

Provider FAQs

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What does ISF stand for?

ISF is short for 'Individual Service Fund'

What is an ISF?

An ISF is a way in which an individual (or their representative) can manage their Personal Budget.

An ISF is when an organisation holds the Personal Budget on behalf of the individual and helps them to decide how and when they want care and support to meet assessed outcomes.

Within an ISF:

- The money is paid to, and is held by, the organisation (the ISF Provider) for the provision of care and support
- The individual (or their representative) with the help of the ISF Provider, decides how to spend the money to best meet their needs and outcomes.
- The ISF Provider is accountable to the individual (as well as to the Council).
- The ISF Provider commits to spend the money only on the individual's service and the management and support necessary to provide that service

Why would an individual choose an ISF?

ISFs are a good option for people who want more choice and flexibility about who supports them, and how their support is delivered, but who cannot or do not want to manage some of the responsibilities that come with a Cash Budget.

With an ISF, Service Users (or their representative) can:

- Choose their ISF Provider.
- Work with the ISF Provider to use their ISF in a flexible way to meet outcomes and support needs
- Use their ISF to pay for support from different organisations if they want to

Who can have an ISF?

At the moment, only a limited number of individual's can choose to have an ISF.

ISFs are initially being offered to service users within some Learning Disability and

Autism services or people who are new to adult services (for example, people transitioning from children's services).

This is because Wakefield Council is starting with a pilot of ISFs. More service users will be given the opportunity to choose an ISF as the pilot progresses.

Service users may live anywhere in the Wakefield Council district.

How long is the pilot for?

The pilot has been extended to the end of November 2019. A decision will then be taken on what to do next.

If the approach works, the ISF Provider Agreement, and all ISFs set up under the Agreement will continue. Also, all service users, starting in Learning Disability and Autism services, will have the options of choosing an ISF.

What does an ISF Provider do?

An ISF Provider is the organisation that manages the Individual Service Fund.

An ISF Provider can also deliver some or all of the services required to meet the service user's needs and outcomes.

Where the ISF Provider does not deliver all the services, they can work with the service user to buy in support from another organisation or support them to purchase equipment, employ Personal Assistants, or arrange other types of support.

An ISF Provider could also choose not to deliver any services but to buy in the service user's full care package from other providers with the individual's agreement.

Once an individual has chosen their ISF Provider:

- The ISF Provider will be given a copy of a partially completed Adults Care & Support Plan by the Council. At this stage the plan won't include any details about how support will be provided or the way the Personal Budget will be

spent. The plan will set out the Service User's needs and what they want to achieve in each domain area.

- The ISF Provider will be informed of the indicative Personal Budget available
- The ISF Provider will work with the Service User and their circle of support to decide how to use the Personal Budget to meet the needs and outcomes identified in the Plan.
- The ISF Provider may have a range of options or ideas about how each need/ outcome might be met within the Personal Budget, but it is a fundamental principle of ISF that the provider will support the service user and their circle of support to make key decisions about what services they have and how they are delivered.
- Their decisions will be used to form the 'My ISF Plan'. The My ISF Plan will detail the support to be delivered/ bought (for example, include a guide weekly timetable) and the outcomes the support is working to.
- The ISF Provider will send the My ISF Plan to the relevant social worker/ care coordinator who will check that it meets all areas of need identified within Adults Care & Support Plan and is within the budget available.
- Once the My ISF Plan is agreed, support can start.

How do we become an ISF Provider?

To become an ISF Provider, you need to apply to join Wakefield Council's ISF Provider List. Any organisation can apply to join the Provider List.

You do this by completing the application form available here:

<https://procontract.due-north.com/Advert?advertId=f223084f-6c74-e811-80ed-005056b64545&p=1c381835-7581-e611-8114-000c29c9ba21> (or search for this opportunity on www.yortender.co.uk)

Organisations need to evidence within their application that they have the required insurance, policies, procedures, and CQC registration where relevant. Organisations will also need to evidence they have experience of co-producing services and support planning and give information on how they will provide help people choose services, accounting systems and quality assurance processes. All questions are pass/ fail.

How will individuals choose their ISF Provider?

Wakefield Council will publish the ISF Provider List and all Provider Guides on its website. The List will be updated each time a new organisation is accepted onto the ISF Provider Agreement.

Service users or their representative will choose their ISF Provider from this List.

The Service User or their representative may approach the ISF Provider directly in regards to setting up their ISF or may ask their Care Manager to do this on their behalf.

If an individual wants an organisation not on the ISF Provider List to hold their ISF, that organisation will first need to apply to join the ISF Provider List as described above.

How is the money managed?

An amount of money will be determined via the Resource Allocation System (RAS) based on the social care assessment of unmet need. This allocation becomes the Service User's indicative Personal Budget. This budget may go up or down depending on the care and support put in place under the ISF. Once the My ISF Plan, setting out the care and support to be provided, has been agreed the individual's final Personal Budget will be confirmed.

Payments will be made every 28 days – 14 days in advance and 14 days in arrears. Any assessed financial contribution the service user is required to pay towards the cost of their care will be collected from the service user by the ISF Provider, and will be "netted off" the ISF payment made by the Council.

The ISF Provider will need an arrangement in place with the service user to collect any assessed financial contribution and will need to underpin this with a mutually agreed ISF agreement.

