

Putting you first

Personalisation and self directed support in Gateshead



The way we provide adult social care is changing and this means the way we work with you will change too. It's all about putting you first and giving you more choice and control through "self directed support". This means that services are more personal to your needs and how you want to live your life.

We hope this leaflet will explain all of the changes but we know some of the things mentioned here are quite complicated so please don't worry if you find any of it difficult to understand.

We will continue to work with you to help explain the changes.

Adult Social Care Direct staff are trained to help you. They will listen to your concerns and ask questions to help decide what support you need. If they think you may be eligible for help under our Fair Access to Care criteria, they will make a referral to our social care assessment teams. If you are not eligible we can still help you by signposting you to other useful organisations.

If you think you or someone you know needs help, your first point of contact should be Adult Social Care Direct. You can contact them on **0191 433 7033**.



What will happen?

If an assessment is required a social care worker will arrange to visit you so you can complete your assessment together. They will gather information to see if you are eligible for help from social services, using our Fair Access to Care criteria. We currently provide services for people whose needs are considered to be either a critical or substantial risk to their independence. If you are eligible for care you will receive what is known as a “personal budget”.

As part of our Putting You First programme we are also testing a new way of assessing people known as the personalised assessment. If you are selected to take part in this pilot you will be sent a personalised assessment form which will help us to gather information. You will receive guidance to help you fill it in and your family or friends may also be able to help you. Your social care worker will still visit you to discuss your assessment and the care and support that you need.



What is a personal budget?

Your personal budget is the amount of money identified to meet your social care needs following your assessment.



How much will it be?

We will work out how much money you require to support your needs based on your assessment. This process is known as the “Resource Allocation System” or RAS. It is designed to make sure that your personal budget is a fair amount of social care money.

We will tell you the amount we expect your budget to be early on in the process but please be aware that the final amount may change. This is because we need to make sure you have enough money to meet your assessed needs, but we also need to consider value for money. For example, we may not pay the full cost of a particular service of your choice if we know your needs can be met in different ways that cost less.

How can I receive my personal budget?

There are three ways you can receive your personal budget and it's up to you which one you choose. Your choice is between:



Your personal budget used to arrange services on your behalf

You can choose for your social care worker to arrange the care and support services that will meet your needs. We will still tell you what your personal budget amount is, but you will not receive the money directly. We call this a virtual, or managed personal budget. We will spend the money on services that the council already has a contract with, which could include day care, support at home and respite care. If you already receive care and services from us and they still meet your assessed needs you can choose for these to continue.



Your personal budget as a direct payment

This means you choose to manage the budget yourself by having it paid into a bank account which you set up for this purpose. Your social care worker will help you plan how you might want to use this to meet your needs and make changes in your life. You will need to agree this in a support plan but it means that you can have more flexibility and choice about your care and support; for example, you could employ your own personal assistant or arrange care with an agency. But you will also need to think about the responsibilities - you will need to keep receipts and send us information about how you have used your budget. If you choose to employ a personal assistant you will also have legal responsibilities.



The self directed support team in Gateshead can provide information and advice for you and a range of factsheets are available if you have queries about hiring a personal assistant. You can download these from the Gateshead Council website at www.gateshead.gov.uk or you can contact the Self Directed Support Team on **0191 433 2379/433 2425** or by emailing selfdirectedsupportteamenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk

It is possible to have a mix of a direct and managed personal budget if you would prefer this.

Your personal budget administered by another person

If you are not able to manage the budget yourself you can ask a third party to look after it for you. In most



cases this would be a family member or friend. However it does not have to be. If your chosen person is not a family member or friend then they will need to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and other checks.

How can I use my personal budget?

Your personal budget can be used flexibly but only in a way that meets the critical or substantial needs agreed in your social care assessment. You will need to agree with your social care worker how you will use your budget to meet these needs and this will be written into a support plan which you write together. Your friends and family or an advocate can also help you with this. You cannot use your budget to pay for your health care or day to day living expenses that are covered by other income e.g. food, alcohol, bills or fines. It must not be used for anything which is illegal or will put you or others at risk of harm or abuse. You will also need to show that how you plan to spend it is best value for money.

Will I automatically get a personal budget?

No, not automatically. We are currently rolling out personal budgets. The government has set us targets to work towards, but this is a big change for social services. This means that it will take a few years to complete the changes. We are beginning to roll this out from 2009. If you are interested in receiving a personal budget please ask your social care worker about this.

Further information

You can download a free guide to receiving direct payments from your local council from the Department of Health - www.dh.gov.uk

Please speak to your social care worker if you need any other help or information.

