

A Step-by-Step Guide to Support Planning

There are 10 questions that can help you to develop your **Support Plan**. In this guide we will take you through the questions and suggest some ideas and tools to help you.

The **10** questions:

1. What is my Individual Budget?
2. Who can help me make the decisions in my Support Plan?
3. What is working and not working in my life?
4. How do I want my life to be? What changes do I want to make?
5. What is important to me?
6. What do I bring that can help make the changes that I want?
7. What support do I need?
8. How will I spend my money to do this?
9. How will I manage my support and stay in control?
10. What will I do to make this happen? What is my action plan?



Your care manager can help you answer questions **1** and **2**:

1. What is my Individual Budget?

Your assessment will tell you this.

2. Who can help me make the decisions in my Support Plan?

Your care manager will help you think about whether you want or need support with decision-making. You may develop a Decision-Making Agreement together, or agree someone to act as your agent.

Your care manager will help you decide if you want support to use this guide and develop your support plan. You could complete it yourself, or with help from your partner, family and friends, with support from the local authority or an independent person.

You might want different people to help you with different parts of your plan. People who know you well could help you think about what is important to you, and what is working and not working in your life. Or you might want to pay someone to work out your budget with you. You could talk with people one-to-one, or get a few people together for a couple of hours to help you.

Now we will go through the other 8 questions in turn.

3. What is working and not working in my life?

Think about your life at the moment.

What is going well? What are the things that you want to keep in your life? For example, if you work you may want to make sure you keep your job.

What is not working out? What are the difficult things that you want to change? For example, is your home right for your needs? If you get help during the day, is it the kind of help you want?



5. What is important to me?

Think about what is important to you. Think about your work, interests, hobbies, holidays, achievements and life events. You might include your culture, religion and family traditions.

6. What do I bring that can help make the changes that I want?

Because this plan is about changes in your life, you need to think about what you bring – what you can do to make changes happen.

What are your skills and your gifts? Is there anything about your history that can make this plan happen? Do you have resources that you can use.

7. What support do I need?

What support do you need?

It is helpful to write down as much detail as possible about the support you need. Then you can use this information in job descriptions for paid supporters.

You may need to take certain medication before you get up or need to be helped out of bed in a particular way. If you have particular routines or rituals it will be useful to put these down in detail. People usually have a lot of routines. Start with these:

- Morning routine
- Evening routine
- Hobbies and Interests
- Work routine
- Weekend routines
- Culture, religion and places of worship.

How much support do you need?

One way to think through the amount of support you need is to create a timetable of when you need help. Fill in boxes for different days and different times of the day.

Here is an example:

Day of the week	Morning (8am to 1pm)	Afternoon (1pm to 6pm)	Evening (6pm to 11pm)
Monday	Get up and have breakfast. Take kids to school. Have lunch.	Go out to work. Come home and have tea.	Take kids to the pool for swimming lessons.
Paid hours	2	2	2
Tuesday	Get up and have breakfast. Go out and do weekly food shopping. Have lunch.	Physio appointment.	Stay in and watch TV.
Paid hours	3	1	1
Wednesday	Get up and have breakfast. Do jobs around the house.	Go out to work. Come home and have tea.	College.
Paid hours	2	2	2
Thursday	Get up and have breakfast. Take kids to school. Have lunch.	Mam and dad for tea.	Mam and dad stay for the evening.
Paid hours	2	0	1
Friday	Get up and have breakfast. Take kids to school. Housework. Have lunch.	Go out to work. Come home and have tea.	Go out for a meal with friends.
Paid hours	2	2	1
Saturday	Lie-in. Go into town shopping.	Come home for tea.	Rent a video and watch with the kids.
Paid hours	0	0	0
Sunday	Get up. Prepare Sunday lunch	Go to local football match.	Home - get kids stuff ready for school.
Paid hours	0	0	0

There is an empty table for you to use on the following page.



