

6 Sorting out problems



Sometimes things don't go as smoothly as we would like and it's useful to know that there are simple steps to take that can help.

Short notice absences

If your personal assistant (PA) is sick or on holiday it is a good idea to have a cover plan. There are PA agencies you could register with or you could employ a couple of PAs on an informal basis to help out when needed. Your social worker or care manager can help you with contact details for PA agencies in your area. But take note agencies will charge a fee to find a PA for you.

If you're unhappy with your PA

How serious is it?

Some problems can be sorted out easily just by sitting down for a cuppa and a chat. So, if there is something about your PA's work or behaviour you're unhappy with, this is the first thing to do. There may be a reason for what has happened that can easily be sorted out.

If the problems don't improve or something more serious happens, it is best to follow the correct legal procedure and stay on the right side of the law.



Visit www.leeds.gov.uk/personalbudgets for more downloadable factsheets.

This publication can be provided in large print, Braille and audio.

 **0113 247 8630** to request a copy.

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If you do not speak English and need help in understanding this booklet, we may be able to provide a translation or an interpreter. Please contact Adult Social Care customer services to see if we can help.

 **0113 222 4401**
textphone **0113 222 4410**

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Disciplinary policy

It is a good idea to give out a disciplinary policy with the job contract to your PA when they first start so you both know what could happen.

Support

Get some support from someone in a similar situation or who has similar experiences. Speak to Leeds CIL or Free to Live as they may be able to suggest who to get in touch with.

Consider external mediation

If your PA is not happy

Make sure you have regular meetings – not just supervision or performance meetings - with your PA. Establishing good communication habits can stop small situations becoming bigger ones. But if there is still a problem a grievance procedure, makes sure that everyone is following the correct procedure. It is a good idea to give your PA a copy with their job contact when they start.

More information:

For disciplinary or grievance policies and procedures go to www.gov.uk/handling-employee-grievance

What if you are being abused?

How do you know? If your PA takes advantage of your human and civil rights, you are being abused.

Examples of abuse:

If your PA:

- ◆ **doesn't help you with your personal care**
- ◆ **doesn't pay your bills**

- ◆ **always criticises you, or is bad-mannered, who bullies you and says you are rubbish**
- ◆ **threatens you to get your money and to change your will**
- ◆ **stops you from going to a medical appointment**
- ◆ **won't let you be with your friends, family or community**
- ◆ **looks after you in a way that's convenient to them not you, especially if it makes you poorly**
- ◆ **hits you or gives you too much medication**
- ◆ **who makes you watch pornography or take part in a sexual act you don't want**

If these things are happening tell someone immediately.

You can tell:

- ◆ **the police**
- ◆ **the Safeguarding Adults Team in Adult Social Care on 0113 224 3511**
- ◆ **trusted family members**
- ◆ **trusted friend**
- ◆ **your social worker or care manager**

Hate crime

A hate crime is when you are attacked because of your race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability.

Whatever form it is in it is wrong. So it is important to report it if it happens to you or to someone you know.

In an emergency call **999** or **112**

You can contact the 999 emergency services by SMS text from your mobile phone, but you have to register first.

Contact your local police force – by telephone or visiting in person.

Local agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau or Community Voluntary Services can also report an incident on your behalf and provide advice and support. Stop Hate UK <http://www.stophateuk.org/report-hate-crime/leeds/> provides confidential and independent hate crime reporting services in various areas in the UK including a 24 hour helpline.

A hate crime can also be reported by calling Crimestoppers on **0800 555111** or through their website www.crimestoppers-uk.org. What you say is confidential so you do not have to give your name and the call is free.

Your PA is leaving

If your PA leaves they need to give you notice. The length of notice required should be in their job contract.

During the notice period you can think about employing a replacement. It might also be a good idea for the new PA to meet with the one who is leaving – a handover – to discuss what the job involved.

Keeping records

You should keep records of:

- ◆ **sick pay/ sick absence**
- ◆ **other absence, lateness and employee turnover**
- ◆ **discipline including dismissals and grievance**
- ◆ **termination of employment**
- ◆ **equal opportunities issues such as gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, age, disabilities)**

More information:

Free to Live Leeds – Leeds Peer Support Group
People who use personal budgets offer informal advice based on their own experiences.

☎ **0113 231 1125**

email info@freetoliveleeds.org

www.freetoliveleeds.org

Leeds Centre for Integrated Living provides information and support to help disabled and older people in Leeds live more independently.

☎ **0113 231 1125**

email leedscil@leeds.gov.uk

www.leedscil.org.uk