

Using Personal Assistants (PAs) - a guide to Employing Staff in South Gloucestershire

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Introduction

Personal budgets and direct payments are about offering people choice and control in how they are supported, so that they can meet their assessed eligible unmet needs and outcomes. If you have care and support needs which mean that you need assistance to live an independent life, you may be interested in employing your own staff, such as a personal assistant (PA).

Employing your own staff has great benefits. You get to choose who provides your care and support on an individual basis, and having the same person looking after you consistently means they are aware of your routine and individual needs.

People usually pay for their personal assistant out of direct payments which they receive from us (the Council). However, some employers are also funded through a number of other sources and may even provide the funding for a personal assistant themselves.

You're classed as an employer if you pay a personal assistant directly, even if you get money from us. This means that you need to be aware of some important information and ensure you do certain things both before hiring, and while employing someone.

There are a number of laws and systems in place to make sure that both you (as the employer) and your personal assistant (as the employee) are protected and treated fairly and safely. You can find information about these in this guide; however, we recommend that you do not start the recruitment process without talking to someone who has expertise in this field of work. We ask that anyone recruiting their own staff and employing personal assistants uses a direct payment support provider to help them through this process. This also applies if you already know who you want to work for you, as we need to ensure that you are employing them legally. The direct payment support provider will be able to work with you to ensure the areas covered in this guide are put into place, and to help you understand anything you aren't clear about.

For more information about personal budgets and direct payments, please see our guide [Personal Budgets and Direct Payments – a Guide to Personalisation in South Gloucestershire](#)

We welcome feedback about this guide. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email CAHinfo@southglos.gov.uk

Personal Assistants (PAs) – the basics

What does a personal assistant do?

Every person who has support is different. Some people have personal assistants to help them at work, college or university. Others need support at home, to help them to get out and about or to engage in hobbies and social activities.

The role of a personal assistant can include some or all of the following:

Social support

- For example to help their employer to go shopping, meet friends, go out for a meal, engage in leisure activities and interests, or gain education
- Helping their employer to gain confidence personally and socially

Personal care – support with personal care for example:

- Helping their employer with washing and toileting, showering, dressing, eating and drinking, helping their employer to shave, brush their hair or put on make-up
- Mobility (including assisting with mobility aids) for example pushing their wheelchair
- Supporting their employer to make healthy living choices such as taking exercise and sorting out medication

Independent living support

- support to assist their employer in living independently assisting when necessary with meal preparation, paying bills, administration and paperwork.

If you are eligible for support from us, your care and support plan will clearly set out what your eligible needs are and which outcomes are funded by the council and the way in which you are choosing to meet these outcomes. You can find out more about eligible needs and support planning in our [Care Act: Frequently Asked Questions Document](#).

How to find a personal assistant

Finding the right personal assistant is important, and it can be difficult to know where to begin.

Things to think about when looking include:

- Writing job descriptions, job specifications, job adverts, preparing job application packs
- The PA's conditions of service (rates of pay, hours, breaks)
- What they will do, how and when
- What training is needed
- What you will do when they take annual leave, are sick or need other unplanned time off work
- How to keep safe when advertising, interviewing and recruiting.

We would recommend that:

- You do not put your home address, telephone number, or details about yourself on the job advert
- You could ask the Jobcentre to advertise for you. They have their own process which will help you to stay safe or you can perhaps use a mailbox number
- You make sure you ask for two written job references from the people you interview and follow them up
- When you interview people do it away from your home address if you can and have someone with you to support you
- When the PA starts working with you it is advised that you arrange for a friend parent or someone you trust to spend some time with you when your PA first starts work.

You must comply with all the current employment legislation and we strongly advise that you obtain support to do this.

If you have autism, Skills for Care have produced "[How to be a great autistic individual employer guide](#)" to help.

There are many ways you can advertise for a personal assistant, but it is important that you think about the job you are asking them to apply for, as well also your own safety during the recruitment process. See our guide to guide [Personal Budgets and Direct Payments – a Guide to Personalisation in South Gloucestershire](#) for more information about support providers.

What support is available?

