

Using direct payments to employ personal assistants

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Find out more about using direct payments to employ personal assistants

What is a personal assistant?

A personal assistant, often referred to as a PA, is a person employed to provide a direct service to an individual or small group.

The individual or small group decide what the employee will do to support them. Read more in [Pooling direct payments](#).

As an employer, there are legal requirements, including keeping accounts, doing payroll and providing sick pay, holiday pay and a pension.

There is [support available](#) to help understand what those requirements are and how to get help with fulfilling the role of employer. A PA also has a right to be a member of a trade union.

If a person needs to use an agency to employ a PA, the local authority should pay for the agency fee if this is more than the direct payment.

Training personal assistants

Some [direct payment support services](#) provide training for PAs, including accredited awards and diplomas. Training not only supports PAs to do their job but also provides career progression and the opportunity to gain qualifications.

Training also contributes to the training of safeguarding recipients, as it promotes a skilled workforce.

Direct payment support service providers will have example policies and templates, and guidance for employers to use.

This can include insurance, safeguarding and working with vulnerable adults, and health and safety training.

Equally, some individuals may prefer to train PAs themselves or seek alternative services.

Local authority practitioners should ensure that anyone providing their own training has access to the support and information they need to meet their obligations as an employer.

[The PA toolkit](#) provides information for PAs about their role and the training and support that can be made available to them.

Case study: how Sophie used direct payments to pay for a cleaner

Sophie has medical conditions that cause fatigue.

In an effort to conserve her energy for the tasks that are most important to her, she uses her direct payment to pay for a cleaner to clean and tidy her flat for two hours twice a week.

Without this support, Sophie would find that her flat being untidy would overwhelm and depress her.

With a few hours of support each week, Sophie can now better manage her energy and spend the time doing things she enjoys such as going for coffee with her friends.

Case study: how David employed a gardener through direct payments

David has always taken pride in keeping a nice garden but is no longer able to manage by himself.

By employing a gardener once a fortnight, he has help to keep his garden to the standard he enjoys, can do some tasks with support and enjoy the company and conversation.

The direct payment is then able to support David to improve his physical and mental health.

David experiences a sense of pride in being able to keep his garden in good shape, and the weekly company goes a long way in tackling loneliness and isolation.

Case study: how Dylan uses direct payments for short breaks and respite

[A video about how Dylan uses direct payments for provide short breaks and respite](#) (Welsh video with English subtitles)

We want your feedback

Help us to improve the Direct payments resource by telling us what you think about it in our short [four question survey](#).