

100,000 more people to be given personal health budgets

The change in law comes into force on Monday 2 December, following legislation being laid in Parliament today (31 October).

From 2 December, everyone eligible for an NHS wheelchair and people who require aftercare services under section 117 of the Mental Health Act will have access to a personal health budget.

Personal health budgets are planned and agreed between individuals and clinicians, giving people greater choice, flexibility and control over their health and care support.

A personal health budget could be spent on:

- specially adapted wheelchairs designed to maximise independence
- a choice of personal care assistants who can be trained to meet the individual's needs
- exercise classes to help maintain a healthy lifestyle, gain confidence and reduce stress

Over 70,000 people are already benefiting from personal health budgets, helping people with complex needs stay healthy and independent for longer.

As part of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#), the health system will increase access so up to 200,000 people can receive one by 2024.

The NHS Long Term Plan aims to expand personalised care. This will be given to 2.5 million people by 2024 through measures including personal health budgets and social prescribing, where people are referred by their GPs to local community or voluntary activities.

Last year [DHSC and NHS England consulted on extending the right to a personal health budget](#). The consultation revealed strong support, with nearly 9 out of 10 respondents supporting the proposals.

The NHS will continue to explore further extension of legal rights to other groups covered in the consultation as appropriate, including people with ongoing mental health needs and those with learning disabilities.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Everyone deserves the right to make decisions about their care, and health and care should be centred around each and every one of us, not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Our NHS Long Term Plan has personalised care at its core. This

important piece of legislation puts the power back in the hands of more people, transforming the wellbeing and quality of life for thousands while also reducing distressing and avoidable hospital trips.

Minister for Care Caroline Dinenage said:

I've seen for myself how personal health budgets are giving people a new lease of life, opening up possibilities to let them live their lives fully.

This extension of legal rights will give many more people independence, a say in how they're cared for, improving their experiences while ensuring value for money for taxpayers.

This is an important step in our NHS Long Term Plan's ambition to see personalised care become the norm for thousands more across the country.

UN General Assembly 74th Session, First Committee: thematic debate on conventional weapons

The United Kingdom aligns with the statement made by the European Union. I will now add some remarks in a national capacity.

Madam Chair

The UK welcomes the positive progress we have made in international conventional arms control, which is crucial in tackling threats to life and security as part of the rules based international system.

It is in our collective interest that all relevant instruments function. This can only happen when they are fully funded, implemented effectively and include all relevant stakeholders.

The UK remains strongly committed to the Arms Trade Treaty, and its aim of effectively regulating the international trade in conventional arms and preventing their illicit trade and diversion. It is essential to consolidate the provisions of the Treaty and implement them fully to achieve these objectives. It is also crucial that major exporting and importing states accede to the Treaty. In this regard, we welcome China's announcement of its intention to begin the accession process. We welcome the outcome of the Fifth

Conference of States Parties, and congratulate the outgoing Chair on his work.

Madam Chair

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which is celebrating its twentieth anniversary, has delivered significant humanitarian impact. But we need to do more. November's Review Conference in Oslo gives us the opportunity to review progress, reaffirm our commitment to our core obligations, and renew our determination to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. The UK continues to make steady progress in meeting our obligation to clear the Falkland Islands.

The UK also remains deeply concerned by reports of the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions. We encourage all States to accede to the Cluster Munitions Convention, and to support draft Resolution L.46 on the CCM.

Madam Chair

The UK considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to be a vital arms control instrument. We welcome the progress made this year by the CCW GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We look forward to the formal endorsement of the Guiding Principles affirmed by the GGE at this year's Meeting of High Contracting Parties, and welcome the continuation of the GGE's mandate to the 2021 Review Conference.

Madam Chair

The UK has consistently been at the forefront of global efforts to counter the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. This is a transnational problem and we continue to work with individual states, regional organisations, industry and civil society to strengthen cooperation and reduce the supply of illicit weapons.

The UK looks forward to the GGE meetings on the 'Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus' and to supporting the recommendations of the Group.

Thank you Madam Chair.

UKEF appoints Carl Williamson as Head of Trade Finance

Carl joins UKEF from Lloyds Banking Group, where he spent 31 years in a variety of roles. Most recently he was a Relationship Director, managing and developing a portfolio of customers within the Manufacturing & Industrials sector. Prior to this he was Head of Cash Management and Trade Finance,

delivering cash and trade products to large London corporates.

In this new role, Carl will head the Trade Finance Business as UKEF grows its support for exporters with a range of products including Working Capital, Bond Support and Export Insurance. He will be responsible for leading a business unit incorporating UKEF's 25 strong team of Export Finance Managers (EFMs), the Business Group Operations area and team of Short-Term Business Underwriters, as they drive the uptake and adoption of the export credit agency's products across the UK.

Gordon Welsh, Head of UKEF's Business Group, welcomed Carl to UKEF, saying:

I am very pleased to welcome Carl to UK Export Finance and look forward to working with him as we expand the reach of our unique financial offer. UKEF is at the heart of the government's support for exports, and the work of our EFMs and Short-Term Business teams is crucial as we ensure every UK company meets its export potential.

Carl Williamson, Head of Trade Finance at UKEF, added:

The right financial support can play a vital role in ensuring that a company is able to compete overseas and grow. For the last 100 years, UKEF has been at the heart of the government's support for UK exporters and I am delighted to be joining the department, and to be responsible for growing this important range of products and services.

