

Shaw Trust Direct Payments Support Services

Information Sheet 2: Selecting a Care Agency

Sheet Outline:

- Advantages and disadvantages of using an agency
- Selecting an agency

Outcome:

- To be prepared for selecting an appropriate Care Agency

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using an Agency

If you think you would find managing your own staff difficult or if you wish to use an Agency instead of employing directly, then your Local Authority Social Services department will allow you to use a Care Agency as an alternative.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using this system:

- All the services will be arranged for you and you can specify the times when you need assistance and what assistance you want.
- Cover will be provided in case of sickness or annual leave by your regular Personal Assistant.
- You may find that this system gives you less control over the service received.
- It might not give you the freedom you want.
- It may cost more than employing someone direct.

If you are employing and managing your own Personal Assistant you may wish to use an Agency to provide short term cover when your regular PA is unavailable or you may wish to use a combination of employees and Agency on an on-going basis.

Selecting an Agency

If you do decide to use an Agency, make thorough enquiries to make sure you get the best service and value for the support you require. As part of the Government's initiative to improve overall care standards, all agencies must register with the appropriate Care Standards Authority and will be expected to achieve and sustain a minimum set of national standards. Once registered, an Agency is not allowed to charge VAT on its invoice to you. **Ask your Support Officer for the Agency Questionnaire Template which could help you select an Agency or go to: www.shaw-trust.org.uk/dp**