Nottinghamshire County Council

# Social Care Support: assessment, support planning and personal budgets

This guide will explain how we assess people for ongoing social care support and the process which leads to a personal budget. It also explains the different ways of having a personal budget.

If you would like any further details, please contact your assessment worker.

## Contents


**Section 1. Assessment** **Page 2-3**

- Eligibility
- Indicative Personal Budget
- Will I have to pay?
- What happens if I am not eligible for social care support?
- What happens if I am eligible for social care support?
- What about help for carers
- Sharing information
- Identity cards

**Section 2. Support Plan** **Page 4**

- What is a support plan?
- What help can I get with making my support plan?
- What does a support plan cover?
- What can my personal budget be used for?

**Section 3. Paying towards your personal budget** **Page 5-7**

- Who has to pay towards their personal budget?
- How we work out how much you have to pay
- When and how to make payments

**Section 4. Different ways of having a personal budget** **Page 8-10**

- Having a personal budget as a direct payment
- Having a personal budget as a managed personal budget
- Having a personal budget as a mixed personal budget

**Section 5. Personal budgets: Review** **Page 11**

**Contact Information, What if I am not happy?, Workers details** **Page 12**

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# Section 1
# **Assessment**

Following an assessment, most people who are eligible for long-term social care support from Nottinghamshire County Council will be given a personal budget.

A personal budget is an allocation of money that people use to fund the care and support they need. It gives people as much choice and control as possible over how their needs are met.

In order to do the assessment a worker will arrange to visit you at home or in hospital. If you want support at any time through the process, you are welcome to have a friend, relative or carer with you.

The assessment will involve:

- talking to you about what you need
- with your permission, talking to other people who know you, for example, your family, your GP or Community Nurse

**Eligibility**

A decision about your eligibility for ongoing social care support will be based on national government guidelines called 'Fair Access to Care' (FACS). If the assessment shows that you have needs that pose a **critical** or **substantial** risk to your independence you will be offered a personal budget.

**Indicative Personal Budget**

If you have eligible needs, your assessment will identify an amount of money which we call an **indicative personal budget.**
The actual amount of money in your budget could go up or down and is finalised after **support planning** – see section 2

**Will I have to pay?**

You will not have to pay for the assessment. You will need to have a **financial assessment** to see how much, if anything, you will have to contribute towards the cost of any support you get. – see section 3

**What happens if I am not eligible for social care support?**

If you are not eligible for social care support, our staff can still give you:

- advice and guidance about other local activities and support to help you to carry on living at home. You will need to pay for this support yourself
- advice and information about moving into a care home if you can no longer live in your own

home and you are paying the cost of the placement yourself

**Important:** if you are planning to pay the whole cost of a care home placement yourself, we advise you to read **Living in a care home – a guide to funding your own care**, before you accept a place. Find it on our website www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/caring/adultsocialcare/somewheretolive/care-homes/payingforacarehome/ or contact the Customer Service Centre.

**What happens if I am eligible for social care support?**

If you are eligible for social care support you will be offered a choice about how you want to receive your personal budget. You can have:

- a direct payment so that you can buy the support yourself
- a managed personal budget which means that the Council will arrange your support for you
- or a mixture of the two

The different ways of having a personal budget are explained more fully in section 4

**What about help for carers?**

Anyone caring for you may also be eligible for support. We offer all unpaid carers a carer's assessment and eligible carers can receive a carer's personal budget. Visit our website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/caring/adultsocialcare/whoneedssupport/carers/ contact the Customer Service Centre or ask the worker who visits you for a copy of **Do you look after someone**?

**Sharing information?**

We have a duty to keep your personal information secure. The information you give us will usually only be shared with our staff. Sometimes we have to share information with other agencies, for example the NHS. You will be asked to give your permission for us to do this. It is possible for the information to be shared without your permission, however, this will only happen if it is necessary to protect you or someone else from harm.

