

A way of agreeing how we will work together: a guide for individual employers and personal assistants

Purpose

This document is for people who employ personal assistants (PAs) to support them to live a life they want to lead; engaging in all the things they want to do in their life.

It sets out what PAs can expect from their employer and what employers can expect from their PAs.

Each individual employer and their PA will have a different working arrangement from others.

This document and accompanying template can be used as a starting point for beginning and supporting conversations about developing an agreed way of working together.

How can I use this document?

You can use it to have a conversation about what would work well for each other so that you can agree how to work together. It can

- make sure you are a good fit for each other
- establish boundaries
- help to find out if any learning and development is needed
- be used flexibly to fit with your working relationship
- complement other documents, for example, contract of employment, employee handbook, job description, information from insurance providers and more.

Use the [template](#) to expand on what will make your unique working relationship work.

When should I use it?

At the beginning, during and throughout your working relationship.

It could be used during a work trial, as part of induction, at supervision or regular reviews.

It should be the basis of an ongoing conversation between employer and PA, and where relevant the wider team and circle of support.

Understanding the nature of the employer and PA relationship

- Being a PA is the same as having any other job.
- PAs have an employer who will have a certain expectations of how they would like their PAs to conduct themselves at work.
- As an employer they have certain responsibilities towards their PAs, but every employer might do things in a different way.
- Working as a PA is unlikely to be like any other role within health and social care. It can be complicated and intense, but also fulfilling. PA working is a shift in power away from care being provided to someone, to people having choice and control over how they are supported to live their life the way they want to. PAs can be involved in all aspects of an individual's life and this involves trust on both sides for it to be effective. It's a collaboration.

We agree to:

- ✓ Work together to promote independence, support choice and show mutual respect.
- ✓ Recognise each other's differences with regard to personality, culture and lifestyle.
- ✓ Communicate in an open and honest way so that we understand each other.
- ✓ Grow together: learning from each other's life experiences, developing new skills, recognising the time needed to be confident in our roles.
- ✓ Be flexible when appropriate, whilst managing expectations.
- ✓ Recognise and respect the boundaries of our working relationship and those around us.

As your employer I will:

- Comply with my legal responsibilities
- Treat you with respect
- Be clear about what I can and cannot do
- Have a plan in place for cover if you are not able to work
- Recognise that you can seek independent advice
- Recognise and value your contribution to our team
- Make sure your role is understood with the people that matter in my life
- Support you to develop and sustain the knowledge and skills needed to support me
- Recognise that you may wish to participate in peer support

As your PA I will:

- Comply with my responsibilities as your employee
- Turn up to work when I am supposed to
- Treat you with respect
- Be honest with you
- Support you to manage risk in a positive way
- Commit to doing the necessary training needed to support you
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Use equipment and technology used to support you correctly
- Work with you and others in an open and honest way

Works and phrases used in self-directed health and social care

Personal assistant: Personal assistants (PAs) work with individuals to support them to live the life they want to live.

Individual employer: Someone who has chosen to have more choice and control over their support by employing PAs. They may do this using a direct payment from their local authority or a personal health budget from the NHS, or their own money.

Learning and development: Supports individuals to improve their knowledge and skills. It can be done through formal training and qualifications or informal sharing of information.

Social model of disability: A way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things. The social model helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for disabled people. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers disabled people more independence, choice and control.

Medical model of disability: The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences. The medical model looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs. It can create low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice and control in their lives.

Personal budgets and direct payments: A personal budget is an amount of money to support your social care and/or health and wellbeing needs, which is planned and agreed between you (or someone who represents you) and your local authority or NHS team (or both). An integrated personal budget is for both healthcare and support needs, and social care needs. A direct payment is one way of managing these budgets. It's when people get the money directly so they can manage their own support, in a way that suits them.

Social worker: A professional who works with individual people and families to help improve their lives by arranging to put in place the things they need. This includes helping to protect adults and children from harm or abuse and supporting people to live independently. Social workers support people and help them find the services they need. They may have a role as a care manager, arranging care for people who access services. Many are employed by councils in adult social care teams; others work in the NHS or independent organisations.

Broker (also known as a Care Navigator): Someone whose job it is to provide you with advice and information about what services are available in your area, so that you can choose to purchase the care and support that best meets your needs. They can also help you think about different ways that you can get support, for example by making arrangements with friends and family. A broker can help you think about what you need, find services and work out the cost. Brokerage can be provided by local councils, voluntary organisations or private companies.

For more definitions of words or phrases used in health and social care use the [Think Local Act Personal \(TLAP\) Care and Support Jargon Buster](#).

Acknowledgements

This document has been developed in co-production with individual employers, personal assistants and organisations supporting them, without whom it would have not been possible. We thank them for giving us their time and sharing their knowledge and expertise: David Ashley ([Independent Living Group](#)), Sebastian Bianco Lynn, Harriet Butler, Cyndie Coleman, Lucy Currier, Aimee Davies, Hillary Delaney-Hall (Teme Training), Laura Goody, Marion Grist and Abbie-Jo Lawrence ([Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living](#)), Chloe Harris, Phil Hicks, Saff Highet, Renee Jasper-Griffith ([East Sussex County Council](#)), Faye Johnson, Caroline Lewis, Ali Malik, Jennifer Nyenyezi, Jane Page, Julie Partridge, Sandra Priseman, Catherine Sibthorpe, Gill Stevens, Hannah Tucker, [Your Support Matters](#).

Further reading and helpful links



Skills for Care has information and resources available to support individual employers and the PA workforce, including links to local support and funding for training
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/iepahub

[Employing personal assistants toolkit](#)

[Funding for training](#)

Think Local Act Personal's [Making it Real](#)

In Control [seven steps](#) to being in control of your own care and support

[Wellbeing resource finder](#)

[Support in your area](#)

[Access to work](#)