



## Direct Payments

# How to help ensure your personal safety when recruiting your own staff

If you intend to use your Direct Payments to employ your own carer/personal assistant(s), there are things you can do to help keep yourself safe during that process. The vast majority of people will not deliberately try to harm or exploit you but some might, so it's always a good idea to consider the following:

### Advertising and interviewing:

- When placing an advert you might prefer not to include your home address, or telephone number, for responses. You could consider a PO Box or Enham (independent support agency) would be happy to let you use their contact details (which can be found at the end of this factsheet).
- It's also a good idea not to hold interviews in your home. The local Job Centre will often let you use a room in their office, or you might be able to use an interview room at your local Dorset Adult and Community Services office. Enham can help you to arrange this.
- Make sure you have someone with you when you're interviewing. This is not only good for your personal safety, but also offers another viewpoint on who might be the most suitable candidate. Enham will be pleased to interview with you.
- When you've decided on someone you think could be a suitable carer, you should always check his or her ID. The easiest way to do this is to ask everyone to bring their ID to the interview. Ask to see at least one form of photo ID, such as a passport or one of the newer driving licenses, and 2 proofs of address, e.g. an electricity bill, or a bank or credit card statement with their name and address printed on it. You should also ask to see evidence of their National Insurance number – some people have plastic cards with their NI number on, others might have a formal letter or a printed payslip.



- If the person you wish to employ is not a UK citizen, you should also make sure s/he is entitled to work in the UK – ask to see his/her work permit, as well as evidence of his/her National Insurance number.
- You should also explore with each interviewee whether they are physically suited to the job, especially if your needs call for some manual handling, for carrying heavy shopping for example, or driving. You should not discriminate against people unfairly on health or disability grounds, but the person you employ should be physically able to perform the tasks you set, with the aid of support, training and/or equipment where necessary. Your Employer's Liability Insurance could be affected if you fail to take reasonable care when selecting and supervising your staff, or fail to take steps to prevent any event that might give rise to a claim. Dorset County Council **strongly recommends** that you carry out a comprehensive health check with your proposed employee, and the Council can help you to do this.

### **References:**

- Make sure you always take up at least 2 references, even if the person seems very suitable. Do not accept pre-prepared references. Ask for the names, addresses and telephone numbers of referees and write requesting your own references.
- When you've received satisfactory written references, follow them up with a phone call, to make sure the referee is who and where they say they are, and to give the person a chance to add anything to their written reference – sometimes people are more comfortable saying things over the phone than they are putting them in writing. You should always follow up with a phone call if the written reference contains something you find confusing or unusual.
- If you want to employ someone quickly, you could fax or email the reference request, where possible, or take up a telephone reference first and follow up with a written one later. **You are strongly advised never to employ someone without first taking up some references.**



### **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks:**

- You might also want to consider a more formal check against your potential employee, such as a CRB check. The CRB carries out checks against individuals (who must agree to be checked and provide all the relevant information to make it possible) in all the areas they have previously lived, to see if they have ever been convicted of an offence. The check may reveal convictions considered less relevant such as a speeding fine, or a conviction for breaching the peace, but it will also show if the person has been convicted of theft or assault.
- CRB Enhanced Disclosure checks carried out by local authorities also include checks against the Government's new Protection of Vulnerable Adults list (POVA). Local authorities and private care agencies are required to place people's names on this list when they consider them unsuitable for care work.
- The parents of disabled children will be pleased to learn that checks also include the Protection of Children Act list (POCA) and List 99, which list people barred from working in schools and educational establishments or with children.
- CRB checks can be useful, but you should not rely on them entirely. They reveal criminal convictions, but some potentially dangerous people avoid being caught and/or convicted. They also depend on the honesty of the person being checked, who must give accurate details of his/her previous addresses.
- Despite these drawbacks Dorset County Council **strongly recommends** that you do have your potential employees CRB checked. The checks take about 4 to 6 weeks and the Council will carry them out on your behalf, free of charge. Your social worker can tell you more.

Dorset accepts that the measures mentioned in this factsheet are not the only ones. You may well know or hear of other things that can add to your safety.

For further information speak to your social worker or contact Enham on 0845 504 0726 (full contact details can be found at the end of this factsheet).



**Key Points:**

- **Don't give people your home address or phone number in adverts, or interview them by yourself at home.**
- **Make sure you see people's ID to be sure they are who they say they are.**
- **ALWAYS speak to other people who have worked with or known the person, before you employ him or her.**
- **Make sure they haven't been convicted of any serious offences.**
- **Make sure they are physically able to do the job.**
- **Ask your social worker or Enham, for more information.**

**Compliments and complaints**

Adult and Community Services staff in Dorset are committed to providing quality services to our service users, their carers and families. We welcome comments from our service users as this helps us to understand what aspects of our service people like.

If you are unhappy about the service you have received and want to make a complaint, our factsheet 'How to complain' describes the procedure. Our Complaints Officer can give you advice on the process and can be contacted on 01305 224322.

**Diversity statement**

Diversity is not about treating everyone in the same way, but about recognising and valuing difference, as well as recognising and addressing inequalities and disadvantage.

As an employer and service provider, Dorset County Council seeks to promote an environment that accepts and actively supports diversity in age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, culture, work style and the many other ways in which people differ from each other.



All our factsheets are available in large print and on audio cassette/CD, Braille, Easy to Read or alternative languages. Please contact the Information Office on 01305 224320.

Further information on services provided by Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services can be accessed at [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

### **Social care local offices:**

#### **Bridport**

St Andrews Road, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3BJ  
Tel: 01308 422234  
Fax: 01308 426044  
Email: [bridportsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:bridportsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

#### **Christchurch**

Loring Road (off Jumpers Road), Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2GZ  
Tel: 01202 474106  
Fax: 01202 478081  
Email: [christchurchsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:christchurchsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

#### **Dorchester**

Acland Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1SH  
Tel: 01305 251414  
Fax: 01305 251034  
Email: [dorchestersocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:dorchestersocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

#### **Ferndown**

Penny's Walk, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 9JY  
Tel: 01202 877445  
Fax: 01202 876604  
Email: [ferndownsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:ferndownsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)



**North Dorset**

Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1DR

Tel: 01258 472652

Fax: 01258 473161

Email: [northdorsetsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:northdorsetsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

**Purbeck**

19 Bonnets Lane, Wareham, Dorset BH20 4HB

Tel: 01929 553456

Fax: 01929 556319

Email: [purbecksocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:purbecksocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

**Sherborne**

Non-visiting office

Tel: 01935 814104

Fax: 01935 817207

Email: [sherbornesocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:sherbornesocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

**Weymouth & Portland**

Jubilee Retail Park, Jubilee Close, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 7BG

Tel: 01305 760139

Fax: 01305 774622

Email: [weymouthsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:weymouthsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

**Independent Support Agency:****Enham Direct Payments and Support Planning Service**

Enham (Head Office), Enham Alamein, Andover,  
Hampshire SP11 6JS

Tel: 0845 504 0726

Minicom: 0845 504 0723

Fax: 0845 504 0725

Email: [directpayments.dorset@enham.org.uk](mailto:directpayments.dorset@enham.org.uk)

Web: [www.enham.org.uk/pages/dorset.html](http://www.enham.org.uk/pages/dorset.html)

