

How We Decided Your Estimated Budget

Formulate for Children & Young People's Social Care V4



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What is an Estimated Budget?

An Estimated Budget (EB) is an indication of how much money a council thinks is needed to help meet the social care needs and outcomes identified for a child or young person with a disability, impairment or health condition.

An EB is also known as an 'indicative budget' or 'indicative allocation of money' and it is used as the basis for support planning with a family.

How we decided your Estimated Budget

As a council, we chose to use a tool called 'Formulate' that is used by some councils in England for calculating EBs. There are three parts to the Formulate tool, which are:

The Needs Profile

The Needs Profile is a form with questions that capture:

- The child or young person's 'additional needs'. This means the areas of day-to-day life where their disability, impairment or health condition (rather than their age) affects their independence – such as personal care, participating in social activities or staying safe.
- The impact on the well-being of the child or young person's parent(s) or carer(s) of meeting the additional needs identified. This is captured through a series of 'impact factors'.
- Details of any areas where the parent(s) or carer(s) are struggling to meet some or all of the additional needs identified and require (or would benefit from) support through a personal budget.

The questions in the Needs Profile have been carefully designed to produce an accurate estimate of the amount of money needed to meet the social care needs identified.

The Formulate Algorithm

The Formulate algorithm has been in development since 2014 and is specifically designed to calculate fair and accurate EBs for children and young people with social care needs and their families.

The algorithm has been built based on thousands of real cases from around the country and then tested in the local area. This means that the way each EB is calculated is 'in line with what it costs to meet the needs of other people with similar needs and situations in the local area'.

The algorithm cannot be used in any area until:

- The council has completed a 'Configuration document' which determines how a completed Needs Profile form is translated into an Estimated Budget.
- A testing exercise has taken place to ensure that the algorithm is calculating appropriately for local families who already have care and support in place.

The Configuration Document

This document is completed and kept up to date over time by the council to ensure Estimated Budgets are appropriate and sufficient for purchasing care and support services in the local area. The decisions are reflected in the local Formulate algorithm.

The Council's 'configuration decisions' are a mixture of the following:

- Sums of money (rates) which the algorithm uses to translate estimated support time into a budget. For example, the cost per hour for meeting personal care needs or providing daytime short breaks.
- Decisions about how the algorithm should work locally in different circumstances. For example, whether to use different rates where a Direct Payment is chosen and what the maximum estimated hours should be for daytime short breaks.

How the algorithm calculates Estimated Budgets

There are three main steps involved in how the Formulate algorithm calculates an Estimated Budget. These are set out below.

Step one – Self-care

If additional needs related to self-care tasks are identified for the child or young person in the Needs Profile, and parent(s) or carer(s) are not able to fully meet the additional needs, Formulate will allocate an estimated sum of money for this area.

The following parts of the Needs Profile are used during this part of the calculation:

- How often support is needed with self-care tasks per day
- Usual length of time needed to support with self-care tasks
- Self-care areas where more than an age-appropriate level of support is needed to maintain or develop independence (including getting up and ready for the day, eating and drinking, washing whole body, using the toilet and managing continence, and getting ready for bed)
- Support needed with staying comfortable and repositioning, and any impact of weight, frame, balance or strength on mobility
- Any personal care areas where support from two or more adults is needed
- Impact of any behaviour which causes worry, upset, concern or harm
- Number of mornings, daytimes and evenings each week that parent(s) or unpaid carer(s) can meet self-care needs in the term-time and in the holidays
- Daytimes where support may be provided by an education setting (either full-time or part-time)

There are some important points to note, as follows:

- The Formulate calculation will not simply allocate hours for each individual area of need and add them up. The number of hours allocated is based on the full picture of the child or young person's additional needs across all of the above areas.
- An estimated allocation is only given for times during the week where it is recorded that parent(s) or carer(s) cannot meet personal care needs every day.

For children or young people in full-time education, Formulate will not normally include self-care allocations for weekday daytimes.

Step two – Short breaks and social activities

If the Needs Profile identifies that parent(s) or carer(s) would benefit from daytime short breaks through social care, Formulate may make an estimated allocation for this, depending on the answers within the 'Sustainability of parenting or caring role' section.

The following areas of the Needs Profile are used during this part of the calculation:

- Whether parent(s) or unpaid carer(s) would benefit from daytime short breaks through social care to help them manage
- Whether parent(s) or unpaid carer(s) already receive support from a daytime short breaks service outside of children with disabilities services
- The impact on the parent(s)' or carer(s)' ability to continue providing support beyond normal parenting and caring duties – in the term time and during the holidays. This is recorded for the following six areas:
 1. Not having sufficient support with the caring role
 2. Having other caring roles
 3. Not being able to carry out day-to-day activities due to caring role
 4. Difficulties relating to the housing situation or home environment
 5. Not getting sufficient good quality sleep
 6. Their own health issues or their understanding of the child or young person's needs

If the Needs Profile identifies that parent(s) or carer(s) are not able to support all of the child or young person's social or community activities, Formulate will make an estimated allocation based on how many activities per week require additional specialist support.

The following areas of the Needs Profile are used during this part of the calculation:

- Level of independence with participating in social, leisure, cultural and spiritual activities
- Whether parent(s) or unpaid carer(s) would benefit from the child or young person attending any activities or groups in addition to daytime short breaks
- If so, how many activities would be beneficial per week in the term-time and in the holidays

Important note: In some situations, the Needs Profile will indicate that an estimated allocation is needed for both short breaks and support with social and community

activities. In this case, the greater of the two allocations will be given rather than adding them together, as the parent(s) or carer(s) would be able to take a break whilst the child or young person is supported with a social or community activity.

Step three – Overnight breaks

If the Needs Profile identifies that overnight breaks are needed or would be helpful for the family, Formulate may make an estimated allocation for this, depending on the reason for needing overnight breaks and the answers within the 'Sustainability of parenting or caring role' section.

The following areas of the Needs Profile are used during this part of the calculation:

- Whether overnight breaks would promote independence, help to sustain parenting or caring role(s), or prevent parenting or caring role(s) breaking down.
- The impact on the parent(s)' or carer(s)' ability to continue providing support beyond normal parenting and caring duties – in the term time and during the holidays – across the six areas already set out for step two above.

Important note: Local decisions within the Configuration Document may mean that overnight breaks are excluded from the scope of Formulate, or only calculated as an estimated number of nights per year without an associated budget amount. This is usually related to the availability and cost of relevant services in the local area.

What if you think the budget is too little or too much?

No approach is perfect, and everyone's personal situation is different. This is why we calculate an **Estimated** Budget (EB).

If the figure does not seem realistic, for example it seems either too low or too high:

- 1) Check whether you agree that the child or young person's additional needs have been reflected appropriately in the Needs Profile form.
- 2) Check whether the responses in the 'Sustainability of parenting or caring role(s)' and 'Ongoing support from parent(s) or unpaid carer(s)' are correctly reflective of the situation at home and what feels manageable.

It is important to remember that at the stage where your EB is provided, no final decision has been made about your Actual Budget (AB).

How is your Actual Budget determined?

We will confirm your Actual Budget (AB) after your care and support plan has been prepared and agreed as appropriate for meeting your needs.

Your AB may be lower or higher than the estimated figure, due to your specific personal situation. There may be other factors that also mean the EB and AB are different, such as variation in the local cost and availability of a particular type of support that you need.