Some of the responsibilities relating to taking a direct payment, especially employing staff, are quite complicated, and may sound a little scary, but you don't need to worry.

If you employ someone to help you lead an independent life, we have details of support providers that can help you. The providers can help you with all the tasks related to finding staff and being an employer. These providers can offer support from the start through to the end of the process. They can also offer support on an ongoing basis if you need help to manage your direct payment once you have set up your arrangement. If you are intending to recruit and employ personal assistants, the council needs to know that you are in touch with one of the providers. This is so you can receive the correct advice to make sure that you are working within the law.

The Direct Payments Support Providers can offer help and support with the following:

- Employing Staff - for example how to advertise for and interview people
- Arranging Insurance - this protects you and the people you employ from the consequences of accidents or injuries while they are supporting you
- Getting a Disclosure and Barring Service Check - this helps you find out more about the person you want to employ
- Payroll services

For more information about support providers, please see our guide to [direct payments document](#)

Insurance

Relevant insurance must be in place before your PA can start work. Below are the types of insurance you must get when employing staff:

Employers' Liability Insurance - It is a legal requirement to get [employers' liability insurance](#) as soon as you become an employer. This will provide essential cover for situations such as if your PA has an accident or becomes ill as a result of working for you, for example they trip in your home. You can read more about [employer's liability insurance](#) at gov.uk.

Public Liability Insurance – this will insure you against any damages or injury caused to someone else by you or your PA while working for you.

We will fund the cost of this insurance within your personal budget as part of your direct payment. We strongly advise you take out a policy that covers you in the event that your PA takes you to an industrial tribunal or you need to make someone redundant. There are terms and conditions you must adhere to and these will be explained by the insurance company. We do not recommend who you use to provide your insurance cover but your support provider should be able to provide you with information on where to go.

Other insurance to consider:

Comprehensive house insurance – It's a good idea to cover your property and its contents. You may want to include cover for accidental damage. You should tell your insurer that you are employing people to work in your house. As an employer you have a legal duty to insure against accidents or injury to your staff, or accidents or injury caused by them while they are working for you.

Travel and car insurance - You may also need to think about this, for example if your personal assistant is going to be using your car. If the PA is driving your vehicle you must ensure they are added onto the insurance policy of your vehicle. Most insurance companies do not charge for this cover. If you will be travelling with your personal assistant in their car, they will need to be insured to use their car for work. You must advise the PA to contact their insurance company and request business use cover and show you a copy.

You are not required to provide insurance for **self-employed PAs or agency workers**, as this is the responsibility of the PA or their employing agency. However, you can ask to see a copy of proof of cover before buying services with your direct payment. Please seek advice before recruiting anyone who claims to be self-employed. You can find out more information in 'Self employed PAs' below.

Keeping Safe

We require you to have help and advice from a direct payment support provider if you decide to have a PA.

The direct payment support provider will give you all the advice you need at each stage of employing your own staff. The organisation can also carry out a Disclosure Barring Service check on the person you want to employ. We ask that you consider this when you employ your own staff. (You can pay for this from your Direct Payment money).

For guidance on keeping safe with recruitment, please see Personal Assistance – the basics on page 4.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

It is important to request a criminal records check processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as part of any recruitment process. This assists you in making safer recruitment decisions. You can find out more information about DBS checks from Gov.uk.

We highly recommend that DBS checks are carried out on personal assistants. They are essential if the personal assistant is providing support to a young person aged under 18, or if there are children or young people in the home while the personal assistant is working. You must speak with your social worker who will advise when a DBS check must be undertaken for anyone you engage in providing services.

Your direct payment support provider can provide access to DBS checks should you request one.

What is abuse or harm?

- Harm is when someone does or says things to make you upset or frightened
- You may be too scared to speak out or to stop them
- You may be harmed on purpose, or by someone who may not realise that what they are doing to you is wrong
- Harm can happen when someone has power over you, and you do not agree to what is happening.

Abuse can take many forms: physical, emotional, financial, neglect or sexual abuse. If someone has concerns that harm or abuse is taking place that is what is called a safeguarding concern.

