Introducing personal budgets and self-directed support for disabled children, young people and their families in Medway

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December 2011
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Part 1: Context

Medway Children’s Services is in the process of introducing personal budgets for disabled children and their families. It is one of 31 children’s services departments taking part in the national ‘Support and Aspiration’ pathfinder work and is a member of In Control’s Children’s programme. As part of its membership of In Control’s Children’s Programme, Medway Children’s Services has requested this report to be produced. This report will be used to aid their planning and development of personal budgets over the coming year.

Since 2007, In Control has worked with more than 45 children’s service departments nationally, to support the development of personal budgets for children, young people and their families.

Background to this report

The following statements represent the author’s understanding of the work currently taking place in Medway to introduce personal budgets.

- To put in place a simple pathway and approach to introduce personal budgets for disabled children, young people and their families in Medway
- To structure this pathway around In Control’s model of self-directed support while building on the strengths of practice and support already offered to disabled children and young people in Medway
- To approach this development by using SQW’s 'Common Delivery Model' as a foundation for planning and implementing personal budgets and self-directed support
- To draw on examples of practice, service delivery, participation and development from across In Control’s established network of children’s services and more widely if possible

This report aims to contribute to this planning and development work. It draws together consultation with key people, the common delivery model, In Control’s seven steps to self-directed support and examples of best practice, service delivery and work that the author is aware of from across a network of children's services that are in the process of introducing personal budgets.
Part 2: Overview to the introduction of personal budgets

Successful introduction

The following three factors underpin the successful introduction of personal budgets for children and young people. These factors need to be addressed at the outset.

Leadership and responsibility

Leadership is critical to successful implementation and personal budgets need to be championed at a senior level. This leadership needs to focus on addressing challenges, removing barriers and ensuring that all staff within the service are aware of the changes being introduced and the reasons for this. Clear leadership is already in place in Medway.

Resourcing the work

Time needs to be allocated to driving this process forward. Without sufficient resource the timescale for implementation will be affected and the pilot is unlikely to succeed. Our experience shows that where children’s services allow three or more days resource, then the plan has been delivered successfully and families have been positive about the support and information they have received. If two days or less have been given to the work, everything takes longer and families will report a lack of support and will have concerns about information, process and ‘buy-in’ from the staff.

Timeline

A realistic and focused timeline needs to be set at the outset to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved. An ambitious target for a first group of families to have been supported through the whole process and to be using personal budgets is six to nine months but this is obviously dependent on resources. Most children’s services who have put some small resources towards 'driving the work' will take between 12 and 15 months to complete the first phase of introductory work and to have some families using personal budgets.

The next step is to be clear about what the outcomes and outputs of the work will be. This will need a clear approach to planning actions, logging milestones and ensuring that all parties are involved and their participation valued and respected. In Control would recommend starting with a small pilot. This allows the creation of a shared understanding across all parties of the challenges, actions and outcomes of the work. Of utmost importance is to use the pilot /small
scale introduction of personal budgets as a chance to really learn what it means. During the pilot it will be important to keep everyone involved, to gather learning along the way and to use this real experience to underpin the longer term wider introduction of personal budgets.

It is also critical that the outcomes and outputs agreed are ‘owned’ by the whole steering group/board. Outcomes define the change which will have happened whilst outputs will be concrete products or changes, for example:

**Outcome:** A group of families will be using personal budgets to support their son(s)/daughter(s)

**Output:** Each family will produce a support plan detailing how their child will get the support they need which have all been agreed by the project steering group/board.

The outputs will deliver the outcome. The desired outcome for Medway is the same as given in the example above eg 'a group of families will be using personal budgets to support their son(s)/daughter(s)'. The outputs from this work will include:

- a piloted resource allocation system, supported with a first version of unit costs, experience of professionals and families and the basis for developing a Medway Resource Allocation System
- a number of agreed support plans in use, backed up with experience from families and professionals on how to complete support plans which will inform a more formal and consistent approach to underpin a second wave of families taking up the opportunity of personal budgets
- a group of experienced and skilled family members who can share their experiences with other families and support new families in understanding and developing personal budgets
- a group of providers who are offering services which have been shaped by their participation in this work to introduce personal budgets
- an experienced staff group
- a bank of processes, procedures and guidance materials used by other children’s services and shared with those taking part in this first step which will inform the longer term development of guidance and process in Medway
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Together these outputs will form the evidence base upon which Medway will be able to take forward the roll out of personal budgets for disabled children, young people and their families.

**Timetable**

The timetable is obviously shaped by the target date for introduction of personal budgets. To date, there is no clear steer on this from Medway. The successful introduction of personal budgets will be based upon the resources set aside to support this work. Most sites take about 12 months to move from a situation of no personal budgets in place to having a pilot group of families using budgets. Recently, where resources have been more clearly focused on this work, personal budgets where introduced to a small group of families over a nine month period, however this involved significant focus and resources.

