



Personal Budgets in an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

RANi Need to Know Guides | EHCP Advisory sheet 6

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A guide for parents, carers and young people on what a personal budget is, how it works, and how to request one

What is a Personal Budget?

A **Personal Budget** is an amount of money identified by the local authority to deliver some or all of the **special educational provision** set out in **Section F** of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. It may also include **health** and **social care** provision if the relevant bodies agree.

A personal budget allows the parent of a child, or a young person (aged 16+) with an EHC plan, to have **more choice and control** over how support is provided.

What Does the Law Say?

Under the **Children and Families Act 2014**, parents or young people **have a right to request a personal budget**:

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- **When an EHC plan is being prepared, or**
- **When an existing EHC plan is being reviewed or amended**

Local authorities **must consider** the request and explain any refusal.

What Can a Personal Budget Be Used For?

A personal budget can only be used to **arrange support** that is:

- **Detailed in the EHC plan** (especially Section F), and
- **Agreed by the local authority, school, and other relevant bodies**

Examples might include:

- Specialist teaching or therapy not already provided by the school
- Equipment or software for home learning
- 1:1 support delivered outside of the school setting
- Activities that support learning outcomes

In some cases, **health provision (Section G)** or **social care support (Section H)** may also be included, such as:

- Personal assistants
- Respite care
- Direct payments for therapies agreed by the NHS

It cannot be used for school fees or general school staffing costs.

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How Can the Personal Budget Be Managed?

There are four ways a personal budget can be managed:

Option	Explanation
Direct Payment	The money is paid directly to the parent or young person to arrange and pay for the provision themselves.
Third-Party Arrangement	A third party (e.g. a charity or brokerage service) manages the budget on your behalf.
Notional Budget	The local authority or NHS keeps the money and arranges the provision, but you are involved in choosing how it is used.
Combination	You can mix and match – e.g. direct payments for some services, and notional for others.

Direct payments must be agreed by the local authority and can only be used for eligible provision.

How to Request a Personal Budget

You can request a personal budget:

- When you are **first given a draft EHC plan**
- **During an annual review**
- **During a reassessment or amendment** of the EHC plan

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Step-by-Step:

1. **Write to the local authority** (you can use a template letter)
 2. Explain which **part of the EHC plan** you are seeking a personal budget for
 3. Say whether you want **direct payments, notional budget, or a mix**
 4. Include any ideas you have about how the budget would help meet your child's outcomes
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Can the Local Authority Refuse?

Yes – but only in specific circumstances. The local authority can refuse a personal budget if:

- The request would negatively affect services provided to others
- It would not be an **efficient use of resources**
- The provision is **already delivered** by a school or setting
- The **school or college does not agree** to the personal budget being used on their premises
- There are **safeguarding concerns**

They must provide a **written explanation** of the refusal and explain your **right to request a review or make a complaint**.

What Should Be in a Personal Budget Agreement?

If the personal budget is agreed, a **clear written agreement** must set out:

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- The amount of money
 - What the money is for
 - How the outcomes will be measured
 - Who is responsible for managing and monitoring the budget
 - What happens if things change or the budget is misused
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What Are My Rights?

You have the right to:

- **Request** a personal budget
 - **Choose how it is managed** (subject to agreement)
 - **Challenge a refusal** via the LA's complaints process
 - **Use mediation** if the refusal is linked to the EHC plan
 - **Appeal to the SEND Tribunal**, but only if the disagreement is about educational needs or provision
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Example of a Personal Budget in Practice

Child: Ellie, age 8, has an EHC plan for autism and sensory needs.

Support needed: Ellie needs weekly sensory integration therapy and specialist mentoring, but these are not available through the school.

Personal Budget solution:

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- The local authority agrees to provide a personal budget of £2,000 per term
 - Ellie's parents use direct payments to commission therapy from a registered OT
 - The outcomes and impact are reviewed at Ellie's annual review
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Checklist for Requesting a Personal Budget

- Understand what support is set out in the EHC plan
 - Think about what could be delivered differently or more effectively
 - Decide how you want the budget managed (direct payment, notional, etc.)
 - Make a written request to the local authority
 - Ask for a clear explanation if your request is refused
 - Use mediation or complaint routes if needed
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Support and Resources

You can get further support from:

- **RANi** – Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **Local Offer** - Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **SENDIASS** – Local impartial information and advice service for parents and young people www.iasmanchester.org
- **IPSEA** – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice:
www.ipsea.org.uk
- **Contact** – A national charity supporting families with disabled children:
www.contact.org.uk

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If you'd like help preparing your request or understanding your appeal options, RANi can provide guidance and templates.

Remember:

Always keep a copy of all correspondence you send, along with proof of postage or delivery. If you send documents by post, we recommend using a **signed-for** service. If sending by email, request a **read receipt** if possible.

Get in Touch

If you need more information or have a question, we're here to help.

Email us: info@rani.org.uk

Please include:

- Your name
- Your child's name
- Your child's date of birth
- Your query

Or, if you prefer, you can fill out our online **contact form** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

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