



University of
Sheffield



ISF Factsheets

**Use with the EQUALD video
about Individual Service Funds**

Plain English version

FUNDED BY

NIHR | National Institute for
Health and Care Research

Introduction

These factsheets can be used with the [EQUALD video about Individual Service Funds.](#)

Find out about:

Personal budgets

Individual Service Funds

How ISFs work

Benefits of an ISF

How to get an ISF

How to spend the money

If your ISF isn't working for you

Extra information: making decisions

Personal Budgets

A **personal budget** is the amount of money your local council pays towards your care and support.

The council will do an **assessment** or a **review**. This is a meeting that helps them understand how much help you need.

The council will work out how much your support should cost.

This is your **personal budget**.

Personal Budgets

There are 3 ways to get your personal budget:

Council managed

Your council arranges your support for you.

Individual Service Fund or ISF

The money is given to a support provider organisation to manage.

They work with you to decide how to spend the money.

Direct Payment

The money is given straight to you or a person you choose, to organise and pay for your care.

Individual Service Funds

An ISF is a way for your local council to pay for your care and support.

Your **support provider** looks after the money.

They work with you to make decisions about your care and support. They can help you to change things if you need to.

How ISFs work

You meet with your Support Provider to talk about the budget.

Your family, friends and other advocates can help you think about your life and make decisions.

You will work together to plan:

- the activities you want to do
- who helps you
- how they help you
- where and when you get help

Benefits of an ISF

You will plan how to achieve your **outcomes** with your support provider.

An **outcome** is the result of doing something. For example:

- learn to cook for myself
- get a job
- visit my family more often

Plan your support around achieving these things. For example:

- cooking classes
- try voluntary work with support
- learn to use the bus

How to get an ISF

First, you need to have an assessment which shows that you need care and support. Then:

- ask your social worker for an ISF
- talk to a support provider about managing the ISF

There are 3 ways to pay for the ISF:

- your local council pays the support provider
- use your own money
- use a Direct Payment to pay the support provider

How to spend the money

You can spend the money on:

- support from your support provider
- activities
- support from somewhere else

You can also share support with someone else. This can be good for things like holidays or day trips.

You can spend the money in any way that is legal **and** is about doing the things in your Care and Support Plan.

The support provider has to keep records about how the money is spent. You should be able to see this, and have it explained to you.

If your ISF is not working for you

If you are not happy with your care and support, talk to your support provider.

Try to work together to make things better.

If this doesn't work, or you do not want to talk to your support provider, contact your social worker or social care department.

You can change how you get your personal budget if an ISF isn't right for you.

Extra information: making decisions

If you find it difficult to understand information and make decisions, you can still have an ISF.

The people who support you need to know about the Mental Capacity Act.

It is about making sure that people have the support they need to make as many decisions as possible.

When people cannot make a decision, then it is made by people who know them well, in their best interests.

Making decisions

You should be allowed to make **unwise decisions**, if you understand the things that might go wrong.

For example, some people might say that choosing to drink or smoke is an unwise decision.

If you cannot understand enough information to make a decision, it can be made by other people. But:

- your views must be included in the process of making the decision
- the decision must give you as much freedom as possible

Making decisions

Every decision is different!

You might be able to decide what to eat, but **not** where to live.

You might be able to choose who supports you, but **not** whether to go to the doctor about a health problem.

You should be supported to:

- make decisions in a way that makes sense to you
- make all the decisions that you are able to make
- make decisions at a time of day that is best for you

Useful links

EQUALD video about ISFs

<https://vimeo.com/1092471465?share=copy>

EQUALD homepage

www.sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/equald/home

More EQUALD resources about ISFs

<https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/equald/toolkits?authuser=0>



The EQUALD toolkits were co-produced by:

Self advocacy groups

Support providers

Local councils

The EQUALD Team at Sheffield University