

# Instructing an Agency: **Your Toolkit**



# Introduction to Purple

## Who are Purple?

Purple is the preferred provider of Employment Advice and Guidance (EAG) for the referral organisation.

Purple is the successor organisation to **ecd**p (Essex Coalition of Disabled People). Purple is a new organisation, with a new corporate team, and fresh vision: to change the conversation on disability from one of disadvantage, to one of value. Purple provides new and innovative support services to disabled people as well as an offer to businesses to support them to become disability confident. You can find out more about Purple here: [www.wearepurple.org.uk](http://www.wearepurple.org.uk).

Dependent on where you live, Purple can support our Customers with:

- Support Planning
- Employment Advice and Guidance
- Purple Match - Personal Assistant Register
- Payroll and Purchase Ledger

As well as delivering the service via more traditional means, Purple will provide a range of self-serve and digital options, including a portal via which Customers will be able to submit invoices, view their account statements and download useful documents and forms. This portal will also provide a conversation hub for peer support and advice, as well as a live chat feature enabling real time support in an alternative format to telephone calls and providing an out of hours service.

## Our Employment Advice and Guidance Service

Instructing an agency can improve your independence – you can choose which agency you want to support you. In negotiation with the agency, you can agree a contract to meet the needs identified in your Support Plan, when you need them. Purple know that it can be daunting instructing an agency, but good information and advice can really make a positive difference.

We have produced a toolkit to help you on your journey with finding, instructing and being supported by an agency. The toolkit provides you with information and acts as a reference document. We have tried to make the toolkit as practical as possible and not use any jargon. The aim is to provide you with all the information you need to instruct an agency to provide care and support services, whether this support is funded through a Direct Payment, a Personal Health Budget or private funds.

We know sometimes people like to speak with our Employment Advice & Guidance & Support Planning Officers (EAG/SP Officers) and this toolkit is not about replacing that service – but hopefully complementing it, giving you the confidence to make the most of your role. This toolkit also aims to support you to think about the responsibilities of instructing an agency, dealing with issues, charges and managing the funds.

## Compliments and Complaints

At Purple, we are always keen to improve the service we provide to our Customers. Should you have any feedback, positive or negative, we would like to hear from you – please speak to your EAG/SP Officer. For more serious matters, we also have a formal Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures in place and this is available on our website - <https://wearepurple.org.uk/direct-payment-support/> - or you can request this from your EAG/SP Officer.

## Your EAG/SP Officer

You should have signed a Customer Agreement which sets out the respective rights and responsibilities of the staff and Management of Purple and you, as a Customer, and includes the contact details for your EAG/SP Officer but for ease of reference this is stated below:

**Name:**

**Telephone:** 01245 392300

**Email:** [@wearepurple.org.uk](mailto:)

**Post to Purple:**



Purple Zest, BIC109, Arise Innovation Hub, Alan Cherry Drive, Chelmsford, CM1 1QT



Payments Team: 01245 392300, Option 1

Invoice Team: 01245 392300, Option 1

## Choosing your agency

Finding the right agency for you is important. Purple recommends that you contact more than one agency and preferably meet face-to-face with them before committing yourself. Ask lots of questions to find out if they can meet your needs.

All care agencies providing personal care in people's own homes must, by law, be registered with the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**. The personal care may or may not be intimate but will involve direct support in undertaking particular tasks, such as helping someone dress themselves. It is simple and easy to check if your chosen care agency is registered with the CQC either online [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk) or through their Customer Service Team via telephone on 0300 061 6161 (8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday) or email [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk) or post CQC, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA.

## Some questions you may want to ask when you speak to an agency

- What **services** are available? Check that the agency can fully meet your needs, as identified in your Support Plan. Read through the contract of services to make sure it includes everything you need. If not, you will need to negotiate before instructing the agency, or instruct another agency.
- Can you expect to see the **same person** on a regular basis? If not, think about if you are happy with this arrangement or need to find an agency that offers this service.
- If there are any **issues** either with the level of service or the carers the agency provides, it will be your responsibility to resolve this directly with the agency. Make sure you have the contact details for the registered Manager and know how to make a complaint. Contact details for registered Managers can be found on the CQC website or by calling the CQC Customer Service Team.
- How much do they **charge**? Agencies often have different rates for the day time, evening, weekends, Bank Holidays etc. You need to be confident that the weekly cost of the care you have requested is within your budget. Otherwise you may need to adjust the amount of care you receive or be able to self-fund the difference.
- How **often will they invoice** for their work - weekly, four weekly or monthly?
- What obligations will you have if you **cancel the service**? For example, how much notice do you need to give the agency before you incur a charge.

## How to pay the agency for the work they provide

An agency will raise an invoice for the work that they complete for you.

If you choose for **Purple to manage your funds**, then the agency should send their invoice either to you to check before sending onto Purple, or you can request that they send the invoice directly to Purple for payment. If you choose this option then you will receive a 'Managed Account – Purchase Ledger (Invoice Only)' payment services pack, which will include forms to complete and information you need to provide to the agency.

If you **self-manage the funds**, then the agency should send their invoice to you directly and you are then responsible for paying the invoice. If you choose this option, for Purple Personal Health Budget Patients, then you will receive a 'Self-Managed' finance services pack which will detail your responsibilities. However, if your local authority is monitoring your funds, please ask your EAG/SP Officer for the contact details of the local authority department.