INVITATION TO QUOTE

Testing the Personal Assistant Role Category
within the Care Workforce Pathway

Skills for Care
May 2025

Invitation to Quote: Personal Assistant Role Category Testing

1. Background and Purpose

The [Care Workforce Pathway](#) (CWP) is the first universal career structure for the Adult Social Care (ASC) workforce in England. Developed in partnership by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Skills for Care, the Pathway aims to set out the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours needed to work in the sector, support career development, and enhance sector-wide professional recognition.

The [Personal Assistant (PA) role category](#) was added to the Pathway in April 2025 in response to sector demand to raise visibility and recognition of this unique and often underrepresented workforce. The PA role category is designed to be flexible and person-centred, reflecting the nature of PA work and its alignment to the needs of individual employers (IEs).

One of the core aims of publishing this role category is to provide PAs and their IEs with greater clarity on the skills and knowledge associated with their work. This supports their ability to articulate their contribution to the sector helping raise visibility/recognition. It offers a framework for career development, opening up potential routes for progression and mobility within adult social care. It also supports the professionalisation of the PA workforce by positioning them as skilled care professionals who deserve recognition, investment, and development opportunities on par with other roles in the sector. For Individual Employers, the role category offers a valuable tool for identifying relevant training, guiding recruitment, and holding constructive skills and career development conversations with their PAs. Ultimately, the role category supports a dual ambition: to give recognition and empower PAs to grow in confidence and capability, and to strengthen the overall sustainability and quality of the personal assistant workforce in England.

To this end, we are seeking a User-Led Organisation (ULO) or suitable contractor to lead a robust programme of user testing with Personal Assistants and Individual Employers to evaluate the role category's usability, reception, value, and implementation potential.

We are looking for a supplier who will engage with this work creatively and thoughtfully, bringing their own ideas and approaches to how best to test the role category with PAs and IEs. While we have set out suggested areas and methods for testing, we welcome proposals that go beyond these, offering innovative ways to generate meaningful insights and support the broader aims of the exercise.

We intend to use the findings from this testing activity to refine the PA role category, making it more accessible, relevant, and useful to PAs and IEs. The insights will help us shape supporting tools and guidance, inform implementation approaches, and contribute to wider efforts to raise the profile and recognition of PAs across adult social care. We also hope to use real stories and case studies (with consent) to bring the role category to life and encourage broader engagement across the sector.

2. Objectives

The contractor will design and deliver a test programme that:

- Gathers feedback from PAs and IEs on the reception and perceived value of the PA Role Category.
- Assesses usability, clarity, and navigation of the role category within the wider CWP.
- Identifies enablers and barriers to adoption and implementation.
- Evaluates the role category's effectiveness in prompting learning and development conversations and career/progression planning.
- Captures short-term intentions for use and longer-term aspirations from the user perspective.
- Produces actionable insights and recommendations to support refinement and rollout.

3. Scope of Work

The successful contractor will be expected to:

- Recruit, onboard and engage a diverse, representative sample of:
  - 10 Personal Assistants (PAs)
  - 10 Individual Employers (IEs)
  - Making up 20 PA - IE pairs across varying arrangements.
- Design and deliver a mixed-methods testing plan.
- Coordinate participant engagement, including clear communication about participation payment eligibility.
- Track and evidence participant involvement to meet audit requirements.
- Provide:
  - A structured test plan with defined milestones and timelines
  - Mid-point progress update/report
  - Final report summarising findings, insights, and recommendations

4. Key Areas of Testing

Methods may include but are not limited to surveys, interviews, focus groups, thematic analysis, and case studies.

Test Areas		Suggested method/s
Reception/Sentiment towards the Role Category and the key message this is sending to the sector around raising awareness and recognition of the PA workforce	How well does the inclusion of the Role Category (RC) positions PAs within Adult Social Care (ASC)? Does this help with raising awareness of the PA workforce? Do PAs feel recognised as a key part of the ASC workforce? What are the benefits and limitations of this RC?	• Survey • Feedback

