

**Exploring service user preferences
and priorities, and the uptake of
Personal Health Budgets in the
complex care pathway across
South London.**

**Authors - Dr Palmer, D, CEO Mind in Bexley and East Kent Ltd and
Visiting Senior Lecturer Canterbury Christ Church University and
Smith, N IMHA Advocate Mind in Bexley and East Kent Ltd
For more information, contact: dpalmer@mindinbexley.org.uk**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019 made a clear commitment to expand personalised care and Personal Health Budgets, with a specific expectation that these will be offered within mental health services as part of plans for up to 200,000 people to benefit by 2023/24. One of the key drivers behind Personal Health Budgets is giving people greater choice and control over the support they access to manage their mental health as this increases their prospects of recovery.

The South London Mental Health & Community Partnership (SLP) and South East London CCG Personalisation lead commissioned Mind in Bexley to develop a programme of engagement to draw on the expertise of people with lived experience of mental health difficulties regarding Personal Health Budgets.

The research provides valuable information for commissioners and service providers in designing a pathway to support the uptake of Personal Health Budgets across the SLP and thereby increasing recovery outcomes, choice and control.

Engagement

Mind in Bexley engaged with 64 service users with placements in inpatient rehabilitation, residential / nursing care or supported accommodation across South London. Participants were from a range of genders, ages and ethnicity. Engagement was time intensive as it needed to be in person rather than online due to needing to build trust and the depth of information covered

KEY FINDINGS

The importance of listening to and engaging with users was highlighted by many individuals in the study.

Service users and staff lacked knowledge about Personal Health Budgets. None of the participants had any clear knowledge or understanding of what Personal Health Budgets are, what the eligibility criteria is and how to access one. Only 5% per cent of the health professionals who acted as brokers to access individuals for this study had ever heard of Personal Health Budgets.

Personal Health Budgets were positively viewed by the majority of respondents as a concept and principle.

Of those interviewed 64% said after hearing about the concept that they would be keen to have one. Participants valued being asked what they thought would most help them to be as happy and healthy as possible and that a Personal Health Budget could give them the choice to access this support.

37 participants had a clear idea of what they would like to access if they had a Personal Health Budget. These included travel, education and training, physical activities, personal assistants, alternative therapies, equipment, pets and hobbies.

There were levels of caution and doubt with regard to how effectively it would be delivered in practice. Concerns included worries and delays over the administrative process, the burden of managing the budget and the disappointment of being turned down.



Key Recommendations

- Ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to communicate what a Personal Health Budget is and explore with the individual how this could help them
- Co-produce information about Personal Health Budgets with people who use services and which demonstrate the possibility of positive outcomes from Personal Health Budgets including stories of how people have benefited.
- Provide training for all relevant parties including statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors to ensure they fully understand Personal Health Budgets and the level of Personal Health Budget support to which clients are entitled.
- Employ community organisations and individuals with lived experience to be involved in the delivery of education and training programmes to communities and service users in order to improve take up.
- Ensure equal opportunities for BAME individuals by providing a culturally sensitive approach with access to interpreters and provision of Personal Health Budget information in a range of languages.

- Work alongside voluntary and community sectors to build a resource of what may be available and ensure mental health staff are aware of what is available.

- Ensure advocacy and mentoring, befriending or peer support services are funded and offered to users to support them to access and use Personal Health Budgets

- Ensure equitable and fast access to Personal Health Budgets through establishing clear eligibility criteria, pathways, systems, budget holders and decision-making processes so that delays in decisions and payments are avoided.

- Establish an involvement strategy and ensure evaluation, consultation and planning mechanisms are in place to incorporate user and other stakeholder feedback into ongoing improvement of how Personal Health Budgets are provided.

- Fund a formal evaluation of the progress of Personal Health Budget implementation in July 2023 which includes analysis of client use of budgets, client feedback, outcome measures, ease or difficulty of accessing budgets, reasons budgets have been declined and how far the joint action plan has been achieved.

Glossary

A personal health budget is for NHS healthcare and support needs.

A personal budget is for social care and support needs.

An integrated personal budget is for both healthcare and support needs and social care needs.

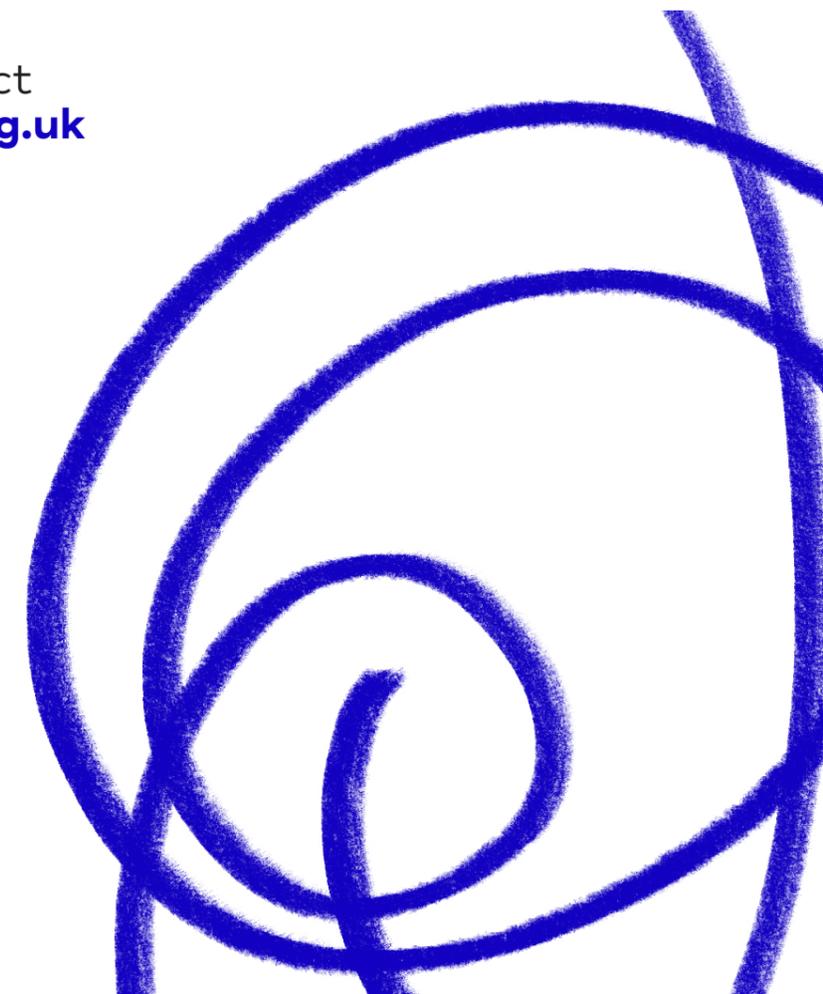
A direct payment is one way of managing these budgets. It's when a client receives the money directly to buy the agreed care and support rather than the council or the NHS arranging it for them

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to members of the Advisory Group for their guidance; the staff and particularly, the residents who gave up their time to be interviewed for the project and shared their personal views and experiences with us so openly and honestly. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the South London Mental Health & Community Partnership (SLP) and South East London CCG.

For more information contact
dpalmer@mindinbexley.org.uk

 **Mind**
in Bexley
and East Kent





mind
in Bexley
and East Kent

**Join the fight for
better mental health!**

@mindinbexley

info@mindinbexley.org.uk

www.mindinbexley.org.uk