



# Overview of LinkMeUp

## About Vibrance

Vibrance is a social care charity that has been established since 1989. We currently operate in 11 local authority areas across London and the South East, providing a range of services including community day services, outreach, residential and supported living. Following a series of pilots, in 2008 we began delivering self-directed services; information, advice and guidance, support planning and brokerage, and financial services for people that want to have more control over their support. We are now contracted to deliver these in Bexley, Bromley, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and Southend.

## About LinkMeUp

In March 2014, Vibrance launched the LinkMeUp Personal Assistant (PA) Register; an online service enabling people who require support to recruit their own staff. The service was developed in partnership with London Borough of Bromley and supported by Skills for Care.

We decided to explore the possibility of developing an online PA Register in response to customer need; we were frequently hearing potential employers sharing that they were deterred from taking on the role due to the time and cost of traditional recruitment. Where PA registers did exist they tended to be static, meaning that the information is often out of date. Similarly when speaking to PAs they were repeatedly frustrated that there was nowhere for them to advertise their services to the individual employer market.

This led to us identifying our key aims for the development of the service:

- To establish a user-friendly online PA Register, that can be kept up to date in real time
- To enable individual employers to have real choice and control over who supports them
- To develop an approach that empowers and safeguards users
- To raise the profile of being a PA
- To promote Skills for Care and to enable access to essential resources and training
- To develop peer support for both employers and PAs

## How is LinkMeUp different from other Personal Assistant Registers?

- **We co-produce** - on an ongoing basis we work in partnership with existing and potential employers and personal assistants, commissioners, health and social care professionals, public and voluntary sector and our developers.
- **We evolve** - we recognise that the wants and needs of our users are changing, as well as the capabilities of technology. Using the service ourselves on a daily basis enables us to identify areas of development and ensure that these are implemented in a timely manner.
- **We safeguard** - all potential PAs undergo referencing, DBS and Right to Work checks before being activated on the site.

- **We value commitment** – we have developed a series of expectations that all employers and PAs must agree to on registering with LinkMeUp.
- **We have ‘the personal touch’** – we meet every PA on the site so that we can suggest potential matches, we provide as much or as little support as required through the selection and interview process, and offer information and resources to enable people to be responsible employers
- **We work holistically** – alongside the PA register we provide support planning, brokerage, information, advice and guidance, payroll and financial services.

## LinkMeUp in 2017

LinkMeUp is now established in Bromley, Newham and Wandsworth, and we are working with a number of partners to expand our offer across London and the South East. In Summer 2016 we launched our first LinkMeUp franchise, working in partnership with Dorset Advocacy and Ansbury Guidance to deliver the PA Matching service in Dorset ([www.dorset.linkmeup.org.uk](http://www.dorset.linkmeup.org.uk)).

“We are delighted to be working in partnership with Vibrance to launch LinkMeUp Dorset. We believe that LinkMeUp Dorset will make it possible for many more people to choose to be supported by Personal Assistants, giving them greater opportunity and control in their lives. Vibrance has been excellent to work with; clear in the offer and prompt in their delivery. We look forward to the success of LinkMeUp Dorset”.

*Mike Pochin, Chief Executive of Dorset Advocacy*

## Testimonials

“LinkMeUp made something that is very complicated, easy to understand and filled me with confidence”  
Danielle – Employer

“Having an active PA Register in our area has meant that we can suggest a real alternative to agencies and offer people the choice and control that they strive for.” Sally – Support Planner

“Link Me Up has proved to be a very effective tool for putting together service users with service providers in the convenience of their own homes. It’s a brilliant idea and is surely the way forward in the support and caring world!” Sue – PA

“I think the new idea of the PA Register online is great, people can see the PA profiles and get a good idea of who they might like to support them with their needs. For the PA’s themselves they can update their profiles at a click of a button at any time.” Howard – PA

“It’s a really good service and nice to know that there is someone in the background that can help” Mrs L – Employer

“Having a Direct Payment has changed my life, I am so much happier being my own employer.” Susan – Employer

## Contact Us

For more information on the LinkMeUp service, please get in touch:

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