UK Export Finance is the [UK's export credit agency](#) and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.

It exists to ensure that no viable UK export lacks for finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.

Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: infrastructure, aerospace, healthcare, telecommunications, transport and industrial development.

UKEF has a regional network of 24 [export finance managers](#), who support UK businesses export their goods and services.

UKEF support exporters with a range of products that include:

- Bond insurance policy
- Bond support scheme
- Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
- Direct lending facility

- Export insurance policy
- Export refinancing facility
- Export working capital scheme
- Letter of credit guarantee scheme

The latest information on UKEF's country cover positions can be [found here](#).

If you're a business owner and want to learn more about how UKEF could help you, [tell us about your business](#).

[Funding boost to support childcare and early education](#)

Councils across England will receive a funding boost to deliver free childcare places, enabling parents to work more flexibly and supporting children's early development.

Some of the additional investment will go to ensuring nurseries and childminders can support some of the most disadvantaged children, with an increase in hourly funding for all councils offering 15 hours free childcare for disadvantaged two-year-olds. The vast majority of areas providing free 30 hours places for working parents of three and four-year olds will also receive an increase in the hourly rate.

It will also see an increase to the minimum hourly funding rate so that no authorities will see less than £4.38 per hour per child for three and four year olds.

The Education Secretary Gavin Williamson also confirmed continuation of supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools for 2020-21, providing reassurance for these settings which tend to care for higher numbers of disadvantaged children, often most at risk of falling behind.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

A child's early education is crucial to their future success which is why we are increasing our hourly funding rates for councils so that they can continue to deliver high quality and free childcare places.

Over one million children every year are now benefitting from the Government's record investment in childcare and early years education – which will have reached £3.6 billion by next year. This will give families the flexibility they need to be able to balance their work and family lives.

The increase in funding comes following the Chancellor's announcement of an additional £66 million investment in the early years as part of the spending review.

It will also see a handful of areas that have historically received higher levels of funding having their current funding rates for three and four-year-olds protected in 2020-21.

In recognition of the need for certainty about the 2020-21 financial year in maintained nursery schools, we have today announced the continuation of the additional funding which will be provided to local authorities to enable them to fund maintained nursery schools at higher rates.

This forms part of the Government's drive to ensure children have the best start in life through access to high quality early education and wider aims to support parents in creating a learning environment at home, through the [Hungry Little Minds Campaign](#).

This additional funding follows the announcement that we are investing a total of £14 billion additional funding in schools over the next three years to 2022-23. Schools found out earlier this month how the first part of that investment – £2.6 billion – will be allocated for the coming year. Every secondary school will receive a minimum of £5,000 per pupil next year and every primary school will receive a minimum of £3,750 next year, before receiving at least £4,000 from 2021-22.

Councils awarded £500,000 for digital technology innovations

Seven digital technology projects have received grants of up to £100,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Local Digital Fund.

The digital research and development projects will look at improving the efficiency of the planning system, predicting demand in children's social care and enabling better information sharing to drive improvements in local services.

Local Government Minister Luke Hall MP said:

Councils across the country are working to embrace digital technology to adapt, innovate and drive improvements in public services for their residents.

I'm delighted to announce we're investing over half a million

pounds from our Local Digital Fund into seven more collaborative projects to boost public services for all.

For the projects, lead councils partner with at least 2 others to share knowledge and ideas. This collaborative approach is an important part of the government's Local Digital Declaration to coordinate public bodies seeking digital solutions.

Different stages of projects have different names. Discovery projects explore problems and propose possible solutions, those called 'alpha' build prototypes and test solutions, and the 'discovery' stage builds a working service for public testing.

The fund is also paying for in digital skills and leadership training for council staff.

Projects funded and the local authorities involved:

1. Improving data and evidence on children in care; Greater Manchester Combined Authority – £100,000. A project to eliminate errors in statutory data returns to provide better, evidence-based decision making.
2. Reducing invalid planning applications; led by Lambeth Council, with Wycombe District Council, Southwark Council, Lewisham Council, and Camden Council – £98,500. Developing a system to limit the number of incomplete or invalid digital planning applications.
3. Researching what data early help children's services heads need to analyse performance; led by Richmond and Wandsworth Councils, with West Berkshire Council, and Croydon Council – £80,000. A project to explore how data can be used to improve the quality of early help children's services.
4. Improving code sharing between councils; led by Croydon Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council, Bracknell Forest Council, and Oxford City Council – £75,000. The project is will improve how computer code is shared between councils, making it easier for them to collaborate.
5. Predictive modelling to understand future demand for children's social care; led by Suffolk County Council, with Cambridgeshire County Council, Norfolk County Council – £74,000. The project will help councils to anticipate demands on their services.
6. A new system for processing revenue and benefits data; led by Teignbridge District Council, with East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Basildon Council, and Brentwood Council – £71,000. The

project will explore the development of a cost-effective system focused on residents' needs.

7. Cross-local government user research; led by Croydon Council, with Hackney Council, Kent County Council, and Hertfordshire County Council – £25,800. The project will look at how one council can use another council's user research to improve statutory services.

See [more information](#) on the Local Digital Fund, projects previously funded and how to apply.

Only councils in England are eligible to lead on applications; councils in other parts of the UK are still eligible to partner on applications.