

Formulate Practitioner Reference Pack (V9)

Strengths-based working in Adult Social Care

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1 What is Formulate?

Formulate is a tool to help you calculate an Estimated Budget. It has been designed to be fair, accurate and consistent.

Formulate is based on an assessment of need, meaning it helps eliminates variation in provision for the people with the same needs – and ensures that the people you work with get a fair Personal Budget compared to others with similar needs and situation.

The purpose of the Estimated Budget is to provide a starting point for the care and support planning process. The figure provides a framework to enable choice, control and person-centred care within a sustainable financial envelope. This helps move the conversation away from more traditional service or provision-led thinking.

Benefits for practitioners

- Clarity in understanding the money available for care and support planning.
- Confidence in decision making through the use of a robust, evidence-based tool.
- Free to focus on the person rather than the money.

Benefits for people with care needs

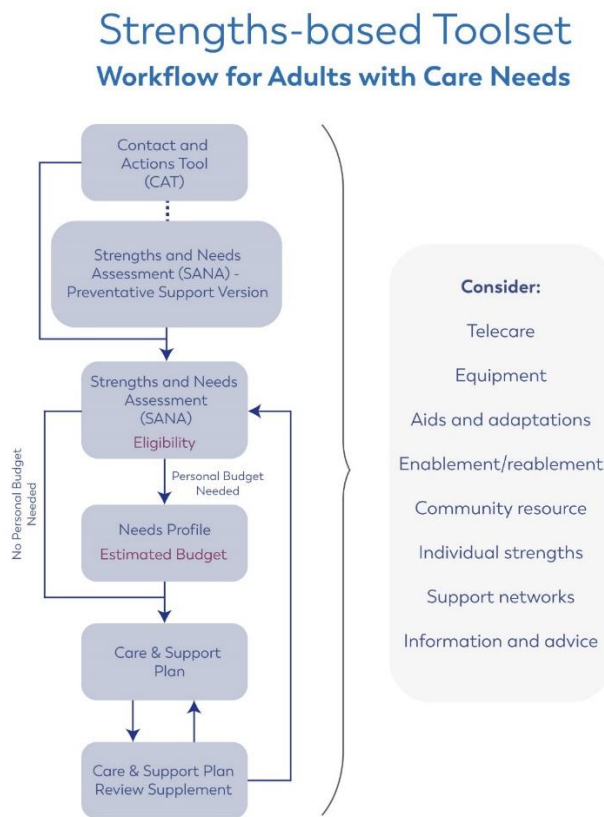
- Clarity in understanding the money available for care and support planning.
- Empowered to exercise choice and control - allows for greater creativity.
- Assurance that allocation is fair and driven by needs and outcomes - rather than decisions on cost.

Benefits for Local Authorities

- Supports financial and budgetary planning and control – helping to inform future commissioning arrangements.
- Benchmarking between service user groups.
- Delegated decision making – potential to reduce moderation/panels.

2 Where does Formulate fit into the process?

Once you've completed your assessment and determined if someone has eligible care needs, the 'Needs Profile' would be completed which contains the questions which are used by Formulate to calculate an Estimated Budget. The Needs Profile is shown as the fourth grey box in the flowchart below:



In a strengths-based approach, you would usually have explored all of the person's strengths, maximised their independence, and looked for any community resources or support networks, before completing the Needs Profile – so the Needs Profile is about the remaining unmet need.

3 How does Formulate work?

The Needs Profile captures the information on the person's eligible needs and situation in a measurable way – sometimes called 'scores' (although the 'score' is just referring to the level of need you've chosen – there aren't any points sitting behind them!)

Formulate then uses this information to calculate the Estimated Budget using the following steps:

1. Eligible Needs:

- An allocation will be made for daily living tasks based on whether support is needed in the morning and evening, and throughout the day. This will be boosted if there are particular mobility or mental health needs.
- Second carer support is allocated for any activities with which the person needs two-to-one support.
- A weekly allocation is made for support with household tasks.
- Social relationships and activities and work, training, education or volunteering activities are allocated for based on the type of support and the number of activities needing support per week. The two may be offset.
- Where a person cannot be safely left alone during the day, an allocation will be made for constant support. This may be offset against other needs that can be met at the same.
- A weekly allocation is made for support with night time needs.

Unpaid Support:

- A reduction is made for any needs that will be met by sustainable support from unpaid carers.

2. Sustainability Allocation:

- Where full breaks are required to sustain the ongoing caring situation and the impact on the main carer is sufficiently high, an allocation for breaks will be made. The calculation for this is based on a combination of the cared-for person's level of need, the amount of support the carer provides, and the assessed impact on the carer's independence.

3. Living Situation:

- Final adjustments are made depending on the anticipated living situation. This will differ depending on the living situation chosen (such as Extracare, Shared Lives, Supported Living, Residential Care or Nursing Care).

4. Local Configuration:

- Local rates and decisions will be applied.



4 How do I complete the Needs Profile?

You will only complete the sections of the Needs Profile which are relevant for the person's needs and situation – this is based on which Care Act outcome areas have been recorded as eligible needs within the assessment prior to the Needs Profile.

