

## Making a Real Difference

### Checking people's experiences and co-producing improvement in statutory services

Personal budgets and EHC plans are now a core part of policy and will be an increasingly significant part of the future of social care, health and education for people of all ages.

The question now is not whether personal budgets have a role in public services but how we can ensure they offer maximum benefit to those holding them.

It is vital that we learn about what works best at both a national and local level and apply these lessons.

“We must strive to improve the outcomes people experience as a result of using personal budgets not just focus on increasing the numbers. We should always be asking ‘are people getting better lives and support – and is the experience simpler and more flexible?’”

**Norman Lamb MP**

Minister of State for Care and Support,  
Department of Health

### How can POET help?

Over the past 10 years, In Control together with the Centre for Disability Research at Lancaster University has been developing the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET) to measure the outcomes of personal budgets and personalised care and support – **and the impact they are having on people's lives**. One product of this has been three National Personal Budget Surveys published by Think Local Act Personal.

POET was initially developed for use in adult social care, and then in health. The DfE has also funded In Control to develop a version of POET able to measure the impact of personal budgets and education, health and care (EHC) plans for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A version for providers is also currently in development.

By consistently measuring both process and outcomes – **through people's direct reported experience** - POET is able to produce a data set that identifies the critical conditions that councils, schools, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and other agencies need to establish if they are

to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of personal budgets, EHC plans and other self-directed support tools.

**More than 8,000 people** have shared their experiences to date using POET – making this the largest national data set of its kind.

With Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) and the Department for Education (DfE) we have recently published a number of reports using POET looking at people's experiences across statutory services in adult social care, children's services and health.

POET is the only national tool available enabling people to share their experiences on the impact personal budgets and EHC plans are having on their lives and offers a real co-productive opportunity to help influence and shape better local delivery.

[www.in-control.org.uk/poet](http://www.in-control.org.uk/poet)

A survey of people's experiences can't answer all the questions about what organisations should do to improve delivery – but it can certainly help and be used alongside other information and evidence. Councils and other organisations are using POET and local findings in a range of ways, including:

- Measuring the impact of the SEND reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014
- Informing local engagement and planning sessions with managers, practitioners, personal budget and EHC plan holders and their families. This can support local areas to compare their results with national evidence and set them against other local data, experiences and perspectives. Organisations can then develop improvement plans to help deliver the Care Act, Children and Families Act and personal health budget delivery, for example.
- Using POET findings as part of wider local stakeholder engagement and planning using TLAP's Making it Real markers – informing reviews of personal budgets but also steering necessary improvements in the other areas such as information and advice.
- Informing and supporting Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA).
- Incorporating POET within regular processes for checking user experience and outcomes including via the review process. In this way local delivery and wider commissioning activity can be systematically informed by direct user feedback.

In the Third National Personal Budget Survey we have outlined some of the emerging themes and how councils and other organisations can potentially make use of them.

## What do the findings tell us?

### Adults:

Good process = Good outcomes

**2x**

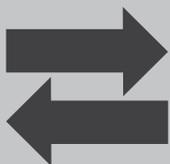
Personal budget holders who said their views were included in the process were nearly twice as likely to report good outcomes

**3x**

Those that found the process easy were nearly three times more likely to report good outcomes



Personal budget holders who used their budget for personal assistants or community-based solutions were more likely to report better outcomes than those who used their budget on traditional services



Carers who said their views were included in the process were significantly more likely to report better outcomes



People were also more likely to report good outcomes if they had help to plan their support and if they could say how much money was in their budget

But these factors made very little difference to outcomes:



Personal factors such as gender, ethnicity, age or social care group



Type of personal budget direct payment, council managed or individual service fund

**At least two thirds of respondents said their personal budget had made things better or a lot better in 11 of the 15 areas of life we asked about:**

- Dignity in support
- Independence
- Arranging support
- Friendships
- Quality of life
- Mental health



- Control over life
- Feeling safe
- Family relationships
- Paid relationships
- Self-esteem

**80%+**

said a personal budget had made things better or a lot better when it came to dignity in support and quality of life.



More than two thirds of carers said that as a result of the person they care for having a personal budget things had got better or a lot better in three of the eight aspects we asked about (remain well and continue caring, quality of life for them and the person being cared for).

## Children and young people:

**80%+**

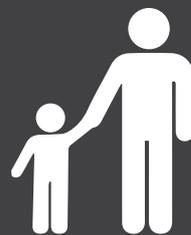
In seven of the nine outcome areas we asked about (individualised support, feeling supported, paperwork, partnership, communication, continuity, information) said things worked well all or most of the time.

In the other two areas (clarity of role and timeliness)

**78%**

said things had worked well all or most of the time.

Parents/carers were also positive about the impact on their own lives. In four of the six areas we asked about (life balance, feeling supported, confidence in future and aspirations) at least 80% said things had got better or a lot better.



In four of the seven work areas we asked practitioners about (partnership with parents, individualised response, being child centred and understanding the needs of the child/young person), at least 70% were positive.



In five of the nine areas we asked about (support, quality of life, home, happy and relaxed, fit and healthy) at least 80% said that things were better or a lot better for their children.

Parents/carers and practitioners were all in agreement that partnership working and keeping the process simple were areas that needed to improve.



The majority (70% of parents) felt that the personal budget or EHC plan met their child's needs.

## Find out more

### We have recently published three reports using POET:

- The Third National Personal Budget Survey
- The POET surveys of Personal Health Budget Holders and Family Carers
- Measuring the outcomes of EHC plans and personal budgets for children and young people with SEND

You can download these reports at [www.in-control.org.uk/poet](http://www.in-control.org.uk/poet), see also [www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk /Browse/SDSandpersonalbudgets](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Browse/SDSandpersonalbudgets)

### How organisations can use POET

Minister of State for Care and Support, Norman Lamb MP has recommended that all councils should be checking people's experiences through tools such as POET. POET is easy to use and low-cost and has also been included in the TLAP Action Plan for 2014/15 as a key action for the sector partnership to promote as best practice. To this end, funding has now been made available to all adult social services in English councils to access POET.

In Control is also working with NHS England to use POET to measure the impact of personal health budgets, and with the DfE on a pilot project for children's services.

To find out more about how your organisation can make use of POET, please email us at [poet@in-control.org.uk](mailto:poet@in-control.org.uk) or telephone 01564 821 650

### What next?

Having built POET over 10 years across adult social care, health and now children's services we believe the right thing is for it now to be owned across a wide coalition - with people using public services at the heart of decisions about its use and its future. In the coming months we will be working to make this democratic ownership a reality.

[www.in-control.org.uk/poet](http://www.in-control.org.uk/poet)