Staff (including personal assistants) who have contact with vulnerable adults have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns, notwithstanding any confidentiality clauses. They have a duty to act in a timely manner on any concern or suspicion that an adult who is vulnerable is being abused or is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited.

Your personal assistant should:

- be aware of and understand local safeguarding procedures
- call the police and/or an ambulance where appropriate in situations where the abuse of the adult indicates an urgent need for medical treatment, or where there is immediate risk of harm
- make a report to the police, and if a crime has been committed, ensure action is taken to preserve evidence
- know what services are available and how to access help and advice for the vulnerable adult
- know how and where to make a referral
- keep a clear factual record of your concerns and any action taken.
- Attend a safeguarding alert course run by the council.

[How to report a safeguarding concern](#)

It is important if you or someone you know is being abused, that you tell someone so that they can help. You can use the following numbers:

01454 868007 - Monday to Friday

01454 615165 - Out of hours/Weekends

In an emergency please ring 999

You can visit our Adult Safeguarding website for more information on adult abuse:

<http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/adults>

Employer responsibilities

Employing people legally

Checking their right to work

You must check that a job applicant is allowed to work for you in the UK before you employ them.

- You must see the applicant's original documents
- You must check that the documents are valid with the applicant present
- You must make and keep copies of the documents and record the date you made the check.

Gov.uk has [more information](#) on checking an applicant's right to work in the UK.

Keeping records

If you choose to hire a Personal Assistant (PA) and become an employer, by law you need to keep the following records - these are called statutory records:

- tax and national insurance information
- for most workers it is advisable to keep records of individual hours worked to enable averaging over a period to meet the requirements of the Working Time Regulations 1998
- holidays, again for the Working Time Regulations 1998
- pay, to ensure the requirements of the Minimum Wage Act 1998 are being met, and to meet the statutory requirement that workers are issued with pay statements
- paid sickness and Statutory Sick Pay
- accidents, injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences. The Health and Safety Executive can advise on particular requirements and necessary assessments.

Note: All confidential information should be stored in a secure place. There is more information about this available on Gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/personal-data-my-employer-can-keep-about-me>

Contract of employment

For each person you employ you must make sure that you have an agreement between you and them. This is important because it gives details of employment rights, responsibilities and duties. These are called the 'terms' of the contract. It means that both you and your personal assistant will be clear about each other's responsibilities.

Once you have checked and are happy with the candidate's references and have done all your other checks, like DBS, you should send two signed copies of the contract of employment to your new personal assistant and ask them to sign both. They keep one copy and send the other one back to you. You must provide this within two months of taking on a new employee.

The following should be included in the contract: your direct payment support provider can advise on this and give you a model contract

- Your name and the name of the personal assistant
- The job title (e.g. Personal assistant) and main duties
- The place of work (your home address)
- Start date and type of contract
- Probationary period
- Notice period for both if you
- Salary and when it is to be paid – weekly or monthly (also see 'Paying wages' below)
- Working time, hours and breaks
- Holiday entitlement
- Sick leave and sick pay arrangements
- Pension arrangements (also see 'Pensions' below)
- Reference to disciplinary and grievance procedures
- What happens when you are away
- Redundancy
- Confidentiality
- Dismissal

If you want to make any changes to the contract of employment, you must get your personal assistant's agreement. You will need to consult with your personal assistant, explain the reasons for any changes and listen to alternative ideas for changes. If you do not, then your personal assistant may have the right to take legal action. Once any changes are agreed, then you must confirm them in writing within one month of the changes being made.

Skills for Care

Skills for care have developed a range of support for individual employers to help them to understand their responsibilities and complete any necessary checks before employing a personal assistant:

- [Skills for Care Toolkit – Before your Personal Assistant Starts](#)
- [Skills for Care Toolkit – Sorting out Problems](#)

You can also find more information about [employing someone to work in your home on Gov.uk](#).

Health and Safety

You have a legal responsibility to make sure that your personal assistant remains safe and healthy whilst doing their job.

