

# Self-Directed Support

## Using a support provider

Some people like to organise their support themselves. They like the responsibility and the control.

Other people prefer not to take as much responsibility so they use a support provider. Even if you use a support provider, you can still keep control of your support. This fact sheet tells you about how you can use support providers – organisations set up to support people.



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## The basic facts

When you direct your own support you can spend the money how you choose. Some people, for example, spend their money on gym membership to stay healthy or a holiday instead of respite care. You don't have to buy support from a support provider at all.

But some people prefer to get support from an organisation that specialises in supporting people. If you do, you can choose the services you want. You can also change them when you want. You can still remain in control.

Also, you can use a support provider for just some of your support and spend the rest of the money in a different way.

There are many different kinds of support provider. Some are already working in personalised ways. Others can be slow to change. You will need to shop around to find one that suits you.

## More information about using a support provider

Even if you use a support provider, you can still have control – as much as you want.

### For example:

- You can hold the money in a bank account and pay for the services as you use them. You can organise this by yourself or with the help of a family or friend.
- Some support providers can set up your own Individual Service Fund. This means that the organisation sets up an account just for your money. They can only spend your money on supporting you. They can't mix up your money with other money they use. The first organisations to do this were in Scotland. There aren't that many organisations that do this in England yet. But there are some – like IAS and Castle Supported Living – and the number is growing. Ask your local authority which organisations set up Individual Service Funds.

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- A broker organisation like Embrace Wigan and Leigh or a Centre for Independent Living may hold your money and you can instruct them in how to manage it for you.
- shop4support – an online support shop – helps you to manage your money and choose a support provider. (There is another In Control factsheet on shop4support).

### You might appoint a support provider if:

- you want to save time
- the service you want is complicated to organise
- you don't want to take too much responsibility
- you want to meet other people with similar support needs.

### You can find out about local service providers:

- by asking your local authority
- through an advice or advocacy service – there are local, regional and national advice services
- use a broker
- ask other disabled people
- use the yellow pages or the internet
- shop4support.com

## More detail about using a support provider

Care and support providers come in all shapes and sizes.

### They are mainly organised as:

- Not-for-profit companies or registered charities. These usually have a governing Board of Trustees and are regulated by the Charity Commission. They might be small, local organisations that support a particular group of people. Or they can be multi-million pound organisations with many different services all over the country.

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- Independent or profit-making companies. These can be large national organisations or small, family-led concerns. These organisations are not charities but that doesn't necessarily mean they are only interested in profit. Many do a very good job and care about the people they support.

Provider organisations are inspected by the Care Quality Commission. Look on the Care Quality Commission website – to find reports – [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

You can also ask your local authority about the organisations they approve.

Ask to meet the provider yourself. Take someone with you to help you ask some searching questions. Find out how personalised, flexible and responsive the organisation can be.

Remember that many services are only offered to groups.

### The main types of support services are:

- Adult Placement Services – these link people into family homes.
- Resource centres – day centres where people spend their days in group activities.
- Community networks – one or two organisations set up local networks. Each person has their own ordinary place to live but is linked together with other members and supported by a Community Living Volunteer.
- Domiciliary services – home help services where workers go into someone's home.
- Local authority hostels – often large buildings where many people live.
- Long-stay hospitals – there are still a few left. Some have been renamed Residential Campuses. Government policy since the 1970s has been to close hospitals because of human rights abuses in some.
- Registered care homes – often called 'group homes'. The residents may not be able to choose who they live with. Home and support are controlled by an organisation.
- Registered nursing homes – similar to Registered Care Homes, except that nurses must give some of the support.

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- Residential respite services – these are generally to give families a break from supporting a family member. Respite usually means a short stay in a residential care home.
- Residential schools – some children and young adults end up getting support in residential schools.
- Sheltered or village communities – set up as an alternative to long-stay hospitals. Some people like the rural settings and sheltered lifestyle.
- Sheltered workshops – a working environment that is mainly for disabled people.
- Social business – some disabled people have set up their own business or co-operative.
- Supported employment – some organisations support people to take up ordinary jobs while helping the employer to provide support on the job.
- Supported living services – some support providers will only provide support to people living in their own homes.

### Advantages of using a support provider:

- Buying support from a service provider can save you time and cut down your responsibilities.
- You don't have to deal with the staff, wages or insurance.
- You are the customer and you can always take your custom somewhere else.
- You can still stay in control.
- You can have a contract. This contract can say, for example, who works with you and exactly what they will do.

### Possible disadvantages:

- Quality and cost can vary a lot.
- Some organisations still have to change old habits of caring for groups of people – rather than supporting an individual to get the life they want.
- Some of your money goes on the organisation's management fee – to pay for their overheads like management staff, office rent and insurance.
- You may be locked into a contract for a minimum period – say, three months.
- You might have less direct control over who supports you.

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## An example

### Mrs B

This story is told by Mrs B's daughter.

'My mum already had a care package provided by an agency. My mum is 74 years old, a fulltime wheelchair user who has had a severe stroke. She has a traditional care package, but was not happy as the agency sent 24 carers in 21 days. This is when the social worker told us about Individual Budgets. Mum decided to give it a go because it appeared to be more flexible and we would have more control.

Mum had help to do a support plan from a support broker. He gave us a lot of information and helped us in other areas as well.

The broker emailed us a support plan template and we did the collating of information ourselves. It did not take too many hours but it was just difficult finding the time to do it. The broker collected all the information from us and typed up the support plan. We were happy with the end result. Mum is using her budget to purchase care from an agency. She can purchase one hour more a week with an Individual Budget than she could with traditional services. It has not made too much difference but I think you have more control.

Mum does not like respite but has agreed to have one week every three months to give her husband a break. This respite is paid for by the Primary Care Trust because she has nursing needs so this does not affect her Individual Budget.

Mum says 'My husband says he is happy with me having an Individual Budget as long as I am happy.'

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# There is a lot of information about Self-Directed Support on In Control's website: [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

## Here is a selection of things that tell you more:

### 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):

**Top Tips and In the Driving Seat**,  
Helen Sanderson, Suzanne McStravick  
and Carl Poll

**How to be in control**, 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

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

### Useful website

[www.shop4support.com](http://www.shop4support.com)

#### About the **in Control and me** project

A three-year project to produce accessible information for everyone who wants to direct their own support.

The project has worked with individuals and families to decide what information should be produced. This information will reach over 11,000 people a year through the national learning disability helpline. The In Control website will also have an online advice area.

More information: Lisa Dunne: 07984 111315.

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