

Vibrance

Vibrance is a social care organisation, established in 1989, that works across London and the South East. The charity

provides a wide range of services including supported living, nursing care, day opportunities, supported employment and self-directed services. Vibrance began working in Bromley in 2012, supporting people in receipt of Direct Payments.



Direct Payments offer an alternative to local authority commissioned services and enable people to have increased choice and control over how their social care and health needs are met. They are available for children and adults who have been identified as having an eligible assessed need.

Vibrance provides information, advice and guidance around Direct Payments to enable people to make informed decisions about how their needs can be best met. The organisation supports people to explore options and opportunities in a person-centred way, almost like your very own personal shopping service! This could include joining clubs and activities, attending courses or training to develop new skills, support to live independently and to access your local community to name just a few.

Many people choose to utilise their Direct Payment to directly employ their own support staff, known as Personal Assistants or PAs. One of the benefits of being an individual employer is that you can choose who supports you, this could be someone that you already know, enabling consistency and trust. For those who wish to employ their own support staff, Vibrance provides guidance to be a responsible employer, and coordinates an online Personal Assistant (PA) Register, LinkMeUp, to support recruitment and payroll and fundholding services.

"We recognise that employing your own staff can be daunting at times, but we aim to make it as stress free as possible, by ensuring that we keep up-to-date with developments and legislative changes and sharing this information with employers. This has been particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic as there have been a number of common queries; from PPE to furlough, tiers to testing, and of course the path out of lockdown".

Our ongoing support is key to enabling people to feel confident in managing their Direct Payments and their PAs, as shared by an employer during our recent satisfaction survey: *"I am extremely thankful to Vibrance for the continued support and patience they give me. They really care which shows in their positive approach to their roles*

within Vibrance. They have helped me grow as a person by giving me the confidence to employ my own staff. It has really enriched my life!"

As well as assisting people to recruit their own support staff, the LinkMeUp Register offers a flexible and varied opportunity for those seeking employment locally. People can sign up to be a PA, detailing their skills, interests and availability, and once vetted their profiles can be viewed online by potential employers. The role allows people to work flexibly around other commitments, such as childcare, informal caring responsibilities or other part time employment, and provides the opportunity to develop a real rapport with the person/people they are supporting.



Working in Bromley, Personal Assistants can earn between £10.85 (London Living Wage) to £13.00 per hour. The role is very rewarding, as shared by an experienced PA: *"Initially you think about that you're there to support someone, but you forget about how much you can learn, and how much that person can teach you."*

You can find out more on LinkMeUp's [website](#) and social media channels:

- Facebook /linkmeupuk
- Instagram @linkmeup_uk
- Twitter @LinkMeUp_UK

You can also contact the Bromley Team on 0208 290 6639 or email bdp@vibrance.org.uk