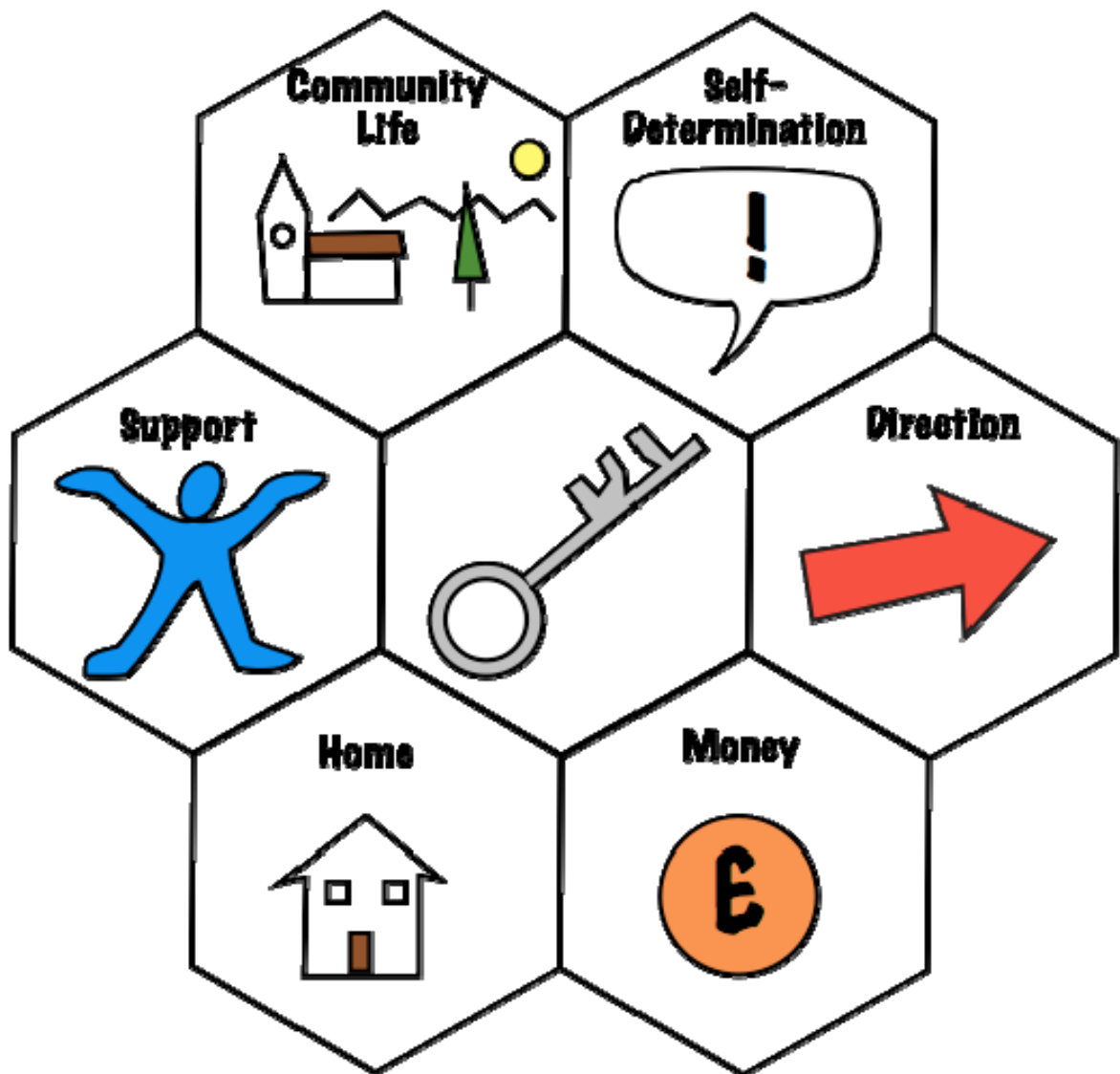


Self Directed Support

People's stories

Volume 3



Dated 22/06/ 2007 to 17/12/2007

Individual Budgets is a National programme to change the organisation of social care in England so that people who need support can take more control over their own lives and fulfil their role as citizens.

The logic is, if the support a person receives fits them better, it will improve their lives and the communities in which they live.

Part of the role of the Self Directed Support team is to capture some of the experiences of people who are directing their own support.

In doing so, this will help everyone to learn more about the programme and ultimately make people's lives better.

