

Direct payments factsheet 13

Personalisation, self-directed support and self assessment

This factsheet explains the different areas of personalisation of social care and self-directed support.

Personalisation

Personalisation of services is becoming a key part of many government policies, not just social care. It is a general term used to describe attempts to make sure that every person who receives care and support should be supported to shape their own lives and the type of services they receive. This should apply to both people who have support funded by councils as well as people who pay for their own support. This should result in people having personalised, or individualised, services.

Ultimately, all individuals accessing social care should have as much control as possible resulting in them receiving services that they have designed themselves and that meet their need. The initiatives covered in this factsheet are methods that Government and others are using to try to make services more personalised. Personalisation of services is a positive move, but it is important to ensure that any changes are properly implemented and resourced. For personalised support to work for deafblind people, it is crucial to take account of specialist support needs and their cost.

Self-directed support

Self-directed support is a general term used to describe new approaches in the social care system that put individual service users in control of the services they receive. This should enable individuals to make the decisions about the support they receive and manage their own risks. The main aim of putting individuals in control is to help people to design their own personalised support. Direct payments, personal budgets, individual budgets and self-assessment are all examples of self-directed support as they all promote the individual as the primary decision-maker.

Direct payments

Direct payments are a different way to get the support that people have been assessed as needing. This is one way for people to have more control over the way they meet their needs. Social services can give people money as a direct payment instead of providing a service. People then have to use this money to pay for the support they have been assessed as needing. For basic information on direct payments, see 'Direct payments: an introduction'.

Personal budgets

Having a personal budget should mean that individuals will know how much social care money has been allocated by their council to pay for the support they need. Government is now working towards personal budgets for every individual who receives services from social services. Putting People First is a Government document that states how Government departments have agreed to working towards personal budgets for all social care users.

It will be possible for people to take their personal budget as a direct payment or let it be managed by their council. People should be able to decide how this money is spent as long as it meets agreed aims. People are able to receive their personal budget (or part of it) as a direct payment. People may have more freedom about deciding who supports them.

Individual budgets

Individual budgets were piloted in 13 council areas from April 2006 to December 2007. The pilots aimed to further develop some aspects of direct payments. Individual budgets would work on the same principle as personal budgets. This means that individuals would know how much money was allocated to them for their support. People can receive direct payments as part of their individual budget.

Individual budgets are different to personal budgets as they would include different sources of funding, not just social care funding. The pilots tried to include these funding streams: Social Care funding, Supporting People funding, Independent Living Fund, Disabled Facilities Grant, Integrated Community Equipment Services and Access to Work. Again, individuals should be at the centre of decision-making about how the budget is spent. Government is currently processing the evaluation of the pilots.

Self assessment

Self-assessment enables people to assess their own care needs or to complete an assessment for someone else. It is a positive development that focus is placed on allowing people a space to communicate their needs. However, it is important to remember that a deafblind person is still entitled to a specialist assessment of their needs. No change has been made to the underlying community care legislation so deafblind people are still entitled to a specialist

assessment by a specialist in deafblindness. You may find a specialist assessment useful, especially if your needs have changed. If you would like a specialist assessment, ask for one. For more information on your rights to a specialist assessment, see the Sense factsheets on deafblind people's rights and entitlements.

In Control

In Control was set up as a social enterprise in 2003. The main aim of In Control's work is to set up systems for self-directed support and personalised services. In Control provide tools and information that are aimed at helping individuals to assess their own needs, to receive and manage an individual budget and to take control of their own support. This includes the Resource Allocation System (see below). In Control is also working with local councils to help them to develop new systems to develop self-directed support and personalisation.

Resource Allocation System (RAS)

The Resource Allocation System is a new tool that some councils are starting to use to decide how much money they allocate to pay for individuals' personalised support. This involves a questionnaire that asks questions about an individual's needs. A number of points are then awarded for different levels of need for each question. When the process is complete, all the points are added up and individuals are told the total amount of money that has been allocated to pay for the support they need. The questionnaire does not look at the number of hours of support that individuals need.

Currently each local council is developing its own RAS questionnaire. This means that the questions may well be different for each council. Also the amount of points allocated to each question may be different. There have been some difficulties reported by deafblind people and their families about the amount of money they are allocated through a RAS questionnaire. In some cases the RAS questionnaire does not take account of the specialist needs of deafblind people or the cost of specialist support. In some cases, the maximum amount that can be allocated by the RAS is not enough to meet the assessed needs of some deafblind people. If you are not allocated enough money to meet your needs, you should challenge the outcome. There are different steps you could take to challenge the decision:

- tell your social worker or care manager that you are not happy;
- ask for support from an independent advocate;
- make a complaint using your council's complaints procedure;
- if you are not happy with how your council deals with your complaint;
- complain to the Local Government Ombudsman;
- in extreme cases, you may want to take legal action.

Valuing People Now

Valuing People Now should be published by the Department of Health in October 2008. It sets out the priorities for the provision of services for people with learning disabilities over the years 2008–11. The draft document set out five main priorities for this period including personalisation.

Brokers

Brokers can help people choose the best options for meeting their assessed needs. There are a small number of brokers in England, though it is expected that this number will grow. Currently, it is not possible to recommend brokers who have knowledge of deafblindness or sensory impairments. If you think you could benefit from a broker, ask social services. You may like to ask whether the broker is independent and how the broker will be paid for.

Advice and Information for people who pay for their own support (self-funders)

Government is putting increased focus on supporting people who pay for their care with their own money. Self-funders should be given support by councils to locate services that will meet their needs.

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Resources:

Putting People First (December 2007)

The Department of Health,
Richmond House,
79 Whitehall,
London, SW1A 2NS.
Telephone: 020 7210 4850
Email: dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk
Web: www.dh.gov.uk

Individual budgets pilots

Care Service Improvement Partnership (CSIP)
Web: www.individualbudgets.csip.org.uk

In Control

4 Swan Courtyard,
Coventry Road,
Birmingham, B26 1BU.
Telephone: 0121 708 3031
Email: web_enquiries@in-control.org.uk
Web: www.in-control.org.uk

Personalisation Network

Care Service Improvement Partnership (CSIP)
Telephone: 0113 2545127
Email: ask@csip.org.uk
Web: www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisation

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771,
Coventry, CV4 0EH.
Telephone: 0845 602 1983 or 02476821960
Fax: 02476 820 001
Email: advice@lgo.org.uk
Web: www.lgo.org.uk