What you must do:

- carry out some risk assessments on your home, including pets or any animals you keep
- think about any training your personal assistant needs
- tell your personal assistant about health and safety, including fire safety.
- record (and possibly report) any accidents that take place in your home.
- take out employers' liability insurance (see 'Insurance' above)

If you employ five or more people you will need a health and safety policy. The [Health and Safety Executive website](#) and helpline has lots of support and free leaflets, including a model policy.

There are also templates for safety in the home and risk assessments available in the Skills for Care Employing Personal Assistants Toolkit:

<http://www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk/before-your-personal-assistant-starts/#health-and-safety>

Paying wages

You must pay your employee at least the National Minimum Wage. This changes every year so call the Pay and Work Rights Helpline on **0300 123 1100** for the latest rate or go to www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage. You must always give your PA a payslip.

Personal assistants must be paid at least the national living wage (or the national minimum wage for workers 24 and under) while they are on call or working a sleepover; this includes sleeping time. The guideline rate that the council recommends is paid to personal assistants is at the national minimum wage level.

[Payroll, deducting tax and national insurance](#)

Most direct payment users choose to use a payroll scheme, as it is convenient, saves time and ensures you are paying your personal assistants correctly. These make sure that your personal assistant's tax and National Insurance contributions are deducted correctly. They also tell you how much Employer's National Insurance to pay. They will sort out your paperwork and deal with the tax office (HMRC) for you. You can ask your direct payment support service about payroll providers. You might be able to find local accountants who will do this for you very cheaply. You could contact a few, and ask what they would charge. Costs for payroll services are built into the hourly rate that is paid to service users.

If you want to organise paying your staff yourself, you will need to contact HMRC to [register as an employer](#). You can do this up to 4 weeks before you pay your new staff.

HMRC has developed a programme of webinars (online seminars) which are suitable for people employing personal assistants. They look at issues such as payroll responsibilities, how to deal with expenses and benefits, and PAYE in real time: www.gov.uk/government/news/webinars-emails-and-videos-on-employing-people

[Pensions](#)

New laws relating to pensions mean that every employer in the UK must put certain staff into a pension scheme and contribute towards it. This is called 'automatic enrolment'.

As an employer, you'll have duties in relation to everyone working for you:

- who is aged between 16 and 74
- who works in the UK
- for whom you deduct income tax and National Insurance contributions from their wages.

What you will need to do will depend on whether you employ someone classified as a 'worker'. Whether someone is a worker depends on the person's age, and how much they earn. If the personal assistants you employ are workers, you must set up a pension.

[Who can get a Workplace Pension?](#)

People employing personal assistants will have to consider whether the personal assistants qualify automatically for a workplace pension. Some personal assistants **MUST** be auto-enrolled into a workplace pension which the employer must pay into. These workers are called **Eligible Jobholders**. Some personal assistants do not have to be auto-enrolled but will have the right to opt into a workplace pension which the employer must pay into – these workers are called **Non-eligible Jobholders**. Others have a right to join a workplace pension, but the employer does not have to contribute – these are called **entitled workers**.

This table sets out who falls into these categories. The salary figure is the amount earned each year:

Type of worker	Who does this apply to?
Eligible jobholders – have to be auto-enrolled, the employer pays a contribution	Workers aged at least 22 but under state pension age who earn over £10,000
Non-eligible jobholders – workers have the right to opt in and the employer pays	Workers between the ages of 16 and 22 years old, who earn over £5,772 and below £10,000. Workers who are 22 and over and below state pension age and earn over £5,722 and below £10,000. Workers from state pension age up to the age of 75 who earn over £5,722
Entitled workers – worker can join a scheme, employer doesn't contribute	Workers between the ages of 16 and 22 years old, who earn £5,772 or less. Workers who are 22 and over but below state pension age, and earn £5,772 or less. Workers from state pension age up to the age of 75 who earn £5,772 or less
Workers who don't qualify at all	Employees under the age of 16 Employees who are 75 and over

So this means that only workers over the age of 22, and who are paid more than £192 a week or £833 a month have to be automatically enrolled.

How much is the Workplace Pension going to cost people with direct payments?

The Employer, the Employee and the Government all contribute to the pension. The employer must pay a minimum contribution of 1% of the workers earnings as a pension contribution rising to 3% by 2018.