**Identity cards**

All our staff have an identity card with their photograph on it. Before you let anyone in they should hand their card to you, tell you who they are and why they have come but if you are worried contact the Customer Service Centre Tel no: 0300 500 80 80 and a service advisor will tell you whether the person works for us or not. Do not let anyone into your home if you are not sure who they are.

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# Section 2
# Support Plan

**What is a support plan?**
Support planning follows assessment.

- A support plan tells us how you want to use your personal budget to meet your needs and live your life your way

**What help can I get with making my support plan?**

A social care worker from Nottinghamshire County Council will be available to help you with completing your support plan, other people of your choice can help too and you can complete as much or as little of the support plan by yourself as you wish.

**What does a support plan cover?**

We need to make sure, before your support plan is agreed, that it clearly shows the following:

- what is important to you/for you
- what you want to change or achieve (your outcomes)
- the costs of all the support that you need to meet your outcomes
- how you will manage your support
- a contingency plan to deal with emergencies or circumstances when your regular support is not available
- details of regular medication
- how risks will be managed. The support plan has a section that identifies any risks attached to your support plan and how these will be managed

**What can my personal budget be used for?**

Everyone is different and how you choose to meet your outcomes will be individual to you. However, Nottinghamshire County Council provides guidelines for decisions on what your personal budget can be used for.

The support, services or activities that you choose to spend your personal budget on MUST:

- meet the social care outcomes agreed in your support plan
- be affordable and sustainable
- be legal
- be a proper use of social care funding

Following this, your support plan needs to be agreed by Nottinghamshire County Council.

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# Section 3
# Paying towards your personal budget

## Paying towards your personal budget

This information explains:

- who has to pay towards their personal budget
- how we work out how much you have to pay
- when and how to make payments

## Who has to pay towards their personal budget?

You will **not** have to pay anything towards your personal budget if any of the following apply:

- you are receiving aftercare services provided under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983
- you have Creuzfeldt Jacob Disease (CJD)
- you are receiving services funded by the Independent Living Fund (ILF)
- your day services are paid for by the NHS
- you are receiving a carer's personal budget.

If you do not fall into any of these categories you may have to pay towards your personal budget.

## How we work out how much you have to pay

We need to know details of your income, outgoings and savings. This is called a **financial assessment**. We can send you a form to complete or we can arrange for an officer to visit you to collect this information.

If you do not want to have a financial assessment, you will have to pay the full amount of your personal budget. You will still need to complete a form to say that you agree to pay the full amount.

If you have a partner we will ask for details of their income and savings, even if they do not need a service. Your partner does not have to give this information, but you usually have to pay less if we assess you as a couple.

## Income

You will be asked about all your income including disability benefits, means tested benefits, earnings and pensions. Some of your income is disregarded, for example:

- earnings
- pension credit (savings credit element only)

- disability allowance (mobility component)
- disability allowance (night time element)
- tax credits
- interest from savings and investments

**Savings**

If you have over £23,250 in savings and investments you will have to pay the full amount of your personal budget

If you have under £14,250 you will not have to pay anything towards your personal budget from your savings.

If you have between £14,250 and £23,250 we will calculate the amount you need to pay from your savings. We will take into account £1 for every £250 you have above £14,250.
e.g. if you have £15,000 we will assume an income of £3 per week from your savings (£15,000 less £14,250 equals £750 divided by 250 equals £3 per week).

**Allowances**

We make allowances to cover your day to day living expenses, rent or mortgage and council tax. If you are single the allowance is £178.38 per week. For a couple the weekly allowance is £272.38. You may be entitled to additional allowances if you are a carer or have a child.

We also make an allowance to cover costs that you may have because of your disability e.g. higher heating bills or additional laundry costs.

We only make this allowance if you are receiving the higher rate of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance. This is a standard allowance of £20 per week. If you think that this amount does not cover the additional costs you have, please discuss this with your social care worker during your community care assessment.

