

The **7** essential criteria for a support plan



What needs to be in a Support Plan?

Support Plan is the name for the plan that shows how someone's Individual Budget will be spent. In order for the social worker to agree the release of money for the Budget, they must be able to see and agree a plan that meets clear criteria.

Support Plans can be written in different ways. They may be short or long - with pictures or just text. The person can write it themselves or people who know you well can help you with your support plan, so long as they know what your maximum indicative amount is and have a copy of your original assessment. This may be your family, friends, staff who support you, an advocate or professionals such as a community nurse or occupational therapist. Your social worker does not have to be involved in writing your support plan but they do have the responsibility of agreeing it before your money is made available to you.

Your support plan must clearly show how you will use the money from adult social care to meet the needs identified in your original assessment. It must give details of the outcomes you plan to achieve – your social worker can help you to think about this if you need them to.

The local authority will need to make sure that the plan answers these seven questions:

1. What is important to you?
2. What do you want to change or achieve?
3. How will you be supported?
4. How will you use your individual budget?
5. How will your support be managed?
6. How will you stay in control of your life?
7. What are you going to do to make this plan happen (action plan)?

1. What is important to you?

What this means	What social workers will look for	Your plan will not be agreed if...
<p>If someone reads the plan, they should get a good sense of your lifestyle. They should get an understanding of who you are, and your interests and hopes for the future.</p>	<p>Information about you. For example: what is important to you, any experiences that may feel relevant, people who are important in your life.</p>	<p>Your plan will not be agreed if the information in the plan treats you like a stereotype, and does not express your individuality.</p> <p>Your plan will not be agreed if it is written in very general terms.</p>

2. What do you want to change or achieve?

What this means	What social workers will look for	Your plan will not be agreed if...
<p>The plan should say what you want to change about your lifestyle. This may include changing where you live, changing services that you receive, or changing how you spend your time.</p>	<p>Changes must be realistic and achievable. The changes can include long-term changes that you would like to make. These must then be broken down into achievable steps.</p>	<p>The plan will not be agreed if it does not clearly specify what you want to change or if the changes appear to be imposed by others. The plan cannot be agreed if the actions would make your situation worse.</p>

3. How will you be supported?

What this means	What social workers will look for	Your plan will not be agreed if...
<p>The plan should say what kind of help or support you are going to use to make the changes you want in your life. It should say how you will make sure you stay safe and well.</p>	<p>The plan should say exactly what support you want, when you need it and how you want this to be provided. It should say who will provide this support or help - for example, from family or friends, or paid assistants. It should include information about how you will manage any risks, and what support you need to stay safe and well.</p>	<p>The plan will not be agreed if you have no idea how you are going to use your Individual Budget to get support. The plan must not be agreed if you or others are at great risk of harm but you've done nothing about it.</p> <p>There is guidance on health and safety on the 'in Control' website at: in-control.org.uk</p>

4. How will you use your individual budget?

What this means	What social workers will look for	Your plan will not be agreed if...
<p>The plan must set out how you want your Individual Budget to be used.</p> <p>If you want to use your money as a direct payment, or an indirect payment, then the plan needs to say what your support service will cost for a year, and what money will be needed for the following two years.</p>	<p>The plan should say how you will use your money. You can have your Individual Budget as a direct payment, or it can go as an indirect payment to someone you trust.</p> <p>Indirect payments can be made to an agent on your behalf or to a few people who form themselves into a Trust.</p> <p>You can also ask your social worker to buy a service on your behalf – a service that provides the support set out in your plan.</p> <p>Another option is to have your money as an Individual Service Fund with a support provider. This means that they agree to work to your support plan and only to spend your money on you.</p> <p>Remember that there are lots of kinds of support you can spend your money on. You aren't limited to paying for support from personal assistants.</p>	<p>The plan will not be agreed if it does not say how your money will be used. If you are taking your Individual Budget as a direct or indirect payment, then the plan must say how much the service will cost.</p> <p>The plan will not be agreed if the service costs more than the amount that has been agreed.</p> <p>The plan will not be agreed if you are going to do anything illegal!</p>

5. How will your support be managed?

What this means	What social workers will look for	Your plan will not be agreed if...
<p>The plan must explain how any support you pay for is going to be organised.</p>	<p>The plan should say who is going to manage the money. If you are going to employ people, it must say how you will sort out the payment of salaries, how people will be supported, trained and supervised, and other arrangements.</p>	<p>The plan will not be agreed if it is unclear who is responsible for what, or if you don't intend to do everything that you must do by law. The plan must take into account employment and discrimination laws.</p>

6. How will you stay in control of your life?

What this means	What social workers will look for	Your plan will not be agreed if...
<p>The plan must say how you will stay in control of your own life. This means thinking about what decisions you will make. Where other people make decisions for you, it has to be clear how they involve you and get your agreement.</p>	<p>The plan should describe the decisions that you will be making, and those that others make.</p> <p>If someone else is going to manage your money on your behalf (for example an agent, Trust, social worker or provider), the plan should say how you want to review your support with them.</p>	<p>The plan will not be agreed if it looks like others are making decisions for you if you could reasonably make those decisions yourself.</p>

7. What are you going to do to make this plan happen (action plan?)

What this means	What social workers will look for	Your plan will not be agreed if...
<p>The plan should set out real and measurable things that will happen in the future. In that way it is possible to look back and see whether the plan is working or not.</p>	<p>The plan should say who will be responsible for each action and when it will be done. The plan should say how you will check your action plan to ensure that problems can be dealt with as they arise.</p> <p>It should be clear how these actions will help you to make the changes that you said you wanted to make.</p>	<p>The plan should not be agreed if you just said some general things that need to happen. There need to be clear actions that will make sure your plan will happen.</p>

In summary – your support plan must clearly show how you will be spending your individual budget to meet your social care and support needs as agreed in your original assessment. You can plan to use the money in creative and flexible ways which suit you and your lifestyle, so long as the things you buy meet your social care and support needs.

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language please telephone 01228 606060.

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