

ENIL Personal Assistance Survey

Country/region: Bulgaria

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PART 1: KEY INFORMATION ABOUT PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

LEGISLATION/POLICY	
Is there legislation covering personal assistance (PA)?	<p>NOT ON NATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>There is a municipal regulation in Sofia called ASSISTANT FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING</p>
Is PA currently provided on a pilot basis?	<p>NO</p> <p>Formally, the Regulation has been passed in 2007 (http://web2.apis.bg/sofiacouncil/p.php?i=383379&b=0) but the real provision started in 2009 following a couple of amendments, which took the scheme away from the PA mechanism as defined by ENIL.</p> <p>There is a Government Programme called <i>ALTERNATIVES</i> with an <i>Independent Living</i> component for disabled people and elderly over 65 years of age. It is financed by the European Social Fund and the Bulgarian Government (Human Resources Development Operational Programme), which is mostly for in-home care.</p>
What is the total number of registered PA users in the country?	<p>National data is not available. Sofia Municipality registered 1.679 applications for the PA service in 2012 and 1.582 in 2014.</p>
Has this number increased, decreased or stagnated (eg due to waiting lists) in the last 5 years?	<p>Stagnated due to waiting lists</p>
Does everyone, regardless of type of impairment, have	<p>Disabled people with over 90% lost ability to work and eligible for assistance allowance qualify for the Sofia PA Scheme (which doesn't necessarily mean they get into).</p>

access to PA?	
Does everyone, regardless of age, have access to PA?	There are no limitations in terms of age, though being a student or having a job, attending rehab or other social activities gives disabled PA applicants extra points thus making it less likely that elderly or unemployed people can get access to the service.
Are there restrictions on what PA can be used for?	Formally, there are no restrictions on what PAs can be used for, though the limited number of hours imposes restrictions by itself.
CHANGES IN LEGISLATION/POLICY	
Have there been any changes in legislation/policy restricting the use of PA in the last 5 years?	Not really, but – as far as the Sofia Municipality Regulation is considered – minor decrease in per hour rate for the PAs salaries are constantly in place. The new ALTERNATIVES programme provides for PAs and medical services at the same time.
Have any other limitations been introduced that prevent/restrict PA use in the last 5 years?	NO
If negative changes/restrictions have taken place in the last 5 years, what were the reasons (eg structural, financial etc.)?	NO
ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS	
Who carries out eligibility assessments for PA?	Formal eligibility criteria are checked up by the municipal social service. Then disabled people do their needs assessment by themselves with a social worker from the municipal service.
How often are assessments repeated?	Every year in September.

Is there a specific assessment tool that is used?	YES Please specify: There is a table with different sections by needs.
FUNDING	
How are PA services funded?	By the state: YES for the joined EU – BG funded <i>ALTERNATIVES</i> By the regional or local authority: YES for the Municipal Regulation in Sofia Both: NO If by BOTH, please explain:
Is PA a means tested service?	NO
What is the maximum number of PA hours per day/week that can be approved?	160 hours per month for the <i>ALTERNATIVES</i> Programme Sofia Municipal PA Regulation does not have any limitations for hours, however the assessment panel does not allow for more than 200 hours a month.
What is the hourly rate that is funded?	BGN 3.50 (€1,75) – for the Sofia Municipal PA Regulation
Are direct payments/personal budgets available for funding PA?	NO
What is the total number of direct payments/personal budget holders in the country?	----
Are family members allowed to be paid as PAs?	YES
PROVIDERS AND SUPPORT	
Is there a choice of providers of PA	NO

services?	Please specify:
If PA can be provided by user-cooperatives, do they have to be accredited?	-----
Are PA users provided with training on how to manage their assistance?	NO
Are people with intellectual disabilities allowed to manage their own assistance?	NO
Are support services such as peer support/peer counselling/IL training provided by user organisations funded by the state or the local authority?	NO

PART 2: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<p>Please provide background information about the introduction of PA into legislation/policy (which actors were involved in advocating for PA, was there inspiration drawn from a certain country, which public stakeholders were needed to set it up, which challenges</p>	<p>PA service was initially introduced by CIL – Sofia on the basis of a pilot project funded by an international donor. It covered 30 users following the rules of PA as defined by ENIL today. It was implemented with a thorough monitoring and documentation of the process for the purpose of promoting and advocating the scheme for country-wide coverage. It was considerably altered and taken on board by the then Government as an employment promotion tool and support for families of disabled people. That made CIL activists to continue the struggle for real PAs for IL, which resulted in passing the Municipal Regulation on Personal Assistant for IL. Further on the service is provided on programme basis with no security for the users that they will have assistance as long as they need it.</p>
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<p>arose in the process of developing the legislation/policy, what resources were needed)?</p>	
<p>Are there any current challenges in implementing the PA legislation/policy?</p>	<p>There is no national PA legislation yet. Sofia Regulation though displays severe challenges being designed as a “tool for social inclusion” for active disabled people. Thus people with profound disabilities and extensive support needs are left out – qualifying points are given for activities (having a job, school enrolment, using specialised social services for disabled people, etc.), which they cannot perform due to the lack of assistance. Most of the assistance schemes (under the National Programme and ESF funded <i>Independent Living</i> scheme) act as tool to combat poverty and unemployment by involving municipal authorities as service providers and families as assistants.</p>
<p>Has the legislation/policy on PA led to empowerment of disabled people, setting up of CILs or cooperatives etc.?</p>	<p>No, since no peer support is provided through the schemes.</p>
<p>Is PA used in the process of de-institutionalisation (to help people leave institutional care)?</p>	<p>No, people are not meant to leave institutional care – they are just moved from large institutions to small group homes.</p>
<p>Was any research carried out in the country on the costs of PA? If yes, please provide links or attachments.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>If family members are allowed to work as PAs, is this considered problematic or beneficial?</p>	<p>There is no public debate on this issue. However IL advocates find it problematic, nationally represented DPOs agree with such arrangement; some disabled people complain that they cannot hire their assistants on the market due to the low hourly rate, others seem to be OK “contributing to the family budget”.</p>