

Getting the support you need

Recruiting a personal assistant



Once you've decided to receive direct payments, a personal health budget or if you fund your own care, you can choose to recruit the person you feel is best suited to provide the support you need.

You can also use direct payments, a personal health budget or your own funds to buy support from care agencies and established providers.

For more information see [SILC Fast Facts 3 \(Buying from agencies and care providers\)](#).

SILC can support you in recruiting a personal assistant (PA) by:

- helping you prepare a specification, outlining the skills, experience and knowledge that are needed,
- helping you write a job description detailing the hours required and the tasks involved,
- helping you to draft and place a job advertisement,
- helping you to send out application forms and shortlist replies,
- being there with you whilst you interview suitable candidates.

DBS and reference checks

It's vital that you can trust the person that will be coming into your home. Ask anyone you decide to employ for written references from two people who know them well.

We'll help you:

- ✓ request and follow up references,
- ✓ carry out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

For more information see [SILC Fast Facts 18 \(DBS checks and right to work\)](#).

Who pays for my advertisement?

- ✓ If you receive a direct payment or a personal health budget, this should cover reasonable costs of advertising as part of your initial set up costs.

What about Equal Opportunities?

- ✓ Although you do not have to have an Equal Opportunities policy, you must not (by law) discriminate on the grounds of race, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, age, religious belief or sexual orientation.

Can I employ people from other countries?

- ✓ You can employ people from within the European Economic Area without the need for a work permit. Check that anyone you employ is legally entitled to work in the UK by asking to see documentation and keeping copies of it; SILC can help you with this. You can also get further information from the UK Visas and Immigration website, www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration.

For more information see SILC Fast Facts 18 (DBS checks and right to work).

Can I employ a relative?

- ✗ You can employ a relative who doesn't live with you. However, you cannot employ a close relative or partner who lives with you without prior permission from social services and then only in exceptional circumstances (for example, if there is no other way of providing the support you require).

How do I offer someone the job?

- ✓ Make your offer of employment in a written letter to the candidate, stating clearly that it is subject to receiving satisfactory references; SILC can help you with this.

Can I employ someone for a trial period?

- ✓ It's a good idea to include a probationary period in any offer of employment, so that you can see how the person gets on. We suggest a trial period of 13 weeks.

SILC can also help you recruit via its free PA website www.PAfinder.org.uk. You can put an advert on the site describing the kind of PA you're looking for, what you need them to do, etc. It also enables people who are looking for work as a PA to see information about you (but not your personal or contact details) and apply to work for you. For more details just visit the website, contact the SILC office or see SILC Fast Facts 17 (PA Finder).

If you would like this information in large print, on audio CD, in Braille or another format, please contact us.

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

Surrey Independent Living Council

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