

## SECTION 5

### Learning, training and qualifications

There are different ways for Personal Assistants to learn and develop the appropriate skills and knowledge needed to support you effectively.

- **Personalised on the job training** is designed specifically to meet the requirements of the employer. It can be delivered in different ways. Many employers train their Personal Assistants themselves on the support tasks they need assistance with. You may also ask a new Personal Assistant to watch another Personal Assistant or family carer who is experienced.
- **Informal training** - this helps a Personal Assistant learn new skills but does not lead to a recognised qualification. It may be a short course with a certificate for learners who have successfully completed it.

“The course opened [my Personal Assistant] to understand what I’m going through and the consequences of the illness. She understood things.” Employer of Personal Assistant

- **Formal training** - this leads to a qualification, for example a Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care. These are called accredited qualifications. The training will take place at college or with a learning provider, who deliver training courses. Part of the formal training for Personal Assistants may also take place in the employer’s home.

#### Case study

Dewis Centre for Independent Living, which provides direct payment support services, and Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority work in partnership to provide opportunities for Personal Assistants to gain a qualification. Since 2012 they have delivered the QCF Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care, developing training days and ways of supporting and assessing to reflect the nature of the Personal Assistant role. An independent evaluation identified this as an example of good practice and reflects the positive impact on both the Personal Assistants and the direct payment employer.

<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/personal-assistants/>

#### Case study

Diverse Cymru, which provides direct payment support services, has worked with Agored Cymru <http://www.agored.org.uk/Units/Unit/CDD362> to develop a level 1

Quality Assured Lifelong Learning unit that prepares people for working as a Personal Assistant. It provides an introduction to disability equality, protection and safeguarding of the service user, the role, duties and responsibilities of a Personal Assistant and health and safety responsibilities

“I found the course very informative and relevant to my work as a Personal Assistant. I think it’s a course that all PAs should attend to understand their role more.”

Personal Assistant

- **Internet-based training** - this is sometimes called e-learning and usually consists of exercises or instructions available via the internet. Sometimes CDs and DVDs are used with this type of training. Your Personal Assistant can do this when it suits him/her or can fit it around your day. Internet-based training needs to be assessed by the individual using it to make sure it meets any access needs. It comes in different formats from video case studies, interactive material, or apps which can be downloaded to mobiles or tablets.

Some examples:

The Care Council for Wales have developed several mobile Apps including Safeguarding – test your knowledge which tests social care workers’ knowledge of how to keep people safe

<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/apps/#sthash.PrO1mcrh.dpuf>

Explore other Apps developed by the Care Council

<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/apps/#sthash.Mqh4qH4s.dpuf>

Social Care Institute for Excellence also provides free Social Care TV videos on a range of subjects to help learning

<http://www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv/index.asp>

E-learning modules of varying length from the Social Care Institute for Excellence, covering topics such as dementia care and communication skills

[www.scie.org.uk/publications/elearning](http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/elearning)

“I learnt so much about safety in the home on the online course my employer had found. It was a good experience and I had never done e- learning before. Once completed we sat and discussed what I had learnt and what we could do in my employer’s home to reduce risks.” Janet, Personal Assistant

## **How to access training and qualifications**

There are different ways to access appropriate learning and qualifications. You can:

- discuss with your Direct Payment Support Service, your local authority or other training providers.
- contact your Social Care Workforce Development Partnership co-ordinator based in your local authority.

## **What to consider when looking for training**

- How relevant is it?
- Are the aims of the training clear?
- Is the trainer/ learning provider experienced?
- Is the length, time and location of training suitable?
- How is the training delivered?
- Is it accredited? i.e. assessed and certificated
- Does it include ongoing work or assignments?
- What are the cost implications including ensuring cover for your Personal Assistant?
- Direct payment support organisations may be able to provide additional advice.