

If you have difficulty understanding this document, or would like a copy in larger print, please contact your local Finance Office.

Aberdeenshire North – Banff	01261 813450
Aberdeenshire Central – Inverurie	01467 628571
Aberdeenshire South – Stonehaven	01569 768432

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The enclosed information sheets explain the financial aspects of your Individual Budget, depending on which option you have chosen for your care and support.



SOCIAL WORK FINANCE  
INFORMATION PACK

What you need to know

You have been provided with this information pack because you are considering, or are in receipt of a Social Work service. It provides you with financial information in relation to these services.

We are now able to offer you more choice in how you direct your care and support, and it may be that we are providing you with an Individual Budget.

We hope that you find this pack helpful in explaining the financial aspects, regardless of the service you are considering or may be in receipt of.

If you do not understand anything in this information pack, please contact your worker who will be happy to assist you.

### **Will I be asked to pay anything towards my Individual Budget?**

You may be asked to make a contribution towards the cost of your Individual Budget. If so, you would be contributing towards the annual agreed budget and not for individual services. Contributions will not be refunded if a service is not received, however, we may consider a refund of contribution under certain circumstances. The contribution will be amended if there is a change to your financial circumstances or if the Individual Budget is reviewed.

You will be offered a Financial Assessment, which allows us to calculate your available income. You will not be asked to contribute more than your available income.

If you do not want to have a financial assessment, then you will be liable to contribute towards your Individual Budget.

*Please see enclosed Charges & Allowances sheet for more information*

### **Services not included in your Individual Budget**

A few services that Aberdeenshire Council provide are not included as part of your Individual Budget.

You may be asked to contribute towards the cost of these services. If so, you would be contributing towards the cost of the individual services as well as the cost of your Individual Budget if you have one. Please refer to the Charges & Allowances information sheet for a list of the excluded services and their charges. You will not be asked to pay any more than your available income, unless you receive meals from Very Sheltered Housing or in a day care establishment. A standard charge is applied for these meals, regardless of your financial circumstances.

### **Free Personal Care**

If you are aged 65 or over, and have Personal Care included in your Support Plan, you will not be charged for this element up to an agreed maximum level. Your worker will be able to tell you how much of the Personal Care you will not be charged for.

### **Children's Services**

If you are under the age of 18, or whilst you remain in Children's services over the age of 18, you will not be asked to contribute towards your Individual Budget. When you reach the age of 18, and move to another service, you will be offered a Financial Assessment and may be asked to start contributing towards the cost of your budget.

# OPTION 1 EXPLAINED

## What is Option 1?

You can choose to have your Individual Budget paid direct to yourself (or a nominated person). You would use this money to achieve your outcomes, as agreed in your Support Plan. You choose and direct how the budget is used, and manage your own budget. **This is known as an Option 1, or a Direct Payment.**

Your worker will be able to tell you if you are eligible to receive a Direct Payment.

## Bank Account

You will be asked to open a bank account for us to make payment to, and this must not be used for any other personal banking transactions. Payments will be made to this account every 4 weeks.

## Payroll Service

If you are going to be employing staff, you can ask us to pay the employee wages and expenses to an approved payroll company, who will make payments on your behalf.

Or, if you would prefer to be responsible for paying the employee wages, we can make payment directly to you. You still can ask a payroll company to calculate the amount of wages and national insurance payments.

Please note that the payroll companies charge for these services, and the cost will be added to your Individual Budget.

If you would like to use a payroll service, you should let your worker know this when you are agreeing your Support Plan.

Your worker will explain the options available to you, and can make arrangements for a managed bank account to be opened with the provider if required.

We cannot make payment to a payroll company for anything other than employee related costs. So we may still ask you to open your own separate bank account, depending on your Support Plan.

## How should I pay my contribution?

If you are asked to pay a contribution, the way we will ask you to pay it will depend on how your Support Plan is made up.

