



Personal budgets for special educational needs

This information is about what you can do if your child has special educational needs, or a disability (SEND) and you are unhappy about the help they are getting.

What is a Personal Budget?

A Personal Budget for SEN is money identified to pay for support specified in an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) for a child or young person with SEN. It can include funds from the Local Authority for education and social care and from the health service.

There are four ways you can use a personal budget:

1. Sometimes the Local Authority, the school or college will look after the Personal Budget for you. This is called an Arrangement or a Notional Budget.
2. Sometimes you can receive money directly to manage all or part of the Personal Budget yourself. This is called a Direct Payment.
3. Sometimes you can opt to have someone else to manage the Personal Budget for you. This is called a Third Party Arrangement.
4. Sometimes you can have a mixture of some or all of these arrangements.

Who can have a Personal Budget?

Parents of a child with an EHCP, or a young person with an EHCP, can request a Personal Budget either during the drafting of an EHC plan or once the EHCP has been issued and is under review.

You do not need to have an EHCP to get Personal Budgets for social and health care, but once you have an EHCP, or one is being prepared, you can request budgets for all three areas of support. You must have an EHCP to get a Personal Budget for special educational provision (section F of the EHCP).



You can see information about [Personal Budgets on the Reading SEND Local Offer website](#).

A young person with an EHCP can ask for their own Personal Budget after the end of the school year in which they become 16.

Sometimes the local authority or the health authority may not agree to a Personal Budget. If the local authority refuses a personal budget for special educational provision, it must tell you why. You cannot appeal to the SEND tribunal over this refusal.

What can a Personal Budget be used for?

Personal Budgets can be used only to fund the support set out in an EHC plan. This must be agreed by the Local Authority for education and care support, and by the health authority for the health provision.

A Personal Budget for special educational provision can only be used to deliver provision specified in section F of the EHCP. It can be a useful means of commissioning specific support for a child, particularly if that support is not commonly provided from within the school or local authority services. It enables parents/carers to identify and engage a provider of their choice. This could be, for example, for the delivery of speech and language support, occupational therapy, or other therapeutic provision necessary for the child's education. Direct payments can be used for special educational provision in a school or college only if the school or college agree. The Local Authority can refuse a direct payment for special educational provision if it would make things worse for other children and young people with an EHCP, or if it would be an inefficient way to pay for services.

You can find out what can be included in a Personal Budget in the [Reading SEND Local Offer](#). You can also ask Reading IASS for SEND for more information about this.

A Personal Budget for educational provision cannot cover payment for a place at the school or college. A Personal Budget can include any top up funding (known as Element 3 funding). It can also include support that is managed by the school or college – but only if the Headteacher or Principal agree.

You can find out more about what can be included in a Personal Budget in Sections 9.110 to 9.118 of [the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25e](#).

What is the difference between a Personal Budget and a Direct Payment?

A Personal Budget shows you what money there is to make some of the provision specified in an EHCP, and who provides it. The parent or young person does not actually manage the funds directly.



With a Direct Payment the parent or young person is given the money for some services and manages the funds themselves. The parent or young person is responsible for buying the service and paying for it.

A Personal Budget can include a Direct Payment if it is agreed that this is the best way to manage part of the Personal Budget. It is also possible to have a Third-Party Arrangement to manage a Direct Payment.

How much will I get if I have Direct Payments?

How much you get will depend on what has been set out in the EHCP. So it will vary from one person to another. If the Local Authority has agreed to make a Direct Payment it must be enough to pay for the service or services specified in the EHC plan.

Where can I get further information, advice or support?

You can see information about personal budgets on the Reading Local Offer

Reading IASS for SEND can also give you:

- more information about Personal Budgets, including Direct Payments
- advice on whether you may be able to get a Personal Budget and how you can apply for it
- information and advice on local services, organisations, and resources that may be able to help
- information, advice and support on what you can do if you are unhappy with the local authority's decision on your Personal Budget.

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