

# Self-directed support

## Support brokers

Some people can plan and organise their own support without any help. Others want help from ‘support brokers’.

This fact sheet tells you about what support brokerage is and who you might choose as a support broker.



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## The basic facts

Some people can plan and organise their own support without any help. Others want help. The help people get to plan and manage their support is often called 'support brokerage'. The people who help in this way are called 'support brokers'.

The word 'broker' sounds like it must be a professional – someone paid to help with a specialised area, like an insurance broker. So the name 'support broker' is a little misleading, because a friend or family member could be your support broker.

## More information about brokers and brokerage

### A support broker:

- is someone you choose to help you plan and manage your support
- can help to action your plan
- can help you work out your choices and arrange the support you need to make things happen
- should listen to you and work in partnership with you. You are in charge.

### A support broker does not have to be a paid professional. They can be anyone you trust:

- someone in your family, a friend or neighbour
- a circle of support
- a worker for a voluntary organisation
- someone in social services, such as your social worker or care manager
- advice and information organisations, such as Centres for Independent Living
- an independent, professional broker
- a support provider organisation – as long as the role of broker is separate from the provider's other activities. They have to remain impartial: the broker should not recommend all their organisation's own services.

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# What a support broker does

## A support broker:

- should help you to think about, plan and organise support that is tailored just for you
- may help you with one or several areas of planning or organising your support
- can help you for a short time or a longer period – it all depends on what you want
- can act as your agent and hold your personal budget for you.

## A support broker can help with many tasks, for example:

- designing and costing your support package
- finding creative ways to plan and organise your support
- telling you about what services you can use
- negotiating with organisations on your behalf
- helping you to make connections in the community
- placing personal advertisements
- recruiting staff
- payroll or accountancy
- co-ordinating your support
- tapping into local networks and funding opportunities
- keeping track of how your support is going.

## Finding a support broker

If you want a support broker who is not a friend or family member, let social services know.

Many councils are starting to offer brokerage services or are making lists of local brokers.

If you want to use a professional broker remember that their fee usually comes out of your personal budget.

[www.shop4support.com](http://www.shop4support.com) will soon hold lists of brokers in your area.

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# An example

In this example, Tony, Ken's friend and advocate, played the role of Ken's broker.

Ken has had a life of being moved around. He is now 45. He has been in just about every hospital in East Anglia. He had his first experience of long-stay hospital when he was 15. He says he was kept in hospital on a section under the Mental Health Act. Ken has lost his temper with staff in the hospitals he has lived in. But, in all the years that Tony has known him, he has never done anything like that outside the hospital.

Whilst he was living in another institution – in Devon – Ken said he was not allowed to go to the toilet alone. He had to ask for toilet paper and wasn't allowed things like razors, batteries, bottles and beakers at night. 'If I was dry I could not get a drink,' he says.

Going out was a rare event. When he needed new clothes for his move back to Essex, a staff member went to buy them for him. His care at the institution cost almost £3,000 per week. (To stay in the Savoy Hotel for a week costs £2,800!)

Tony had the idea of Ken being part of the In Control project, with a view to moving to supported living and a place of his own. Ken was desperately unhappy where he was living. He longed to move to Essex.

It was decided to do a half-way plan. When Ken was on holiday in a cottage with Tony in Essex, Tony invited Nicola, a social worker, for a cup of tea. She read the report about Ken but couldn't match what she had read with the person she met. She started looking for somewhere suitable in Essex. This is how Ken came to be where he is now – in his flat, able to organise his life as he chooses.

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# Find more information about self-directed support at: [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

Here is a selection of things that tell you more.

Free to download from [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

**Support Brokerage – frequently asked questions**

Paul Key and Alison Short.

Free to download or you can buy a copy from:

In Control Support Centre, Carillon House, Chapel Lane, Wythall, B47 6JX or [www.in-control.org.uk/shop](http://www.in-control.org.uk/shop)

**How to be in control** DVD or view on:

[www.in-control.org.uk/dvd](http://www.in-control.org.uk/dvd)

Printed publications for sale at:

In Control Support Centre, Carillon House, Chapel Lane, Wythall, B47 6JX or [www.in-control.org.uk/shop](http://www.in-control.org.uk/shop)

**The Essential Family Guide: how to help your family member be in control** Caroline Tomlinson

Useful websites

The **National Brokerage Network** can help you find out more about support brokerage:

[www.nationalbrokeragenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalbrokeragenetwork.org.uk)

**shop4support** can tell you more about support brokers in your area and what other people have thought about their service. [www.shop4support.com](http://www.shop4support.com)

**National Centre for Independent Living:** [www.ncil.org.uk](http://www.ncil.org.uk)

## About the **In Control and Me** project

A three-year project to produce accessible information for everyone who wants to direct their own support, funded by the National Lottery through the BIG Lottery Fund. You can find out more at [www.mencap.org.uk/incontrol](http://www.mencap.org.uk/incontrol) or [www.in-control.org.uk/icandme](http://www.in-control.org.uk/icandme)

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