You may be asked to pay your contribution in to the bank account that you opened for your Individual Budget payments (every 4 weeks). You should never pay your contribution to an account held with a payroll company.

We may send you an invoice for your contribution (in most cases, every 4 weeks). There are many ways in which you can make payment, and these will be listed on the invoice. You should not pay the invoices from your Individual Budget money, they should be paid from your personal funds.

When your Individual Budget is set up, we will write to you confirming the details, and this will include how you should pay your contribution. If you do not understand how you should pay, it is important that you ask your worker to explain it to you.

## Will I need to keep records of how I have spent my budget?

You will be asked to keep records of how you spend your Individual Budget.

You will be asked to complete what we call a Budget Monitoring return on a regular basis and you should send this to your worker.

This is a simple form in which we ask for information on the amount of money you have received from us, and a breakdown of how you have spent the money. Your worker will explain how to complete these forms and how often you should complete them. You will also be asked to send a copy of your bank statement to your worker (for the bank account we make payments to).

You will be asked to keep all bank statements, employment records, receipts, invoices etc. for a period of 6 years plus the current year. You may be asked to send them to us at a later date.

## What happens if there is money left over in the bank account?

If you haven't used all of your budget and have money left over in the bank account, it doesn't mean that you can spend it on anything other than your agreed outcomes.

Any balance may go towards your following year's budget, or we may ask you to return it to us. If you would like to use the budget in different way from what was agreed, you must seek approval from your worker before making any purchases.

**If you do spend your budget on things not agreed in your Support Plan, then we will ask you to pay the money back to us.**

## **Are there any forms that I have to complete before receiving my budget?**

Your worker will ask you to complete some forms to allow us to set up your Direct Payment. Your worker will be on hand to help you complete the forms.

### **Payment to Companies/Individuals (Supplier) by BACS form –**

This form asks for details of your name, address and the bank account that we will be making payment to. We need this so we can add your bank account details to our payments system. We cannot accept your bank details on anything other than this form. We cannot make payment to you until this form has been completed.

**Financial Assessment Form** – This allows us to calculate if you need to pay a contribution towards your Individual Budget. You may also be asked to sign a mandate giving us permission to access your financial information. This is a separate form. Your worker may ask you to sign this if your financial information requires to be verified.

If you do not wish to have a financial assessment carried out, and are happy to pay the maximum contribution, then you will be asked to sign the appropriate section on the form.

**Supported Person Agreement** - You will be asked to sign an agreement to confirm that you understand your responsibilities of holding an individual budget. Your worker will explain terms of the agreement before they ask you to sign it.

**If you do not understand any part of this leaflet, please contact  
your worker who will be happy to help you.**

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# OPTION 2 EXPLAINED

## What is Option 2?

You choose how the budget is used but the money is managed by someone else. **This is known as an Option 2.**

You can choose to have all or part of your Individual Budget paid to an Individual Service Fund (ISF) provider. The ISF provider will manage your budget on your behalf as per the agreed outcomes in your Support Plan. They may book trips/ outings on your behalf, or release money to you as required.

Your worker will be able to tell you if your budget can be managed by an ISF provider.

## Is there a cost for using an ISF provider?

Yes, there are costs incurred for using an ISF provider and these will be added to your Individual Budget. Your worker will be able to tell you what the costs are.

## How should I pay my contribution?

If you have to pay a contribution, then you will be asked to pay this direct to your ISF provider every 4 weeks. You should contact your ISF provider to make arrangements.

## Will I need to keep records of how I have spent my budget?

Your ISF provider will keep records on how your budget is being used, and will send the appropriate budget monitoring to us on your behalf.

## What should I spend my Individual Budget on?

Your Individual Budget should be spent as per the outcomes agreed in your Support Plan. Your worker will explain this to you when you agree your Support Plan. Your ISF provider will also have a copy of your Support plan so that they know how the money can be used. If you are unsure what you can spend the budget on, please ask your worker to explain it to you.

