

Putting Essex People First



A Guide to Personal Budgets and Self-Directed Support



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Putting Essex People First is our commitment to providing social care in a different way. We will focus on what you want to achieve rather than simply finding out about your needs.

Self-directed support recognises that you are the expert on your own needs and is the way that you will be able to manage your own care and support in order to achieve your desired outcomes and improve the quality of your life. It is about making services more individual or personalised to meet your needs and means that you will have more choice, control and independence.

How can I apply for Self-directed Support?

You will need to call Contact Essex on 0845 603 7630. You will be given advice and information and asked some questions to find out if you are eligible for Self-directed support.

We may be able to arrange some temporary support or reablement services to help you if you are eligible, but if we feel that your needs require longer term support we will arrange for a full assessment to be carried out.

Will I automatically get a Personal Budget?

No. We will always try and meet your needs using either universal services such as advice, support and guidance, reablement or technology. We will look at offering you a Personal Budget only if we cannot meet your needs in any other way.

What is Reablement?

Reablement is about working with you in your own home to support you to re-learn how to carry out the tasks you need for daily living. We will work with you to help you gain the maximum degree of independence and will support you in practical ways to help you regain mobility, confidence and life skills, such as cooking.

How long will my Reablement last?

We will provide a reablement service for up to 6 weeks from the time you are assessed as being able to benefit from it.

Will I have to pay for Reablement?

No. Reablement is a free service.

What happens at Assessment?

If you need longer term support we will carry out a full assessment. You will be supported to fill in a self-assessment questionnaire which will ask you questions about different areas of your life such as maintaining your health and wellbeing; accessing the community and your relationships. We will work with you to understand both your needs and to identify the goals that you would like to achieve in your life. You will be given a copy of the assessment report detailing your identified goals and needs for your own records.

What is a Personal Budget?

A Personal Budget is made up of social care money and is paid to you to help you meet the outcomes you have identified in your agreed support plan. It does not include money from any other source such as the Independent Living Fund or Supporting People etc.

Who can have a Personal Budget?

We can only meet needs that are assessed as being either critical or substantial, in line with the Fair Access to Care Services Criteria (FACS). This is national guidance published by the Department of Health. We will look at all means of meeting your needs, including services such as information advice and guidance, and where appropriate telecare. It is only if we can not meet your needs in any other way that we will consider a Personal Budget.

What about money from other sources?

In addition to your Personal Budget you may be entitled to money from other sources such as:

- **Independent Living fund** – this is money to help disabled people over 16 and under 65 live in the community
- **Disabled Facilities Grant** – this can pay for changes to your house, like a stair lift or a wet room. We can organise a specialist assessment to advise how these adaptations might be arranged and more information can be found in our leaflet ‘Adapting your Home’.
- **Integrated Community Equipment Services** – this pays for equipment you might need, like a raised toilet seat or a grab rail.
- **Access to Work** – this can pay for the cost of workplace adjustments to help a disabled person take up or retain paid work.
- **Supporting People funding** – this is spent on ‘housing related support’ to help people live independently in their own home. It can pay for things like help to develop life skills such as understanding a tenancy agreement or cooking, which will help vulnerable people to be able to live independently.

Your assessor or support planner will be able to advise you about what other money you may be entitled to and this can be added to the amount you receive from us as a Personal Budget so that you can develop your support plan against the total amount of money you receive for your support.

It is important to remember that each source of funding has its own rules and reviewing arrangements and therefore you may be reviewed by more than one organisation.

How much money will I get?

The answers given on the self-assessment questionnaire will be used to work out the amount of money available to support your needs.

This process is called the resource allocation system (RAS) and is designed to ensure that people receive a fair allocation of social care resources according to their level of need.

You will be told how much your budget will be early on in the process so that you can start to plan how you might want to spend the money to meet your needs and make changes to improve your quality of life.

Contributing to the cost of your support

You may have to contribute towards the cost of your support but it will depend on your financial circumstances. We will carry out a financial assessment to see if you have to make a contribution.

What is a Support Plan?

A support plan is a detailed plan that tells us about you as an individual and how you would like to use your budget to support your needs. It also shows us your aspirations, goals and the outcomes that you wish to achieve to improve the quality of your life.

It should be as individual as you are and as long as it shows us clearly what support you need and how you will use your budget to meet these needs, you can decide what your support plan will look like.

Here are some examples:

- Write your ideas down on paper
- Use a computer to produce a document
- Make a poster with pictures and words
- Make a PowerPoint presentation or a video

You could also include photographs of the people, places and things that are important in your life – the choice is yours.

What needs to be in a Support Plan?

We need to make sure before your support plan is agreed that it clearly shows the following (with any help you need):

- What is important to you?
- What do you want to change or achieve?
- How will you be supported?
- How will you use your personal budget?
- How will your support be managed?
- How will you stay in control of your life?
- What are you going to do to make this plan happen?

You also need to include a contingency plan that can be put into action should something unexpected happen. This plan needs to tell us how your care needs would be met in any emergency or unforeseen situation, for example if your carer suddenly became ill.

The support plan must also show any risks attached to it and how these will be managed.

Who can help me?

There are a number of different people who can help you with your support plan; it is your choice to decide who you would like to help you.

Examples include:

- **Self completion** – many people are happy to use the information available and create their own plan.
- **Help from a family member, friend or informal carer** – people who know you well will be able to offer good support and advice.
- **Support from ECC staff** – this can be given during a ‘one to one’ interview; a person centred planning meeting or family group conferencing.
- **Support from an advocate or independent organisation** – there are various organisations that will be able to offer you support, their contact details are given at the end of this leaflet.