I currently employ a PA. What must I do as an employer?

You don't need to do anything until the Pension Regulator contacts you. You will hear from the Pensions Regulator sometime between June 2015 and February 2018 with a date for when you need to decide if your personal assistants can get a pension. You will have to send a Declaration of Compliance to the Pensions Regulator within five months of your staging date. See www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk for more details. You must send this declaration, even if none of your personal assistants qualify for a pension. Please speak to your payroll service about completing the declaration, they will be able to help you. Many payroll services will be able to help you through the arrangements, and make the whole process clear and easy for you. It is very important that you respond to the letters and emails you get from the regulator, with the help of your payroll service.

Paying for Auto-Enrolment

Your direct payments contingency can be used for the costs relating to setting up and paying into a pension. Costs will be for your monthly contribution to your workers' pension, and may include payments to the pension provider. Your payroll provider may also ask you to increase the payment to them for the help they give to make pension payments.

If you do not have the funding to cover this in your direct payment, please contact the council on 01454 868007 or speak to your social worker.

Where can I get further information?

The Pensions Regulator website has a lot of information:

<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/employers/automatic-enrolment-forpeople-who-employ-their-own-care-and-support.aspx>

Or telephone: 0345 600 1011

Email: customersupport@autoenrol.tpr.gov.uk

Training

You need to make sure any staff you employ are able to carry out the tasks you expect of them, and do not put you or them at risk of being injured.

We strongly recommend that you identify your own training needs so you can provide some formal guidance/training to your PAs. We also recommend that you access the training courses you have identified. This may mean attending some courses together. If your PA has not already undertaken training, these are sorts of courses you may need to consider:

- Moving and handling
- First aid
- Infection control
- Food hygiene
- Administration of medication
- Health and safety.

Skills for care have developed a range of support for individual employers; to help them to understand their responsibilities and develop the skills of their personal assistants:

- [Employing Personal Assistants Toolkit](#) is a set of guides covering all aspects of becoming an employer including training and qualifications.
- [Supporting your Personal Assistants to gain the skills they need](#) is an interactive guide that enables you to find out what training is available and locating a training provider.

More about Training Courses for personal assistants

South Gloucestershire Council provides lots of free training. An employer can pay out of their direct payment for their PA to attend relevant training.

Personal assistants who support South Gloucestershire service users can attend South Gloucestershire Council training sessions at no cost. If you are a PA and are interested in any of these courses you should talk to your employer. If the course is relevant to your job your employer will pay for you to attend out of their direct payment.

To book a place on these courses:

Email: HRWorkforceDevelopment@southglos.gov.uk to book a place for you or your PA. You can also phone 01454 868963.

What about cover?

If the personal assistant takes a course at a time they normally work, you will need to arrange for another member of staff or agency to cover for you.

Are there any courses that are particularly important?

All personal assistants would benefit from the Safeguarding Alertter, as this raises awareness of abuse and what personal assistants and others should do if they come across it. You can choose courses that will help your PA to meet your needs and outcomes, and to be more confident to carry out your job; so for example if you are helped by your PA to move and transfer, it would be helpful to them to do the manual handling induction course.

Where are the courses held?

Many courses are held in our training centre at Kingswood Civic Centre. Full directions will be given. Refreshments are available at all courses.

The following table lists all the courses that may be of interest to you. For further details on each course please go to: <https://learning.southglos.gov.uk/cpd/portal.asp> search and select a category for individual course overviews, dates, and how to book.

General Courses

Course	Overview
Administration of Medication	This half day course follows CQC requirements on the administration of medication. It includes trainer presentation, discussion, and a short multiple-choice assessment at the end to check the information has been retained by participants. Relevant handouts/paperwork will be provided.
Basic Clinical Skills Training	Covers infection control, catheter and stoma care, pressure area care, compression stockings and continence.
Level 2 Award in Food Safety (Basic Food Hygiene)	This award (formerly the Basic Food Hygiene certificate) is accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH). All food handlers are required by law to receive appropriate food hygiene training.
Health, Safety and Personal Care	Covers ways of working that promote the health of the personal assistant and the person they support.
Manual Handling –Induction	This course looks at how your personal assistant can carry out moving and handling tasks in a way that is safe for both of you, and which respects your privacy and dignity.
Manual Handling -Refresher	Social Care staff should refresh manual handling skills and knowledge annually.
Mental Capacity Act – Essentials	This course will give personal assistants the confidence and skills to support people who are unable to make decisions for themselves.

