

What can I do with my personal budget?

Your personal budget can be used in all kinds of ways; it's yours to use to pay for anything that will support you in your caring role and that has been agreed in your carers' support plan.

You can use it to fund breaks or activities to suit your individual circumstances, practical needs, emotional and physical health and personal lifestyle. However it must be used to meet your needs as agreed in your support plan.

Here's how some other carers have used their personal budgets:

travel expenses or fees to take up leisure or education activities

health promotion activities such as exercise classes, gym membership, massages or relaxation or complementary therapies or leisure classes to relieve stress.

practical things such as a washing machine or a computer

a short holiday to recharge their batteries

driving lessons

help with housework and gardening

a mobile phone

How do social workers decide my level of need?

The social worker will use the information in your support plan and in your carers assessment. They will look at what other support you have, such as family who can step into the caring role, to give you a break. They will also look at how your caring role is affecting you:

health and wellbeing

stress levels

ability to remain in or return to work

relationships and family life

ability to continue with your caring role

What do the different levels of need look like?

High need:

You might be about to lose your job, or have to stop going to college or university because of caring

Your relationship with the person you care for will break down

Your health and wellbeing is being severely affected through your caring duties

You are the only carer and are socially isolated with no other social support

Middle need:

You are the sole carer and have limited social support

You need support to find work, voluntary work or an education course

Your relationship with the person you care for may breakdown

Low need:

You have to change jobs or be flexible with your work or education because of your caring role

You need support to take part in social activities

Other people provide occasional but regular support to the person you care for

After your assessment, if you are not eligible or your needs can be met another way, then you will not get a carers personal budget.

Are there things you cannot use your carers personal budget for?

The budget cannot be spent on any of the following. You will be asked by the council to demonstrate how you have spent your budget.

There are some things the carers personal budget will not fund including:

- illegal activities
- alcohol or smoking
- holidays or breaks that you have already taken or paid for
- costs of breaks or holidays booked before your carers assessment
- debts and household bills
- gambling (including bingo and the lottery)
- services which are, or should be provided to person you care for
- the cost of a break for the person you care for

For more information on Personal Budgets and how they can help you, contact Southend Carers on 01702 393933 or email info@southendcarers.co.uk

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Our mission is to make life easier and fairer to Carers in Southend and our expert information and advice is always tailored to the Carers individual and



Carers Personal Budgets

A Carers Personal Budget is a sum of money paid by a council's Adult Social Care department to help a carer to pay for things which will help them in their caring role. It allows a carer to have more control over how they are supported. To be considered for a personal budget you will have to have had a carer's assessment.

- You can apply for a carers personal budget if:
- you are an unpaid carer (carers allowance is not classed as payment)
- you care for someone who lives in Southend-on-Sea
- you have had a carers assessment
- your carers assessment shows that you have needs that cannot be met another way

If you are eligible for support from your council following a carer's assessment you will be offered a personal budget. You and the person who completes the assessment with you will create a support plan which will show how your support will be arranged, and how you will spend your personal budget.

The amount you receive will depend on your situation, and will be paid as a lump sum. This payment will cover a 12-month period after which your situation will be reviewed with you.

The Personal Budget does not affect any other benefits you are receiving but you will need to be able to account for how the money has been used by presenting receipts or invoices.