## Are there any forms that I have to complete?

Your worker will ask you to complete some forms to allow us to set up your Individual Budget. Your worker will be on hand to help you complete the forms.

**Financial Assessment Form** – this allows us to calculate if you need to pay a contribution towards your Individual Budget. You may also be asked to sign a mandate giving us permission to access your financial information. This is a separate form. Your worker may ask you to sign this if your financial information requires to be verified.

If you do not wish to have a financial assessment carried out and are happy to pay the maximum contribution, then you will be asked to sign the appropriate section on the form.

**Supported Person Agreement** - You will be asked to sign an agreement to confirm that you understand your responsibilities of holding an individual budget. Your worker will explain terms of the agreement before they ask you to sign it.

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# OPTION 3 EXPLAINED

## What is Option 3?

You ask the Council to choose and arrange services for you.

These may be our in house services, or may be services provided by certain organisations that we contract with. We will arrange for the payment of these services on your behalf. **This is known as an Option 3.**

An Option 3 cannot be used for employing staff or purchasing services from organisations that the council does not contract with.

## How should I pay my contribution?

If you have to pay a contribution, then we will send you an invoice for your contribution (in most cases every 4 weeks). There are many ways in which you can make payment, and these will be listed on the invoice.

When your Individual Budget is set up, we will write to you confirming the details, and this will include information about your contribution. If you do not understand how you should pay, it is important that you ask your worker to explain it to you.

## Are there any forms that I have to complete?

Your worker will ask you to complete a **Financial Assessment Form**. This allows us to calculate if you need to pay a contribution towards your Individual Budget. You may also be asked to sign a mandate giving us permission to access your financial information. This is a separate form.

If you do not wish to have a financial assessment carried out, and are happy to pay the maximum contribution, then you will be asked to sign the appropriate section on the form.

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# OPTION 4 EXPLAINED

## What is Option 4?

You can choose to have a mix of the 3 options, to suit your individual needs. For example, it may be that you wish to have responsibility for managing some of your budget, but would also like the council to choose and arrange some services for you. You may also choose for an ISF provider to be responsible for part of the budget. **This is known as an Option 4 – a mix of options 1-3.**

The information sheets for Options 1-3 gives a more detailed explanation on what is involved and responsibilities you would have for each option.

## How should I pay my contribution?

If you are asked to pay a contribution, the way we will ask you to pay it will depend on the Options that you have chosen and your Support Plan.

You may be asked to pay your contribution in to the bank account that you opened for your Individual Budget payments (every 4 weeks).

We may send you an invoice for your contribution (in most cases, every 4 weeks). There are many ways in which you can pay the invoices, and these will be listed on the invoice. You should not pay the invoices from your Individual Budget money, they should be paid from your personal funds.

When your Individual Budget is set up, we will write to you confirming the details, and this will include how you should pay your contribution. If you do not understand how you should pay, it is important that you ask your worker to explain it to you.

## Are there any forms that I have to complete?

Your worker may ask you to complete some of the following forms to allow us to set up your Individual Budget. The type of forms you will need to complete depends on the Options that you have chosen. Your worker will be on hand to help you complete the forms.

### Payment to Companies/Individuals (Supplier) by BACS form –

This form asks for details of your address and the bank account that we will be making payment to (where we are paying a Direct Payment). We need this so we can add your bank account details to our payments system. We cannot accept your bank details on anything other than this form. We cannot make payment to you until this form has been completed.

**Financial Assessment Form –** This allows us to calculate if you need to pay a contribution towards your Individual Budget. You may also be asked to sign a mandate giving us permission to access your financial information. This is a separate form. Your worker may ask you to sign this if your financial information requires to be verified.

If you do not wish to have a financial assessment carried out and are happy to pay the maximum charge, then you will be asked to sign the appropriate section on the form.

**Supported Person Agreement –** You will be asked to sign an agreement to confirm that you understand your responsibilities of holding an individual budget. Your worker will explain terms of the agreement before they ask you to sign it.