Hearing or reading about the lives of individual people is a good idea because:

- Stories are a very powerful and direct way of telling everyone what a person's life is really like.
- It is easier to remember stories about individual people rather than plans, policies and service systems.
- We can generate lots of learning to help us improve the way we do things
- You can sense the real creativity that individuals can bring with just a bit of good information.

The stories that you will read are just a few examples of how people have been taking control in Barnsley.

Thank you to the people who gave us the permissions to share their stories.

Mrs C's story

Mrs C lives in Penistone with her daughter, who she now employs as her carer through her individual budget. They also have two carers from a care agency who come in to help her get Mrs C up in a morning and help her to bed at night.

Mrs C's daughter:

Mum needed care because of an unfortunate accident which resulted in her breaking her hip. We went to a meeting in the hospital around the time of her discharge from hospital where they thought mum may need 24 hour care in a care home. Thank god mum was able to come home as long as we had a hoist. At first BMBC arranged for carers from a care agency to come in and help while I worked full time, but for various reasons it was not working for us. I asked mums social worker if there was anything else we could do and mum chose to have an individual budget, with the view of employing me as her carer.

Our two carers are really good but unfortunately are leaving, so there will be strangers at the door to get to know again, but that's life. It is just do-able financially – but it is not about that at all. It's not about the finances, it is wonderful to be able to have mum home and me look after her.

No one knows mum like I do and no one knows me like mum does so it works a treat for us. I am thrilled with the individual budget. It just works a treat.

Tracy came to see mum around two or three times. She talked to mum about lots of things, like her hobbies, her likes and dislikes, then she went away and did mum a support plan. Tracy was very helpful and she was very good. It took a long time to sort out and once it was all set up she came back to help me with monitoring forms. We also had to open up a separate bank account so we did it in mums and my sister's name. BMBC pay into the account and pay-packet pay it into my account monthly. They see to all the taxes etc. They send a statement through promptly and now I fill in the monitoring forms on my own. It was a bit difficult at first because the paperwork is not my forte!

We got mum home in May 2007 and had a shower room and toilet moved to downstairs. It was worth the wait! We had a ramp outside done at the same time so we can go out. We are still a bit restricted because at the moment I can't help mum into my car but I'm going to enquire about that. If I can help mum get into my car we can go out, like to the garden centres.

Mrs C

I am very happy with my individual budget. I am thrilled; we both are, aren't we.

We go to Penistone when the weather is fine and my daughter pushes my wheelchair- I can hear her puffing away as we go up the hill, so it is good exercise for her! Yes, we are very happy.

Mrs B's story

I am 75 years old and live in Lundwood on my own. I am partially sighted and before I got my individual budget and was able to change things I was struggling quite a bit. My family helped out as much as they could but they worked fulltime. I was putting my clothes on inside out and allsorts. My granddaughter came after work but I was on my own through the day and never went anywhere because the road is busy and I can't see. I had to listen to the green man to cross the road at pedestrian crossings but didn't bother.

I now employ my granddaughter to care for me 24.5 hours per week and anything else she does is unpaid care. She makes my meals, takes me out for meals at Newmiller dam, helps me get dressed and everything else I need.

We go to see my sister every week and go to the supermarket every week. I was stuck in the house before. I wouldn't change anything and I am much happier now.

Granddaughter -

I have been caring for my grandma now for about 7 months and we have had no problems with it. I packed my job in and I'm now my grandma's carer.

We had a lot of help from Tracy, the Support Broker. She sorted everything out for us. Tracy made it easy for us and we didn't have to do anything because she sorted it out. She even used to come just to help me fill in the monitoring forms, until it got to where I could do them myself, and then I told her I could do them and she didn't need to.

We do allsorts now. We try to get out of the house every day. We eat out at a pub at Newmiller dam and other places which she couldn't do before. As her carer, I wouldn't change anything.

Mrs. J's story

Social Services told me about individual budgets when I was in hospital. I let them talk me into it; to be honest; I wasn't expecting to get any help at all.

We had been expecting to get help in the form of a stair lift, because I struggle to get upstairs to have a bath, but the Council had said they would rather move us to a bungalow than install a stair lift (we live in a Council house). We didn't want to move though, because we've lived here 49 years.

My individual budget started at the end of March, and I use it to get a bath at Age Concern. It wasn't possible to get a bath at home because of not having a stair lift. It's wonderful at Age Concern, it really is. I don't get out of breath – it's wonderful.

The individual budget pays for a bath once a week at Age Concern, and my husband's petrol costs for the journey there and back; it's quite a way and we couldn't get there by bus. As well as the individual budget, the hospital sorted out a wheelchair for me.

