

Individual Service Funds

When your assessment has been written and your care manager has worked out how much your Personal Budget will be, you will be offered a number of ways of managing this.

- You might decide to manage the personal budget yourself, as a Direct Payment.
- You might decide that you want Dorset County Council to manage your personal budget and buy services for you.
- You might decide that you want another organisation (such as a Care Provider) to manage your personal budget with you. This is called an Individual Service Fund (ISF).

This leaflet explains what happens if you want another organisation to manage your personal budget with you.

Individual Service Funds are available to people who use services and to their carers.

1. Why would I want an Individual Service Fund?

For some people, arranging their own care and support services and managing the money to do so is a perfect solution. This can give people a huge amount of choice and control over how their needs are met and who is going to help them to do this. For these people, a Direct Payment is the natural choice.

For others, making a plan and managing the money is more responsibility than they want or can cope with. In the past these people had to rely on Dorset County Council to manage their services for them, which meant they didn't have much choice over who was supporting them and what would be done to meet their needs.

For these people an Individual Service Fund is a good option because you can have a lot of choice over who supports you, and you will work with an organisation to jointly produce the plan of how to use your personal budget. Your chosen provider will hold your personal budget for you and will take on the financial responsibility for managing this on your behalf. They will be able to tell you exactly how much money is in your budget each month, how it has been spent, and how much is left.

2. Who can support me?

An Individual Service Fund is held by the provider you want to help you come up with your plan. Some people will choose the provider that they want to deliver some or all of the services identified in the plan; others might want their provider to hold the budget and design the plan, but buy in support from other people to deliver the plan.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both of these options. An organisation who will also deliver your support might charge less or nothing for running the ISF, but this might put some restrictions on how you can use your budget because they will need to do most of the support. An organisation who is not going to deliver any support services directly has no financial interest, so you can be assured that the support plan they produce is entirely objective and independent. However, they will likely need to directly charge a cost for the ISF service.

Dorset County Council keeps a list of organisations who have signed up to offer Individual Service Funds in Dorset, so you can choose an organisation from that list and start talking to them about what they want to do with your budget.

There might be an organisation you have found that you would like to support you who is not already on the list. If so, you can ask them to contact Dorset County Council using the details below and ask to join the register – as long as they agree to some basic rules about how the Individual Service Fund will be managed they can join the list. These rules include things like what records they need to keep and how they have to make sure that you can make choices about your services.

Contact:

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3. Planning your services

Each organisation might have a different way of helping you to decide how you want to be supported, but fundamentally you should be able to make key decisions about what services you have and when you have them.

When you are sat with your provider designing your plan, you might decide that you want to use services out in the community, or you might want a different organisation to do some of the services you have put in your plan. Or you might want a Personal Assistant to support you with some of your plan. This is all allowed in an ISF, and your provider should arrange this for you. If you decide that you want a Personal Assistant to support you, your ISF provider can arrange this and deal with the legal aspects.

For example, you might decide that you want your ISF Provider to support you with the personal care tasks that you need help with when you are at home. But instead of visiting a Day Centre during the day you might decide that you want to go to a Gardening Club once a week, and would like a Personal Assistant to go with you on that day.

Some providers who have to manage a lot of other services for you might need to charge you to cover the costs involved in making these arrangements. If they do, they should be clear and up-front with you about how much this will cost so you can make an informed decision about what you want to do.

For example, you might decide that you just want your ISF Provider to manage all the other people and organisations who are helping to deliver your plan, rather than doing anything else with you directly. The provider might then say that if that is all they are going to help you they would need to charge you £30 per month, but if you also have some of your other services with them they would drop that £30 per month. You would then be able to decide if that is still what you wanted to do, or if you wanted to look for a different ISF provider.

Some organisations might not want to manage lots of other organisations for you if they are not delivering any services themselves. They should be clear and up-front with you about what they are

willing to do and how much of your plan they will want to deliver themselves. This will let you make an informed decision about who you want to work with.

