

Putting you first

Factsheet 3 **Employing a personal assistant: recruitment process**

The 'Putting you first' factsheets have been designed to guide you through the process of employing a personal assistant.



We know that some of the things we mention in these factsheets are quite complicated, so don't worry if you find them difficult to understand - the Adult Social Care Direct team are on hand to offer guidance, advice and information.

For help, or to discuss a referral or assessment, contact Adult Social Care Direct on **0191 433 7033**.



Recruitment process

The recruitment process will be more successful if it is well planned and thought out.

It is important that you consider how your support needs will be met until your new personal assistant starts working for you.

To recruit a personal assistant you will need to:

- Draw up a detailed job description and person description which sets out what the job will involve and the qualities, abilities and qualifications you require from your personal assistant.
- Think about how many personal assistants you need and what hours you need them to work. It's important to also consider working time regulations.
- Think about what information you would like to give applicants, such as an application form, for example.
- Write an advertisement and decide where you want to place it.
- Prepare a shortlist of people you want to interview based on the responses you receive.

- Request references from those nominated by the applicant (this should include their current or most recent employer).
- Interview short-listed applicants.
- Contact the referees - our advice is to wait until you have received satisfactory references in writing before making an offer of employment.
- Offer the job to the successful applicant.
- Let unsuccessful applicants know that you have given the job to someone else.

The National Centre for Independent Living has a toolkit for recruitment and selection, and you can also purchase a *Rough Guide to Managing Personal Assistants* from them.



Equality and diversity

It is unlawful to discriminate against people at work on the grounds of:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Age

However, it is also useful for you to consider the candidates who most suit your needs. For example, if you are a woman you may only want a female personal assistant to undertake intimate personal care. Or, you may require a personal assistant who speaks the same language as you.

Job description

This is an important document as it lists what your personal assistant(s) will be expected to do. This should be sent out with the application form to let applicants know exactly what is involved in the job, and to minimise misunderstandings and disagreements.

The job description will also form part of the employment contract and provides a basis for measuring whether your

personal assistant is carrying out their duties effectively. A person description is also useful - this sets out the qualifications, abilities and experience that your personal assistant must have.

Advertising

From your job description, you can write your job advert. To begin advertising you will need to decide:

- What you want to say in your advertisement
- Where you will advertise? (e.g. job centre, local shop, newspaper etc)
- When the closing date for applications will be?

It is important that your advert does not discriminate against people on their gender, age, sexuality, race or disability.

It is also important to consider whether or not to put your home address or telephone number on advertisements as this could leave you vulnerable to harassment or prank telephone calls.

Your local Job centre Plus can help you advertise your job and could also act as a point of contact for applications and provide interview facilities.

Application Form

The application form helps you to get as much relevant information about a person as possible so you can decide if they are the right person for the job.

The form helps you to:

- Find out if the person has the basic skills and abilities needed for the role of personal assistant.
- Ask for the names of referees who can tell you about their character and/ or previous employment.
- Ask whether the person agrees to a CRB or criminal records bureau check.

You should bear in mind that the questions you ask need to be relevant to the job. If you are intending to employ someone you know, it may not be necessary to ask them to complete an application form.

You can download job application forms from The National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) website if you need help or suggestions.



Short-listing

By the closing date you should have received completed application forms, or information in another format if you have not used an application form.

It is useful to compare the applications to your job description so you can check if a person meets your needs and requirements. The information provided should give you an idea of whom you want to interview.

Interviewing

Before you begin interviewing applicants, there are a number of things you need to consider:

- It is important to think about the venue as interviewing in your own home can lead to difficulties. Your local job centre plus can help provide interview facilities.
- You need to contact those shortlisted to tell them where the interviews are and at what time you would like them to attend.
- Remember that interviews are two way processes. It is an opportunity for you to gain information from the applicant and for the applicant to ask you questions, too.

- You should interview with another person, as it is helpful to have someone to discuss your views with afterwards
 - Each interview is likely to take about 20 minutes, so you should allow for a short break between applicants.
 - Prepare for interviewing by thinking of some open questions that don't need a 'yes' or 'no' answer. For example: What were the main responsibilities in your previous/current job? Why do you want to leave your current job? Where do you want to be in five years time?
- The National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) has a checklist that you might like to use if you need help in deciding what questions to ask.
 - It's a good idea to take notes at the interview to help you reflect on the answers and help you decide on the best candidate. Remember that candidates could ask to see your notes.
 - If you still need help, Business Link has a lot of information at www.businesslink.gov.uk to guide new employers through the process.

Important words - and what they mean

Interview: A formal meeting with shortlisted applicants to assess whether they are right for the job.

Working Time regulations: The government has set restrictions on how many hours people can work and these have to be followed by law. As an employer it is important that you are aware of this.

If you have concerns

You may be vulnerable at times because of your age, illness or disability, and our advice is to try to keep yourself safe at all times.

However you may have concerns or worries that someone is harming you,

abusing you, or neglecting you and the care you need - in a physical, emotional, verbal or financial way.

We will always take your concerns seriously. We call this adult safeguarding, and you or a friend or someone you trust can contact us on **0191 433 7033** if you need help or support in dealing with a situation.

Useful contacts

National Centre for Independent Living
www.ncil.org.uk

Government information site
www.directgov.uk

ACAS

For a booklet on delivering equality and diversity, call **08457 47 47 47**, minicom **08456 06 16 00** or log on to www.acas.gov.uk

Business Link Call **0845 600 9 006**
Textphone **0845 606 2666**
www.businesslink.gov.uk

The other fact sheets in this series help you think about some of these issues so you can decide if you want to employ a personal assistant.

Other fact sheets in the the 'Employing a personal assistant' series are:

Factsheet 1 : an introduction

Factsheet 2 : pay and tax

Factsheet 3 : recruitment and selection

Factsheet 4 : choosing a personal assistant

Factsheet 5 : contract of employment

Factsheet 6 : health and safety

Factsheet 7 : being a good employer - supervision

Factsheet 8 : disciplinary and grievance

Factsheet 9 : ending the employment period

Factsheet 10 : employing a personal assistant: keeping yourself safe

Factsheet 11 : starting direct payments: what happens once your direct payment has been agreed?