With regards to the wider roll out of personal budgets, eg making personal budgets the standard offer to new children and undertaking a process of converting existing children's support packages to ones funded through a personal budget, this is likely to take between 18 and 30 months. This applies to social care personal budgets. The Green Paper is clear about an expectation of an offer of personal health and personal SEN budgets also being in place by 2014, which is approximately 30 months’ time. All our experience would suggest treating such a target with great caution. Whereas there is a structure in place for social care, no such clear model exists yet for health and there is a great deal of uncertainty about personal SEN budgets. In Control would advise moving swiftly to put in place personal budgets in social care, and working in partnership with SE7 members to begin mapping out an approach to both health and SEN budgets. There may be some quick wins achievable for personal health budgets if a focus is put on to a small number of children who receive continuing health care funding, as these resources are tied to an individual it is conceivable that these children could have a jointly funded social care and health individual budget in place simply by being part of the work undertaken on social care eg the process is basically the same.

The key stages of piloting personal budgets are set out below with an approximate guide to the amount of time each phase will take. A more detailed example of a plan from East Sussex is attached in the appendix. The outline below is simply an overview of essential work. This is based on a small pilot of personal social care budgets for a group of children of various ages and support needs numbering between 15 and 20. Medway Children’s Services needs to set a target for these children's plans to be 'live' eg their personal budget being used to fund the support they need.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand of Work</th>
<th>Months 1-3</th>
<th>Months 4-6</th>
<th>Months 7-9</th>
<th>Months 10-12</th>
<th>Output</th>
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| **Allocation System** | - Unit cost in-house and contracted services  
- Agree RAS format for pilot  
- Carry out desktop exercise and confirm results | - Complete RAS with families  
- Agree results  
- Confirm allocation with families | - Review RAS in light of pilot with families and agreed personal budgets  
- host workshop with social workers and families to review paperwork and draft a Medway RAS for wider use | An evidence based allocation system for social care funding, informed by families and professionals and drawing on practice from other children's services |
| **Staff Involvement** | - Early staff awareness session  
- identify lead  
- identify capacity for support planning with families | - Link staff involved in support planning with families  
- Release capacity for staff to work with families on support plans | - Workshop with staff to review their experiences of pilot and collate learning and lessons | An experienced group of staff and managers who can support wider roll out of personal budgets |
| **Families** | - Host awareness session with families  
- Collate from other IC Children’s Services information needed by families – direct payments, safeguarding, CRB checks etc  
- Host joint workshop for families and those supporting families | - Invite families to take part  
- Meet with pilot families  
- Complete RAS exercise with families  
- Set out the pilot process for families  
- Ensure ongoing support offered to families  
- Once plans agreed seek feedback from all involved with a view to creating a Medway support planning resource and/or training programme | - Families work to complete their support plans with support from identified staff | An experienced group of families with identified champions to support families in wider roll out Formal / Informal family networks |
| **Support Planning** | - Early staff awareness session  
- identify lead  
- identify capacity for support planning with families  
- Host joint workshop for families and those supporting families  
- Ensure ongoing support offered to families  
- Once plans agreed seek feedback from all involved with a view to creating a Medway support planning resource and/or training programme | - Link staff involved in support planning with families  
- Release capacity for staff to work with families on support plans  
- Host support planning workshop with families  
- Support families to complete support plans  
- a commitment to support families working together both formally and informally | | An approach to support planning in Medway for children and families alongside an experienced and mixed group of support planners |
As indicated this is simply an overview, there is a great deal more work to be undertaken which is illustrated in the appendices and later in the report when exploring the Common Delivery Model.

### Part 3: Introducing personal budgets – the detail

#### A simple pathway and approach

Medway will be developing a simple pathway for children and families. This pathway will set out the steps from referral, to taking up a personal budget and it being agreed, it going live and then being reviewed. In Control has over the past five years developed a pathway called self-directed support\(^1\) which uses seven steps to illustrate the process involved. Although there may be changes as Medway progresses this work, In Control’s pathway is explained here as the basis for Medway to begin their work. Where available and appropriate, examples have been given of this being used in practice from across In Control’s network of children’s services\(^2\).

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\(^1\) Enabling Self-Directed Support for Children, Young people and Families, Crosby, N and Miller C, In Control 2010

\(^2\) All contact details are listed in the appendices
1. **Need some help?** Child and family needing some help, referral to children's services

2. **Making the most of resources** – exploring the real wealth of the child and family and looking for solutions and support opportunities based on their real wealth and what is available in the universal and targeted support offers. If eligible, these resources may be added to with a personal budget. This step is likely to include more detailed formal assessment.

   - 'Making the most of real wealth' – a draft approach to helping families think about the resources they bring. Shared at In Control Children's programme residential workshop in November 2011
   - Examples of Resource Allocation Systems are available from many children's services. Medway has examples from Newcastle and Halton which are informing early work on this. A template allocation system is available from the In Control website. Most members use this for their first allocation exercise and then revise once they have worked with it and consulted on it. It is exceedingly difficult to write and design an allocation system without any experience of how they work, the In Control template, used by both Halton and Newcastle children’s services, took more than five years’ work to design.
   - A paper linking outcomes used in allocation\(^3\) with a wider set of outcomes used in assessment and planning is available and will be circulated to all members of the Children's Programme in the next month

3. **Making a Plan** – this draws together key people and is centred on the child and their immediate family. It explores the support needed and how their real wealth and their personal budget (if eligible), can enhance these resources or supplement or complement other support offers.

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\(^3\) Outcomes RAS and Integration, Crosby, N. In Control 2011, unpublished
• Newcastle is in the process of commissioning a voluntary sector organisation to act as a 'support planning hub'.

• Halton Children's Services now commissions a local Children's Centre run by Barnardos to support 90 families a year to develop and manage support plans. This commission was based on a pilot for personal budgets which included training Children's Centre staff to support families in planning.