You might decide in your plan that you want to be flexible about the amount of support you have each week. This is allowed in an ISF, and you are allowed to keep back money in your ISF over a period of 12 weeks before your provider will give the money back. The maximum you can keep back is the equivalent of 4 times your weekly budget. Your provider will keep a record of how much money has been spent each week, and how much is left.

For example, you might be going to visit your family for a week and you won't need your provider to help you while you are away. Your provider can keep a record of how many hours that would have been delivered and keep them in hand. When you get back you might then decide that you need to use one of those hours to help you catch up with your post and your housework, but the rest can be given back to Dorset County Council.

This might also be of benefit to carers with ISFs:

You might receive an ISF to help fund a break from your caring responsibilities. You may decide to use this for a regular short break, or you might decide to bank support in order to save this up for a weekend away every few months.

It is important to remember that your personal budget amount might need to go up or down depending on the plan you have put together. The starting amount is a best guess for how much will be needed. If you and your provider have made a plan that meets all your outcomes for less money that is in your budget then the final amount will be lower. You and your provider may instead find that your initial budget is not enough to do everything you need, and so the final amount might need to be higher.

Once you and your provider have developed your plan, this will be checked over by your care manager. This is because Dorset County Council still has to agree that what you want to do:

- Helps you to achieve the outcomes in your assessment
- Is the right amount of support and is not too much or too little
- Does not ignore any outcomes from your assessment
- Does not include any activity that is against the law

The care manager might suggest some changes, or will agree the plan and finalise the budget according to the activities and services you have decided to have.

4. What happens next?

When your plan has been agreed, your provider will arrange for all the services to be put in place. They will also ask you to sign an agreement to confirm what they will do and what you will do. Dorset County Council will pay them directly the amount of money needed to buy these services.

Once your services have started, you and your provider will regularly meet to think about whether they are doing what you thought they would, and whether you need to make changes to your plan. This is called reviewing, and can happen as often as you need it to. Your Provider will regularly liaise with you and with Dorset County Council about how successful your plan is.

You may find that a service you have planned is no longer needed or should be done by a different organisation. These changes can be made without needing to let Dorset County Council know, as long as the cost of your plan is not significantly changed. If your needs do increase and you need more money each week, Dorset County Council will do a new assessment with you.

Every year, your care manager will speak to you and your provider to make sure your plan is still right, and has been successful. You might find that you have learned new skills and no longer need the same amount of support. You might also find that there are activities in the community that you can use, which you might start doing instead of using paid-for services. On the other hand, you may find that you need more support with some things. All of these changes will be discussed and recorded on your Annual Review.

5. What will I have to pay?

This section is not applicable to carers because services for carers are currently provided free of charge.

When you have an assessment from Dorset County Council you will also have a financial assessment, which looks at how much money you have and whether you can afford to pay towards your services. If your financial assessment says that you have to pay a contribution then Dorset County Council will write to you to tell you how much, and will take this off the payment we make to your provider. Your provider will make an arrangement with you about how and when they will collect this from you.

Part of your agreement with your provider will be to pay your contribution, and if you don't they have to let Dorset County Council know.

If you don't pay your contribution and Dorset County Council doesn't agree that there is a good reason for this, you might not be able to carry on having an Individual Service Fund. You would still have to pay your contribution towards any care or support services you did receive. If you are having problems with your payments then you should speak to your Provider as soon as you can, and they will help you figure out how to deal with this.

6. What if I am not happy with my ISF?

The first thing you should do is speak to your Provider so they can help you try to fix the problem. If you are unhappy with how your ISF provider are helping you and you don't feel like you can speak to them about it or you don't think they are listening to you, you can contact Dorset County Council.

Once you have an ISF in place you can change your ISF Provider if you are unhappy. You will not need to have a new assessment, but you should still speak to your Care Manager so they can help you with the process of changing your provider.