Usability - ease of understanding and accessibility	Do PAs/IEs find the RC easy to understand and navigate? Do PAs find it easy to identify potential career pathways and opportunities for progression/Learning &Development (L&D) within the RC and the Pathway as a whole?	• Individual feedback via a set of defined questions • Focus groups
Perceived Value (benefits)	Do PAs see the RC and Pathway as beneficial for their career development? And in what way? (e.g. Increase my skills level so I can better support the needs of my IE; Help with understanding of the different roles within the sector and KBS required should I want to explore career development or progression into other CWP roles.) Do IEs feel the same/differently? And why? (e.g. Develop my PA's skills to better support my needs; Use recommended training to access PA/IE funding for this purpose; Help me to reflect on the Knowledge Behaviour and Skills (KSBs) I might want to consider when recruiting for a new PA.)	• Feedback • Reported increase in confidence about career development and progression in ASC
Approaches to Implementation/Adoption	Do PAs/IEs find it helpful to frame career development conversations based on the information in the RC and Pathway? How might they do this in practice? What would support/be helpful when they are undergoing the process? (e.g. resources to support skills assessment and career conversations?)	• Interviews with IEs/PAs • Focus groups • Case studies of implementation attempts
Barriers and Enablers to Implementation/Adoption	What are the challenges preventing PAs/IEs from using or benefiting from the RC/Pathway (e.g. time, lack of funding for L&D opportunities)? What are the enablers to using the RC to guide L&D/career development?	• Thematic analysis of user feedback • Surveys on challenges faced • Observation of usage issues
Intended Actions (short and long term)	Are PAs/IEs motivated to take next steps (e.g. take part in training, seek L&D opportunities) after engaging with the RC and Pathway? What might these steps be? Would PAs/IEs continue using the RC/Pathway over time, and does it help them make career/L&D decisions? How do they intend to do this? (e.g. carry on with having career development conversations, actively seek out L&D opportunities to progress to other roles in ASC)	• Follow-up surveys after engagement • Interviews tracking intention and steps taken • E.g. % of PAs/IEs returning to the RC/Pathway after initial testing

5. Deliverables

- Test Plan – Within 3 weeks of contract start
- Participant Recruitment & Onboarding - Complete by mid-August 2025
- Mid-Point Report – November/December 2025
- Final Report - February/March 2026
- Regular Updates – Monthly check-ins with the Skills for Care National Lead
- Evidence Pack – Participation records and activity logs

6. Contractor Responsibilities

- Ensure a high standard of project management and participant support
- Monitor and report risks or delivery issues promptly
- Handle data ethically and securely
- Set clear expectations around participation, payment eligibility, and disclosure obligations

7. Budget and Payment

We expect suppliers to propose a costed plan that represents good value for money and is proportionate to the scale and complexity of the work outlined in this brief. While we are not disclosing a maximum budget, bids should reflect a clear rationale for costs, demonstrate efficiency in delivery, and align with the level of activity described (including participant engagement, data collection, reporting, and coordination with SfC). Payment will be made in instalments linked to key project milestones, with final payment subject to submission of the final report and satisfactory completion of agreed deliverables. Participation payments will be managed by Skills for Care, but contractors must set expectations and track eligibility.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Quotes will be assessed on the following:

- Understanding of the brief (15%)
- Approach to recruitment, diversity, and engagement (25%)
- Methodology and test plan (25%)
- Team experience and relevant expertise (15%)
- Value for money (20%)

9. Submission Requirements

Please include in your ITQ submission:

- Organisation overview and relevant experience
- Proposed methodology and delivery timeline

- Outline of your approach to recruitment and inclusion
- Project team bios and roles
- Risk mitigation approach
- Budget breakdown
- One relevant reference or case study (if available)

10. Timeline

Task	Anticipated dates
ITQ issued	By Friday 9th May
Tenderers to confirm whether they will submit a quote	By Friday 16th May
Deadline for questions	By Wednesday 21st May
Answers circulated	By Friday 23rd May
Deadline for quotes to be submitted	**By Friday 30th May**
Tender scoring	Monday 2nd to Wednesday 4th June
Panel interview or inception meeting	**Monday 9th to Friday 13th June**
Notification of proposed contract award	**By Friday 20th June**
Anticipated contract commencement Date	On or before Tuesday 1st July
Interim report submitted	November
Final report submitted	February/March

11. Contact

For questions about this opportunity, please contact NWDCS@skillsforcare.org.uk. Responses will be circulated to all tenderers. We would appreciate it if you could confirm receipt of this tender opportunity and inform us as to whether you intend to bid, **by Friday 16th May**.

Please submit your tender response by **3pm** on **Friday 30th May** by email to NWDCS@skillsforcare.org.uk with subject heading: **Quotation for Personal Assistant Role Category Testing** (We will not be able to consider any responses received after this date and time).