It's difficult to say what difference it's made because I didn't need any help before I went into hospital. But I'm quite satisfied with how it's worked; everything we've asked for we've got, apart from the stair lift.

It's a wonderful scheme; I think people ought to know about it. Doing my support plan was great; I've been showing it to my family.

We were a long time getting the bath sorted out, because it took a while to find out where we could get one.

The individual budget is doing what we need it to do. We'd have really noticed it if we'd had to pay for it out of our pensions.

Mr W's story

We live in Mapplewell together and have been married a long time. Mrs W is a strong minded woman and if she doesn't want to do something then she won't! She's a character! Before she had an individual budget she had one carer who we paid through a direct payment, but not for many hours. Alzheimer's disease means that Mrs W doesn't recognize danger and I have to do everything for her and I do everything in the house. I can't leave her alone even to walk down the road to the shop so it is a lot of pressure to deal with. When my own health is good then I feel like things are fine, but it's when you're ill that you start to feel the pressure. I've got lung cancer and I had a bad chest for 9 weeks, I couldn't get rid of it. It was then that I felt the pressure of caring for Mrs W and something had to change.

We spoke to Mrs W's care manager, who was a lovely girl, and then a man from York University came to see us one day and explained all about individual budgets. We became part of the individual budget pilot project as we thought it sounded more flexible and wanted to explore it.

Tracy, Support Broker, came about twice to talk to my wife. She said the process would take about a month to organise and that is probably what it has taken. Mrs W's support plan is written beautifully, it is Mrs W to the letter. We really like it; it's like a book all about her.

A lady visited us from York University as part of the evaluation for the pilot project and even she commented on how beautifully written and personal the support plan was.

Since the individual budget started I feel 100% better in myself. Mrs W now gets 35 hours of care per week and has two carers who are brilliant. Their hours and job description are planned out but they are very flexible, especially when my health is bad. Mrs W loves going out and we go to the local club for a drink every week. There's not as many places to go dancing in the winter so the carers are planning lots of activities and days out for Mrs W next year. They are self employed and they pay their own taxes and stamp. I just pay their wages and complete the monthly monitoring forms. There have been no problems at all, it's been brilliant and I recommend it.

The individual budget has helped us both a lot. Mrs W is happy and does what she likes depending on how she feels every morning. The pressure is off me because the carers are doing 35 hours a week. It's smashing. I used to love gardening and am really looking forwards to seeing to my hanging baskets, tidy the garden and start growing vegetables again. I have neglected my garden and can't wait to start my gardening again. That will be smashing!

Mrs S's story

Mrs S lives in Royston. She has used her individual budget to employ her daughter as her carer for 18.5 hours per week. They also have carers who come in to help Mrs S in the morning.

Mrs S's daughter:

When mum came out of hospital she had a full 'hospital at home' care package for about 1 month. Mum then had me and my sister helping her and carers helping her with bathing.

I am employed by my mum for 18.5 hours per week and the rest is unpaid. I probably care for her nearer to 30 hours per week. My sister helps when I am at work because I still work part-time.

Mum has been receiving her individual budget for one month now and I have just had my first wage through pay-packet. The help from Tracy mums Support Broker, and pay-packet has been good. Tracy has gone through everything with us, such as the time sheets and monitoring forms. We feel quite happy with the support we get. Tracy has been very flexible and offered to meet us anywhere to plan mums support. We met Tracy in the café at Morrison's twice- which was very convenient for us. There has always been someone to speak to at the end of the phone and I don't know how it would have been if we didn't have

the full help from a Support Broker.

Tracy showed me how to complete the monthly monitoring forms and I post them to Barnsley Council. Mum's first statement from the separate bank account we set up shows the direct payment going in, the amount paid to me and the one off payment from the employer liability insurance. There have been no problems or issues with any of this. It was a little bit slow to start with but once the wheels were put into motion it went quite fast. Once Tracy visited us it seemed to go fast and has been good.

Mum is doing everything she used to enjoy doing, as we have always taken her out places like shopping, to cafes and to see her sister. I would recommend having an individual budget to anyone- and I already have.

Over the coming months the Self Directed Support team will be working with people who are in receipt of Direct Payments to enable them to have even more choice and control through Individual Budgets.

Sharing people's stories will be an essential part of this journey.

For more information about Self Directed Support you can visit:

www.individualbudgets.csip.org.uk

www.in-control.org.uk

in addition a new network has been established to support local partners to further develop self directed support, visit

www.sdsnetwork.org for further information

For more information, contact the Self – Directed Support Team on 01226 772425