

Self-directed support

Thinking outside the box – using your personal budget in a creative way

This fact sheet offers ideas about different ways of getting support. You don't have to get support from a professional organisation. There are lots of other ways of arranging support.



To get more help contact In Control.
Tel: 01564 821 650
Email In Control
help@in-control.org.uk



PHOTO: CHARLOTTE MORSE

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LOTTERY FUNDED



This fact sheet was produced by In Control and Mencap as part of In Control and Me, a lottery funded project.
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The basic facts

When you are planning your support, you may think of going straight to an organisation – a ‘support provider’.

You don't have to do that, though. You can be creative. Some people, for example, have paid for a supporter to go with them on holiday for less money than it would cost to go into respite care.

Some people mix traditional support with more creative ideas. It's up to you. It's about what suits you best.

The only restrictions are that you cannot spend your money on things that are illegal or on gambling.

Being creative has two big advantages: support can be cheaper and it's more individual to you.

More information about thinking outside the box

As long as you spend your budget to help you meet your needs and achieve the outcomes you put in your support plan, you can use your money in a creative, flexible and imaginative way.

Some people may prefer to use traditional support from a support provider and there's nothing to stop them from doing that. Others have very imaginative support arrangements. Many have a mixture.

Quite a lot of people start out using traditional support and, as they get more confident about having a personal budget, use more and more creative ways to get support.

Think about what works and what doesn't work in your life.

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More detail

There are many creative ways to spend your money. Below are a few examples of how you could think outside the box.

These are just some possibilities – not the only ones. If you start with what is important to you and figure out ways of achieving that, you are likely to come up with completely different ideas that suit you.

Staying fit and healthy

- Pay for someone's membership fee at the gym in exchange for their support while you are there.
- If you don't want to go to a gym, hire a personal trainer.

Getting to work

You can ask someone who works there to give you a lift in exchange for paying for the petrol (this is much cheaper than a taxi).

Support:

- Employ a personal assistant. You can choose someone you like to help you live the way you want to. If you don't want to manage them, you can pay an organisation to do that. You could use an accountant to pay them.
- Get support from a relative or a friend. If they don't have much time, you could pay for someone to help free up their time – such as a cleaner or someone to do their ironing.

Taking a break:

- Pay for someone's travel and accommodation if they support you on the holiday – this is cheaper than a paid supporter.
- Join clubs and activities in your community.
- Use your budget to pay for membership fees.
- Pay someone to take you and support you while you are there.

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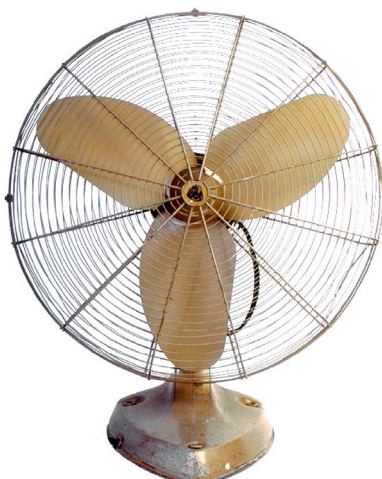
Computers and equipment:

- Pay someone to teach you more about computers.
- Buy software that helps you be in touch with other people, or use a webcam so you can speak and people can see you at the same time.
- Get electronic equipment that helps around your home – like changing TV channel, answering the door or closing the curtains.
- Buy a telecare service so people can get to you if you fall or there's an emergency.
- Buy a rise, stand and recline chair which helps you get into standing position so you don't have to rely on someone else for help.
- Get air conditioning if it would help you with breathing problems.

The list is endless!

Explore websites for other ideas – try

www.shop4support.com



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The voice of
learning disability

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An example

Sheila in London

Sheila in London bought a mobile home on a site that her family had often visited on holiday. Her son, Gary, has complex support needs and the mobile home has proved to be a cost-effective solution to a challenging situation.

Sheila says:

‘There’s no comparison to how my life was before to how it is now. We bought a mobile home. I know people think “what an expense” but that’s Gary’s respite, that’s my sanity, that’s where I keep my family together. It’s somewhere we can go as a family and invite carers to come to look after Gary. If I need a break, I can stay here with the girls and Gary can go down there. I’ve got loads of contacts there. People are so helpful.

If I went back to how it was before, I couldn’t cope. Gary’s at home 24/7. He doesn’t go to centres. Without my mobile home I don’t know what I’d do. There was an uproar about how much it cost. But if you add up three years’ respite and everything else, I’m nowhere near that. Gary has severe brain damage, cerebral palsy and he’s epileptic. He needs more than two people, which is money. Overnight you’re talking a lot of money. The mobile home – it’s all in. Everything’s equipped for him.’

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There is a lot of information about self-directed support on In Control's website: www.in-control.org.uk

Here is a selection of things that tell you more:

Free to download from: www.in-control.org.uk/stories

Stories of how many people have organised their support

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:

How to be in control DVD or view on: 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:

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

Keys to Citizenship: a guide to getting good support for people with learning disabilities Simon Duffy

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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 or www.in-control.org.uk/icandme