• Family led – it will not be sufficient to simply look to formal delivery of support around support plans. It will be important to 'seed' and support families linking and supporting each other. Many sites have taken this forward by delivering training to family groups using approaches such as 'the big plan' or 'families leading planning'. North Tyneside has taken this forward with the support of 'Skills for People'.

• Piloting activity – one key purpose of the pilot is to learn as much as possible about how to support families. Through the pilot it will be necessary to explore a number of different approaches to support planning and to skill up a diverse group of different people both professional and voluntary.

4. Agreeing the plan – ensuring the plan will deliver the identified outcomes, that money is managed transparently, that the budget is sufficient, that contingency is in place and that any safeguarding concerns are addressed in the plan.

• Outcomes – any support plan will need to demonstrate how the support planned will deliver the outcomes agreed on the basis of the assessment and also with reference to the outcomes which shape the allocation system and sit within the local authority’s Children and Young People’s Plan. Many In Control members include outcomes within the support plan and use as an approach to agreeing the use of a personal budget and support plan, alongside using the same outcomes in the review process.

• Panel / skills and knowledge – resource management panels will have a different role as more families use personal budgets. The allocation of funding will have been made by the resource allocation system so a panel will not be confirming an available budget. In some sites, where there is a greater use of personal budgets, the old model of a large number of representatives attending a panel is being changed to offer a more family friendly approach. In Newcastle the plan is agreed between the team manager, social worker and parent, with the opportunity for the parent to invite a parent advocate along.
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- Pilot activity – sites have used the resource panel as a way of educating all those attending about how personal budgets work and what person/child centred support plans look like. This has had the positive impact of changes such as that indicated above in Newcastle with a move away from expensive meetings to much more child and family centred practice.

5. Managing support – Many families may need ongoing support to manage their support plan, and if applicable, their child's personal budget. This support may come from their key worker, lead professional, social worker or a voluntary organisation.

1. KIDS Key workers – key workers in Hull, managed by KIDS, supported a small number of families to develop and use personal health budgets.

2. Account management – South Tyneside has a number of different voluntary organisations that offer 'account management services' to families. These have been developed for adults but are now open to children and their families. Families pay from their child's personal budget for this service.

3. BHLP models – A two-year pilot programme supporting the development of the lead professional role in to a budget holding role offered a model which is applicable to personal budgets where the lead professional manages the personal budget on behalf of the family. Resources and case studies from this pilot are available for OPM's website.

6. Living my life – the plan is live, the child and family have the support they need. They and their key worker know what to do in times of crisis and also understand flexibilities in the plan around expenditure.

- Stories and champions – a key output of the pilot process will be families with experience who can support and raise awareness of personal budgets with other families. It is important to collate these stories as the pilot progresses. These stories will help raise awareness but also inform the wider roll out of personal budgets. In Control supported Newham and Middlesbrough Children's Services in collating stories, experiences and information which has been then used to inform wider roll out of personal budgets.

4 [www.opm.co.uk](http://www.opm.co.uk) – search 'Budget Holding Lead Professional'

5 Personalisation for Children, Young People and Families, Briefing 3: Evaluation and Outcomes, Crosby, N. In Control 2011
7. Review and Learn – never assume that something cannot be done better. Carrying out regular reviews ensures that all is going well, that money is being used for what it should be, and that learning from the previous three to 12 months is included in any re-designed support plan.

In Control has worked and continues to work closely with SQW, the developers of the Common Delivery Model (CDM), and a number of workshops have been co-hosted which bring together the seven steps with the CDM, this report echoes those.

The Common Delivery Model

The CDM is split into four parts which set the foundation for personal budgets. This section identifies these parts as well as recommended actions for Medway to take forward and examples of how other services have done this.

1. Organisational engagement and cultural change

Engagement of wider agencies

In Medway, the Personal Budgets Steering Group has good representation from adult services, key people from the SEN service and from parts of the Disabled Children's Service. The consultation process indicated a bias towards young people of transition age and this will need to be addressed. Health representation was good, with both leads for the personal health budget present and representatives of children's health services present.

Recommended action:

- Invite parent/family representatives and ensure they are supported to attend. In the case of this steering group, they were invited to attend but were not able to join the consultation meeting. There is a need for a briefing (or more than one) to parents, both as part of recruitment to any pilot activity but also to widen the knowledge and possible participation in consultation activities. This could be linked to the SEN Pathfinder work.
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- Invite representation from the local voluntary/private sector provider services. It will be necessary to host a workshop for providers if this has not already been held. Personal budgets will completely change their source of income from the local authority to families.
- Invite a school representative. As the agenda becomes clearer around personal SEN budgets it will be necessary to hold a meeting for headteachers and key people to discuss how this agenda will be taken forward in Medway.

The sooner there is full representation on the PB Steering Group and the workshops/meetings are held, the better. Creating a feeling of this being a shared agenda with people involved from the outset will help manage the wider challenges of system change as a move is made to scale up activity from pilot to wider introduction of personal budgets.

Recruitment of staff

There are a number of recruitment issues for staff in support of taking this work forward. Not only in light of the statements already made about the need for resourcing a lead person but also around support to families involved in the pilot activity and a more basic 'recruitment of the whole staff group' to support this work.

