



## SEND Personal Budget – Ben’s Story

*Bath and North East Somerset Council - PfA demonstration site*

**Ben, a 19 year old with autism and profound and multiple learning disabilities, has benefitted greatly from effective use of a SEND personal budget. Ben has a range of sensory and communication difficulties, exhibits behaviour that challenges through occasional swallowing of non-food items and self-injurious behaviour, and had recently moved into supported housing.**

### Background

Ben requires consistent support delivered by professionals he is familiar with. At Ben’s transfer meeting it became clear that attending the local further education college would be dependent on securing additional support from familiar staff. Ben’s mobility allowance was also being used to enable him to get around in the local community, and his family could not therefore pay for transport to the college through his Disability Living Allowance (DLA) payment. The alternative option of attending a residential college was not appropriate to meet Ben’s needs, given its significant costs and his recent successful relocation to supported housing.

### Options and Challenges

Using a SEND personal budget to provide for consistent additional support was presented as an option and backed by both social care and education services. Whilst Ben’s mother was interested in the potential flexibility of a personal budget, she had concerns over receiving a direct payment in addition to Ben’s direct payments for social care.

As an alternative, a commissioned personal budget (individual service fund) was established with the college and the National Autistic Society (NAS), as an external provider. The college and NAS sought to use top-up funding through the personal budget to employ a personal assistant who would also support Ben in the community, whilst travelling and at an additional education placement for one day a week.

### Flexibility

When it became clear that the initial college placement was not appropriate for Ben and did not meet his needs, the Local Authority responded positively to Ben’s mother’s suggestion for an alternative arrangement with a local care provider, with support from NAS.

These arrangements provided Ben with a 5 day a week package which met his needs, and were only possible due to the flexibility of the SEND personal budget arrangement using High Needs block funding.

### Successes

The new arrangement is under regular review, and appears to be working well for Ben and his family. The increased flexibility allowed for:

- a consistency of care which reduced risk and improved outcomes for Ben.
- Ben’s mother to suggest alternative care and education arrangements when the initial setting was found to be inappropriate.

In addition:

- The local authority estimates that identifying local education provisions created a saving of around £46,000 compared to a residential college placement.
- Ben has also secured a mobility vehicle, which further reduces his transport costs.