How will my Support Plan be managed?

When your support plan has been agreed you will be able to choose the way in which you would like your plan to be managed.

Here are the different options:

- **Personal Budget Managed** – if you choose this option, you can ask Essex County Council to look after your budget for you and provide you with the goods or services that you would like. You will only be able to choose from care services such as care and support at home, respite care, meals services or day services.
- **Personal Budget Direct** – this option allows you to manage the budget yourself and will allow you to choose where, when and how you purchase your goods and services. You will need to shop around and look at the various options and make comparisons between the different goods and services that are available. If you prefer, you can also ask a third party to look after your budget for you. This could be a family member or friend; an independent broker or an advocacy and support organisation, their contact details are given at the end of this leaflet.
- **Personal Budget Administered** – if you are not able to manage your budget yourself you can ask a third party to look after it for you. There are a range of options, such as an independent service broker or independent service provider. It is also possible to have your money managed for you using a trust or an individual service fund. Whatever method is right for you the money will still be used to obtain the goods and services set out in your support plan.

How can I use my Personal Budget?

Your Personal Budget can be used flexibly but only in a way that meets your agreed needs and outcomes as shown in your support plan.

Here are some examples:

- **A personal assistant instead of a carer from us** – if you choose to employ your own staff you will be put in contact with the organisation Independent Living Advocacy (ILA Essex) who will be able to give you the correct advice, support and information about your legal responsibilities as an employer. You cannot routinely employ a member of your family to support you except in exceptional circumstances which have been agreed by us.
- **A care agency of your choice** – we recommend that your care is purchased from a provider that is registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) who inspect the standards provided by care agencies to make sure that they meet national minimum standards. Contact details are given at the end of this leaflet.
- **A Community activity** – such as going to a club or an educational activity like going to college.
- **An item of equipment** – you may wish to purchase an item of special equipment to meet an outcome shown in your support plan.
- **Complementary treatments** – such as chiropody, physiotherapy or occupational therapy to complement any ongoing health treatment you may be receiving.
- **Transport** – to visit family and friends or attend a leisure or educational activity.

You may not use your Personal Budget for any illegal or unlawful purpose.

Some further Questions

Are Personal Budgets taxable?

No, because the money is for your own support needs. It is important to keep your Personal Budget money in a separate bank account so you can demonstrate that the money has been used to meet the outcomes in your support plan if asked about it by HM Revenue and Customs.

Will a Personal Budget affect my benefits?

No. Your benefits will not be affected by your Personal Budget.

Will I have to pay any of the money back?

We normally allow people to carry forward up to 8 weeks worth of their Personal Budget from one year to the next; although it is possible to carry forward more if that has been agreed in your support plan. Over and above this amount we will ask you for repayment but we will discuss this with you.

Do I need to keep records?

Yes. If you have a Personal Budget then you will need to keep receipts of your purchases and retain bank statements. We may ask to look at these records when we do reviews of your support. We will discuss this with you as part of the process for setting up your Personal Budget.

What happens if my needs change?

If there is a change in your needs so that you require either more or less support, please let us know as soon as possible. We may need to review your support with you.

Are there any policies setting out your approach to Putting Essex People First?

Yes. We have developed a full set of policies to cover all aspects of our approach to self-directed support.

What do the policies do?

Each of the policy documents sets our approach to a particular aspect of Putting Essex People First, ranging from a policy that deals with our whole approach to Putting Essex People First, to documents dealing with specific items such as the Resource Allocation System (RAS), Support Planning, and how to get Support Plans validated or authorised. They also contain an overview of the legislation we are operating within and how our approach fits with national guidance and best practice.

Where can I get copies of the policy documents?

All our policy documents relating to Putting Essex People First can be found on the internet at www.essex.gov.uk/pepf

Useful Information:

Advocacy and support organisations available in Essex to help you:

Independent Living Advocacy Ltd. (ILA)

Offers face to face advocacy and employment advice

Unit 4, Whitelands,
Terling Road, Hatfield Peverel,
Essex CM3 2AG

Tel: 01245 380888
Minicom: 01245 382093
Email: enquiries@ilaessex.co.uk
Website: www.ilaessex.com

Direct Payment Screening Service (DPSS)

Offers telephone advice and information on direct payments

Ground Floor, 1 Russell Way,
Chelmsford, CM1 3AA

Tel: 01245 392312
Email: dpss@ecdpc.co.uk

Essex PASS (Personal Assistant Support Scheme)

Offers support and advice on managing direct payments and provides payroll services

Ground Floor, 1 Russell Way,
Chelmsford, CM1 3AA

Tel: 01245 392320
Minicom: 01245 392302
Email: essexpass@ecdpc.co.uk
Website: www.ecdp.co.uk/essexpass

Direct Payments User Network (DPUN)

A peer support network – main meeting every 2 months

Unit 12, Whitelands Business Centre,
Terling Road, Hatfield Peverel,
Chelmsford, CM3 2AG

Tel: 01245 382288

Email: enquiries@dpun.org.uk

Commission for Social Care Inspectorate

To find a registered Care Agency

Tel: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.csci.org.uk

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Essex County Council Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing

You can contact us in the following ways:

By post:

Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing

PO Box 297

County Hall

Chelmsford

Essex CM1 1YS

By telephone:

0845 603 7630

By fax:

0845 7585 592

Visit our website:

www.essex.gov.uk

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and/or made available in alternative formats, on request

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