

Your Contingency Fund

What to do if you need to access your contingency fund:

When you wrote your support plan in order to receive your Personal Budget you may have set aside some money within a 'Contingency Fund' for emergencies and unexpected expenses. Your Contingency Fund is held by Norfolk County Council's Direct Payment Team. If you need to access to your contingency fund you would need to make a request to them for this to be released; when this is agreed by them the money will be paid into your direct payment account.

You should only make a request for contingency money if the use for it has been covered within your support plan. If you make a request for something which you did not identify within your support plan, the Direct Payments Team will question this with your Care Assessor.

Accessing contingency funds if not receiving a personal budget

If you are receiving direct payments, for example on behalf of a child as they do not have a personal budget, you may be able to access a contingency fund in certain circumstances; Examples of when this might be considered include covering initial insurance costs, increased employment costs or high advertising costs.

There may be times when you are refused access to contingency funds e.g. if you pay wages above the guideline rate, when using more hours than agreed in your assessment , if you have spent money on something other than what was agreed or if you have not kept records. If you have any questions about accessing contingency funds when you do not have a personal budget, contact the Direct Payments Team.

What should I do if I don't have enough money in my account?

It is your responsibility to make sure you are using the money as agreed. However there may be times when you overspend due to things like an increase in National Minimum Wage, or increase in agency rates of pay. In these cases you may be able to ask your care assessor for a 'variation' to allow for the increase in costs if you did not allow for this within your contingency.

There could be a time when your account runs short of funds due to money being sent back in accordance to Norfolk County Councils '8 week rule'. This is where if your account has more than 8 weeks of money available it would be returned to them e.g. you are using two hours less support a week so you can use the extra money to pay your employee to come on holiday with you, once your account has over 8 weeks worth of money available the surplus would get returned to Norfolk County Council in accordance with their 8 week rule.

If you have run out of money in your account due to using too many hours of support or using it in a way that has not been agreed, you will not be able to access a contingency as you should not have used the money in this way. Although you may have a reason for using extra hours / support you are expected to have requested a re-assessment first. Please contact your care assessor to discuss if your needs have changed, if you want to use the money in a different way, or if you require a re-assessment.

If you require further information or would like this factsheet in an alternative format you can contact us by calling: 01508 491210, by emailing: info@equallives.org.uk, or by writing to: Equal Lives, 15 Manor Farm Barns, Fox Road, Framingham Pigot, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