



# Hartlepool and Darlington Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Pathfinder

## Personal Budgets: a guide for families



County Durham and Darlington



### » Introduction

As part of the SEND Pathfinder trials, Hartlepool and Darlington have agreed to test Personal Budgets for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities which aims to enable families to have more flexibility over the funding allocated to them in a way that is simple and transparent. Hartlepool and Darlington have been working with their respective health, education and social care teams to align the processes and draw the available funding streams together and ensure a multi-agency package of support.

In November 2012, Hartlepool and Darlington applied for personal budgets to be extended to children and young people under the age of 18 years.

### » What is a Personal Budget?

A personal budget is the financial resource you may be entitled to from health, education and social care funding streams from your Local Authority. The principle is that it puts you in control of **how** you are supported, **who** supports you and **when**, making personal budgets a more flexible and efficient way of accessing support and services to meet your personal needs.

### » Managing your personal budget

Did you know that every adult with a social care allocation has a personal budget but currently only 1/3 of people choose to take this as a Direct Payment.

There are many ways to manage your personal budget:

- Some people prefer to manage their own personal budget via Direct Payments to directly fund particular support and services.
  - Other people prefer to use a third party company who will manage your personal budget for you around your needs and outcomes.
- Both Hartlepool and Darlington have a trusted third party services who are contracted

to support you. In Hartlepool this service is **Wilf Ward** and in Darlington it is the **Darlington Association for Disabilities (D.A.D.)**

These management companies can:

- ▶ Take your allowance from the Local Authority and use it to pay bills, invoices, tax, national insurance etc. on your behalf.
  - ▶ Provide support around all stages of recruitment of services including: advertising the job; writing job descriptions and specifications; drawing up contracts of employment; arranging CRB checks.  
(In order to protect your privacy they will also provide a P.O. Box for applications to be returned to and can provide interview rooms along with interviewing, short listing and checking referees.)
  - ▶ Provide post recruitment support such as ensuring that your Personal Assistant has a legal contract in place and co-ordinate any relevant training or insurance needed.
  - ▶ Provide a payroll service which will manage all payments of wages to any employed services.
- Depending on the age or need of your child, the parents may receive their personal budget via a Direct Payment to use their child's behalf. [there is existing guidance to allow this—where?]
  - When your child reaches the age of 16, the Direct Payments could potentially be transferred to them to manage.

### Did you know?

Since 1996 in **social care**, your Local Authority has a legal duty to offer Direct Payments following the Direct Payments Act.

In **education**, because Hartlepool and Darlington are a SEND Pathfinder, your Local Education Authority has the legal power to provide Direct Payments for any assessed education funding for families trailing the Pathfinder.

In **health care**, because North Tees & Hartlepool Trust and Darlington & Durham Trust are both part of the SEND Pathfinder they have been granted the legal power to provide Direct Payments for any assessed health funding for families who are trailing the Pathfinder.

**What this means for you** is that if you think that by arranging your own support you will get better outcomes for your family, beyond what is currently offered by either education or health, then you can now ask for a direct payment in either of these departments as well.

## » Examples

The following are some examples of what people who have been trailing the personal budgets, have used their personal budgets on:

- Short breaks rather than building based respite
- Employing a Personal Assistant rather than Local Authority staff or agency staff.
- Alternative transport eg: shared taxis rather than specialist transport.
- A smart set of clothing and laptop for the young person to prepare for college or employment.

## » How do I get a personal budget?

To get a personal budget you will need to have an assessment that leads to an **indicative allowance** depending on your needs. You will then work with \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ to create a plan which outlines how you will spend your indicative allowance to improve your life and help you to reach your agreed outcomes.

## » Can I get a personal budget if I am not part of the Pathfinder trial?

You can get a personal budget if you have already had an assessment which has resulted in a Statement of Needs. [insert the rules & a myth buster as requested by Steering Group/parents]

## » For more information you can contact:

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## » Or you can visit:



[www.darlington.fsd.org.uk](http://www.darlington.fsd.org.uk)



[www.hartlepool.fsd.org.uk](http://www.hartlepool.fsd.org.uk)

## » About this factsheet

This factsheet gives an overview of Personal Budgets within the SEND Pathfinder project. It was published in December 2012. We will check that the information is up to date in April 2013.