

Factsheet A22: Support Planning

A support plan is a document that is created to explain a bit more about you, about what is working well, what is not working so well, and what you would like to achieve. It will explain how you will use the money in your Personal Budget through the year to meet your identified care needs, including how you will manage the money and who will be responsible for it.

It will also explain if there are any risks and how these would be managed; this is a section called Keeping Myself Safe. You and your care assessor need to sign this section to say you have thought about what you would do if things went wrong, for example: 'I am employing staff, however I have allowed some contingency money in case they are ill and I need agency cover', although they may expect that you name a neighbour/friend who is willing to be a back-up on the payroll.

Your support plan can be created by you, with as little or as much support as you would like: you can ask for family and friends to support you complete this, or your care assessor, or an independent provider from Norfolk County Council's Accredited Providers List (this is a limited list of organisations approved by the Council). This support will not cost you anything.

If you would like some independent support to create a support plan you should ask your care assessor to approve this and make a referral to the relevant organisation.



Equal Lives run an Information, Advice and Support Service which can answer questions over the phone or by email about your support plan. You can contact us on 01508 491210.

Once your support plan is completed you should give this to your care assessor and it will be shared with their manager. This will be checked to ensure it meets your needs and outcomes from your assessment.

If your care assessor or their manager would like to make any changes to your support plan or have any questions about the support you would like to put in place, then they will discuss this with you.

Once your support plan has been signed off you should receive a copy of it. It is important you receive a copy of your support plan as this document is a good reference to remind yourself of what you can spend your budget on. If there is anything you don't understand, ask for advice from your care assessor or Equal Lives.

Arranging Support

Once your support plan is signed off, your care assessor should let you know when your Personal Budget has been set up.

Your care assessor will arrange any services that are directly commissioned (set up directly by your care assessor) and these will be paid directly by Norfolk County Council from your Personal Budget.

If you have Direct Payments (money given to you to organise your own care and support) you will then be able to set up support services that you need.



You will be asked to sign a Direct Payment Terms and Conditions document which explains for example that you will spend the money as agreed.

Once all your support is set up you may have an initial review by way of a phone conversation. If everything is going well your care assessor will close your case. Your Personal Budget should be reviewed annually. If your needs change during the year you will need to contact Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020 to request a review. You can do this at any time.

Problems

During the time you have a Personal Budget, it is possible that you may have some problems. For example, you may have problems with staff you employ, or you may find that you have spent too much money. You will find information about recruitment and employment, and managing your money in the sidebar on the right.

If your Personal Budget is reduced when you have a review, there is no appeal – instead, there is a complaints procedure to follow. In the sidebar under Complaints we explain all of the steps and the timescales for what happens, up to and including complaining to the Local Government Ombudsman. We also have a template letter for how to make a complaint, with a simple example.

If you require further information or would like this factsheet in an alternative format you can contact us by calling: 01508 491210, by emailing: info@equallives.org.uk, or by writing to: Equal Lives, 15 Manor Farm Barns, Fox Road, Framingham Pigot, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ.

