

Fact sheet

Last Review Date: August 2023

Next Review Date: August 2024

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What is a Personal Assistant?

A Personal Assistant is someone who is usually employed directly by a person who needs support to live their life in a way they choose. You can employ a Personal Assistant through a Direct Payment to support you following your Care Act assessment, if you have care and support needs.

A Personal Assistant can also be employed by a family member or representative, when the person they are supporting does not have the physical or mental capacity to be the employer.

However, a Personal Assistant always works directly with the individual they are supporting. It's most likely that this is through an employed arrangement, rather than being self-employed. People employing Personal Assistants are often referred to as individual employers.

A Personal Assistant will be likely involved in many aspects of the employer's life and may be asked to provide support in their home, at a person's place of work or places of leisure.

What skills does a Personal Assistant need?

The tasks that a Personal Assistant carries out can vary greatly according to what an individual needs to live independently in a way that they choose. It could be as simple as helping someone to get out and about, go to work, support while at work, go shopping, visit friends or take part activities.

An individual could need support with personal care, getting dressed or require end of life care. Therefore the skills needed to carry out the role depend on the needs of the individual you are supporting. The most important thing is that you are able to connect with the person you are working with.

As a Personal Assistant you should:

Be:	Have:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible• Reliable• Respectful• Encouraging and enabling• Understanding and empathetic• Flexible• Committed to equality and diversity• Understand the challenges faced by disabled people• Willing to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ability to listen• Good interpersonal skills• The ability to be personal yet professional• Good written and verbal communication skills• Literacy and numeracy skills• Advocacy skills (if required)• Strong local knowledge• The ability to treat people with dignity

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How much could I earn and will it affect any benefit payments?

The hourly rate for a Personal Assistant employed through a Direct payments is £10.50. The amount of hours you are required to work every week can vary, you might consider working for a number of individuals to make up your hours or just working a few hours a week. One of the benefits of this type of role is that it is flexible and can fit around your lifestyle.

If you are on benefits and are worried how this will be affected you can use an online benefits calculator www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators or contact the [jobcentre](#) directly.

What qualification or training do I need?

To work as a Personal Assistant, you don't necessarily need to have any previous experience or qualifications; what is important is having the right values because your employer will rely on you for support. However there are some steps/courses you can take that will support you into a Personal Assistant role:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – Most employers will require you to have a DBS check which is a service to check for any criminal convictions. This is normally carried out by your prospective employer but you might consider a 'portable' DBS. This is when you can use the DBS for more than one employer. There is an annual fee for this service.
- First aid
- Food safety
- Safeguarding Children or Adults
- Moving and handling

For more information about being a Personal Assistant and access to free online courses please visit Skills for Care website: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Home.aspx



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Key contacts

Family Connect - information for families and for reporting any concerns	Website: www.familyconnecttelford.co.uk Telephone: 01952 385385 (Select option 3 when prompted)
Live Well Telford – online all age community directory	Website: livewell.telford.gov.uk
Wellbeing Independence Partnership – information and advice services to promote and support independence	Telephone: 01952 385385 (Select option 2 when prompted)
My Options – local support and activities for adults	Website: www.myoptionstelford.co.uk Telephone: 01952 381317 Email: myoptions@telford.gov.uk
Marches Growth Hub Telford – local business advice	Website: www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/telford/ Telephone: 0345 6000 727
Learn Telford – for training courses	Website: www.learntelford.ac.uk
Community centres – for local information and activities	www.telford.gov.uk/communitysupport
Discover Telford – local activities and attractions	www.discovertelford.co.uk/
Volunteer Telford - local volunteering opportunities	www.volunteertelford.co.uk

Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)

Question: Is a Personal Assistant employed or self-employed?

Answer: Either – normally a Personal Assistant is employed directly by the individual they are supporting but some Personal Assistants have set themselves up as a 'business'.

Question: Do I need a driving license to be a Personal Assistant?

Answer: Not necessarily, but it will depend on the needs of the individual you are supporting. Some individuals may require you to drive them to appointments/activities, they may have their own car that you are required to drive or you might be expected to drive someone in your own vehicle (you will need to have business use car insurance for this).



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- Question:** Are there different requirements to working with children and parents than adults?
Answer: If you are supporting a child or young person then it will be a mandatory requirement to complete a DBS (Criminal Records Check). DBS checks when working with adults are not mandatory but are strongly recommended. We will work with the individual and determine any issues or concerns with not carrying out a DBS check, this may impact on them having a Direct Payment.
- Question:** Do I need insurance?
Answer: If you are directly employed for the person you care for then they are required to have the necessary insurance. If you are working as a self-employed PA you will need to make sure you have public liability cover. If you are employed or self-employed and use your car for your job then you will need to have car insurance for business use.
- Question:** Where can I find work as a PA?
Answer: Often there will be job adverts in the local paper and/or Job Centre. You can also look out on community noticeboards. There is also a section on Live Well Telford where you can find a job role or upload your profile as a PA available for work.
<https://livewell.telford.gov.uk/Categories/1819>
- Question:** If I have a concern about my employment where can I go for help and advice?
Answer: There are a few organisations that can help. [ACAS](#) and [Citizens Advice](#) are independent organisations who can advise you in many different areas.
- Question:** Where can I find information about what training and development I may need?
Answer: For more information about supporting your training and development and to access free training please visit the [Skills for Care](#) website.



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