



Fact Sheet DP2 August 2012

Using an agency to recruit a Personal Assistant

You have chosen to use an agency to find a Personal Assistant for you.

This means that you will not be an employer yourself.

The benefits of using an agency are that:

- you do not have to worry about the responsibilities of being an employer
- you can agree with the agency how much to pay the worker using your Direct Payments



- agencies are often willing to agree a lower hourly fee than usual for people on Direct Payments
- you can agree more flexible support with the agency because you receive Direct Payments
- This means that you do not have to have support at the same time each day
- you can ask the agency to send the same worker every day if you wish. This way you will know who is coming each time to support you
- you can meet and interview workers before they start working with you
- agencies can often provide workers at short notice
- the hourly amount charged by the agency includes wages, taxes and National Insurance contributions, Public Liability Insurance and CRB checks. You don't have to manage these things yourself.

Top tips for finding an agency worker

Tip 1: Before you choose which agency to use, ask the agencies if their workers have an **enhanced** Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

The CRB check allows you to find out whether a person has committed a crime against someone. This is especially important for people who are at risk of abuse.

Tip 2: Ask the agency what training they give their workers.

This is especially important if you need a worker to operate a hoist or to move you, for example.

“Ask the Direct Payments Advisory Service for the **“Training for Personal Assistants”** fact sheet.”

Tip 3: Register with one or two agencies in advance, even if you are not going to use them straight away.

This way you can use the agency at short notice, if you need to.

“Visit our website at www.barnet.gov.uk for a list of agencies, or ask for the Direct Payments Advisory Service for a copy.”

The disadvantages of using agencies are:

- the quality of agency staff can vary from worker to worker
- you may have less choice about who works for you than if you employ somebody directly yourself

Tip 4: Make back-up arrangements.

Even well planned support can go wrong, so it's important to have a back-up plan, such as a friend or relative who can support you in an emergency if your support arrangements break down.

The Direct Payment Advisory Service can support you to make back-up plans, if you need this.

Direct Payments Advisory Service
Building 4, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South
London N11 1NP
Tel: 020 8359 3760
Fax: 0870 889 5485
Email :
DirectPaymentsAdvisoryTeam@barnet.gov.uk

If you need this factsheet in a different format or language, please contact the Communications Officer for Adult Social Care and Health on:
Tel: 020 8359 7150
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