

How Your Budget is Decided

V7 (Spring 2015)

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WHAT DOES MY INDICATIVE/ESTIMATED BUDGET FIGURE MEAN?

As a result of your assessment, we have established that you have eligible social care needs and we have provided you with an **indicative/estimated** personal budget.

Your indicative personal budget is an estimate of how much money is needed to help you meet your eligible social care needs and outcomes. The figure only takes into account the social care needs which your Local Authority has identified as being eligible to be met by your local council. Even if you have some lower levels of need in other areas, support for these will not be included in your indicative budget unless your Local Authority has found them to be eligible. For example, if a Local Authority finds you eligible for support to manage your nutrition and personal hygiene, your indicative budget will only include money to help you achieve outcomes in these areas.

There are three key factors involved in estimating your budget:

1. **Your assessment of need.** The FACE Overview Assessment tool captures information about your needs and circumstances – using both free-text ‘narrative’ questions and questions that describe your level of need in different areas of your daily life. You should have received a copy of your assessment, as well as a summary which clearly sets out your eligible outcomes from the following list:
 - Your ability to maintain a habitable home environment
 - Your ability to manage and maintain your nutrition
 - Your ability to managing toilet needs
 - Your ability to maintain personal hygiene
 - Your ability to be appropriately clothed
 - Your ability to develop and maintain family or other personal relationships
 - Your ability to make use of necessary facilities or services in the local community
 - Your ability to access and engage in work, training, education or volunteering
 - Your ability in carrying out any caring responsibilities for a child
 - Your ability to be able to make use of your home safely

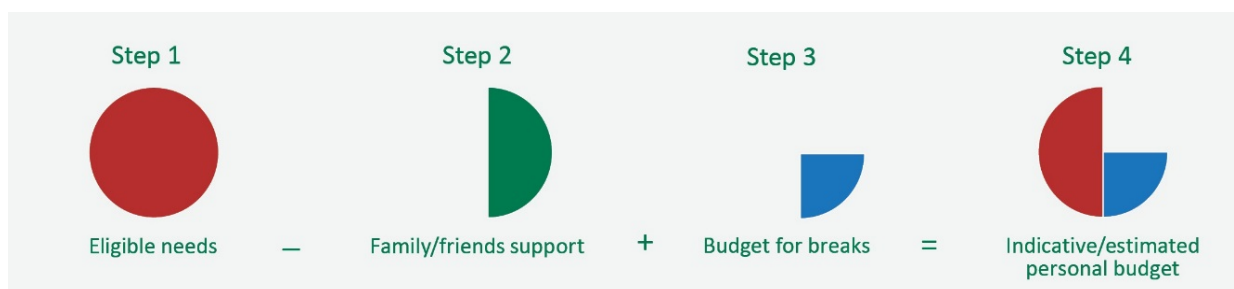
These are the areas of your life for which the Care Act 2014 suggests you may be eligible to receive support from 1st April 2015. In each of these areas an answer or a set of answers has been recorded on the assessment form that reflects your situation. The questions and answers have been carefully designed to enable the production of an accurate estimate of the amount of money required to meet your eligible social care needs and outcomes.

2. **The Resource Allocation System (RAS).** The ‘scored’ answers from your assessment are used by the ‘FACE Resource Allocation System’ to calculate an estimate of the cost of meeting your eligible social care needs and outcomes. The FACE RAS was selected by your Local Authority as the most suitable method of doing this. It was developed in conjunction with independent researchers at UCL, London, working with a large group of Local Authorities. It has been refined over a period of several years using information on the needs and support costs of thousands of individuals with social care needs across the country and has been demonstrated to make an accurate prediction of the costs of meeting people’s needs.

3. **The local market for services and support.** Before being used, the Resource Allocation System has been tailored to reflect the costs of different types of services in your local area. This is important – as, for example, the average cost of an hour of care varies significantly between different areas. Decisions have also been made by your Local Authority concerning the local availability of different types of services to meet different needs. Such decisions have also been reflected in your indicative budget.

HOW WAS MY BUDGET ESTIMATED?

The diagram below illustrates the main stages of the calculation process:



Step 1 – Eligible needs

The first step in estimating your budget is to apply different ‘weightings’ to the answers in your assessment. For example, suppose you needed help with dressing in the morning, a different weighting would apply where your need was determined as ‘Unable to manage – needs **one** other to undertake’ compared to ‘Unable to manage – needs **two** others to undertake’.

The weightings for all of the different areas in which you need support (e.g. managing toilet needs, maintaining family relationships) are then combined. This is not simply a process of adding up the weightings as in ‘a + b + c’, because it may be the case that some of your needs could be met at the same time (the support you may receive for one task could also cover other tasks). A good example is where you might need someone to help with dressing in the morning and preparing a meal in the evening. If you also need someone to drop by once or twice a day to make sure that you are safe then these checks could be done in the morning at the same time as helping you with dressing and in the evening along with helping to prepare your meal. So, in this situation you would not need any additional money in your budget to ensure you stay safe over and above that allocated for help with dressing and preparing meals.

The ‘overlap’ described above is taken into account when estimating your budget and an overall amount of money is then allocated to help you achieve your outcomes across all of the areas listed on the previous page – taking into account the costs of care and support in your local area. The approach has been tested with other local service users before being used routinely. The system did not go ‘live’ until testing had demonstrated that, in the majority of cases the system does provide a reasonable indication of the money needed – and it will continue to be regularly checked and updated to ensure that it remains accurate.

Step 2 – Family/friends support

Where you have family, friends or neighbours that are providing you with some or all of the (unpaid) support that you need, your assessment should capture to what extent they are able and willing to continue providing support. The recorded levels of ‘ongoing’ support they have agreed they will provide in different areas are then used to adjust your indicative budget accordingly.

Step 3 – Budget for breaks

If you receive unpaid support from family, friends or neighbours, your assessment should also capture whether or not they will require regular breaks through the year in order for them to continue in their caring role. If this is the case, extra money may then be added into your budget to provide these breaks. The amount is dependent on how much support they provide and the impact of supporting you on their own independence.

Step 4 – Indicative/estimated personal budget

This is your indicative personal budget with which to begin the Care and Support planning process.

WHAT IF I THINK THE BUDGET IS TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH?

No approach is perfect and everyone's personal situation is different. It is for this reason that your indicative budget can only be an estimate. If you feel it is not realistic – too low or too high – the first step is to establish whether you feel that your needs have been recorded correctly in your assessment and that the amount of unpaid support that will be provided by your family and/or friends/volunteers is accurate. If so, it is important to remember that no final decision has yet been made about your actual budget – your budget may go up or down depending upon the details of your support plan and the actual costs of providing that support.

HOW IS MY ACTUAL PERSONAL BUDGET DETERMINED?

Your actual personal budget may be different from the indicative figure due to your specific personal circumstances as well as factors such as variation in the local cost and availability of the particular type of support that you require. Your actual personal budget will only be confirmed following the process of preparing and agreeing your Care and Support Plan to meet your eligible needs.