

## **Factsheet 5: Using Care Agencies**

**If you think you would find managing your own workers difficult, your Local Authority Social Services department will allow you to use a care agency as an alternative.**

There are advantages to using this system:

- ✓ All the services will be arranged for you.
- ✓ You can specify the times when you need assistance and what assistance you want.
- ✓ In case of sickness or annual leave by your regular PA, cover will be provided.

There are disadvantages as well:

- ✗ You may find that this system gives you less control over the service you receive.
- ✗ It might not give you the freedom you want.
- ✗ You may not always get the same person
- ✗ It will cost most of the direct payment, possibly more.

You might consider using an agency to provide support when your regular personal assistant is unavailable to provide short-term cover. Also, you might find that your needs are best served using a combination of services (and this is allowed). If you decide to use an agency, make enquiries to get the best service and value for the support you require. Discuss your needs with the agency to ensure that they provide appropriate support at the right times for you.

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 sustain a minimum set of national standards. Once registered, an Agency is not allowed to charge VAT on its invoice to you.

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