture of a direct payment and a managed budget)	10
• Individual service funds	11
Step 5: How much will it cost me?	12
Step 6: Keeping records and spending the personal budget (if received as a direct payment)	12
Step 7: Reviewing	14
Customers stories and their views on using personal budgets	15

What is self-directed support?

Self-directed support is about you being in control of the assistance you need to live the life you choose.

Self-directed support is the way that social care in Warwickshire is delivered. It involves identifying and allocating a “personal budget” - an upfront sum of money to meet your social care needs.

If you have been assessed as being eligible for social care support, or have been a customer in our reablement home care service and have been assessed as needing continuing support, you will be offered a personal budget.

Steps to self-directed support

There are seven main steps to help you be in control of your support:

1. Completing a supported assessment questionnaire
2. Developing a support plan
3. Agreeing the support plan
4. Using a personal budget
5. Paying towards a personal budget
6. Keeping records
7. Reviewing

Step 1:

Completing a supported assessment questionnaire

The questionnaire called “My Assessment” helps us to find out:

- if you are eligible for social care support
- about your day-to-day life and
- your social care needs.

We will arrange to visit you to help you complete the assessment. If you want, you can involve a family member, carer, friend or someone else who is important in your life to help with this too.

You can tell us about the changes you would like to make, the things you would like to stay the same, and what you would like to achieve.

It may be that you need some support to make decisions about what you would like to achieve. If you are unable to make your own decisions about your needs, we will make sure we meet your best interests.

After we have completed the assessment we will look at what you have told us and work out an estimated amount of money you may need to pay for your support. We call this your estimated personal budget. This will help you as a guide to plan your support.

We also want to support carers. We will assess someone who regularly cares for you, for example, a family member, friend, neighbour etc. provided they are not being paid to care for you.

A carer who provides regular and substantial support to you can be offered a separate carer's assessment, which looks into their own needs as a carer. They may be able to access services in their own right as a result of this assessment.



Step 2:

Developing “My Support Plan”

The information you provide in the “My Assessment” questionnaire is used to calculate your estimated personal budget. How you wish to use this money will be written in a plan called “My Support Plan”. This describes the support you want to meet your social care needs and how you plan to achieve them. This must also keep you safe and well, and be legal. It will include:

- how having support will help you achieve your plans and outcomes
- how having support will help you be as independent as possible
- how having support will help you keep safe, healthy and well
- any help you need to organise your support
- what you will spend the money on, and
- evidence that your plan is within your personal budget.

A social care practitioner will meet with you to help you with your plan. You can also have a friend, family member or a trustee to help you as well. The final amount of money is only confirmed when your support plan is agreed. This is called your “personal budget”.

Step 3:

Agreeing “My Support Plan”

Your personal budget must be spent on meeting your eligible social care support needs and the outcomes in your support plan. You can use your personal budget on many different things within the amount of budget available to you, for example:

- employing someone to support you in your day-to-day life (we call this person a personal assistant)
- buying support from a care agency
- meeting other people, perhaps at a local club
- keeping well by having regular exercise, perhaps swimming, or being part of a local walking group
- having help to run your home
- having a break so that your family carer can have some time off or
- learning a new skill or maintaining an existing skill.

Often talking about this with someone else can help you think about the different possibilities.

If we cannot agree over your support plan, or the amount of funding, the plan will need to be reviewed. We will discuss with you ways we can agree your support plan, but if you still disagree with our decision, you will be given details of how you may appeal.

Step 4:

How do I use my personal budget?

There are a number of ways you can receive your personal budget:

✓ **Direct payments**

Direct payments provide greater choice and flexibility in the way you arrange the support you want, and you can include things we (the Council) do not organise and directly pay for.

Choosing direct payments allows you to receive your personal budget as a cash payment, which you can use to buy services that meet your assessed needs.

You will receive the money every four weeks paid into your designated bank account to pay for your support.

We will explore with you ways to make managing direct payment as easy as possible.

If you have capacity to agree to direct payments but you do not want to manage it alone, you may wish to discuss with us about the different ways you could manage the money and arrange the support. There may be other ways the money could be received for you. For example, as a:

- Trust – this is usually a small group of people who manage the direct payment on your behalf and can include anyone you agree to, such as members of your family.