The ISF Provider is accountable to the person (or their representative) for how their ISF has been spent and must be able to evidence this to the service user (or their representative) and the Council as part of the monitoring of Personal Budgets.

The ISF Provider must therefore have appropriate systems and processes to be able to manage and account for the service user's funding in a personalised way, with clear recording and an audit trail for each individual. ISF Providers will need to reconcile payments they make on the service user's behalf with the support delivered. Evidence of transactions must be available for audit in a format that is individual to each ISF (i.e. separate from transactional data related to other accounts).

ISF Providers will be allowed to hold up to 8 weeks' budget in the Service User's ISF account at any time. Where the balance in the ISF account exceeds this, the ISF Provider must notify the Service User's social worker/ care coordinator and gain agreement for an exception.

If a Service User is does not get support in a week (e.g. because they have been on holiday) should they still pay their financial contribution?

Yes. The Service User's contribution is an annual amount, but often paid in instalments. The amount of their assessed financial contribution is seen as being spent first. The Council then essentially 'tops-up' the budget to pay for the remaining cost of care. Service users would only be refunded if the total cost of their care was less than their assessed financial contribution.

If someone is away from a service for an extended period of time, a stop can be put on their contributions as services have effectively ceased. However, within the ISF model, if it is likely additional support is required within the service on return (e.g. following hospital discharge) their personal budget will be banked for later use. Contributions will continue to be made.

What happens if the service user does not pay their financial contribution?

There may be situations where a service user refuses to pay their financial assessment contribution. If a service user does not pay their financial assessment

contribution for a period of more than 4 weeks the ISF Provider should notify the relevant social work team so this can be investigated with the Service User. Repeated failure by the service user to pay their financial assessment contribution may result in the ISF being withdrawn.

How much can/ should we charge?

Wakefield Council cannot tell Providers what to charge for services delivered through an ISF

Individuals will have to plan their support within their allocated Personal Budget and will be able to make their own choices about how they choose to spend it. Some may be prepared to pay more to have what they see as a better service and others will be looking for good value and getting more for their money. Individuals will be able to compare prices and consider what each ISF Provider has to offer before making a choice so it's a good idea to keep your pricing structure simple and easy to understand.

If you intend to charge an administration cost for the ISF then you will also need to make sure that service users are told about these in advance and can clearly understand these charges. You may wish to consider incentives to individuals who would like you to act as both their ISF Provider and deliver their care and support. Wakefield Council will not increase Personal Budget amounts to cover administration charges so if you intend to charge for administration who will need to consider what is attractive and competitive for the individuals you wish to support.

How long does an ISF take to set up?

Once an individual has decided to take their Personal Budget as an ISF, they will need to choose an ISF provider and co-produce their My ISF Plan.

The My ISF Plan will then need to be agreed with a social worker/ care coordinator. If the plan needs amended, this will need to be negotiated with the individual and the ISF Provider before final agreement is reached. Payment of ISFs will only be made once the My ISF Plan has been agreed.

This can take time, so Wakefield Council recommends starting the planning process as soon as possible with new service users.

What happens if a service users' needs change?

The ISF Provider and the service user need to regularly review and adjust the My ISF Plan according to changing need and where outcomes have successfully been met. The ISF Provider only needs ask the social worker/ care coordinator to reassess where the plan required altering to the extent that the budget needs to be reconsidered – for example where there has been a significant increase or decrease in the service users' needs or changes to their circumstances.

How will we be monitored?

Quality monitoring will be carried out by Wakefield Council's Care and Support Commissioning Team. This will include:

- Review of outcome data submitted by ISF Providers
- A quality and compliance monitor with all active ISF Providers at least annually to ensure the ISF Provider is compliant with the contract

Financial monitoring, including of transactional and reconciled payment data, will be carried out by the Personalisation and Assessment Team.

Is there a conflict of interest in an ISF Provider both holding an individual's ISF and delivering aspects of their care and support?

ISFs do create potential conflicts of interest in these areas. Wakefield Council has taken the view that the benefits offered by ISFs outweigh the risk that unscrupulous providers will take advantage of the system to the detriment of the individuals they support. We want to work in partnership with providers and should begin from a position of mutual trust.

There are also systems in place to mitigate the risk:

- The individual (or their representative), and their circle of support will be the key decision makers in the ISF process.
- My ISF Plans need to be agreed with a social worker/ care coordinator. They will be checked to see that the individual's needs are met and goals being worked to.

- Wakefield Council's Care and Support Commissioning team will undertake quality monitoring with all active ISF Providers and financial monitoring will be carried out by Wakefield Council's Personalisation and Assessment Team.

What if the ISF isn't working – either for us or for the service user?

As this is a pilot, the Commissioning Team would like to be told about any issues or problems so we can try to resolve them or address them within the ISF model

If an issue can't be resolved, either party can give four weeks' notice to cancel an ISF.

If there are serious safeguarding concerns for the service user or to care workers the Council can terminate the ISF with immediate effect.

Which organisations are currently on your ISF Provider List?

A list of all our current ISF Providers can be found here:

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/Documents/health-care-advice/adult-services/isf-provider-list.pdf>

Can the ISF Provider directly employ a close family member living in the same home as the service user?

The Council would apply the same rules as for PAs in these circumstances. The ISF Provider would need prior written agreement from the Council before employing as a support worker any close family member living in the same house as the service user. The Council would consider whether employing a close family member is the most effective way of meeting the service user's needs before giving agreement.