Recommended action

- Recruit or identify a development lead and resource this post for three or more days per week to focus specifically on all the issues and challenges of taking forward personal budgets for disabled children, young people and families. This role will need to be at an appropriate level of seniority to take forward work on resource allocation, liaising with key people and partners, linking with the pathfinder agenda in Medway and building awareness and relationships across Medway Children’s Services and the local community. Examples of this role exist in East Sussex, Brighton, Newcastle and Cambridgeshire.
- Host a workshop for the social work team and wider members of the Disabled Children's Service where personal budgets, self-directed support and the roles of those supporting families will be explained. Hosting this workshop early on will be important as the failure to address the involvement of staff at an early stage elsewhere in the country has created significant problems as pilot work has been taken forward. Personal budgets challenge the historical culture of disabled
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children's services moving away from prescription and dependency to empowerment, choice and control for families.

- Identify key workers who will be more deeply involved in the pilot activity. These workers will work alongside families to develop support plans. Although it will be good to involve people from outside the children's service in this it will provide key workers with a chance to develop skills which will be necessary in the long term. All those involved in supporting families with support planning will need training; this training is best delivered to the whole group of families and supporting workers.

change management

Medway Children's Services are members of the SE7 Support and Aspiration Pathfinder. This will mean a radical change in the whole approach to supporting disabled children and their families over the next 18 months and longer term. Introducing personal budgets on its own is a major change. It will be beneficial to include personal budgets and the associated challenges and changes within the wider change management approach underpinning the transformation being taken forward. However, it may be the case that work on personal budgets is taken forward more swiftly than other parts of the pathfinder work. In this case it will be necessary to address a number of key issues.

recommended action:

- Participation and involvement of staff and wider partners from the outset, as explained under engagement and recruitment of staff
- Plan to address the culture change underpinning the introduction of personal budgets
- Addressing the culture change will include offering and delivering training on person centred thinking and approaches to all staff and partners. It is likely that there will be knowledge and experience in adult learning disability services to draw on with reference to this training.
- Uncertainty in the staff group about new roles, responsibilities and what work they will no longer do.
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Market development

Personal budgets will change the market over the coming years and will de-stabilise services currently reliant on block and/or longer term contracts with Medway Children's Services. Personal budgets will also challenge all the services which Medway currently deliver in-house. The customer base for local services will change from being mainly with the local authority to one with all families and disabled children and young people. This will cause great concern, especially in the voluntary sector.

Recommended action

- Lead commissioners need to be involved in all discussions about the introduction of personal budgets alongside procurement and contract officers. There must be clarity about what commissioners will commission and what individuals will commission.
- The voluntary and private sector need to be supported in thinking through how their offer of support will need to adapt due to the new customer base. This support from the children’s service can be complemented with input from family members involved in piloting personal budgets.

2. Engaging and involving families

Awareness raising

Involving family members and those with representative roles will be very important. Clear information about the pilot, what it will mean for those taking part and information about what safety net is in place should a family decide not to continue with the pilot will be necessary. Copies of such information will be available from many children’s services who have already embarked on this work.

Recommended action

- Contact children’s services already embarked on introducing personal budgets for disabled children and their families and ask for copies of the publicity information used. Review and revise if necessary for families who will be taking part.
- Hold an information and awareness workshop for families explaining what

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6 A Guide for Commissioners will be published by KIDs as part of their 'Making it Personal' DfE funded project. The guide has been developed by Claire Lazarus at OPM, if you wish to see early versions please contact Claire on Clazarus@opm.co.uk
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personal budgets are and setting out the planned pilot.

- Invite families to take part in the pilot, meet with them and take forward work on completing the resource allocation questionnaire, training in support planning and link staff members with each family to help them complete their child's support plan.

This pilot is one which will succeed if taken forward in partnership with families; everyone will learn together and problems and challenges can be resolved together as opposed to separately. Taking such an approach will both mean success is more likely and foster a healthy working relationship between all parties.

Peer support
One of the successes in some areas has been building on formal parent carer forum structures and also fostering informal networks of families taking part in piloting personal budgets. Not only does this offer different types of help to families in completing support plans but it begins to build wider and more informal support for new families in the longer term. Facebook pages have been set up and meetings arranged without support from the local authority; such activity can only be positive in the longer term introduction of personal budgets.

Recommended action
- Be strategic about building informal networks. Seek examples from Newcastle (Pass it on Newcastle – an informal network of families supporting each other).
- Offer to resource a family-led meeting to kick this off in partnership with Medway Parent Carer Forum.

3. Setting up the infrastructure

Support Planning
In many pilots, attention has been focused on resource allocation systems as opposed to what is acknowledged in both the adult world and more recently in the DfE IB Pilots that the most important stage in families taking up personal budgets is support planning. Creative support to develop plans will see more efficient use made of the limited resources available, and will build upon the 'real wealth' or resources a family brings with them. Many pilots have struggled through not offering ongoing support to families to develop their plans, whilst some families find it really easy, many do need and want support from professionals and/or others. Alongside
support, families will need good information about what is available both in terms of specialist and mainstream activities, opportunities and support, and for this to be backed up with good information about direct payments, what it means to use direct payments. Finally, some families may wish not to manage the budget themselves. Medway will need to link with support services currently helping adults using personal budgets and/or look to develop capacities for account management within the area. South Tyneside has some good examples and Newcastle Children's Services are in the process of commissioning a support planning hub.

