



Children and Young People's Department

Draft Policy

Individual Budgets for Children and Young People

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Introduction

Wirral Council has a duty to facilitate the provision of social care services to those individuals who qualify under its eligibility criteria. This policy applies to those individuals eligible for services through the Children with Disabilities Team within the Social Care Branch of the Children and Young People's Department.

Wirral is transforming its services in line with the personalisation agenda which will enable families to utilise an Individual budget to obtain the services they require. The Green Paper published 9th March 2011 states that by 2014 all families with children with a statement of SEN will have the option of a personal budget.

What are Individual Budgets (IB's)?

Individual Budgets are an option for families who are in receipt of Social Care services. Instead of receiving specific services they are allocated a budget to spend. They can then use their individual budget to buy services to meet their eligible assessed needs in accordance with a validated support plan.

How the money is spent is up to the family, as long as it is legal, keeps the young person safe and meets the young person's needs identified and written in the support plan.

With individual budgets families will know how much they have to spend allowing them to plan how they are going to use the money to support them to live their life in the way they want. It will allow families a greater choice, more flexibility and the ability to purchase the appropriate service required to support the child or young person.

Who are eligible for Individual Budgets?

Families who are currently in receipt of services through the Children with Disabilities Team or meet the criteria for an assessment from the team.

The services provided are to support children in need and their families who have **severe** or **substantial** disabilities, specifically:-

- A severe or profound learning disability (for children of school age this will be supported by a Statement of Educational Need)
- A severe physical disability
- A substantial degree of visual impairment/ moderate and severe hearing loss
- A complex Autistic Spectrum disorder with severe learning difficulty (A diagnosis of Autism or Autistic Spectrum Disorder does not of itself meet the criteria for the service)
- A complex medical health condition (For the youngest children with complex health needs or technological dependence there will usually be involvement from the Continuing Care Co-ordinator)

What is the Procedure?

Assessing the Needs of the Child/ Young Person

Referrals are made via the Central Advice and Duty Team and as appropriate they will forward requests for assessment to the Children with Disabilities Team who will undertake the following process:

- The manager of the CWD team will decide whether an Initial Assessment under the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need should be undertaken and contact will be made with the family to arrange for the Assessment to be completed.
- Through the process of completing the Initial Assessment the needs of the child and family will be identified.
- Discussion will then take place with the family about the services that could be provided to meet the identified needs. Within this process Individual Budgets will be one of the options considered.

Individual Budgets

If a family then choose to explore the option of having an individual budget the following steps will be carried out:

Step One- Finding out how much money is available?

If a family are eligible for services they will undertake a supported self assessment to establish an indicative individual budget.

The Resource Allocation System (RAS) is the outcome focused system by which an indicative personal budget is calculated for eligible service users. Its is a supported self assessment carried out by the parent/carer with support from their assigned social work and anyone else they feel has a thorough understanding of the child's needs. It assesses supports needs by asking a series of questions, for which the responses have a points value. The total of points calculates an 'indicative' budget. The RAS is transparent and nationally has been proven to be an effective method of assessing need and required support.

The questionnaire asks questions in relation to these main areas:

- Meeting personal care needs
- Relationships
- Being part of the community
- Work, leisure and learning
- Making decisions
- Staying safe from harm
- Complex needs and risks
- Impact on carers

Step Two- Making a Plan

Once the family have an indicative budget they will need to produce a support plan. This will detail what they will use the money for to achieve the outcomes they want to achieve.

The plan to answers these seven questions:

1. What is important to you?
2. What do you want to change or achieve?
3. How will you arrange your support?
4. How will you spend your money?
5. How will you manage your support?
6. How will you stay in control of your life?
7. What will you do to make this plan happen?

Step Three- Getting the Plan Agreed

The support plan must be agreed before the budget is released. The process for this will be for the allocated social worker to present the proposed support plan to the Children with Disabilities Resource Panel for consideration. This Panel meets fortnightly and its members are representatives from the multi-agency partners working within the Children with Disabilities service.

Step Four- Releasing the Money

The money will be paid on a four weekly basis to the family into a separate bank account. They can organise the money with support from the following methods:

- a Trust (a legal group set up to act for you)
- a broker, an independent social worker or an advocate
- another family member, with a separate bank account.
- a service provider who manages the budget and provides support
- using an Individual Service Fund

It is the responsibility of the family to arrange such support if they choose to but it must be approved by the local authority.

Step Five- Organising Support

It is the parent/carers responsibility to organise the support and services they have stated they require. They can get assistance from:

- A support provider
- A broker
- An agency
- The local authority.

This will be detailed in the support plan.

How will the Individual Budget be monitored?

Finance- The Personal Budget spending will be reviewed initially after 6 weeks of implementation, and every 6 months thereafter. Parent/carers will be expected to provide bank statements to evidence how they have been spending their Personal Budget. The review will also check that the following are in place if required:

- Employer's Liability Insurance
- Employment Contracts
- CRB checks

Outcomes- These will be reviewed as detailed below.

How often will the assessment and support plan be reviewed?

- The support plan will be part of the statutory Child in Need Plan and will be reviewed at a frequency proportionate to the level of service.
- Where the package provided is relatively small the reviews would usually be held annually.
- For higher levels of service or more complex situations the review frequency would be 6 monthly.
- At any point the parent/carer or a professional feels the needs of the family have changed a review can be requested.