Here is an example of how we work out how much you can afford to pay towards your service.

**Income:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Retirement Pension | £185.15 |
| Attendance Allowance | £ 51.85 |

**Savings:**

| | |
|---|---|
| £16,000 **(£16,000 less £14,250 equals £1,750 divided by 250)** | £ 7.00 |
| **Total Weekly Income** | **£244.00** |

**Allowances**

| | |
|---|---|
| Single Person | £178.38 |
| Council Tax | £ 12.62 |
| **Total Weekly Allowance** | **£191.00** |
| **Income less allowances** | **£ 53.00** |

This shows that you can afford to pay a maximum of **£53** per week towards your service.

If your personal budget is less than the maximum amount you are assessed as being able to pay, you will only need to pay your actual budget amount.

**Attending a day service**

If you use your personal budget to attend a day service run by the council, you will also have to pay for your meals when you attend. You will also have to pay towards transport if this is provided by the council. The cost of a meal is £3.95 and a return journey to the day service is £5.00. If you travel to more than one place, you will be charged for each return journey.

**Living in a care home**

If you use your personal budget to move to a care home, the way we calculate how much you can afford to pay is worked out differently.
Your care worker will give you a booklet **Living in a care home** which provides more information to help you.

**When and how to make payments**

You will not have to pay towards your care until you have had a financial assessment. If you have provided financial information before, you may not need to have a new financial assessment. You do not have to pay until you start to receive a service.

You need to pay towards your personal budget each week unless you go into hospital. We will send you a bill every four weeks and you can choose how you want to pay.

The easiest way to pay is by direct debit, but other payment methods are listed on the back of the invoice that we send. If you want to discuss payment options please contact the **Business Support Centre on 0115 84633330.**

For further information on Financial Assessment, please see page 12 for contact details of the Adult Care Finance Team.

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# Section 4
# Different ways of having a personal budget

## Having a personal budget as a direct payment

A direct payment is:

- money from Nottinghamshire County Council to help you meet your social care needs rather than having your services arranged by the Council
- paid direct to you or someone acting on your behalf

### What are the advantages of having a direct payment?

- a direct payment is the most flexible way to meet your eligible social care needs

### How can I use my direct payment?

It **must** be used to help you to meet the outcomes identified in your support plan – see section 2. For example, this could be getting support or services to:

- help with washing, showering, dressing, toileting and getting in and out of bed
- support to access your local community

The money **must not** be used for:

- services provided by Nottinghamshire County Council
- accommodation/housing costs
- services for your health care needs
- long-term residential or nursing care
- employing your husband, wife, partner or a close relative who lives with you (except in exceptional circumstances which you would need to discuss with your social care worker)

### What am I responsible for?

- opening a separate bank account or using a pre-payment debit card (see separate guide to using a direct payment pre-payment debit card)
- arranging the support you need
- buying any equipment agreed
- sorting out any problems with the support you get
- recording and showing the way you use the money
- if you have a contract with an agency, they will be accountable to you, not to Nottinghamshire County Council
- If you need help arranging your support the social care worker will be able to help you

### Employing staff

The money can be used to employ your own staff to meet your needs:

- you have the legal responsibilities of an employer
- the staff you employ will report directly to you
- if you are going to employ staff, you will be expected to accept advice from a direct payments support service in respect of becoming an employer
- see resources at the back of the booklet for further sources of information and advice
- **Support with Confidence:** the council has a list of people who want to work as personal assistants on the NCC website. These people have had some training and all have provided references and have had an enhanced CRB check – www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/supportwithconfidence

### Can I get help managing my direct payments?

If you need help managing your direct payments, we can give you contact details of **Direct Payment Support Services** who can support you with

- payroll services
- recruitment
- employment advice
- managing the direct payment account

The cost of the direct payment support service is included in your personal budget

### Who does the money belong to?

The money you have received as a direct payment belongs to Nottinghamshire County Council and you will have agreed what you are going to spend it on as part of your support plan - see section 2.

