The Care Act states that councils need to assign a personal budget to all people who are eligible for support so they can have more control over their support. The personal budget is the amount of money needed to cover the cost of the support for which a person is eligible.

All people who are eligible for support from their council should then be given a support plan which explains what support they need, how this support will be arranged, and how much the support will cost. People should be involved in writing up their support plan as much as possible, so that it makes sense to them and reflects their views and wishes.

And as many people as possible who are eligible for support should then be offered the chance to receive a direct payment - this is a sum of money which they can then use to arrange and pay for their care and support themselves, so that they can stay in control of their care arrangements and in control of their lives.

Many people will have been receiving personal budgets and direct payments to pay for care and support for some time; to find out more about how things work in practice, and will continue to work in future, you can go to our main page on Personal Budgets and Direct Payments.