As the Needs Profile captures information in a measurable way, it is made up of a combination of scales and checkboxes. You should choose the most relevant answer for the person's situation. People are different and we are not trying to fit people into boxes – it's about which answer most closely reflects the person's situation – in order to generate an accurate Estimated Budget.

To help choose the most relevant answer, there are some key principles that should be applied.

Key Principles - Needs

- Assess based on presenting need, not based on any current care, service or support provision.
- Disregard any support already in place. Imagine the person on their own with nobody present.
- Any equipment or technology already in place should be taken into account.
- After following all of the above principles, if in doubt between two responses, choose the higher level.

Key Principles - Unpaid Support

- Score based on what unpaid carer(s) are 'able and willing' to support on an ongoing basis.
- Base the responses on a 'usual' week - 'full breaks' from caring (e.g. 'weeks off') should not be accounted for here.
- If a relative, friend or neighbour is employed as a paid PA funded by the Local Authority, their support should be excluded.

The narrative from your assessment should provide the written evidence for the responses you choose within the Needs Profile.

At the end of the Needs Profile you will capture any factors (for example dementia or a learning disability) which have a significant influence on the person's care needs, along with their anticipated living situation. These items help enhance the accuracy of the Estimated Budget.

5 What are the other Formulate outputs?

As well as an Estimated Budget, you may see some additional outputs. These are described below. The actual outputs you see will be dependent on your local system configuration.

- Automatic Quality Assurance (QA) Summary
 - A set of statements providing information on the answers recorded within the Needs Profile, to help you ensure that answers are not contradictory and to reduce potential challenge.
- Global Need Band
 - A 'needs band' between 1 and 12 is worked out for each individual based on their overall needs in different areas. This can be useful when considering the types of care and support available, or for internal reporting. It is particularly useful when reporting on populations to help understand how many people there are with each level of need.
- Allocation Summary
 - A breakdown of how the Estimated Budget has been calculated at a domain level. This can be provided as a monetary breakdown and a unit breakdown.
 - The monetary breakdown can help give a framework for support planning, allowing a creative and flexible approach to be taken.
 - These figures can also act as an internal benchmark, by creating a picture of the areas of identified need from the assessment, allowing for comparison to what is specified in the support plan.
 - The unit breakdown can help you where provider costs vary significantly as they allow you to see the **amount** of care and support that has been estimated by Formulate – factoring-out things like hourly rates and leading to a focus on the preferred type of support and how it may meet the person's outcomes.
- What Ifs
 - A set of hypothetical Estimated Budgets showing what different support options for the person may cost.
 - These figures can be used in financial modelling, to understand the variation in cost for different accommodation and support types.
 - They are particularly useful with support planning for young people in transition, and for individuals contributing to the costs of their own care.
- CHC Checklist Mapping
 - A recommendation as to whether referral to Continuing Healthcare (via completion of the CHC Checklist) should be undertaken, using Needs Profile answers to suggest what the A / B / C 'scores' might be if a Checklist were to be completed.

6 What if I disagree with the Estimated Budget?

It is important to remember that Formulate produces an Estimated Budget – the Actual Budget may well be different. However, there are cases where recording issues may result in an inaccurate Estimated Budget. There are some examples below of situations where the Estimated Budget doesn't look right and checks you can do to resolve this.

6.1 The Estimated Budget is £0

You can carry out the following checks:

- Have eligible needs been determined in two or more outcome areas in the person's assessment (or at the start of the Needs Profile)?
- Have you recorded that unpaid family/friends/volunteers are fully meeting all of the person's identified needs?

6.2 The Estimated Budget seems too low

You can carry out the following checks:

- Needs Profile - Unpaid support – Ensure you have completed this section to reflect what unpaid carer(s) are able to provide on an **ongoing** basis (particularly if the current situation is unsustainable).
- QA Summary– Are any QA statements shown? Have you corrected the related issues in the Needs Profile where relevant? In particular, have all areas with eligible needs been marked as such in the assessment (or at the start of the Needs Profile)?
- Allocation Summary – Are there any domains where you were expecting to see an allocation but are showing as £0?

If you are happy with how you have captured the needs and situation in the Needs Profile, then variation may be due to the local configuration, for example:

- There may be things not included in the Estimated Budget due to your local authority's configuration decisions (such as travel/transport or household tasks).
- Configured rates might be different to the cost of the actual care sourced.

6.3 The Estimated Budget seems too high

You can carry out the following checks:

- Needs Profile – Needs sections – Do the 'How often is support needed' answers for daily living and personal care tasks match with the narrative in the assessment? Pay particular attention to the responses recorded for safety during the day and night.
- Needs Profile - Unpaid support – Have you double-counted any areas? For example, have you under-scored support from unpaid carers with safety due to paid support that is needed for personal care or social activities?
- Allocation Summary – Check whether there are any areas with an allocation that you would not expect (for example support during the night)?

If you are happy with how you have captured the needs and situation in the Needs Profile, then variation may be due to the local configuration.