### What if I want to change some of the arrangements?

You can make minor changes that still meet your outcomes and do not affect your overall personal budget. For example, what time you need someone to come to support you. Major changes should be discussed with your social care worker. If in doubt, please contact your social care worker.

## Having a personal budget as a managed personal budget

A managed personal budget means we (Nottinghamshire County Council) will arrange care and support services to meet your needs. If you choose to have a managed personal budget we will look after the money.

### How much choice and control will I get?

You will have less choice and control with a managed personal budget than if you have a direct payment. This is because we are managing the budget on your behalf and we can only organise your care and support with the organisations we contract with.

## Having a personal budget as a mixed personal budget

This option gives you choice and flexibility, but how much depends on you.

You may decide that you want Nottinghamshire County Council to organise some of your support (managed personal budget), whilst also taking some of your personal budget as a direct payment to give you more choice and control.

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# Section 5
# Personal Budgets: Review

Nottinghamshire County Council has a duty to review everyone who receives a personal budget.

The review is a chance to check how things are going for you and to see if any changes are needed to your support.

It is an opportunity to check whether:

- the outcomes in your support plan are being met and whether the support is working for you
- your needs have changed/or the needs of your carer
- you are satisfied with your support
- you wish to change the way your personal budget is managed
- you are still eligible for long term social care
- any new outcomes have been identified

**Frequency**

Your first review will take place up to 3 months from the date when your services and support were put in place.

Following this, you can expect to have a review every 12 months.

There may be an earlier review and/or more frequent reviews if:

- there is a change to your needs or your circumstances
- you have complex needs
- you are considered to be at risk

**The review can take place:**

- over the telephone or
- face to face

The assessment worker will discuss the date and type of annual review with you following your first review.

**Your personal budget:**

Please let us know if your needs or circumstances have changed as soon as possible as it may be that your personal budget will also need to change.

A personal budget can go up, go down, stay the same or be stopped if you no longer need our support.

# Contact Information

## For information on personal budgets

Phone the County Council on: 0300 500 80 80
Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday: 8am to 12 noon

Email: enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk

Website:
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Minicom: 01623 434993

Emergency Duty Team: 0300 456 4546
Mon – Thurs: 5pm – 8.30am
Operates 24 hours at weekends from 4.30pm on Fridays to 8.30am on Mondays.
Operates 24 hours during all public holidays.

Phone 0300 500 80 80 if you need the information in a different language or format.

## For information on financial assessments

**Adult Care Financial Services**
Tel no: 0115 9772426
Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.00pm
Friday: 8.30am to 4.30pm

Email:
acfs.communityassessment@nottscc.gov.uk

## For information on Direct Payments:

www.dh.gov.uk – a Guide to Getting Direct Payments from your Council (2009)

## Useful Links:

Skills for Care
www.skillsforcare.org
National Council for Independent Living
www.ncil.org.uk

Social Care Directory
http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/caring/adultsocialcare/supporttoliveathome/communitysupport/social-care-directory/

Disability Nottinghamshire

**Disability Nottinghamshire** is a User Led Organisation (ULO) which means it is run, managed and owned by the people who use the service. Their advisors have personal knowledge and experience of living with or caring for someone with a disability.

For further information:
Telephone: 01623 625891
E-mail:
advice@disabilitynottinghamshire.org.uk
Website:
www.disabilitynottinghamshire.org.uk

## What if I am not happy?

Talk to your social care worker. If you are still not happy you can make a complaint to the Nottinghamshire County Council Customer Relations Service.

**Tel no: 0300 500 80 80**
**Web:**
**www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/contact/comments/adult-social-care/**

| **Your workers details** |
| --- |
| Name: |
| |
| Position: |
| |
| Contact Details: |
| |

**Contact the Customer Service Centre if you need the information in a different language or format**