- A Managed Account – we could agree that someone, or an organisation, can receive the money for you and pay the bills on your behalf. You would be accountable for the way the direct payment is managed and for arranging the services.

If you support someone who does not have the capacity to agree to direct payments you may be able to act as a Suitable Person. If you are appointed as a Suitable Person, you will be accountable for receiving and managing the direct payment. The law tells us who can be appointed as a Suitable Person and we must follow a process to understand who can act as this person.

There are only a few things you cannot use your direct payment for:

- you cannot purchase long-term residential care but you can take short breaks
- you cannot buy a service from us, as the council is not allowed to sell their services in this way
- you cannot use it for health-related services i.e. dental visits
- you cannot use it for your own personal bills i.e. personal clothes, food, household bills, rent, and mortgage
- you cannot use it for gambling, buying alcohol or cigarettes
- the law tells us you cannot pay someone who lives in the same household, unless we agree, and
- you cannot use it for anything that is illegal or does not keep you safe and well.

In Warwickshire, we have a direct payment support service. Here you can access support, information and advice. Please ask us for the direct payment support service contact details.

✓ **A personal managed budget**

You may decide that you prefer not to receive your personal budget as money, and instead you want us (the Council) to make your arrangements for you.

If you choose to do this, we will use the money to pay for your support. Your support will be limited to the organisations that we contract with, and the services we provide.

If we agree with you that residential care is the best way to meet your support needs, this will be arranged as a managed budget for legal reasons.

✓ **A combination budget (a mixture of a direct payment and a managed budget)**

You may decide that you want a direct payment for some of your support, but you want your social care practitioner to arrange some things for you - we call this a combination budget.

✓ Individual service funds

Once you know what your personal budget amount is you may decide that you want to use an “individual service fund” instead of managing the money and organising services yourself. An individual service fund is where you choose a provider who will receive the money on your behalf and provide you with a service(s).

We will work with you to choose a provider that will help you meet the needs and outcomes agreed in your support plan.

If you agree, we will give your personal budget (some, or all of it, depending on what has been agreed) to the provider on your behalf. The provider can only use your budget for your support and must account to you. This gives you some flexibility and control as you agree with the provider the exact detail of your support.



Step 5:

How much will it cost me?

We will carry out a financial assessment with you to see how much money you can afford to pay towards your support. Depending on the outcome of the financial assessment, you may be asked to pay towards your personal budget to buy the support you need.

You will be told how much you need to pay before being given your personal budget.

Step 6:

Keeping records and spending the personal budget (if received as a direct payment)

If you are going to receive direct payments, we advise you to open a separate bank account in your name, or the name of the person you have agreed will help you with managing the money.

We will advise you how to keep simple records and how to get the types of help and support to make things easier for you.

At first, we will need to look at your bank statements for the separate account for direct payments every three months, to help you manage and keep on top of things, and we will write and request these from you.

If you find that you are spending more money each month than you have coming in, you must tell us. We can help you to find out why. You may need to spend your money in a different way to meet your agreed outcomes. However, we cannot give you more money if you run out.

We will look at how much you have in your personal budget. If you do not spend the entire personal budget, we will ask you to pay back anything above the agreed reserve amount.

We support the flexibility of personal budgets and we will allow you to build up an amount of money to help you to plan for such things as your employer responsibilities and achieving your agreed outcomes. Usually around eight weeks of funding would be acceptable. Anything saved above this must be agreed during your support plan or review.



Step 7:

Reviewing

We arrange review meetings with you, the purpose of these review meetings is to look at your support plan and see if your support is still helping you to achieve your outcomes. We will look at what you want to change, or keep the same, and check that the allocated funding is meeting your needs. A large underspend may trigger a review to ensure the resource relates to your support need.

However, you can tell us at any time if you feel your needs have changed.

Your personal budget could be at risk if you break the rules and spend the money on something illegal e.g. gambling, or something outside of the agreed outcomes. We will work with you to stay within the rules and discuss alternative arrangements to maximise the choice available to you.

You will only continue to receive a personal budget if you are eligible for social care support. If your circumstances change and you are no longer eligible you will be supported to close down your personal budget responsibilities.