**Recommended action**

- Seek example support plans from other children's services and also from the members section of In Control's website
- Once families have been identified hold a workshop for linked staff/people from voluntary and private sector who will be involved in supporting families to plan and families focused on getting started with support planning
- Plan to host one or more additional sessions where families can come together and share their progress with their child's plan and help each other overcome any challenges which have arisen.

**Resource allocation mechanism**

Highlighted in the overview timetable earlier, is the work needed on resource allocation. This is one of the very first tasks to focus on. The key parts of work on resource allocation are headlined in the timetable. It will be important not to try and create a perfect system before working with families. The development of allocation systems needs to be viewed as an ongoing process, the more one is used, refined and revised, the better it will become. The version offered by In Control to children's services has taken between five and six years to complete, it provides a children's service with a starting place upon which children's services can develop their own approach. As stated, it is very difficult to construct a new system without any working experience. Finally, In Control and those members using our system have found real strength in basing an allocation on outcomes as opposed to needs. Any system needs to be clearly different to families experience of assessment which is more often than not deficit based, includes personal care, and impairment information and may in some circumstances been filled in certain ways to get the service the social worker or family want as opposed to a simple record of information.
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Recommended action

- Build on the early work underway drawing together allocation systems from Newcastle (In Control’s open source example) and Halton. Balance the need to get a version people are happy to use with the fact that it will change once the first pilot is underway.
- Complete all work on unit costing of in-house provision and outsourced contracts and commissions of support service
- Identify a sample group of 50 children with a social care package (not with a health component at this stage), cost up each support package and use this data in a desktop exercise to be run with In Control. (Set a date for this workshop)
- Set aside time after the completion of the desktop exercise to go through the results, explore and understand any changes to support packages and the overall pattern of distribution. In Control can support this.

The emphasis needs to be on getting a ‘good enough’ allocation system in place for the pilot. Other services can advise on their approaches to managing some of the changes in allocation and the discussion about allocations with families.

Management of IB funds

There will need to be an alternative in place for families who do not wish to manage the funds and where it is not necessary for social workers / social services to be involved in this work. This service will need to be based in the community. There is currently no blueprint for this yet in the children’s world (nor in the adult world) but a number of ideas have been explored as noted earlier. As a pilot site for personal health budgets there will have to be work under-way exploring management of health funding, it will be important to link with this.

Recommended action

- Seek examples of account management (South Tyneside), hubs (Newcastle), extending the commission of children’s centres (Halton).
- Explore the possibility of combining with the support service used to help adults with personal budgets.
- Discuss with one of more voluntary sector services possible involvement in the
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pilot with a view to being able to offer such services in the longer term.

There will have to be an offer of support to families in the pilot and even more importantly in the long run as more families get involved in deciding how a personal budget will be used to support their child.

**IT resources – linking together allocation systems, Children's Information Systems and local authority software and it systems**

Concerns were raised during the consultation session about IT and subsequent discussions have highlighted differing opinions about adult and children's IT systems. For Medway Children's Services it will be best to contact other children's services further along with the introduction of personal budgets and find out how they are using their current IT systems. Of our members, it will be best to focus on those involved in the DfE IB Pilot, these authorities are: Gloucestershire, Newcastle, Gateshead and Essex.

4. Safeguarding and risk

Self-directed support, as identified by many practitioners, has the potential to improve safeguarding practice. Support is tailored to the individual, staff are known to the individual child, participation in the mainstream is more visible, and moving away from historic institutional settings means reducing the number of different staff involved in supporting a child over the day and night.

**Recommended action**

- Contact members of In Control and seek copies and examples of their approaches to safeguarding, including CRB checks, support plans, risk assessments within support plans and monitoring/audit processes. Newcastle has a process in place which includes dealing with safeguarding. Foremost is the inclusion in the plan of risk assessments which supports an open and honest discussion early on and enables resource to be set against addressing any identified risks.
Extending personal budgets to health and SEN funding

This report predominantly focuses on the introduction of personal social care budgets. However, the government set out in the Green Paper an ambition for personal budgets across social care, SEN and health, with a focus on families having a right to a personal budget by 2014.

Personal health budgets

In Control has been involved taking forward personal health budgets since 2008 and prior to the launch of government policy. There is an immense amount of expertise here which is available for Medway Children’s Services to draw upon. Medway is also a government sponsored pilot site for personal health budgets for adults, which will also provide a large amount of expertise.

When thinking about disabled children and their families, there are a number of health funding streams which could be included in an individual budget. Most straightforward is funding which is allocated to individual support such as continuing care. More challenging is funding linked to equipment. There are examples of continuing care funding being used as a personal health budget7. For the pathfinder and work on redesigning assessment, planning, introducing personal budget and putting in place genuine and robust multi-agency approaches to support and funding it will be important to temper ambition with what is realistic within the 18 months of pathfinder work.

Steps to pilot the use of continuing care funding in a small number of children’s individual budget would be a good start. As a PHB pilot site, Medway has the ability to make health funding available as a direct payment. There is a lot of guidance on the Department of Health Personal Health Budget web pages, and on In Control’s website.

With a view to the wider agenda it may be most realistic for children's services to engage with those already taking work forward in adult services and use their current work to inform pathfinder developments.