Fill out your own timetable:

Day of the week	Morning (8am to 1pm)	Afternoon (1pm to 6pm)	Evening (6pm to 11pm)
Monday			
Paid hours			
Tuesday			
Paid hours			
Wednesday			
Paid hours			
Thursday			
Paid hours			
Friday			
Paid hours			
Saturday			
Paid hours			
Sunday			
Paid hours			



Who could support you?

When people think about who could support them they often start with the services that are available.

But don't forget about the people who are already in your life. They may be able to offer paid or unpaid support. Put people who will support you into the blank table. But first, here is an example from a real plan:

Who could support you?

Who do you know that will support you?	When will they support you?	What will they support you to do?	Will they get paid to support you?
Anne (my Friend)	Will come round on a Sunday night.	We will go and get a take away and watch TV.	No.
Nicola	Wednesday before tea for 2 hours.	Nicola helps me sort out my bills, helps me budget my money and sorts out any benefit queries I have.	Yes.
Husband/wife	Over the weekend and evenings.	Will help me with getting up and ready and the general day-to-day things around the house. Will help me get to the places I need to be each evening and weekends.	No.

Fill out your own table with people who can support you:

Who do you know that will support you?	When will they support you?	What will they support you to do?	Will they get paid to support you?

What kind of person do you want to support you?

After you have thought of the people in your life and how they could support you, you may find out that you still need to recruit some new supporters to fill in the gaps, or to do the jobs that others are unable to do.

Here is a table to help you think about who would be right for the job:

1 Support: wanted and needed	2 Skills that are needed	3 Personality characteristics needed	4 Shared common interests (would be desirable to have)
Support needed to go swimming	A swimmer.	Energetic. Motivated.	Scuba diving. White water rafting.
Support needed to get to work	Driver.	Supportive nature.	
Theatre	Drama.	Out going. Like performing in front of crowds	Previous acting experience.
Gym	Knowledge of gym equipment and safety features. Have knowledge about dietary needs of a person actively involved in sports.	Healthy and fit (no current limiting sports injuries). Willing to take on a fitness challenge.	Have an interest in charity fun runs, sponsored events, etc.

From the information you have gathered in column 2 and column 3 you need to decide which of these skills and characteristics are essential (what you can't do without) and which of these skills are desirable (someone can do without these if they have to, as they may get this support from existing friends, etc.)

You can capture this information on the table below. The qualities you are looking for in a supporter make up a person specification.

Here's an example:

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Swimmer. ● Experience of gym equipment. Knowledge of safety features on gym equipment. ● A moderate level of fitness. ● In good health with no limiting sports injuries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be out going. ● Be interested in taking on new sporting challenges. ● Have past experience of charity and sponsored events. ● Be motivated and be able to motivate others through enthusiasm.



Now fill in one for yourself.

Essential	Desirable

Job description

If you are going to employ people yourself, you need to write a job description for each job. With all the information you've put in the tables so far, you should have ideas about what can go in the job descriptions.

First, here's a simple example:

The job title	Main purpose of the job	Who the supporter is directly accountable to	The main tasks of the job
Come-in supporter	Daily one-to-one support.	Me and my partner.	Day-to-day coordination of events and travel. Guidance with tasks I am not confident in.
Live in supporter	Minimal support and reassurance.	Me.	Being able to help during the night in the event of an emergency or illness.

Now you can write your own:

The job title	Main purpose of the job	Who the supporter is directly accountable to	The main tasks of the job



8. How will I spend my money to get the support I want (budget)?

You may decide to have your Individual Budget spent on your behalf by your care manager, or want to use a provider organisation that will hold your money in an Individual Service Fund. In both these options, your Support Plan will become part of the contract with anyone who provides your service.

If you are going to take your Individual Budget as a direct payment or an indirect payment, you will probably be thinking of employing people to support you.

Here is a sheet to help you work out your budget.

How much will your support cost?