<p>Understanding and Responding to Anger and Aggression</p>	<p>This course focuses on how to respond calmly and communicate effectively with people in an agitated state, to maintain the safety of and dignity of both the member of staff and the customer/service user/member of the public.</p>
<p>Being Person Centred</p>	<p>Helps personal assistants develop skills in working in a person centred way.</p>
<p>Safeguarding Adults Alerter</p>	<p>Covers what personal assistants should do if they suspect abuse is taking place; gives an awareness of the different types of abuse and a better understanding of abuse.</p>
<p>Essential Skills for Dignity in Care</p>	<p>A 1-day course covering all of the 7 national Common Core Principles for Dignity, exploring ways to apply these in supporting people’s dignity and respect.</p> <p>It provides learners with an understanding about what “dignity and respect” mean, and their significance in providing excellent adult social care services; the opportunity to examine and to develop positive workplace cultures and team effectiveness; empowerment to become more confident ambassadors of quality care in the workplace; underpinning knowledge towards the new Care Certificate, and elements of the Qualification Credit Framework Diploma for Health & Social Care.</p>
<p>Emergency First Aid</p>	<p>This is a one day course for participants to develop the skills necessary to provide emergency first aid to someone who has had an accident or suddenly becomes ill at work.</p>
<p>Disability Equality at Work</p>	<p>This one day anti-discriminatory workshop will underpin learning about disability as an equal opportunities issue and complement other learning staff may be undertaking linked to national occupational standards. The workshop is intended to have realistic, practical outcomes and to enable staff to feel confident to work in an anti-discriminatory way with disabled people.</p>

For Personal Assistants working with older people and/or people with mental health issues

Course	Overview
Anxiety and Depression	A 3-hour workshop giving PA's working in a variety of settings information and greater understanding about anxiety and depression, including how these link to loneliness and isolation for people. It aims to raise PA's awareness about services that can help promote wellbeing. It includes: information about The Five Ways to Wellbeing, how to recognise and understand anxiety and depression, and the factors that are commonly involved in these, finding out more about self-help resources that can promote wellbeing and reduce anxiety and depression, knowing how individuals can access treatments and local services.
Understanding Loss and end of Life Care Training - Module 1	This 1-day course will enable personal assistants to understand loss and bereavement and its impacts on self and others, as well as exploring good practice in supporting people during the end of life process.
Understanding Loss and end of Life Care Training -Module 2	This 1 day course is a follow-on workshop for staff working in a professional care role. It will enable personal assistants to have an understanding of how to meet an individual's care needs and maintain comfort and dignity in the last few days of life.
Mental Health Awareness	For participants from a variety of settings and backgrounds to gain a basic awareness of mental health which they can draw upon in their day-to-day work and is aimed at any managers or staff in any sector who work with adults or children and would like to know more about Mental Health.
Connecting with People who have Dementia	A 1-day course for PA's that looks at approaches and practices that work well when connecting with people who live with dementia. The course focuses on supporting PA's to: recognise that all people with dementia are individuals, use effective communication with people with dementia, understand the importance of meaningful activity for people with dementia, understand and respond to actions that can be seen as challenging.
Understanding Personality Disorder	This half day workshop aims to provide an opportunity for participants to understand more about the diagnostic category of 'personality disorder' in order to better provide services and support that can make a positive difference to people's lives.

