



Self Assessment of our SEND Implementation

Jan 2019

*A new approach to special educational
needs and disability*



Personal SEN Budgets in Torbay

What was the issue?

SEND Code of Practice – 3.38 Personal Budgets

*Young people and parents of children who have EHC plans have the right to request a Personal Budget, which may contain elements of education, social care and health funding. Partners **must** set out in their joint commissioning arrangements their arrangements for agreeing Personal Budgets. They should develop and agree a formal approach to making fair and equitable allocations of funding and should set out a local policy for Personal Budgets.*

In 2014 there was limited experience within the SEN Team of implementing any type of personal budget and staff were not confident in advising parents and young people of how they could be used to meet special educational needs.

Our journey so far....

In order to develop a skills base within the SEN Team, Torbay worked with [In Control](#), a national charity, who were supporting the DfE in the roll out of the SEND reforms. In Control advised that the best way of 'getting to grips' with personal SEN budgets, was to engage with parents by running a pilot, aimed at developing a shared understanding of the type of provision that lends itself to a personal SEN budget and how it can be set up.

Through this initial process, Torbay SEN staff developed and refined the local approach to personal SEN budgets. The personal budget pilot started in March 15 and for six months a specific SEN worker was tasked with actively promoting this opportunity to parents. Since Autumn 15 proactively discussing personal budgets has been a shared responsibility of all SEN case workers.

What have we done?

In March 2015 Torbay started working with 3 families to explore the options open to them. Early findings were that Personal Budgets could be used in some circumstances to support the transition between primary to secondary school for children.

By May 2016, Torbay had received 17 Personal Budgets requests which resulted in the following outcomes:

- 8 personal SEN budget enquiries that were agreed
- 8 personal SEN budget enquiries that were turned down
- 1 personal SEN budget enquiries that required further information

The SEN Team published some examples of Personal SEN Budgets that had been put in place in the SEND Newsletter, with the aim of sharing the benefits of this approach and raising awareness with the wider children's SEN population of this opportunity.



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The experience of working with families allowed the SEN Team develop a decision making process and to improve the methods for finding out the information required to make a decision. The SEN Team developed a Personal SEN information leaflet which was shared with In Control and a DfE representative during development. The leaflet is given to all parents and young people who make a request for statutory assessment and is available as part of the [local offer](#).

Families are made aware by the SEN Team that they have the right to request a personal budget as part of the EHCP assessment process and are given information to support them in considering this. The majority of parents have chosen not to take up this option.

What difference has this made?

Personal Budgets have been agreed to support:

- A young person with social, emotional and mental health difficulties who was moving from primary to secondary school.
- A pupil with visual impairment enabled to stay in mainstream local school rather than move to a specialist provision out of area and have access to equipment that means she can access the Curriculum
- A child with profound hearing impairment accessing a Deaf Inclusion Worker so they can attend nursery
- A child with severe anxiety access to access therapeutic intervention
- Children with chronic fatigue accessing home learning equipment
- Children with dyslexia accessing appropriate equipment
- A child with complex needs having a bespoke programme coordinated by his parent
- A child with a degenerative condition accessing equipment to support his deteriorating sight

It is important to note that the provision proposed for a Personal Budget is based on individual needs and circumstances and what is put in place for one individual may not be agreed for another.

Areas for further action

- The route for joint commissioning of personal budgets across education, health and social care is not yet sufficiently transparent
- Further examples of how personal SEN budgets are being used successfully need to be understood and shared with families
- Continued work to make description of outcomes and provision in EHCP assessments more specific is linked to the decision making process for personal budgets. As this strengthens, decisions will become more transparent for all.

Immediate next steps

- Work with partners to develop the joint approach to personal budgets across education, health and care.