Money in		Try again	Try again
Social Services			
Health Authority / Primary Care Trust			
Supporting People			
Independent Living Fund			
Money out			
Team Leader			
Pension			
National Insurance			
Support Worker			
Pension			
National Insurance			
Basic Salary Cost			
On Costs ?			
Holidays			
Sickness			
Training			
Team Meetings and Supervision			
Sleep-ins			
On Call			

National Insurance			
Total Salary Costs			
Expenses			
Expenses			
Travel costs			
Telephone			
Training			
Total Direct Cost			
Management Charge			
Total Cost			
Left over / Not enough			

9. How will I manage my support and stay in control?

If you are going to employ people to support you, you will need to include information about how you will get and manage your supporters or assistants.

Once you are clear about the job you have created and the kind of people you are looking for, then you need to think about how to find them. There are a number of ways:

- job advert in newspapers
- contact recruitment agencies and job centres
- asking family and friends
- word of mouth - asking people you trust to ask around
- using the internet
- posting adverts in newsagents, college notice boards etc.

Once you have got your message out there, you need to think about how to choose from the people who come forward. If you have done a good person specification that should help you because you can, in relation to each of the qualities, ask the question: 'How will we find out if they have that quality?'



There are different ways of finding this out, depending on what you are looking for. Here are some possibilities:

- having an interview, where you can ask specific questions
- setting people tests
- getting people to fill out an application form that asks them specific questions
- spending time with the person so that you can observe them and how they work
- getting references from others who have worked with the person.

Managing support

Finding supporters is the beginning and not the end of the task. From here on you need to manage your supporters. This is not always easy as you need to always make sure both that:

- the support is right and changes to suit you and how your life is going
- the supporters are satisfied in their jobs.

You can employ your own supporters, or co-employ your supporters with an organisation or another person. You may want or need a representative to employ your supporters. This could be an individual or a Trust that acts on your behalf.

Using the support of family and friends

The final kind of support is the support from those who love and care about you.

For many people a plan that suits them will be one where they are not just getting support from paid people.

Fortunately, there are lots of ways that money can be used to get support besides employing support staff.

Buying something they can share	If you want to do something that involves the purchase of some equipment then you could reward a supporter by letting them borrow or share that equipment. The Smith family’s purchase of a mobile home not only gave them a flexible and affordable form of respite but it also gave them something they could share with others.
Paying someone their expenses	It’s ok to pay someone their expenses for travel, eating, entrance fees, etc. Expenses are also not taxable and so are a good way to reward someone who would have to pay taxes if they were a paid supporter.



<p>Paying for a holiday</p>	<p>It's ok to pay all the costs of someone supporting you to go on holiday. For example, one young man has paid for the rent on a holiday cottage so that he and his brother can go fishing together. This is a fraction of the cost of a week in respite care. Another woman paid for a holiday abroad and the costs for her two sisters. This was much cheaper than paying paid supporters to go with her on holiday.</p>
<p>Paying for treats</p>	<p>It's ok to buy people treats like getting dinner for them after a day out. This is a nice way of thanking people for their help and letting them know they are not taken for granted.</p>
<p>Employing family or friends</p>	<p>Many disabled people much prefer to employ people they already know as family or friends to give them support. Sometimes regulations do not allow this and it can be complicated to employ family. But this arrangement can work very well. You may need to check with your local authority if it's ok to do this.</p>

How will the person stay in control of their support?

At the very beginning of this plan you may have thought about the people who could help you to make decisions. This was called a Decision-Making Agreement.

It is essential that you:

- are treated with respect
- are involved in discussions and major decision making
- stay in control.

The Decision-Making Agreement may be the same as the one at the beginning of this plan so the same information can be used at this point.

However there may be people who will help you with very specific things in terms of managing your support overall and you may want to include them now - for example, decisions about medication and medical treatment.

Decisions table

Important decisions in my life	How I must be involved	Who makes the final decision



Important decisions in my life	How I must be involved	Who makes the final decision

10. What will I do to make this plan happen (action plan)?

Now you should be able to start thinking about what needs to happen next.

What needs to happen?	Who will do it?	When does it need to be done by?