

ENIL Personal Assistance Survey

Country/region: Belgium/Flanders

Updated on: 25/10/ 2015

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PART 1: KEY INFORMATION ABOUT PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

LEGISLATION/POLICY	
Is there legislation covering personal assistance (PA)?	<p>YES</p> <p>In 1987 some disabled Flemish pioneers founded <i>Independent Living Flanders (ILV)</i>. ILV raises awareness for people, associations and policymakers of the abilities of individuals with disabilities and the need for personal assistance. The constant struggle is worthwhile. In 1997 for the first time in Flanders, an experiment started with the Personal assistance budget (PAB). 15 Flemish people with disabilities participated.</p> <p>The experiment was extended by six months, then another, and reached 50 persons with disabilities. There was a growing political interest in this new phenomenon of people with disabilities organizing their own assistance. In 2000, the Flemish Parliament approved the decree for personal assistance budgets (PAB). The first PAB decision of the Flemish government was taken on 15 December 2000.</p> <p>This means that the legislation we have is Flemish regional legislation. About 60% of Belgians live in Flanders. All people less than 65 years of age with a disability can apply for a PA budget. The number of budget holders is limited.</p>
Is PA currently provided on a pilot basis?	NO
What is the total number of registered PA users in the	About 3000

country?	
Has this number increased, decreased or stagnated (eg due to waiting lists) in the last 5 years?	Increased gradually. About 300 new budgets are granted every year.
Does everyone, regardless of type of impairment, have access to PA?	YES It is primarily the amount of support one needs that gives one access to a budget. Whether it is autism, a visual disability or a physical disability for example.
Does everyone, regardless of age, have access to PA?	NO You must be under 65 years. If you are older, your disability must have been acknowledged before your 65'th year.
Are there restrictions on what PA can be used for?	YES You cannot use it for therapies, for didactical support, to buy appliances,
CHANGES IN LEGISLATION/POLICY	
Have there been any changes in legislation/policy restricting the use of PA in the last 5 years?	In general NO Over the years the ways you can use your budget become more numerous.
Have any other limitations been introduced that prevent/restrict PA use in the last 5 years?	In general NO. There are always efforts from the government to form the labour union for example to restrict certain things. Our organisation always pushes back with, in general, good results.
If negative changes/restrictions have taken place in the last 5 years, what were the reasons (eg structural, financial etc)?	Governmental austerity issues, union issues, issues concerning strong traditional frameworks around institutions who are afraid of losing influence, etc
ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS	
Who carries out eligibility assessments for PA?	Every province has a council in which professionals and PA users decide on the eligibility.
How often are assessments	Once you have a budget no assessments will

repeated?	follow. The only way to lose a budget is to commit fraude.
Is there a specific assessment tool that is used?	<p>YES</p> <p>There is an elaborate list of questions that has to be answered. This is aimed at creating an impression of the amount of support you need at the one hand, at the other they want to know how strong the network is, if you want or have a job, if you live alone or want to, etc.</p>
FUNDING	
How are PA services funded?	<p>By the state: NO</p> <p>By the regional or local authority: YES</p> <p>Both: NO</p>
Is PA a means tested service?	NO
What is the maximum number of PA hours per day/week that can be approved?	<p>You can get up to about 45 000 euro per year. It depends on the way you organise your assistance how many hours you can per week you can end up with.</p> <p>I would suggest a maximum of about 50-60 hours a week.</p>
What is the hourly rate that is funded?	They give out amounts on the basis of one year.
Are direct payments/personal budgets available for funding PA?	YES
What is the total number of direct payments/personal budget holders in the country?	3000, this is the only way PA is organised in Flanders.
Are family members allowed to be paid as PAs?	YES
PROVIDERS AND SUPPORT	

Is there a choice of providers of PA services?	YES You can choose anybody over 18, regardless of experience, age, degree, etc. You can also choose for a service with assistance, sometimes they offer permanence for example.
If PA can be provided by user-cooperatives, do they have to be accredited?	NO This is not common but it is possible. Parents how build a house for their children with mental disabilities for example organise the assistance with the sum of the personal budgets.
Are PA users provided with training on how to manage their assistance?	NO Not structural. Some organisations offer these trainings but they are always optional.
Are people with intellectual disabilities allowed to manage their own assistance?	YES/NO If these people are in their full rights and don't have a guardian they can.
Are support services such as peer support/peer counselling/IL training provided by user organisations funded by the state or the local authority?	YES Partially, these organisations also depend on private funds, sponsors, membership money and revenue from payed services.

PART 2: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 arose in the process of developing the legislation/policy, what resources were needed)?	See first question
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Are there any current challenges in implementing the PA legislation/policy?	There are always challenges but in general over the past few decades the policies are changing for the good. We are a strong organisation with a lot of influence, this accounts for these evolutions.
Has the legislation/policy on PA led to empowerment of disabled people, setting up of CILs or cooperatives etc ?	It certainly has. A lot of cooperatives are not being formed but other initiatives and trends show a trend toward empowerment of disabled people.
Is PA used in the process of de-institutionalisation (to help people leave institutional care)?	It is but only marginally. Most budget holders never lived in an institution. Most people who are living there will not be transferring there support to the PA system.
Was any research carried out in the country on the costs of PA? If yes, please provide links or attachments	It was.
If family members are allowed to work as PAs, is this considered problematic or beneficial?	We consider it beneficial in general. The government is sometimes in doubt but there is only limited pressure to change this.