



Employer led induction case study

Philip Barton, individual employer

“As an individual employer, I have between three to four personal assistants at any one time, supporting me with support and personal care.

To start the employment process, I firstly find out about the new personal assistant (PA) by reading their application form. I ask them to write down courses that they have been on in the past three years and ask which qualifications and certificates they already have. I then have an idea of the level of experience they have, so that I can discuss it with them, in the interview.

When I have a new personal assistant starting, I use a more experienced member of staff to help support their training. They walk the new personal assistant through the flat with me, explain everything that they do and talk about different aspects of the job.

I don't use a written checklist for induction, although this would be particularly useful if you are starting out and it's your first personal assistant. Otherwise, you might rely on that personal assistant to be up to speed already.

I also use an online training site provided by my local council, which has some good training on safeguarding. I ask the new employee to look at the website, read the booklet that goes with the course before I ask them questions about safeguarding.

It takes about a month for a new personal assistant to settle in, although the initial training takes place in the first two weeks. This includes me doing the health and safety risk assessment, sitting down and explaining what to do in an accident and going through food hygiene, as well as first aid procedures. I make sure they have an up-to-date certificate for this.

It would be nice if bigger care providers would reach out to individual employers and allow them to use their induction plans and I would be willing to pay for this, of course. I think there are a lot of resources in the social care sector, which could be used to support individual employers.

It's important to know where to go for funding for training. I'm the only individual employer who goes to the workforce development partnership meetings in my area to find out about funding and local training. Maybe we need a separate meeting for individual employers because our issues can be very different to those faced by the larger residential care providers.

Each personal assistant is different, dependent on their skills and personality. One of my personal assistants has recently completed a Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care, which I arranged for her and secured the funding through a local higher education provider and Workforce Development Fund. Sometimes I provide training not related to their job role

directly with me but for which there is available funding (so it doesn't come out of my budget). It will help the personal assistant to develop their own career and/or meet a specific need that another client they work for is unable or unwilling to provide. I see this as a good investment for me because it gives me a better-qualified and more committed worker.

I always encourage my personal assistant to talk to me openly, so if they have any difficulties in doing their job, I am aware early on. For example, two of my personal assistants felt they didn't know enough about End-of-Life care. One had been affected by this issue through working with another individual employer and it was affecting her work with me. So I helped both of them to access a course at the local college.

I have also accessed the Individual Employer Skills Funding for the Passenger Transport Assistants Training Scheme. This has also given my personal assistants transferable skills, which they can use with another employer. I've found that the training provider was very flexible and, after we talked about what I needed, they altered the training course to meet my needs.

I think we need to be aware of personal assistants' other training needs. If these are not met they may affect the job they are doing with you and they may decide to leave.

In my opinion, most people want to have happy well trained personal assistants and keep their employees, so in the long-term it's a good investment to train them well."