Safe recruitment of a personal assistant

If you need a personal assistant to support you with your care needs, you may want to arrange this yourself.

There are certain things you can do to keep yourself safe when employing someone to support you.

**Finding someone**

There are many different ways to find someone to employ as a personal assistant to help you with some of your daily living tasks, for example:

- through placing an advertisement in the local paper
- word of mouth
- through an agency
- job centre
- internet job websites
- Enfield Brokerage Services who can offer you support and advice in recruiting a PA through an agency.

Contact: email: brokerage@enfield.gov.uk ☎ 020 8379 1001.

**The interview**

You can take some simple steps when preparing to interview someone to reduce the risk of abuse.

1. **Responses to advertisements can be made to a PO Box.** A PO Box is a service which allows you to collect mail from your local Royal Mail delivery office. This ensures that people you may not wish to interview do not know your home address. If you would like information on setting up a PO Box visit Royal Mail online at [www.royalmail.com](http://www.royalmail.com).

2. **Interviews can take place at a different location and using an unlisted or other phone number.** This helps prevent people you do not want to employ from knowing where you live or how to contact you. You may, for example, decide to have the interviews at a relative’s home, a café or your local library.
3. Have another person with you. It always helps to have someone else there when you interview. You may wish to ask a relative, friend or someone from a voluntary agency to support you at the interviews.

References

After you have interviewed someone and before they start working for you, you should ask for at least two references and confirm the information with the people who have given the reference.

A reference is a written statement about someone’s character, work ability, training and skills, usually a previous employer.

It is important to know the qualities you want in a personal assistant and if the reference will support these. For example, does the person:

» arrive on time?
» act in a trustworthy and flexible manner in the way they work?
» treat people with dignity and respect?

These are some of the qualities you may look for, but each person is different and you will have to decide for yourself what works best.

Personal assistant checks

Disclosure and Barring check

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

A DBS check can help you find out if a potential personal assistant has committed a previous offence against a vulnerable adult.

We encourage people who receive a Personal Budget, or are privately employing, to complete a DBS check on the person they want to employ. This is for jobs where a person regularly cares for, supervises or is in sole charge of people.

A DBS check can also tell you if the person is barred from working with adults. The DBS has a barred list of people who are not allowed to work with vulnerable adults.

You do not have to ask for a DBS check for the person you want to employ, but we believe this may reduce the risk of abuse.

DBS checks can be done for you by an umbrella body. For more information visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

For information on the legal responsibilities of being an employer and other employment checks you may be required to carry out, visit www.businesslink.gov.uk

While we know that most people who provide care are honest and reliable, there is always a risk that someone may not be. Taking the necessary steps will help to reduce the risk of abuse.

Where can I get more information?

If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be suffering from abuse or neglect, please do not keep silent.

You can report abuse online via the Enfield Council website by visiting www.enfield.gov.uk or phone the Enfield Adult Abuse Line on 020 8379 5212.

Your concerns will be listened to and you will be taken seriously.

For more information or for a copy of the following factsheets, visit our website www.enfield.gov.uk or phone 020 8379 1001.

» SA01 Making safeguarding personal
» SA02 Financial planning – preventing abuse and fraud
» SA03 Preventing abuse – keep yourself safe
» SA05 Technology and you
» GEN04 Brokerage Service – support to find services

We want to hear from you if you have a comment, compliment or complaint. Please contact us on 020 8379 1001 or pick up a leaflet at Council buildings or visit www.enfield.gov.uk