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7 Mitchell’s Story, In Control website or ‘YouTube’
Personal SEN Budgets

The government is looking to push through an amendment to the Education Act in March 2012 which will grant pathfinders the ability to make the funding tied to additional and individual support as identified in part 3 of a Statutory Statement of Special Educational Needs available as direct payments.

What this may mean is not yet clear, and there is already strong opposition this within the sector. It has caused much concern for head teachers who see parts of their budget being taken away and concern more widely as each local authority appears to take a different approach to the funding of special schools/SEN provision.

For Medway Children's Services, our recommendation would be to start by bringing together all partners including head teachers and family representatives and beginning a discussion about what this could mean, what funding would be ‘sensibly’ included in a personal budget, how this may be managed and thinking through how the family purchasing individual learning support can be a positive addition to any support offered through the school. With reference to the piloting of personal budgets work in Medway should focus on social care and if possible include a small number of children who receive health funded support and look to begin work with personal SEN funding in 12 to 15 months.

Using Outcomes to bring together funding streams

Medway's Children and Young People's Plan will set out the outcomes at the foremost of all work with children and young people in Medway. These outcomes can be used to form the basis of allocating personal funding and also as a basis for planning and review. The example below is taken from an unpublished paper being written by In Control which explores this approach. In Control's work has in the past used the Every Child Matters outcomes, however the change in government and move to local areas setting their own outcomes mean looking to a process which offer areas the opportunity to set their own outcomes and then to explore the contribution from social care, education and health (in this instance) to the delivery of these outcomes.

This is only an example. Medway's outcomes stated in their Children and Young People's Plan can be substituted for the example outcomes used here. It is imperative to use this as a basis for understanding how funding can be allocated, what will be allocated to personal budgets and
Introducing personal budgets for children, young people and families in Medway

how funding and support needs to work together to put in place support for the child, using a single approach to planning.

![Diagram showing the integration of social, health, and education services to achieve outcomes like being safe, healthy, and able to participate, with an indicative allocation of integrated personal budget.](image-url)
This graphic is a first version of the framework for assessment and planning developed at two recent workshops for the SE7 Pathfinder group (November 2011). Although it is not prescriptive in terms of the detail of what each action will mean it does give an overview to how assessment and planning will link together. The key for those taking forward the introduction of personal budgets will be ensuring that any process developed around resource and allocation will fit within this framework.

Resource allocation ties in with 'Agree and Allocate', whilst planning fits within 'Plan'. The principles set out by SE7, which focus on a new person / child / family centred approach tie in well with the use of personal budgets (whether SEN, social care or health or a combination of all three). There is an argument to be made, and a powerful one at that, which sees the plan being developed being based on person centred support planning procedures as will be familiar to those who have been involved in developing personal budgets. The challenge is to have a single planning format which can, if allocated, incorporate a personal budget. The framework in this draft format offers the ability to include personal budgets.
Part 4: Summary

Summary answers to the questions asked by Medway

What will we not be doing as a result of this work and what will change?

Moving to personal budgets as the standard approach to supporting families will not lessen the need for support by disabled children. However the source of support, the type of support, and who is responsible for delivering that support, will change. This will impact on the roles and tasks undertaken by all parties involved in supporting disabled children, young people and their families in Medway.

All changes and developments taken forward as part of the pathfinder programme have to fit within the existing statutory frameworks; this will include responsibility for safeguarding. If we take this as a 'non-negotiable' then we can explore both what 'may not' be undertaken by Children's Services and hence what will change.

The specific answer to this question will be shaped by both what current systems and support exist in Medway, and how Medway chooses to apply the learning from their pilot activity. As illustrated in this paper, areas have taken forward roll out or scaling up activities in their own particular way, for example Halton extended the remit of their children's centres, East Sussex commissioned independent support for families in their pilot from A4E and Newcastle commissioning a support planning hub. In Control has not been prescriptive as to how areas take forward such support, rather we share, support and affirm the values which underpin personal budgets and self-directed support.

The key areas which the introduction of personal budgets will impact on will change as more families begin to use a personal budget approach, these areas may include:

**Financial systems**

With personal budgets comes the need for a greater amount of information about service costs and support from both in-house and external provision. The upfront allocation of an indicative budget means there needs to be confidence both in the questions leading to an allocation, but more importantly in the financial information underpinning the allocation system. This will initially mean a commitment of time to unit costing all in-house and externally provided services.
It is important to stress however that few children's services have felt confident in their first attempt at this and have re-costed services as they move from first pilot to second phase.

External service providers will need to be able to invoice and contract with many individual families instead of having a single contract with the local authority. This will mean new back office systems and re-focusing their services towards families and children.

**Resource management panels**

Using an upfront allocation system will remove much of the need for a resource management panel. The current function of a resource management panel is to set a budget – an allocation system does this early in the pathway for families. Resource panels often involve a large group of professionals for a lengthy period of time. This is an expensive resource. Newcastle, through involving their panel in the early development of personal budgets, has moved to simply involve the team (budget) manager, the family’s social worker and the parent(s) with the option of a parent advocate in the sign off process. This has meant parents feel more comfortable in attending and able take part in a genuine discussion about the plan, as opposed to joining what can be quite an intimidating meeting with many professionals who are not known to the family. The move away from resource panels has been an evolutionary process.