For Personal Assistants working with people with learning difficulties

Course	Overview
Supporting People with Learning Disabilities Module 1	This course has replaced Principles of Learning Disabilities Support. This unit introduces the principles that are fundamental in supporting people who have learning disabilities and it provides underpinning knowledge towards the relevant aspects of the national adult social care Common Induction Standards.
Supporting People with Learning Disabilities Module 2	This unit has replaced "Your Role as a Learning Disabilities Worker". This unit introduces understanding of a learning disability worker's job role and responsibilities, including an awareness of the roles of others and how to work in partnership with them.
Introduction to Signalong	This is an introductory course in signing using the Signalong Adults with Learning Difficulties core vocabulary. You will learn a number of signs useful to the work that you do on a daily basis, learn about the role of signing and how to introduce it into your workplace or role. This is an informal course open to people with no previous experience of signing and those who know/have learnt some Makaton.
Understanding Autistic Spectrum Conditions (Level 1 awareness training)	The aim of this half day course is to increase awareness of how autism is displayed and why, explore the range of abilities found within autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) and provide information and practical strategies and to promote positive understanding to enable delegates to interact and communicate more effectively with adults with ASC.
Supporting Adults with Autism (Level 2 training)	This one day course builds on employees' existing awareness about autism & their initial understanding of working with adults with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). It uses the SPELL framework: STRUCTURE, POSITIVE, EMPATHY, LOW AROUSAL, LINKS, & gives specific, practical information and strategies to use when supporting adults with autism on a frequent, even daily basis.
There are other Level 2 Autism courses available too, including "Understanding Behaviour", "Sensory Considerations" and "Relationships, Boundaries and Sexuality". Plus there is an e-learning programme you can do called "Understanding Autism" which gives a really good introduction to supporting adults with autism"	

Impairment Specific Training

Course	Overview
Visual Impairment Awareness	<p>By the end of the day participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the effects of acquired sight loss on the individual and understand how this differs from the effects of congenital Visual Impairment • Describe some of the similarities and differences between the needs of people who are blind and those who are partially sighted • Describe what interventions are appropriate to support Visually Impaired people and how this differs between blind and partially sighted people • Describe how visual impairment can affect communication and access to information • State and demonstrate how to guide a visually impaired person appropriately.
Deaf Awareness	<p>This one day course aims to enable personal assistants to gain an insight into deafness and to develop basic communication skills to use with deaf and hard of hearing people.</p>
Epilepsy Awareness	<p>This course is for personal assistants working with people with Epilepsy. The course is a combination of interactive discussion, demonstration and practice with equipment and group work.</p>
Epilepsy Refresher	<p>Epilepsy Buccal Midazolam/ Rectal Diazepam instatus Epilepticus Refresher. This half-day course is available to anyone who has previously attended the Epilepsy Awareness Training Day within the last 2 years and will enable participants to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify why emergency treatment is essential and • recognise the importance of individuals protocol for epilepsy. • demonstrate how to administer Buccal Midazolam & Rectal Diazepam
Stroke Awareness	<p>This one day training course provides employees who support and care for people affected by stroke with relevant information about stroke, so they can develop their knowledge and skills to ensure these meet good practice standards.</p>

For Personal Assistants working with Children

Course	Overview
Children's and Young People's Development e-module	This e-module aims to increase awareness of the main issues around children's and young people's development. It provides learners with an increased understanding of the expected pattern of development and details the factors that can influence development.
Awareness of Abuse and Neglect e-module	This e-module is the starting point for any training in Child protection. It provides a foundation of knowledge and covers a variety of child protection issues. It is suitable for anyone who comes into contact with children, either as part of their working life or on a volunteer basis. It aims to inform about the various types of abuse or neglect to a child and then explain what you must do if you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.
Working with Children with Disabilities e-module	A specialist course aimed at professionals working directly with disabled children. This e-module aims to increase knowledge of what you need to be aware of and the processes involved when working with children with disabilities.
There are also other courses relating to working with children which you can find out about at https://learning.southglos.gov.uk/cpd/portal.asp	

Self employed PAs

We do not recommend contracting with self-employed individuals for PA tasks. There are very few instances when someone can be truly classed as self-employed if they work for someone who receives a Direct Payment. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) can help you determine your worker's correct employment status. There are some agencies in South Gloucestershire who introduce direct payment users to self employed personal assistants.

Important

It is your responsibility to decide on the correct employment status of someone that works for you. If you are unsure of the employment status of someone that works for you; you can find the HMRC checklist at: www.gov.uk/employment-status-indicator.

