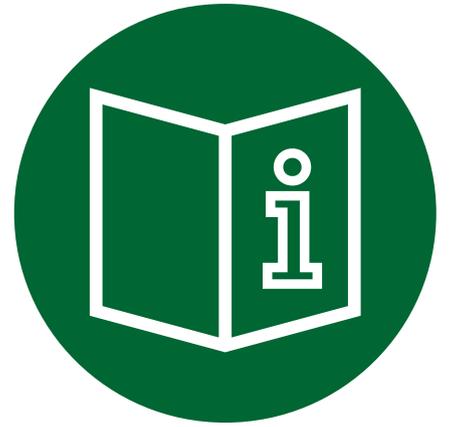


# DIRECT PAYMENTS

from Bromley Council

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# FACT SHEET



## Using agencies

08



[www.bromley.gov.uk/directpayments](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/directpayments)

You may want to use domiciliary care agencies (sometimes known as 'Home Care') to provide for your care.

If you choose to use an agency, the staff who will work for you will usually be employed by the agency. In this case you will not be the employer and the agency will be responsible for managing the staff and will pay their wages. You will have the choice and control over your care as you will make arrangements directly with your agency of choice. You can make arrangements to change the agency you are using at any point you choose. You can let the agency know what days and times suit you best.

## Where should I look for agencies?

You can research agencies in the local area online, or look at the Council's care directory - for a free copy call **01223 207770**.

Agencies providing personal care are required by law to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). You can ask the agency staff to show you details of the agencies registration. You can also use the CQC website to search for home care agencies and to check for ratings - visit **www.cqc.org.uk**.

If you need help please contact the Adult Early Intervention Service - email **adult.early.intervention@bromley.gov.uk** or call **020 8461 7777**.

## Is there anything I should check before choosing an agency?

Before you decide to buy a service from a particular agency we recommend that you ask:

- The amount the agency charges (hourly rates), including for weekends and bank holidays - *if you choose an agency that charges more than the Council hourly rate then you will need to pay the difference*
- About their registration with the CQC
- To see a copy of their insurance policy
- If all their staff have had criminal records checks (Disclosure and Barring Service checks)
- How the agency manages their services and how often feedback on services provided is requested
- If the agency employ staff directly, as opposed to the staff being self-employed - if the agency employs the staff directly it means they will meet all the tax and national insurance payments
- How the agency arrange cover during busy holiday periods or in the event of staff sickness
- What training the agency provides for its staff and what qualifications and level of experience staff employed by the agency are required to have
- How you can alert the agency if you are not happy with their service and how complaints regarding service provided will be addressed
- If the agency carry out a risk assessment for you and for their staff
- If you will be given copies of the hours the staff have worked so that you can pay the correct amount

If you have individual members of staff you are happy with and think about employing them directly instead of via the agency then please seek advice first. You might receive a charge from the agency for employing their carers directly.

## How do I pay the agency?

The agency must always give you a breakdown of their costs in writing, so make sure you have this for your records. You do not want to receive any unexpected costs such as additional charges for mileage, bank holidays, or any other outgoings that you had not previously agreed to pay. Any additional costs must be raised with the Council so as to ensure you do not go overdrawn on your direct payment account.

When you receive an invoice from the agency for the care visits provided you will need to pay this from your direct payment account.

## What should I do if my agency pulls out of arrangements?

If an agency pulls out you should look at the Council's care directory or research online to find a replacement agency.

Please check to ensure that the replacement agency is also registered with the CQC.

If you have tried finding another agency but have encountered difficulties then please contact the Adult Early Intervention Team as soon as possible so that contingency cover can be arranged.

# Who to contact?

## Adult Early Intervention Service

Telephone: **020 8461 7777**

Email: **adult.early.intervention@bromley.gov.uk**

## Other downloads

You can download the supporting leaflets referenced in this leaflet from  
**[www.bromley.gov.uk/directpayments](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/directpayments)**

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