**Social workers participation in planning activities**

A successful roll out of personal budgets should not add to social worker's limited time resource. If there are new, additional tasks then these need to replace others. When looking at In Control’s seven steps graphic it is clear that there are three specific tasks for social workers / social work teams, namely agreeing the allocation, agreeing the plan and reviewing the plan. Outside of these key tasks, the support to families to plan, and manage their plan, can sit either with the family or with a commissioned / external service.
Commissioning activity

This graphic, originally designed to support the Putting People First programme for adult services illustrates the different sectors of commissioning activity. The basic change to commissioning practice is based on the understanding that personal budgets are an 'individual commissioning' approach, targeted services are an 'operational or community level of commissioning' and 'mainstream / universal' is a strategic level of commissioning. The move in commissioning is to open up the mainstream to as diverse group of children, young people and families as possible, thus additional support funded through personal budgets should decrease over time as more children and young people participate in mainstream activities and opportunities. There are likely to be specific changes to contracting and procurement as outlined below but there is a change to the strategic direction of commissioning as set out here. The move is away from specialist to mainstream and universal support.

Service provision

The services currently provided directly or via a commission will change. The service offer needs to move to one of a service able to tailor support to individual children and away from large standard offers such as those of overnight stays. There will always be some demand for this type of service but evidence from both the DfE IB pilot and from across In Control's members indicates many families will choose personal assistants and access to mainstream

8 Explored in detail in 'Learning Together: Commissioning and Personalisation', Miller, C. Commissioning Support Programme, now available from OPM
9 'Making it Personal' Information for Commissioners, currently being written by OPM
activities instead of the traditional support on offer. In-house overnight provision is often one of the most expensive services and when faced with a choice of a single night at high cost or a lot of personal assistant hours, families make often prefer personal assistant time. The provision of overnight stays will change and there are models for how this may happen from spot contracting to subsidised charges across In Control’s membership. There are no examples yet of an agreed plan of action actually been taken forward.

Contracting arrangements need become much more responsive to families and children’s changing support needs. Historic practice around long term block contracts does not fit with a responsive and varied offer of flexible support. Firstly the contracted service will struggle to respond to the different types of support families may want, to the fact that families may choose to stop wanting the service itself. Secondly it commits funding to a service which families may not to choose on the long run hence setting in place a ‘double funding’ situation.

Finally, committing funding to a service which is then not available for families to take as a direct payment is illegal as families can ask for a direct payment of the full value of the support being offered.

As a member of the SE7 pathfinder, much of the changes outlined above will also be impacted on by activity being taken forward on the development of single assessments, plans and wider developments in the role of key workers, the voluntary sector, short breaks, the use of the early support approach across age groups and work focused on the transition into the adult world. All these developments will shape, and be shaped by the introduction of personal budgets.

**Likely cost?**

There are two costs to Medway Children’s Services, the cost of resourcing the development / piloting of personal budgets and the cost of transforming the system.

For reference, the Department for Education Individual Budget pilots in Newcastle, Gateshead, Essex, Gloucestershire, Derbyshire and Coventry have been provided with approximately £150,000 a year for the duration of the programme. This covered a first stage pilot and enabled a focus on 30 to 50 families. All sites are now taking forward the roll out of personal budgets.
Resourcing a pilot for 20 families will cost approximately:

- A lead development officer for three plus days per week
- Venues, family training, family expenses, printing and paper resources
- The cost of 20 personal budgets (average of £8,000). It is unlikely if working with families who already receive support that each family's current support package is already a direct payment. As such, resourcing 20 personal budgets will mean both funding currently as a direct payment and the financial equivalent of current commissioned and/or in house services.
- Potential commissioning of small scale support to families to develop support plans as they have in Newcastle and East Sussex. Not resourcing this through a commission will mean having to release sufficient support from within current services and the social work team.

The author would hesitate to put any cost on whole scale transformation much of which will be part of the pathfinder work. There is an interim period of 'double funding', the scale of which will depend on commitments to contracted and in-house services eg as families move away from using in-house or block contracted which all evidence suggests will happen there will be a period when the children’s services is funding underused contracted or in-house services as well as personal budgets. The DIE IB Pilots have been charged with identifying the cost of transformation, and although this is likely now to get subsumed in the Green Paper work it may be worth contacting SQW\textsuperscript{10} for further information on this.

The process of training will include:

- Training and culture change work with all partners including local authority, health service and voluntary community and private sector organisations alongside families
- Commissioning support to families to plan and manage their plans/budgets and personal assistants
- Costs of time, venues etc for training, awareness sessions and support to families to meet and plan/share/learn together, until formal support commissioned. These costs would then be part of the contracted support service
- Commitment to releasing time from all key people including finance (RAS), commissioning and contracting, social work team and similar commitment from

\textsuperscript{10} MPrabhakar@sqw.co.uk
partners to resource key people’s time and involvement in the pilot and during transformation

- Commitment and resource set against supporting the participation of children and young people

Much of this work is going to be similar and/or part of the wider pathfinder programme, as this is a larger piece of work costs are likely to escalate to incorporate this much wider system change.

**What needs to be in place in the interim stages?**

Underpinning any move from the existing system to one which delivers support to disabled children and young people using personalised funding across social care, health and special educational needs will be a commitment from all levels to making this work and a clear focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and families. The principles set out by SE7 in the framework for assessment and planning work will as a focus for this commitment.

