



How To Identify A Suitable Agency

A Direct Payments Worker at Fife Council can provide you with a list of agencies operating in your area. You can also find details of care agencies in the local telephone directory. Gather information from the agencies, for example, leaflets, brochures. This will allow you to determine exactly what services can be provided and how these can be delivered.

It is recommended that you prepare a shortlist of at least 3 agencies and invite them to discuss how they would deliver your care package. You may want to prepare a “wish-list”, detailing all the essential and preferred criteria you have for a service. We have included a list of questions you may wish to ask the agencies.

When you have selected an agency, ask them to prepare a support plan and provide detailed costing. The agency should also provide you with a written contract with details of their terms and conditions. You should read this carefully.

Any care package you purchase will have to be within the budget limits set by your funding unless you are able to contribute to the cost using your personal finances.

Questions to Ask the Agency

SDS Options (Fife), Disabled Person’s Housing Service (Fife),
West Shop, Law’s Close, 339 High Street, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1JN
Tel: 01592 803280 Email: claire.sds@dphsfife.org.uk



Please note that some of the questions may not apply to your circumstances.
What services could you provide for me?

1. Are there any tasks you cannot carry out? e.g. administering medication.
2. a) Does your organisation provide workers for sleepover?
b) What is the usual length of a sleepover shift?
3. If I use your agency for emergency cover and I get on well with a particular worker can I request them again?
4. If I agree that you should provide me with a long-term support package
 - a) Can I choose the person who provides my support?
 - b) Can I interview the workers who will be working in my house?
5. Can I expect to see the same person on a regular basis? What if that person is sick, or on holiday?
6. What is the recruitment procedure for staff? Are they members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme? What training are they given?
7. I expect everything I tell you or your workers to be kept confidential what is your policy on confidentiality?
 - a) What information do you keep on clients and how long is this information kept for and who has access to this information?
 - b) Would there be any times you would contact anyone without my consent, if so, who and in what circumstances?
8. What is your policy when moving and assisting clients or using equipment? 1 or 2 workers? Do I have a choice?
9. If there are times I need more than 1 worker for moving and assisting procedures will I be charged a minimum of ½ hour, 1 hour or more for this worker?



10. What are the charges? Is there a higher charge for evenings, weekends or public holidays? Are these prices all-inclusive, or are there extras (like VAT, National Insurance or travelling expenses)?
11. Is there a minimum amount of service that has to be purchased (for example, a minimum number of hours a week)?
12. Can the agency be contacted at all times while the support is being provided?
13. Is there an out-of-hours emergency service? Is there an additional charge for this?
14. How can I complain about the service if I have a problem?
15. How much notice do I have to change the time of a visit or to cancel a shift?
16. How much notice is required to end the contract?
17. Is the agency registered with the Care Commission? Does it meet the national care standards? (these are the standards that the Care Commission inspects against).
18. Does the agency have full professional and employer's liability insurance?
19. Does the agency work to a recognised code of practice?
20. How do I register with the agency?

Once you decide to go ahead and buy services from an agency, the answers to all these questions and any other arrangements you make will need to be written down in a contract – an agreement between you and the agency setting out what they will provide, and for what cost.