

A Guide to Your Personal Budget 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. This guide is to help you understand your personal budget and answer your questions about how it will work.

1. What is my personal budget?

Your personal budget is the amount of money we have identified as necessary to meet your eligible social care needs following your assessment.

Once we have completed your assessment and identified your eligible needs, we will tell you your indicative personal budget amount. We currently provide services for people where their needs mean that they are at substantial or critical risk of losing their independence. You can refer to Fair Access to Care guidance for more information on eligible needs.

2. Guiding Principles for the Resource Allocation System:

For more information on the Resource Allocation System you can download our policy from the council website.

- Ensuring that the Council is meeting the eligible needs of service users by modelling the RAS in accordance with the 'Prioritising Need' Guidance.
- Providing service users with more control in the process of assessing their needs.
- Allowing available resources to be fairly allocated in a transparent way to individuals on the basis of assessed eligible needs, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or impairment.
- Enabling a personalised response to need by providing individuals with an indicative personal budget within which they can plan to meet their assessed eligible needs.
- Facilitating the Council to monitor and manage the resources available in accordance with its financial and budgetary responsibilities.

3. How do you calculate my personal budget?

We will send you a personal assessment questionnaire. This will help you tell us what you need help with. Your social care assessment worker will visit you to discuss it and you can ask a family member, friend or an advocate to help you complete your personal assessment questionnaire and support you at the meeting if you wish.

We will use the answers that the social care assessment worker has agreed with you to work out your personal budget – this is through a process called the Resource Allocation System or RAS. This calculates your indicative personal budget.

An example of this is below:

Example

A	I do not need any support with my personal care	
B	I need occasional support with my personal care	
C	I need support at least once a day with my personal care	
D	I need support at least twice a day with my personal care	
E	I need support at least three times a day with my personal care	X
F	I need support more than three times a day with my personal care	

$E = 30 \text{ points} \times \text{£}3.46 \text{ (price per point)} = \text{£}103.80 \text{ per week}$

There are 11 domains in the personal assessment questionnaire to help you tell us about the areas of your life where you need help.

Answers have a number of points attached to them and this is used to calculate your indicative personal budget. Each point is worth £3.46 or £179.92 per year.

The number of points for each question has been determined through a 'rationale' which identifies the standard way of meeting that need in Gateshead. Service managers, team managers and practitioners in the adult social care assessment teams in Gateshead developed the rationale.

4. Do all of the questions calculate my personal budget?

Some of the domains do not have points attached to them. This is because we need to know the information to plan your support but it may not need to be paid for within the personal budget. For example, if you need personal care at night we will consider if Telecare can help meet this need first.

It may also be that there are other services, which are not funded by Gateshead's adult social care which can to meet your needs. These may be from health care, funded through voluntary organisations or provided by other parts of Gateshead Council e.g. housing or leisure services. We will always consider these ways of meeting your assessed, eligible needs first, before we provide money for it through a personal budget. If these other options will not meet your need we may increase your personal budget to provide this care and support in a different way. This will be discussed with your social care worker when they are completing your support plan or care plan to show how your eligible needs will be met.

It could also be that some of your needs identified in your assessment have a low or moderate risk of you losing your independence and so we would not offer you a personal budget. Your assessing officer/social worker can give you information about where you may be able to get help in your local community.

Some of the domains overlap and therefore the budget may be reduced to account for this. For example if you need help with personal care and with eating and drinking this can often be met through the same care and support and therefore we do not cost it twice within your budget.

We also ask about what informal care you have. This is care that will continue to be provided by family and friends to help support you. This will not be included in your personal budget. This is because personal budgets are not intended to replace existing support networks within families and communities.

5. What about my support as a carer?

We do ask about what care and support your family carer may need to enable them to continue in their caring role and part of your personal budget may be to help you arrange respite care to enable your family carer to have a break. This is included within the personal budget as often those services are provided for the cared for person to enable the carer to have a break.

As a carer you can also request a carer's assessment from their social care worker. This focuses on what you need to support you in your caring role.

6. How have you calculated the price per point?

We have looked at a sample set of cases to establish the actual cost of services to meet different types and levels of eligible need. This helped us develop the price per point. We

have then tested this further through additional cases and refined it to ensure that it provides an average cost of meeting that need.

We will continue to refine the system as more and more cases are put through it to ensure that it continues to be accurate.

