

Factsheet 11: Having an individual service fund

Quick guide to having an Individual Service Fund (ISF)

If you have been offered a Personal Budget by the council you may be considering setting up an ISF to manage some or all of your budget. (Factsheet 9: Managing Your Personal Budget).

You can choose which aspects of your budget are managed in this way, some of the budget or just part of it. When you have an ISF, you will be asked to choose a support provider or care agency who will then manage your Personal Budget on your behalf.

Any provider or agency you choose will need to be registered on Shropshire Council's 'ISF Framework'. Your social care practitioner can provide you with a list of providers already on the framework and more about how this works. You will work with your chosen provider or agency to agree how they will use your ISF in line with your support plan, and to ensure that you have the flexibility that you may require to meet your agreed outcomes.

Shropshire Council has an arrangement with selected support providers and care agencies under the ISF Framework. The organisations on this framework have agreed to provide the support that you require. Your chosen provider will receive your Personal Budget payment direct from Shropshire Council on a monthly basis.

Although the agency is paid a fixed amount to meet your support needs, you are in control of how your fund is used. Nothing is set in stone and you can always change your mind later on.

As with all Personal Budget options, you will receive a financial assessment and will usually be required to pay a contribution towards the cost of your support. Where this is the case, we will send you a monthly invoice.

(You can find out more about the financial assessment in Factsheet 7: Paying for Your Care and Support and find out more about support plans in Factsheet 8: Planning Your Support).

Using Your ISF

Your ISF payments can only be used to fund things that are detailed in your support plan. If you or your care agency feel you are not getting the support that you need, the agency must tell the council, so that they can arrange to have your plan reassessed.

- **ISF terms and conditions**

Shropshire Council has agreed a set of terms with the care and support providers who have signed up to the ISF Framework. This is to ensure that the service that is provided is consistent and of a high standard.

- **Statements**

When you set up your ISF with your social care practitioner, the care provider will have supplied a clear quotation for your care and support as outlined in your support plan that is inclusive of all costs, including Bank Holidays and travel.

At the end of each month, the care agency will provide you with a monthly statement showing the number of hours of support they have provided and what they charged per hour for that support.

Choice

Your care provider has agreed to offer you a reasonable choice in staff who visit you and that they will support you in a way that best meets your assessed eligible needs and the outcomes identified on your support plan. If you are not happy with the way you are being cared for, the care agency will work with you to try and resolve your concerns wherever possible. It's always good to talk to your care agency if you are not happy; they will do their best to try and resolve the situation.

'Banking' hours

Sometimes there might be a change to your usual routine and you may not need support on the days you usually would, for example your friends or family are visiting, you have a doctor's appointment or are going away on holiday. On these occasions your care provider has agreed that you can 'bank' any unused support hours to use at another time instead.

In order to 'bank' hours in this way you have to give your care provider two weeks' notice of the change. If you don't give two weeks' notice, then you cannot claim that time back at a later date. It is vital that you tell the agency as soon as you can so that you can 'bank' those hours for another occasion.

You can only bank a maximum of two weeks' support at any one time and you must use your banked hours within the same Personal Budget financial year. You cannot carry over banked hours from one year to the next. The support hours you bank can only be 'spent' on support that meets your identified assessed needs as detailed in your Support Plan.

Banked hours in your account will show on your monthly statement provided by the care provider.

Annual Review

Your needs, support and Personal Budget will be reassessed annually, and you will be informed if there are any significant changes to your plan or payments. This will also be your opportunity to tell the council of any concerns you might have about your care. You can of course raise any concerns that you may have at any time by contacting your support provider or calling our First Point of Contact team (FPoC) on 0345 678 9044.

People's needs do change, and if you or your provider feel that your needs have changed and that you need more or less support, you can request that your support plan is reassessed.

(You can find out more about reassessment in Factsheet 14: As Your Needs Change.)