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# FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

## What is a Financial Assessment?

A Financial Assessment allows Aberdeenshire Council to verify your income, capital and savings. This allows us to calculate the amount, if any that you should contribute towards your care and support.

## What does a Financial Assessment involve?

If you would like us to carry out a Financial Assessment, your worker will help you to complete a Financial Assessment form. You will be asked to provide information on your income, expenditure and any savings/capital you may have. You may also be asked to sign a mandate to allow us to access your financial information.

## How is my available income calculated?

All sources of income will be taken into account, however we do disregard certain income (an example would be Disability Living Allowance – the mobility component). We will also deduct certain expenditure you may have, such as net rent and council tax.

Also deducted from the income is a personal allowance\*. This is an amount we set, which is intended to cover your daily living costs such as food, clothing, heating, electricity etc.

Depending on the amount of savings/capital you have, we may take this into account and add what we call a tariff\* amount to your income. If the amount of your savings/capital is above a certain level\*, you will be asked to pay the maximum charge\* that can be applied to your Individual Budget.

*\*Please see enclosed charges & allowances sheet for more information.*

## What happens after the Financial Assessment?

We will write to you and let you know how much, if anything that you need to contribute, and how you should pay it. We will also give you a copy of your Financial Assessment, which shows how we have worked out your contribution.

## What if I am unhappy with any part of the Financial Assessment?

If you feel you will have difficulty paying or you disagree with the amount of your contribution, you should advise your worker of your concerns in writing, within 28 days of you receiving notification of your contribution. Your case will then be taken through our appeals process. Further details on appeals and complaints, and our charging policy can be found on the Aberdeenshire Council website.

## What if my financial circumstances change?

**It is your responsibility to let us know if your finances change. This may affect the amount you need to contribute.** For example, your income may have changed, or your savings may have increased.

You can ask for a financial re-assessment at any time if your circumstances change.

An annual re-assessment will also be carried out by Aberdeenshire Council in April each year. This allows us to update your financial information in line with increases in benefits etc.

**If you do not understand any part of this leaflet, please contact your worker who will be happy to help you.**

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**Charges and Allowances Information Sheet for Care and Support Services 2016/17**

<b>Self-Directed Support (SDS)</b>		
Contribution to Individual Budget	Up to 100% of cost	per week
Personal Care (over 65 year olds)	FREE up to an agreed maximum level	
Additional care at home (over 65 year olds) following discharge from hospital	FREE (Maximum 6 weeks)	
<b>Please note your contribution will be based on your planned care on an annual basis. Contributions will not be refunded if a service is not received.</b>		

<b>Services not included in your individual budget</b>		
Community Alarm	£3.00	per week
Telecare	£3.00	per week
Blue Badge	£20.00	per badge
Housing Support (Local Authority Sheltered Housing)	£17.18	per week (post 01/04/03)
	£14.73	per week (pre 31/03/03)
	£12.78	per week (pre 31/03/03 on HB)
Housing Support (Non Local Authority Sheltered Housing)	£variable	per week
Day Care meals	£3.00 – not financially assessed	per meal
Very Sheltered Housing Tenants Meals	£21.00 – not financially assessed	per person/per week

<b>Personal Allowances from 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016</b>		
Personal Allowance – Single Person	£195	per week
Personal Allowance - Couple	£297	per week

**Capital Limits**

Our upper and lower capital thresholds are £16,000 (upper) and £10,000 (lower). For every £500 of your capital between £10,000 and £16,000 we will take £1 of income into account when calculating how much you should contribute to the cost of your care and support services. If you have capital under £16,000 you should contact your local finance office to request a financial assessment.

**If you have any questions or comments or would like to request a financial assessment**

Please contact your local social work finance office and we will be happy to discuss:

Carlton House, Stonehaven (01569) 768432

Gordon House, Inverurie (01467) 628571

Court House, Banff (01261) 813430