7. How will this budget meet my individual needs?

The Resource Allocation System calculates the indicative amount. This is the average money that is required to meet your needs. If you have particular needs that cannot be met in this way then they will be considered separately with your social care worker and agreed in your care or support plan. For example these may be needs relating to a severe mental health learning or physical disability requiring constant supervision

We will also consider alternative ways of meeting your needs as well as other funds that may be available for example from health care or from the Independent Living Fund (ILF).

8. Will my personal budget change in future years?

The Resource Allocation System is linked to the actual cost of providing services that meet those needs, in Gateshead. Therefore if the cost of providing those services increases or decreases then the price per point and the budget may change.

9. What if my current way of meeting need is not cost effective within my personal budget?

Because your situation at home may change your personal budget may also change.

As part of your review or re-assessment we may consider with you how best to meet your needs in the future. We may not be prepared to pay the full cost of the particular method of purchasing services which you choose, if your needs can be met just as well in ways that cost less. For example, we may not pay the charges of a particular agency you prefer if another agency charges less for an adequate service.

10. How will I know my personal budget?

We will calculate your indicative personal budget after your assessment of needs. We will then write to tell you your indicative personal budget and your financial contribution to the services that will be arranged for you.

We call this an indicative amount. This is because it will give a guide to the amount of money required to meet your needs. The final amount may increase or decrease.

However 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.

11. Will I have to make a financial contribution?

The council will calculate how much you will have to contribute towards the cost of your care services. This is worked out in accordance with national Government Guidance and we will let you know the maximum amount of your contribution before you take up the personal budget.

12. When will I not get a personal budget?

We may help to arrange other services for you to help you remain at home, for example Telecare services, signposting to other organisations, arranging help from voluntary organisations. We will continue to do this but you will not receive a personal budget for this type of support.

You will not get a personal budget if you are considering meeting your needs in residential or nursing care or if your needs will be met by health services for example if you are eligible for section 117 or Continuing Health Care Money.

If you are referred for Reablement or other short term services or in emergency situations we will not calculate your personal budget until we have a clearer picture of any long term support that you may require.

For people being discharged from hospital we may not offer a personal budget unless a complex and long term care package is being planned or a direct payment was requested. A personal budget could be offered once the person was at home and their long term needs established.

13. How can I choose to take my personal budget?

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. You can choose to manage the budget yourself by having it paid into a bank account, which you set up for this purpose. We call this a personal budget through a direct payment. You will need to agree in a support plan how you will use your personal budget to meet your assessed, eligible needs. You will also be responsible for monitoring your budget and supplying information to the council on how it has been used. But it means that you can have more flexibility and choice about your care and support.

You can choose a mix of the above.

For more information refer to the fact sheets on how to use your personal budget.

14. Will I get the same money if I choose to use my personal budget as a direct payment?

If you choose to take your budget as a direct payment we may reduce your personal budget by 10%. This is because we expect that you will be able to meet your needs for less than the cost of traditional services. It is also to account for any unexpected circumstances, which may mean that your budget needs to be reviewed and increased throughout the year. This should be identified in your support plan which you will need to agree with your social care worker to specify how you will use your personal budget.

15. What if I disagree with my indicative amount?

If you do not feel your indicative personal budget is enough to meet your needs you should firstly discuss this with your social care worker. Remember that your indicative amount is a guide to how much money we feel is required to meet your needs. Your final amount can increase or decrease to ensure that it is actually enough money to meet your needs but also that it is value for money. Your personal budget may also change as we consider different ways in which your care and support can be met.

If you are choosing to take your personal budget as a managed or virtual budget your social care worker will continue to arrange the care and support you required to meet your needs.

If you are choosing a to take your personal budget as a direct payment the final amount will be discussed with you by your social care worker and put in your support plan. Then the final budget will be agreed and your contingency at this point will also be considered. If you are still unhappy that your budget is not enough money to meet your needs you can discuss this with the team manager responsible initially. Or you can make a complaint through our complaints procedure. You can get a copy of our complaints procedures from council offices or from the internet at www.gateshead.gov.uk.

The team manager will make a decision based on the amount of money required to meet your eligible assessed needs. However they will not agreed to pay the full cost of a particular method of purchasing services which you choose, if your needs can be met just as well in different ways which cost less. If they are unable to reach a decision this will be discussed with the service manager.

They will discuss with you how we can meet your needs while your complaint is being considered. You can accept the personal budget as a direct payment provisionally if you wish, without affecting your complaint that it is not enough. If you are not prepared to accept the amount that is offered while your complaint is being considered, you can choose to receive services provided by the council instead.