

# Self-Directed Support

## Living the life you want

The whole point of Self-Directed Support is that people can be in charge of their support so they can live the life they choose.

This factsheet tells you about ways that you can make the most of your Personal Budget so you can live your life your way.



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## The basic facts

Whoever you are and whatever support you need, you are a citizen - someone with the right to live your life as you choose.

Everyone is different - an individual.

**Most people, though, want some of these things in life:**

- a nice place to live
- to feel safe
- to have fun in their spare time
- a job or something interesting to do in the day
- to be part of their community
- friends and relationships
- holidays.

You can use your Personal Budget to get the things in life that are important to you. A Personal Budget is not about getting services, it's about getting the support you need to live the life you want.

## More information about living the life you want

You don't have to spend your Personal Budget on traditional services such as residential or domiciliary care, a day centre place or a specialist placement.

**You can spend the Budget in creative ways that can often be very cost-effective:**

- **Personal assistants (PA)** – someone you choose to support just you. They can help you at home or in the community in the way you choose. A PA could help you, for example, to get involved in community activities or go out in the evenings and weekends.
- **Community support** – think about what your friends, family and neighbours can do and use your money to pay expenses or reward them in other ways. For example, if you want a lift to and from home football games, and support to get in and out of the ground, you could buy

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a season ticket for another supporter. This would be cheaper than paying for support from an agency.

- **Live-in support** – find someone to live with you who can offer you help as well – in exchange, perhaps, for free accommodation.
- **Get involved in the community** – use your money to join in community groups, pay membership fees or help you get support while you're there – anything from art classes to gym membership.
- **Housing** – move house or adapt your home so that it better suits you and the people you want to live with. You could even use some of your money for a deposit on a house.
- **Work** – use your money to find a job and get support while you are at work if find you need it. For example, if someone wants to learn how to be a decorator, they might use their support money to pay a local decorator to teach them on the job.
- **Equipment** – you could buy specialist equipment or perhaps tools of the trade you want to practice. Someone with a respiratory problem used part of their budget to buy an air conditioning unit so they could breathe better when the weather is hot. This helps them stay at home and reduces the number of times in a year when they have to go to hospital.
- **Skills** – use your money to learn new skills and improve your independence. One person paid for somebody to teach them how to cook so that they didn't have to pay for someone to come in and cook for them any more.
- **Shared costs** – get together with people who share the same needs or interests. For example, three friends who all like working outdoors, club together to pay someone to support them in work as volunteers for the National Trust.
- **Take a break** – people have used some of their money to get support to go on holiday, rather than using traditional respite care.
- **Setting up a business** – some people have used their budgets to get support to start up a business based on their skills and experience.
- **Supported living** – support to live in your own home.
- **Therapists and specialist** – for example, speech therapists, counsellors, massage, aromatherapy.

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# An example

## Josephine

Josephine, a ‘young, retired’ woman, worked as a graphic designer until 2000, when her rheumatoid arthritis meant she could no longer carry on working.

She now has an Individual Budget and she says: ‘It has changed my life – I thought that I was lucky having a neighbour to help me but I always felt beholden – now I feel liberated. Having an Individual Budget has transformed my life – it has given me my power back and put me back in control.

**The initial allocation was for £156 per week, but this soon proved not to be enough and it was increased to £324 per week. Josephine uses the money for:**

- massage
- acupuncture
- pedicures
- employing three Personal Assistants who provide an average of 30 hours support a week. They work flexibly according to Josephine’s needs – personal care, housework and meal preparation. Two of them drive and are able to drive Josephine to do her shopping.

‘It’s so good to choose what you want when shopping and now I can go to Chichester or Brighton if I want to.

What I really like about having an Individual Budget is having the flexibility to spend the money on what I think fit. Before this happened I hardly ever went out and had begun to feel really trapped.’

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# There is a lot of information about Self-Directed Support on In Control's website: [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

## Here is a selection of things that tell you more:

Free to download from: [www.in-control.org.uk/stories](http://www.in-control.org.uk/stories)

**Stories** of how many people have organised their support.

Free to view or you can buy a copy from:

In Control Support Centre, Carillon House, Chapel Lane, Wythall, B47 6JX or [www.in-control.org.uk/shop](http://www.in-control.org.uk/shop)

**How to be in control** DVD or view on: [www.in-control.org.uk/dvd](http://www.in-control.org.uk/dvd)

Printed publications for sale at:

In Control Support Centre, Carillon House, Chapel Lane, Wythall, B47 6JX or [www.in-control.org.uk/shop](http://www.in-control.org.uk/shop)

**The Essential Family Guide: how to help your family member be in control** Caroline Tomlinson

**Keys to Citizenship: a guide to getting good support for people with learning disabilities** Simon Duffy

### About the **in Control and me** project

A three-year project to produce accessible information for everyone who wants to direct their own support.

The project has worked with individuals and families to decide what information should be produced. This information will reach over 11,000 people a year through the national learning disability helpline. The In Control website will also have an online advice area.

More information: Lisa Dunne: 07984 111315.

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