

Direct Payments

Factsheet – Using an Agency

You may want to use an agency, sometimes known as a domiciliary care agency, to provide your care. If you choose to use an agency the staff who will work with you will usually be employed by the agency. In this case you will not be the employer and the agency will be responsible for managing the staff and paying their wages.

You will still maintain your choice and control as you will make arrangements directly with the agency and will be able to say how, when and where your support will be provided.

You will be responsible for paying the agency's invoice when you receive it from your Direct Payments card account. Some people prefer to set up a direct debit with the agency so that the payments are made on a regular basis. You will need to request a form from the agency to set up this payment method. Always check that you have discussed all your arrangements with the agency and have an agreement in writing. Ensure that the agency has given you a breakdown of all their charges in writing. You do not want to have any unexpected costs, such as additional charges for mileage, bank holidays etc that you have not previously agreed to pay. Sometimes an agency may charge an hourly rate which is more than the Direct Payment hourly rate paid to you. It is likely you will have to pay the difference from your own personal funds. The Council advises you to discuss any additional costs with your social worker when your Direct Payments are arranged.

Agencies providing personal care are required by law to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

We recommend you make the following enquiries before choosing an agency:

You can ask the agency staff to show you the registration details for the agency.

You can ask the to see their Insurance Policy

Whether all staff have had a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

How they manage their staff and how often someone will check that you are happy with the service that you are being provided with

How they deal with complaints

Cover arrangements for holidays or sickness

What type of training staff are provided with?

How much it will cost to use their service

Whether they carry out risk assessment for you and their staff

Will you be given copies of timesheets so that you pay the correct amount?

You can have as much support as you need in making these arrangements.

We recommend that you use either Barrie Bookkeeping or ask the Direct Payments Team to help you.

Once you have been working with individual members of staff for some time you may think you could employ them directly as Personal Assistants and not use the agency. We strongly recommend that you talk to us before you do this. Some agency agreements allow you to employ their staff directly but may charge you a fee as part of their conditions for providing the service for you. If you want to do this, please contact Barrie Bookkeeping or the Direct Payments Team who will be able to help you.

We have only given you a few suggestions of the type of questions you may want to ask. Please think about the information you want and what questions you need to ask the agency to help you to choose the right agency for you.

If the agency tells you they will not be able to continue providing care for you, please contact the Council and ask to speak to a duty social worker as soon as possible.

Who to contact

Here are some details of people and organisations that you may want to contact for help: -

Barrie Bookkeeping - Tel: 01902 912895
Email: DP@barriebookkeeping.co.uk

Adult Social Care - Tel: 01902 551199

Disabled Children and
Young Person's Team - Tel: 01902 550911

Adult Safeguarding &
Quality Assurance Team - Tel: 01902 553218

Direct Payments Team - Tel: 01902 551294 (Option 6)

Civic Centre

St Peter's Square

Wolverhampton

WV1 1RT

[Email: Direct.payments@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.payments@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

Care Quality

Commission

- Tel: 03000 616161 www.cqc.org.uk

wolverhampton.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Direct Payments Team