You need to ensure the person supporting you can be classed as self-employed as you could become liable for tax and national insurance payments backdated from when they commenced working for you. Your Direct Payment may be suspended, or end if we are not satisfied that the arrangements in place comply with HMRC requirements.

Please seek advice from your direct payment support service before recruiting anyone who claims to be self-employed.

Sometimes an individual will be classed as self employed in another role, but this does not determine their correct status when they work for you. Just because a worker is self-employed in one job, doesn't necessarily mean he or she will be self-employed in another job.

The quickest way of getting HMRC's view on whether your PAs is employed or self-employed is to use the Employment Status Indicator tool (ESI). You will need to take a note of the unique reference number provided, plus retain a copy of the questions and the answers you provided. This will need to be produced should a query arise at a later date.

If you are unable to use the Employment Status Indicator tool (ESI), or are unsure of your worker's employment status you can telephone the HMRC Status Customer Service Team on 03000 527450 9.00am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday, except bank holidays.

Insurance for self employed PAs

If your worker is confirmed as self-employed by HMRC you will not become the employer. The self-employed worker must have insurance and show you a copy of their insurance cover.

Agreement

A self-employed PA should provide you with a contract of the service they are going to provide to you. This needs to include details such as notice required to cancel service, the work they are going to carry out and how much they are going to charge. It is advisable to get something in writing from the PA to state they will be responsible for paying their own tax and national insurance payments to HMRC.

Hours of work

A self-employed person can choose if and when they work for you. You must decide if this will work for you.

Payment

The PA should provide you with an invoice for the work they have carried out, ideally four weekly or monthly. We would advise you ask the PA to sign the invoice to say you have paid them or obtain a receipt for any payments you make. . Self-employed workers are not entitled to paid annual leave. If you have more than one PA they will need to invoice and be paid separately.

Keeping on track – if something goes wrong

Occasionally things will happen or changes occur and you will need to talk to someone about what to do.

If your needs are not being met:

We may have a responsibility to become involved to help you. A review, or reassessment of your needs may need to take place. We may have to arrange services for a period of time or support you to enable you to carry on using Direct Payments.

If you are assisting with managing Direct Payments for someone please contact us and let us know about any changes.

The emergency plans you have in place do not work:

You will have discussed a plan about what you will do if your PA goes off sick, takes annual leave or doesn't show up for work. Sometimes the best plans do not always work. We have a responsibility to assist you to meet your outcomes as identified in your Support Plan. If this happens, contact us.

If things are not going well with your PA

If this happens please contact your current direct payment support organisation as soon as possible. Any employment situation can run into problems with absences, performance issues and sometimes disputes. The sooner these issues are addressed the better. You can get advice and guidance from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) website: <http://www.acas.org.uk/>

If you get into any difficulty:

Mistakes happen when people are using Direct Payments. Please contact us on 01454 868007 so that we can provide advice and support you.

Personal Assistants - Information Directory

Below is a list of additional information relating to employing a personal assistant

<p>Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) ACAS provide information, advice, training, conciliation and other services for employers and employees to help prevent or resolve workplace problems.</p> <p>http://www.acas.org.uk/</p>
<p>Equality and Human Rights Commission Great Britain's national equality body providing advice and guidance on a range of equalities issues, including as they relate to the workplace.</p> <p>https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en</p>
<p>Equality Advice and Support Service Advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights.</p> <p>https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/</p>
<p>Gov.uk Central government website which contains information about employment law when employing someone to work in your home.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/au-pairs-employment-law</p>
<p>Health and Safety Executive Advice, guidance, news, templates, tools, legislation, publications from Great Britain's independent regulator for work-related health, safety and illness.</p> <p>http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm</p>
<p>Skills for Care Information for people who employ their own care and support staff and the organisations that support them.</p> <p>Skills for Care Information Hub</p> <p>Skills for Care Employing Personal Assistants Toolkit</p>
<p>The Pensions Regulator Information about enrolling your employees on pensions. You can check your duties using the tool on the website.</p> <p>http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers</p>