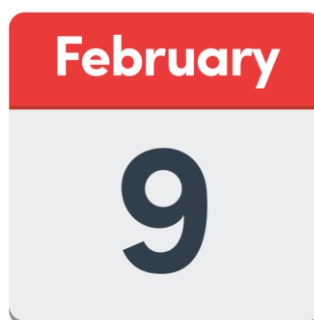
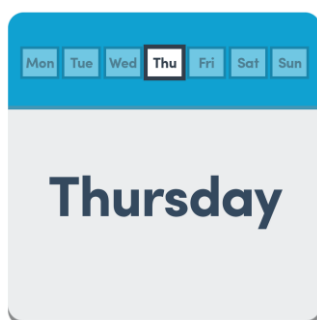


2023



What we talked about at our meeting on





Hello and welcome



Meeting rules



Danny Hayward Deputy Chief Executive at The Action Group joined our meeting to talk about agency staff .



Sometimes The Action Group do not have enough staff.

When this happens we sometimes pay support staff from another company to cover TAG support sessions.



They are called agency staff and the company that employs them is called an agency.



HYS understands staff shortages mean we sometimes have to use agency staff.

HYS want to work together to make sure that when this happens support is still the best it can be.



Danny said

The Action Group are still looking for a lot of new staff. We are working hard to make this better but do not know how long this will take.



Being short of staff is still a problem across the UK.



There are different ways we can look to cover support when we do not have enough staff. Examples include:

Looking to use TAG staff from another team or staff who can work extra hours.



We may ask TAG casual staff to cover support sessions

- TAG only offer work to casual staff when we need to.
- Casual staff do not have to work if they do not want to. It is their choice.



We will look at other ways we can offer support for example shared support, group support or phone support.



Sometimes we may need to reduce or cancel support. This is not something we want to do.



We look to use agency staff to cover support sessions when we need to offer support but we cannot find another way to do this.

Agency Staff at TAG



Agency staff cost twice as much as TAG staff. This is because we have to pay

- agency staff
- the agency who provide the service.



This is not something TAG can afford to do.



Agency staff can be used in any service at TAG but we try to use agency staff where they will be

- working alongside TAG staff
- Supporting someone who can easily tell agency staff what they need.



You can let TAG know which agency staff you prefer to be supported by. This way we can ask to book them again where possible.



HYS said: How do TAG know that we are getting a good service when using agency staff?

Danny said

Agencies and agency staff

- have to follow the SSSC Codes of practice
- Are checked by the Care Inspectorate to make sure things are running well.



The company's that provide agency staff must train their staff before they can start working for TAG.



Similar to TAG staff, agency staff also go through a Good Starts checklist so they know how TAG expects them to work.

Agency staff checks



HYS asked: Do TAG check how working with agency staff is going for people we support and staff for example through reviews and staff supervisions.



HYS said: Feedback should be happening in this way so we get a picture of how things are working across the whole of TAG.



HYS said: Getting time to talk with keyworkers and having reviews regularly does not always happen. This means it can be hard to talk about how support is going.



Danny said : Services are stretched and we are not meeting all our standards for example reviews every 6 months. The Care Inspectorate have marked us lower because of this. We are working on making reviews better.



Danny said:

We can make sure that working with agency staff is being asked at reviews and supervisions.



It is very important to keep raising any concerns with your team managers. This way we can try to make things better.

How do agency staff see and update support information?



Danny said

Agency staff use Access in same way as TAG staff.

- To read support information
- To update support information.



24 hour support services should all have a laptop or tablet to make using Access easier.

A HYS member who gets 24 hour support does not have a lap top. Danny will look into this.



A HYS member said: This is a good example of why It is important we are told what to expect from our support service otherwise we can not raise a concern.



HYS asked: How do agency staff work with Teams as sometimes information is shared this way.

Danny said: Agency staff cannot use Teams. All support information should be on Access and not shared on Teams.

What could be better?



HYS members said sometimes working with agency staff could be better. For example



Not arriving for support



Not talking to you



Only listening to staff and not believing what you have to say



Always on the phone



Not getting on with agency staff



Short introductions



HYS members have already raised their concerns with their staff team. Changes were made to make things better.

What we can do

Danny said:



It is good to hear that you are raising your concerns with staff teams and that changes have been made to make things better.



It is important to remember we can have these kinds of problems with TAG staff as well as agency staff.



There can be lots of reasons why things go wrong.

For example staff not arriving for a shift could be due to illness, staff making a mistake or a double booking.



If the problem is with TAG we will look into this. We also do audits to check services are running well.



If the problem is with agency staff or the company that provides the service they will look into this.

What we can do



If TAG have problems with agency staff or the agency that provide them we can stop using them.



We will also not pay for services we have not received.

For example if agency staff do not arrive for their shift and this was not TAG's fault we will not pay for this.



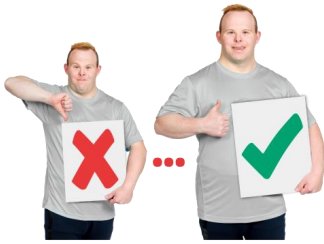
Introductions to new agency staff will be done respectfully but sometimes introductions can be for a shorter amount of time. This is because:



When agency staff are planned in introductions will be for the right amount of time.



If we are using agency staff in an emergency then introductions can sometimes be shorter.



HYS said we know that this can happen sometimes but what can we do to make sure that this can be dealt with in the best way.



For example we could work together in advance to make a plan about what helps most and what should and shouldn't happen.



This would work in the same way as our Covid emergency plans. This way everyone knows what to do and why its important.



Gayle has raised this issue with Keith Fricker who is the Health and Safety manager at TAG.

Agency staff hours



HYS asked: How long can agency staff work for?

For example an agency staff member was on the rota to work from Sunday morning right through to Wednesday morning. This seems like a long time and is that legal ?



Danny said:

Staff can sign a working time directive that allows them to work for longer with the right amount of breaks.



East Lothian are going to trial using live in staff where they can work for 5 to 7 days as long as they have 2 hours off each day.



They then have the next week off.

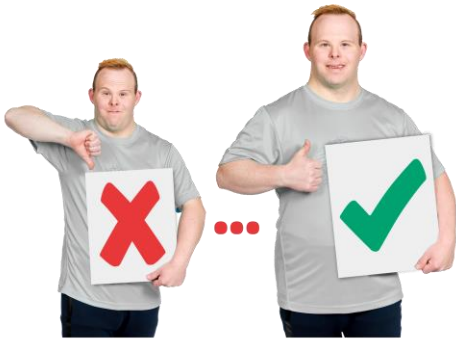
HYS would like to be kept up to date with how this goes.



Danny said:

From listening to HYS today I think a lot of problems are coming from

- How we introduce agency staff for example the Good Starts checklist
- Communication



These can be looked into so things can work better for everyone.

TAG are limited to how much time we can spend on agency staff as



- Due to staffing shortage the staff we do have can not cover everything
- We can not afford to keep using agency staff.

Finding new staff



Danny said:

TAG are working hard to get new staff and look at different ways we can offer support. For example



When we interview people we tell them if they have got the job straight away. These are called instant interviews.



This means checks and training start earlier and it can take as little as 3 weeks for new staff to start support.



We are also looking a recruiting staff differently depending on the type of job for example working with children or a digital support worker.



A HYS member is not being told when staff are coming so is missing support.

Danny will look into this.



2 HYS members joined the January Edinburgh Learning Disability Advisory Group meeting on the cost of living.



They were able to raise what was important to them for example everything is costing more but care charges are not going down.

This is because they are not being reviewed regularly.



Thank you for coming to the meeting today.