

Case Example 6:

Origin Recruitment - specialist spinal injuries agency

Type of organization: Specialist spinal injury care agency

User group: People with spinal injuries (who may have very complex health and social care needs, but must have the mental capacity to direct their own support).

Client numbers and location: Currently 70 clients based around the UK, and still growing.

Staffing: Employs 70-80 Personal Assistants, two Care Managers and seven members of office staff.

Services: Live-in, one-to-one support, and a 'finder service' to help clients locate suitable Personal Assistants to employ directly.

Funding: Clients pay for support in a variety of ways. Some use direct payments, some use money awarded to them through compensation claims, and others use managed personal budgets, continuing healthcare, or a combination.

Evaluation

This service has not been formally evaluated.

Features of Good Practice

Person-centred ways of working

Personal Assistants (PAs) are carefully matched to clients, and vice-versa, both parties having to agree to the match before it can be made. Clients are given information about potential PAs, including information about their experience, interests, hobbies, and where they will be travelling from. PAs are similarly given information about the potential client's interests, level of injury, whether they are in employment, and so on. All information given out is agreed by both the client and the PA in advance.

Flexibility

Clients can try a number of PAs before selecting the one they want to work with. Packages are entirely reversible, and can be changed if either the client or the PA is unhappy with the situation.

Origin can provide an entire package with contingencies and respite built in, or they can simply provide the contingencies or the respite. They have PAs on call at all times, so if cover is needed at short notice, this can be arranged immediately. Care Managers stay in ongoing contact with PAs and clients once an assignment begins, so that the agency receives regular feedback and can tailor support accordingly.

Normally, Origin will provide live-in PAs on a rota basis for 7-14 days at a time, but if a client is travelling abroad and wishes to take their PA with them for longer than the allotted time, this can be arranged.

The 'finder service' enables clients to try a number of PAs before selecting one or more to employ directly (rather than through the agency).

Specialist expertise

Origin's specialism in spinal injury is considered to be a particular strength. The Managing Director has a spinal injury himself and clients know that he is knowledgeable about disability and associated care needs. Clients can speak to the Managing Director if they want advice or information from someone with personal experience of receiving care.

Origin PA's attend a four-day, purpose built level 3 accredited training course to prepare them for working with people with spinal injury. This covers what happens to the body when someone has an injury, and some detail about the psychological impact of spinal injury, as well as moving and handling, bowel training, driving training, and aspects of living and working in another person's home. After working with Origin for 18 months, PAs receive refresher training. Origin also employs a Senior PA with extensive experience who can be deployed, for example, when a person with a spinal injury is first discharged from hospital.

Further information

For further client and PA information please contact Director of Care, Linda Adamsen on 01524 34100, la@origincare.com