Customers' stories and their views on using personal budgets

Mrs A has used her personal budget support to help her stay at home rather than being moved into residential care. She didn't want to go into residential care but the Mental Health Team felt that the risk and her mental health problems were too great for her to remain at home without appropriate support.

With support from her Community Psychiatric Nurse she was given a personal budget to purchase support which has enabled her to remain at home, keep her mental health stable and reduce risk, which were the outcomes she and the team wanted to achieve.

“Direct payments are fantastic for people with mental health conditions. They give them the choice and flexibility to have the kind of support they need to live their lives fully.” *Community Psychiatric Nurse*

Mrs E aged 92 and her partner had been using their motorcycle and sidecar for many years. She first got on a motorcycle at the age of 12. Unfortunately Mrs E's independence and psychological well-being were greatly reduced after she experienced a stroke. Mrs E's occupational therapists got in touch with a company to install a portable gantry hoist to get her back into the sidecar enabling Mrs E to carry on with her passion of motorcycles. The hoist was funded through direct payments.

Before taking up his personal budget, Mr B's parents reported "he came in from the day centre, I asked him what he did and he said, 'Nothing'. He went up to his bedroom, stayed in his bedroom, he'd got no life."

Since taking up his personal budget Mr B's life has changed dramatically. He used his budget to employ his own personal assistant (PA), who is an old family friend.

Mr B is able to tell his PA exactly what he wants to do each day and where he wants to go. It also allows him to take part in leisure activities that he enjoys such as going to the cinema, playing golf and swimming.

"I am doing more things than I have ever done before. I can go out with my PA when I choose and do the things that I want to do on that day. I go to the farm and work with the animals - I love it." *Mr B*

Mrs C is 85 years old, lives alone in her own home and has no main carer. She needed help and support to carry out her personal and practical needs, getting around generally, and so that she could keep in contact with her local church and its members.

We agreed a support plan with Mrs C using a combination budget. The direct payments enabled her to employ a PA of her choice that she felt comfortable with to provide her personal care; meal preparation; carry out household and laundry tasks; manage finances; and support Mrs C in attending local church meetings.

“More people should try direct payments - they don’t know what they are missing. We have the freedom to choose who comes into our home.” Mrs C

Mr D, a young mental health customer, manages his personal budget as a direct payment. He was anxious about managing the money and expressed he would prefer a voucher. So we sent him vouchers to pay for his support stopping his anxiety with handling the cash and offering choice and control. Direct payments can be paid in many ways to suit the person.



Scan the code with your smartphone to find information about our other services:

Assess your social care needs

Information and advice on eligibility, having an assessment and personal budgets.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/yoursocialcareneed



Helping you to live at home

Here you can find information and advice on: home care; supported living for people with disabilities; equipment and adaptations; and telecare.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/helptoliveathome



Choices if you can't live in your current home

Information and advice on residential care and extra care housing.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/cannotliveathome



Your recovery

Information and advice on: reablement; leaving hospital and occupational therapy.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/yourrecovery



Support for carers

Information and advice on carers support services.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/carers



To scan the codes you will need to download a QR reader app to your smartphone from your app store. A charge may be applied by your network provider.

For further information

If you require further information about our services please contact Warwickshire County Council on 01926 410410 in the first instance.

Compliments, comments and complaints

If you have any comments or complaints about our services, please let us know by contacting:

Customer Relations Team

P.O. Box 9, Shire Hall

Warwick

CV34 4RR

Tel: 01926 410410

Information in other formats

If this information is difficult to understand, we can provide it in another format, for example, in large print, on audio tape, easy read, or in another language. Please contact the Interpreting and Translation Unit on 01926 410410.

Customers can also contact the Coventry and Warwickshire Sign language Interpreting service for the information to be translated into Sign language:

Text: 024 76229667 Voice: 024 76520378

Fax: 024 7622 6326 Email: office@cwslis.co.uk

Are we getting it right?

We are interested to know what you think of our information. For any feedback please contact:

Promotions and Publications

Saltisford Office Park

Ansell Way

Warwick

CV34 4UL

Email: promotionsandpublication@warwickshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01926 410410

SSAL725

November 2011



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

133