

Integrating
personal
budgets into
the wider
EHC
assessment
and planning
process

December 1

2014

This document should be read in conjunction with the Personal Budget/Direct Payments policy which is available on the Local Offer website.



“There is a duty on all local authorities to prepare a personal budget (PB) if requested by a child/young person or their family where an EHC plan is either being maintained by that authority, or is in the process of being prepared.” (Children and Families Act 2014)

This document is a guide to how personal budgets are integrated into the EHC assessment and **how and when** a personal budget/direct payment is considered.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Personal Budget/Direct Payments policy which is available on the Local Offer website.

The process is drawn from best practice identified by the DFE in their document; “Evaluation of the special educational needs and disability pathfinder programme, personal budgets and integrated resourcing” ((November 2014)

Present position.

From September, Ealing decided to use a ‘costed provision’ model to create personal budgets for those who requested them. This is a temporary measure until a more robust and rational method, based on need and not provision is introduced.

Families who request a personal budget are contacted and an initial discussion held to discuss what outcomes the family and child/young person would like to achieve. The identified outcomes are then costed by the professionals on the basis of the costs of standard services being provided in the current, traditional system as proxies for service provision that would be required to achieve the outcomes. The sum value of these services is then called the indicative budget.

During the EHC planning process this indicative budget can be altered up or down depending on the actual costs of the proposed provision. The final sum is confirmed at a multiagency planning meeting.

Future plans

Following considerable research and investigation Ealing has decided to work with FACE to develop a resource allocation system (RAS) which will replace the costed services model. The FACE RAS will link seamlessly with Adult services and has a long history of providing robust and accurate budgets.

The process described below will be launched at the same time as FACE is initiated.

Proposed sequence for consideration of personal budgets.

The integration of Personal Budgets (PBs) into the wider EHC process with families requires the identification of a common pathway describing intentions and functions. It is designed to follow the present process as closely as possible.

Figure one and two show how the process will work

Figure 1.

Specialist assessments



Specialists conduct assessments with child/young person (and their family) and write report

Completion of RAS



Assessment coordinators complete RAS based on the content of the reports. This produces a raw score that can be mapped onto a banding matrix

Establish Indicative budget



The indicative budget, having been calculated from the relevant funding matrix should be discussed with the family and other relevant practitioners at the multiagency meeting. Agreement should be reached at this stage.

Finalise proposal for use of PB

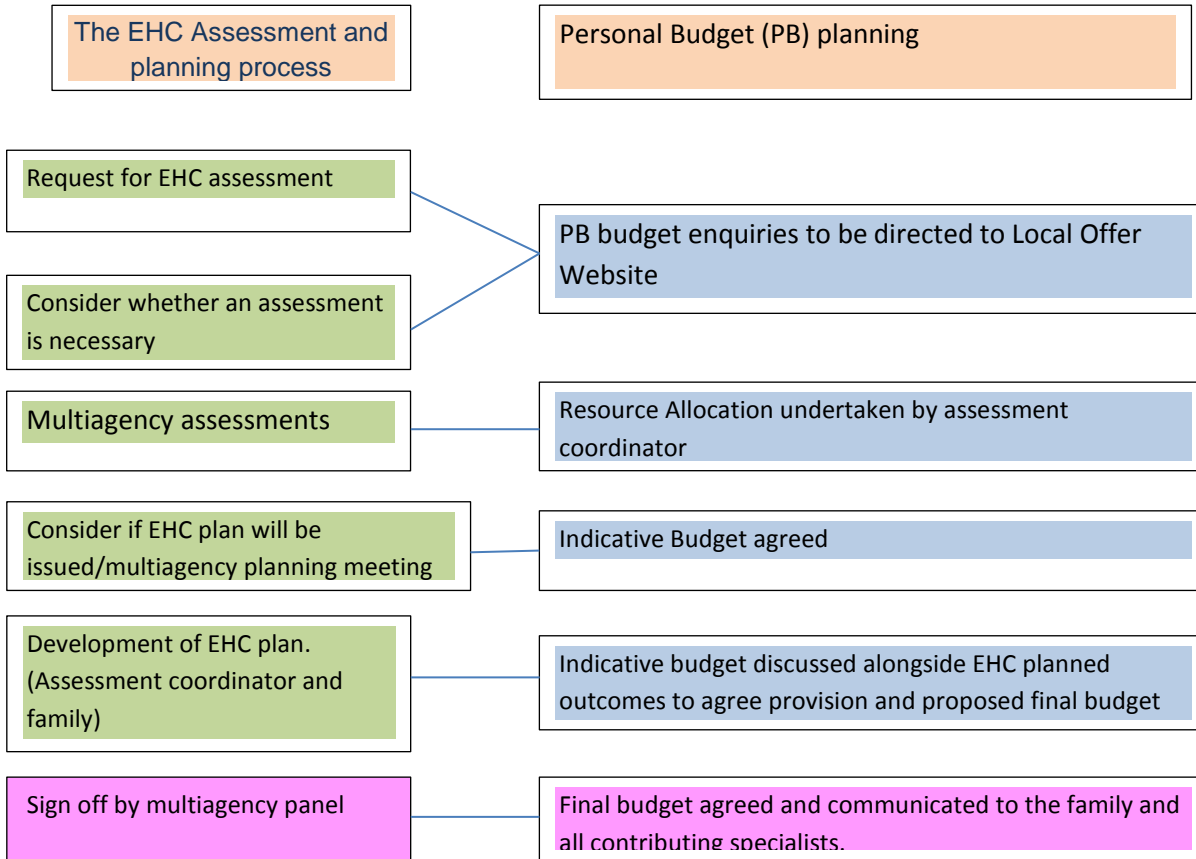


The Assessment coordinators will meet with the family/young person to discuss recommendations for provision that will be purchased via the direct payment.

Finalise Resource allocation

The authorised decision makers (usually at funding panel) should consider the recommendations made and decide on a final allocation. This should be communicated to the family and all contributing specialists.

Figure 2. Where and when Personal budgets are planned



Additional notes

- It is important that the offer of a PB is made during the initial stages of the EHC process.
- During the referral and before a decision is made concerning assessment, the parent/young person should be directed to the Local Offer for all their information needs including personal budgets.
- Indicative budgets (created by a resource Allocation System RAS) should be introduced and explained to families and young people following the assessment phase as part of the summary assessment that is put together in advance of the multiagency planning meeting.
- When potential duplication occurs between existing PBs (e.g. from social care) and the proposed wider EHC resourcing, the multi-agency (and family) planning meeting should act as the focal point at which holistic planning takes place,
- Service **provision** associated with a PBs needs to be discussed at a separate meeting with the Assessment Coordinator and family.
Initial discussion concerning the PB should take place during the EHC multi agency planning meeting. That discussion should focus on agreeing the indicative budget and suggesting a date for a further meeting to map out how this will be spent to achieve agreed outcomes (e.g. specific service provision)
- Integration of PBs into the wider EHC process for families undergoing a translation from an existing SEN Statement/LDA to an EHC plan will follow a similar approach to that agreed for others.