



Oxfordshire's Personal Budget Policy

1. Introduction

If a child or young person has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, the parents or young person are able to request that aspects of their care or provision are given via a personal budget. A Personal Budget is an amount of money identified by the Local Authority and Health (as appropriate) to deliver provision set out in an EHC plan where the parent or young person is involved in securing that provision.

Personal Budgets are intended to give parents and young people more choice and control about how the outcomes in the EHC plan can be met. Personal budgets are well established in Adult Services and many disabled children in Oxfordshire access some or all of their social care packages via direct payments. Personal health budgets for children and personal budgets for SEN support are new developments. Parents and young people interested in having a personal budget to deliver aspects of their EHC plan should ask professionals working with them more about this.

Personal budgets are about helping children /young people achieve good outcomes. They can be used for care and support that is safe, legal and affordable

2. How Personal Budgets are funded

Personal Budgets are not created from any new money available to services. Funding for personal budgets comes from releasing the value of a child/young person's provision from the services they might otherwise be expected to make use of. Not all services can have money removed in this way without adversely affecting other children that use the provision. These services are therefore not eligible as funding sources for personal budgets. For example, currently all the funding for speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy in Oxfordshire is in a block contract and this means that children/young people cannot have a personal budget for these therapy services. This will be kept under review and may change in the future. School places, GPs, health visitors, school nurses and social worker support are not eligible as funding 'released' for personal budgets.

3. Services available as Personal Budgets

In the future, more services will be available via personal budgets but from September 2014, the following can be accessed in this way:

- Care/support identified to meet agreed outcomes for children assessed as eligible for continuing health care funding.
- Care/support for disabled children outside the school day following a social care assessment where this care is needed to improve agreed child and family outcomes.
- Care identified to meet the needs of disabled adults (18-25) who are assessed as eligible for a Personal Budget from Adult Social Care or Oxford Health to improve their outcomes.



Personal budgets for home to school/college transport is expected to be available by late autumn 2014.

4. How Personal Budgets are developed

Children and young people who are eligible for a personal budget may be able to draw on money from up to different funding streams, as described above. The money will be held in a single budget but must be used for outcomes agreed between the family and the education, health and care professionals supporting the child/young person. The family and professionals will need to agree in advance any conditions about how the personal budget can be spent. Parents and /or the young person will need to sign a single contract which makes it clear what conditions they have to agree to before any direct payment can be made. They will need to open a separate bank account for the personal budget and to send in invoices showing how the funding has been spent.

5. Options for managing a Personal Budget

There are four ways of managing a personal budget:

- Direct payments – where parents or the young person receives money to buy and manage services themselves.
- An arrangement where the local authority or education provider holds the money and commissions the services included in the EHC plan as directed by the parent or young person (these are sometimes called notional arrangements).
- Third-party arrangements – where parents or the young person can choose someone else to manage the money on their behalf.
- A combination of the three ways above.

The local authority must secure a school's agreement where any provision, bought by a parent using a direct payment, will be provided on the school's premises.

6. Keeping people safe

In Oxfordshire, any worker/personal assistant employed via a personal budget to support a child under 18 or a vulnerable adult must have an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check before they can provide care. The workers must also complete the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's e-learning safeguarding course. If a child/young person has specialist health care needs such as gastrostomy feeding, specialist moving and handling or epilepsy care, the worker must be trained by a qualified health professional to manage these tasks. The child's social worker, specialist nurse or SEN officer will be able to help arrange this training via the Oxford Health Shared Care Protocol Training Co-ordinator.



7. Eligibility for a Personal Budget

Social care

Disabled children/young people who have had a social care assessment and have been allocated a specialist care package may access some or all of this via direct payments. There are different direct payment rates for different services, for example £10.85 per hour for community short break care support and £16 per hour for overnight residential short break care support. Children may be funded for 2:1 support if this is needed. The hourly rate for employing personal assistants means care staff can be paid around £8.50 per hour as the £10.85 also has to cover tax, NI and sick/holiday pay. Parents may choose to pay more than this but this would mean they could buy less care.

Health

At present, only children and young people with continuing health care needs will be eligible for a personal health budget but in the future this may be extended to children/young people with other chronic long term conditions. The personal health budget can be spent on the child/ young person's care or on equipment which will meet agreed outcomes. Personal health budgets can be spent flexibly but must support the ongoing care needs of the young person and not deliver treatment. Prescription charges, GP costs, surgical interventions are therefore not open to spend for a personal health budget. Parents and young people eligible for a personal health budget will have the opportunity to work with an independent adviser to think about how a package can be created which suits the needs of the individual and this will be captured in the plan containing health outcomes.

Education

Funding for settings, schools and colleges pays for the placements, staffing and resources, and is managed across the whole institution. In most cases, removing money from education support will adversely affect other children and young people, therefore this will not be available as a personal budget.

In exceptional situations, schools or colleges may choose to contribute some of their own budget to a child or young person's personal budget, or the Local Authority may consider using some of the high needs block funding.

Any support for a child funded by a personal budget at a setting, school or college must be agreed by the Headteacher or College Principal.

8. Decision making processes

Support packages for personal budgets are discussed, moderated and agreed through a panel based approach across education, health and care. Parents and young people are kept fully informed of the outcomes.



9. Advice and assistance with Personal Budgets

There is a small amount of paperwork which needs to be completed around personal budgets but professionals will help families with this. The Council also has a contract with Advance who provide information, advice and guidance around personal budgets. Advance can provide a payroll service for people who employ staff using personal budgets and most people find this helpful. Advance can also provide a managed account service which means that all the parent/young person needs to do is to provide invoices. This removes much of the bureaucracy from using personal budgets.