

SECTION 2

Preparing to employ the right Personal Assistants

Some direct payment support services and organisations such as the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) can provide advice and guidance on recruiting Personal Assistants. It is important to seek advice and guidance on the recruitment process. This section of the toolkit only aims to provide information related to how you might assess the learning needs of your new Personal Assistants at the recruitment stage which later affects how you introduce them to their new role.

Before recruiting a Personal Assistant it is important to think about the attitudes, skills and knowledge you may want them to have. It may be helpful to list the:

- skills you want your Personal Assistant to have, such as driving, speaking Welsh or another language, good communication skills
- tasks you would like your Personal Assistant to do, such as cooking meals, personal hygiene and the skills they would need to do these
- personal qualities you would appreciate such as flexibility, reliability, sense of humour
- values and attitudes you would expect such as being respectful, open minded, honest, thoughtful.

A survey about what makes a successful relationship between an individual employer and Personal Assistant found that shared respect and trust is essential to be able to work and learn together.
<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/personal-assistants/>

You can then assess whether applicants have the right skills and qualities or whether they will need to be supported to develop them once they are employed.

Being clear about what you need from your Personal Assistant, what experience, skills and knowledge you are looking for will help you find the right person to support you. Knowledge and skills may have been gained in different ways such as through life experiences, informal or formal training, or qualifications. You may prefer for him/her to learn whilst working with you.

It is important to include a statement about your expectations in terms of learning and development whilst they are employed by you when writing a **job description** and **person specification**. These will also reflect the identified outcomes within the plan you have agreed with your Local Authority.

“You will be expected to develop new skills and learn whilst employed. This will include reading, discussing, attending courses such as safe handling of medication and emergency first aid.” Example from Job Description for a Personal Assistant

Interviewing is easier if you prepare in advance. Write a list of questions based on the job description and person specification. Ask applicants about why they want to work for you, their personal qualities, their work experience, learning and qualifications and measure their answers against your criteria. Carefully think about how you can find out about their values and attitudes. Further guidance can be found in the practical guide **Partnerships for Personalisation** (Skills for Care, 2012). <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/Employing-your-own-care-and-support/Partnerships-for-personalisation.pdf>

The **Code of Professional Practice for Social Care** sets out the standards expected from social care workers in Wales. It reflects the values and principles which are essential for good quality care and support, such as the importance of confidentiality. It can be a useful resource when preparing to recruit and interview Personal Assistants.

<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/code-of-professional-practice/>

For further information and advice about the full recruitment process contact the direct payment support services in your area, your local authority or Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).