

How do customers find out about their Personal Budget?

Social workers will help customers complete an assessment of their ongoing community care needs, which is recorded on a Needs Assessment Questionnaire. As a result of this assessment, customers will receive a score which equates to a sum of money. This money is their Personal Budget. Customers can then get help to plan their care and support, which becomes their **Support Plan**.

The Support Plan is a document that sets out how a customer's needs will be met. It is reviewed regularly by the customer and their social worker. If a customer is taking a Direct Payment, this will be agreed and reviewed so that the money is being spent in the best and most appropriate way to meet the customer's assessed needs.

From autumn 2008, new customers with age related conditions or long term conditions will be eligible for Personal Budgets. This will be extended to include people with mental health needs over the coming months. In 2009, we will be taking a decision about extending Personal Budgets to new customers.

What are the benefits to the customer?

With a Personal Budget, customers can:

- Know up-front how much money is available from the council to meet their ongoing community care needs
- Decide how they want to spend this money
- Get the support and advice to make the choices that best meet their needs
- Know how much they will have to contribute financially

This will be subject to means testing as before, and therefore customers may have to make a financial contribution as appropriate.

Across the country, some truly creative examples have been recorded for customers who have opted to take their Personal Budget as a Direct Payment. This can inspire new ways of planning and receiving care and support that are beneficial to the customer, and potentially even create cost savings for the local authority.

Glossary of terms

- **Personal Budget** – The amount of money available to customers from Suffolk County Council. This can be managed by the customer to organise and pay for their own care, or the council continues to provide care on the customer's behalf using their allocated budget.
- **Direct Payment** – An agreed sum of money paid direct to a customer to manage all or part of their care.
- **Support Plan** – The document created and agreed between customers and the council to set out how the customer's care needs will be met. This is reviewed on a regular basis.
- **Support Planner** – A member of staff who will support the customer in planning their care, and completing their Support Plan.

