

## Factsheet C28: Planning Cover for your staff

### Arranging backup cover

When you employ staff you are responsible for arranging your own support. There will be times your staff won't be able to work for you (they may be ill, have appointments to attend, or take annual leave).

**Don't forget, as an employer, you MUST ensure your employees take leave from their job, regardless if they are someone you know very well or if they are employed part-time. Ensuring they have a break from their job is a Health and Safety requirement.**

It is important your employees discuss their annual leave plans with you and seek your agreement as their employer. You can also ask them to give you plenty of notice, for when they want to take their leave as this will give you time to organise any cover you require. You should plan for what you will do when you need to find someone to cover, so your care/support arrangements don't break down.

### You can consider:

- Using friends and family if they are willing to provide unpaid cover short-term.
- *If you have a Personal Budget or Personal Health Budget, you may be able to pay friends and family to provide cover, but if they live in the same house as you, you must talk to your care assessor or support officer first to seek approval.*



- Request your staff provide cover for each other. This can be written into their job description if it is a requirement of the job. It is also an excellent opportunity for them to pick up extra hours.
- Recruiting people who only work for you when your regular staff cannot work (such as holiday cover and sickness cover), without committing to regular hours. This could include former staff, friends or family.
- Using a care agency providing you have sufficient funding accrued or agreed to cover the higher rates they traditionally cost. If you receive a Personal Budget, you should call Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020 or speak to your care assessor. If you have a Personal Health Budget, you should call 01603 257257 or speak to your support officer. There is a list of Care Quality Commission (CQC) approved agencies within Norfolk to choose from (<http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/view/ncc078176>).

Backup arrangements are an essential part of employing staff and should be carefully considered. You should keep your backup arrangements up to date, and it is a good idea to check regularly that the people or organisations you plan to use are still able to provide you with cover if/when the need arises.

### **How can Equal Lives Support?**

- You can access free advice and general guidance through the Information & Advice Service at Equal Lives, which will also be able to signpost you to other organisations that may be able to assist you.
- If you feel you require more dedicated one-to-one support, there is an accredited list of providers (Equal Lives being one) you can use to purchase Employment Support Services. Equal Lives offer several packages including



recruitment and employment set-up. If you would like to enquire about our Employment Support packages, please call to discuss your options.

- Equal Lives has developed an online PA Register, commissioned by Norfolk County Council, to assist employers to find Personal Assistants more quickly and cost-effectively. This may be suitable for you as you can approach potential employees if you have a vacancy to fill. By registering your profile and requirements, you can approach candidates, and they can also apply for your vacancy (<http://www.equallives.org.uk/pa-register/>). This service may not be suitable for finding emergency cover, although the speed in which you can use the system to find a PA yourself is within your control.

Equal Lives does not employ any personal assistants, is not a recruitment agency, and cannot organise your care/support for you. If your backup arrangements fall through, and you receive a Personal Budget, you should call Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020 or speak to your care assessor. If you have a Personal Health Budget you should call 01603 257257 or speak to your support officer. **Equal Lives does not provide an emergency care service, and can only signpost you to options that may be able to help.**

If you require further information or would like this factsheet in an alternative format you can contact us by calling: 01508 491210, by emailing: [info@equallives.org.uk](mailto:info@equallives.org.uk), or by writing to: Equal Lives, 15 Manor Farm Barns, Fox Road, Framingham Pigot, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ.