Practically there needs to be clear leadership as set out in the ‘Keys to success’ section willing to drive forward the work, the resources put against the time it takes to support the pilot and a wider commitment across the service and partners to releasing the capacity needed to appropriately support the work and the families involved in the first pilot.

With any move from one system to another there will be a period when the service and partners are working both in the historic way and in the new way. Support and time for managers to do this and to support their teams will be necessary. One approach to this may be to designate specific workers to the personal budgets pilots whilst ensuring that all are involved in sharing the learning and participating in training and awareness raising.

Ongoing and long term support to family representation (likely to be part of the wider pathfinder work) will be necessary.

Finally, a solid and deliverable action plan needs to be in place which will provide a structure to getting the work going, delivering support to all involved and thinking through what should happen in terms of a next step up in scale of activity.
Conclusion

Writing a report which sets out how the new offer will look in its entirety is almost impossible. This would be the same with every children's service that In Control has supported over the past five years. There are strengths in Medway and these include the direct payments system and support for disabled children and their families, supportive and clear leadership, the pathfinder programme which will naturally draw in a wider partnership, existing family representation, commitment and support form adult services, and being a personal health budget pilot site. All of these will inform how personal budgets for social care and then health and SEN are taken forward and how the future offer looks. This report is focused on informing and supporting Medway to start this work, identifying sources of information, examples of practice and valuable lessons.

There are a number of key decisions to be made, first and foremost being the timescale and target for implementing live personal budgets for a small pilot group of families. Seeing this as part of pathfinder work and building this in to work on assessment and planning will be important as all three areas of work need to run in parallel. The work over the past four weeks undertaken regionally with the SE7 group sets out a framework which incorporates personal budgets but is not reliant on them as some children will not need personal budgets.

Setting the pilot and getting it going will then offer the opportunity to start building a 'Medway' approach to personal SEN budgets and to draw in work on personal health budgets. Neither of which are covered in detail in this report. Any work on these strands of work needs to begin in a spirit of true partnership with participation from all parties to be successful as is also the case with social care budgets.

In Control looks forward to working with Medway Children's Services over the coming years.

Nic Crosby
In Control
December 2011
Appendix

Appendix A – East Sussex – Action plan for Personal Budgets using the Common Delivery Model

East Sussex has kindly shared their management action plan set out under titles drawn from the Common Delivery Model developed by SQW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>CDM ELEMENT</th>
<th>MILESTONES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational engagement</td>
<td>1. Engagement of wider agencies</td>
<td>Alignment/ inclusion of a wide range of funding streams</td>
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<td>and cultural change</td>
<td></td>
<td>Providers event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Recruitment of designated staff</td>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Change management</td>
<td>Identify Project Manager</td>
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<td>Management briefing</td>
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<td>Project Board meeting</td>
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<td>Finance processes</td>
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<td>Staff briefing</td>
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<td>Lite Bites with Social Workers</td>
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<td>Support planning training</td>
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<td>RAS training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Market development</td>
<td>Community development and inclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness raising and support (support with confidence?)</td>
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<td>5. Awareness raising with families</td>
<td>Identify pilot families</td>
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<td>Pilots begin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Peer support</td>
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<td>Setting up the infrastructure</td>
<td>7. Support planning</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Development and implementation of a resource and funding mechanism</td>
<td>Agree funding</td>
<td>Finance /unit costs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Legal issues finalised</td>
<td>Work on unit costs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Set up evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. A spectrum of choice for management of IB funds</td>
<td>Agree pilot details</td>
<td>IT database</td>
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<td>10. Development of IT resources</td>
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<td>Set up web pages</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous evaluation of outcomes achieved by the families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safeguarding and risk management</td>
<td>11. Safeguarding</td>
<td>Develop policies and processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B - Contacts for all examples, documents etc offered in the main document

The Common Delivery Model – SQW
Meera Prabhakar – MPrabhakar@sqw.co.uk

Management Action Plan – East Sussex
Please email Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk

Enabling Self-Directed Support for children and young people, Crosby, N. and Miller, C. In Control 2010 (unpublished – copies available from Nic Crosby)
Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk
Clive Miller – Cmiller@opm.co.uk


Support planning hub – Newcastle
Please email Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk

Barnardos Children’s Centre – Halton
Please email Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk

The Big Plan – North Tyneside and Skills for People
Please email Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk
Introducing personal budgets for children, young people and families in Medway

Resource Panel – Newcastle
Please email Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk

KIDS key workers – Hull
Sue Cawkwell – sue.cawkwell@kids.org.uk

Account management – South Tyneside
Please email Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk

Budget holding Lead Professionals / BHLP models
www.opm.co.uk, search for ‘Budget Holding Lead Professionals’

Making a big difference – Middlesbrough, Kelly, G. In Control 2011

Personalisation for children, young people and families, Briefing 3: Evaluation and Outcomes, Crosby, N. In Control, 2010

Making it Personal, A Guide for Commissioners, being completed by OPM
Claire Lazarus – Clazarus@opm.co.uk

Pass it on – Newcastle
Presentation download from http://www.in-control.org.uk/media/96945/newcastle%20families%20info%20v2.pdf

Learning together: Commissioning and Personalisation, Miller, C. OPM
Copies from Clive Miller, OPM – CMiller@opm.co.uk

For contact details for any of the Children's Service currently participating in the In Control Children's Programme please email Nic Crosby – nic.crosby@in-control.org.uk