



HIRING PRIVATE UNREGULATED HOME CARE

There may come a time when you or a loved one will need help to safely remain in your home.

Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care (SLTC) work with a number of agencies to provide home care services. These agencies have contracts with us and meet all government laws, policies and standards. They are approved to offer services in the public health care system and we check to make sure that they are meeting standards. A list of these agencies can be found at http://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/Home_Support.pdf

There are private unregulated agencies and individuals offering home care services outside the public health care system. You may choose to hire the services of a private agency or person. This is an important decision, so here is some information that may help you:

Before you hire private unregulated care, you should know that:

- NSH does not endorse or recommend any private unregulated home care agencies or care providers.
- Private care services are not funded, monitored or audited by NSH or SLTC.
- You pay the agency or care provider for the full cost of your services.

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Before you hire private unregulated care, you should:

- Decide what care and tasks you need help with and when you need help (ex: bathing, help at breakfast time, help at bedtime), and think about how often you need help (ex: three days a week, or every day).
- Figure out how much money you will have available to spend on the services you need.
- Check Caregivers Nova Scotia www.caregiversns.org or call them at 1-877-488-7390,
- visit ns.211.ca or call 211, check the Yellow Pages, newspaper ads, SLTC's Positive Aging Directory, and ask family and friends who they recommend.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau to see if there have been any reported complaints.
- Ask:
 - about the qualifications (education, training and experience) of the workers providing the care. You may want to see proof of these qualifications.
 - how much they charge per visit or per hour, when payments are due and how to pay.
 - for copies of any policies they may have, including a policy on cancelled or missed visits. For example, what will they do if the care worker is sick or unable to come to work?
 - for references from current and past clients, follow up by talking to these individuals.
 - to see the contract, they will want you to sign and read it carefully. Ask for a trial period before committing to a longer-term contract.
 - if they have business insurance, if they complete police record checks and vulnerable sector checks (an enhanced criminal record check to protect vulnerable persons) on their staff, and whether their staff are bonded.
 - what they need from you (e.g., no smoking, keep pets away, etc.), as your home will now be a workplace for their staff.

Purchasing private unregulated home care services is a big decision; make it carefully.