

Getting the support you need

Buying from agencies and care providers



Once you've decided to receive direct payments, a personal health budget or fund your own care, you can choose whether to buy the services you need from:

- ✓ an established provider, such as a day care centre,
- ✓ a dedicated care agency who could provide you with a support worker,
- ✓ a mix of these two.

You can also use direct payments, personal health budgets or your own funds to employ a personal assistant directly. [For more information see SILC Fast Facts 4 \(Recruiting a personal assistant\).](#)

How do I choose a provider or agency?

The first job is to ensure that the provider can meet your needs. This means not only checking out what they can provide, but also ensuring that it's of a sufficiently high and consistent quality. All care agencies and providers of residential respite care must be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

www.cqc.org.uk email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk tel: 0300 061 6161

How will I pay for the support I buy?

- The provider you use will invoice you on a regular basis (usually weekly or monthly) for the services you receive from them.
- You will pay these invoices by cheque or direct transfer from your direct payment, personal health budget or self-funded bank account; SILC can help you with this.

What should I do first?

If you are considering using an agency, start by making a list of the tasks you are expecting agency staff to do. Next, spend some time considering what's important to you about the way those tasks are done.

To get the best from a care agency, ask some of the following questions before making a decision about whether or not to use them:

- What services do they provide?
- What charges will be made?
- Is the price all inclusive or are there any extras; for example, VAT, National Insurance or travelling expenses?
- Is there a minimum service that has to be bought? Number of hours?
- Is it possible for you to choose the person who provides the care needed?
- Can you expect to see the same person on a regular basis?
- What if the regular person is sick or on holiday?
- Can the organisation be contacted at all times when care is being provided?
- What are the out-of-hours emergency service arrangements? Is there an extra charge for this?
- If you are not happy, how can you complain about the service received?
- What obligations (e.g. financial) will you be under if you cancel the service?
- Does the organisation have full Employers' Liability insurance?
- Does the organisation work to a recognised code of practice?
- How are agency staff recruited? Are they required to give references? What training are they given?
- What evidence is there that employees have had police checks?

More information about care providers in Surrey can be obtained from Surrey Care Association.

www.surreycare.co.uk email: sca@surrey.co.uk tel: 01372 825116

Employment agencies are required to meet certain minimum standards designed to protect their workers and those hiring them. Details can be obtained from the Pay and Work Rights helpline on [0800 917 2368](tel:08009172368).

SILC is a voluntary organisation led and run by disabled people. To find out more about us, call [01483 458 111](tel:01483458111), text [07919 418 099](tel:07919418099), email admin@surreyilc.org.uk or look on our website www.SurreyILC.org.uk

Surrey Independent Living Council

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