

Personal Assistant



So, what is a PA?

A Personal Assistant (PA for short) is a very different type of caring or support role; in fact the clue is in the job title! It is all about supporting somebody in their day-to-day life so that they can lead an independent life in the way that they want.

You may support someone in their own home, in the community, at leisure or at work. Every day is different which is one of the reasons people love the job so much! The opportunity to focus directly on an individual, and the diversity of the role, is what often attracts people to this type of work. As each person is different, the role of each PA is very different too. The job advertisement and job description should give you a good idea of the tasks that you will expect you to do and the type of support they need.

As a personal assistant you'll be employed directly by an individual who has support needs. This might be someone with a health condition, disability, a parent or someone who is an older person or a parent of a child with a disability. This person is known as an Individual Employer.

“

I came to PA work with no previous experience - but I love the variety and the opportunity to work with others. No day is alike, but every day is rewarding. Knowing that I can make a difference to someone else's day, and give them independence makes being a PA a rewarding and enjoyable role. Can't believe I've been in this job for 7 years now!

”

If you are a caring person, who treats people with dignity and respect then this may be the rewarding career choice for you.

There are always Individual Employers who are looking for the right person to support them - this could be you!

Personal Assistant

What is a PA?

- PA, enabler, support worker, facilitator - the role can come under many different names!
- Supporting an individual to live an independent life
- Different to perceptions of care work - you are supporting / enabling
- At home, out and about, at leisure, at their place of work, with education
- Sharing hobbies and interests with your employer
- Learn new skills with lots of training opportunities
- A rewarding career that enriches your life in many ways
- recognises individuality

more information -



PA Toolkit



All About PAs



Becoming a PA



Sheffield Cares



Whilst experience could be useful, you don't need to have worked in care to be a great PA, the right attitude, values and a person-centred approach is what is important.

Personal Assistants' Roles and Responsibilities

The role of a personal assistant is extremely varied, this is because the individual employer can choose exactly how they want you to support them

You may be supporting an individual employer:

- at their place of work or education
- to maintain relationships with family and friends, including supporting them with childcare
- to meet new people and develop new friendships
- travel around by providing transport, driving their car or using public transport
- to maintain hobbies and interests
- providing personal care (support to dress, wash and bathe)
- to communicate their wants and needs
- carrying out household tasks like cooking, cleaning, meal preparation, shopping, organising paperwork, and, in some cases, pet care
- going with them to their hospital and other appointments
- to become healthier after a physical illness, for example, through a better diet or more exercise
- to develop a new skill or get a job.
- Some personal assistants may carry out, with adequate training, certain health care related tasks.



Not all personal assistants will be employed to carry out all of these tasks – it may be that your employer wants support with just one of these tasks.

Quite often the role can be about companionship and having a shared interest in things like music, politics or sport.

Personal Assistant

Values of a good PA



**responsible,
reliable and
respectful**



**encouraging,
enabling and
empathetic**



**flexible and
willing to learn**



**committed to
equality and
diversity**



trustworthy

What makes someone 'PA employable'?

When employing a personal assistant, individual employers often look for someone who is a good personal fit. It's often not about previous experience and qualifications – what's really important is that you have the right values, attitude and skills to do the job.

Skills of a good PA



Ability to listen and treat people with dignity



Good sense of humour



Good interpersonal and communication skills



Discrete



Personal yet professional



A desire to learn



Good written and verbal skills



Able to follow directions, yet show initiative



Reliable



Flexible



Punctual



Patient



Personal Assistant



PA Work: What to expect

The role of a personal assistant is extremely varied, this is because the individual employer can choose exactly how they want you to support them.

You may be supporting an individual employer:

- at their place of work or education
- to maintain relationships with family and friends, including supporting them with childcare
- enabling someone to get out and about in the community
- to meet new people and develop new friendships
- travel around by providing transport, driving their car or using public transport
- to pursue hobbies and interests
- To learn new skills
- providing personal care (support to dress, wash and bathe etc) This may be practically hands on or through assisting someone to do it for themselves
- to communicate, or translate, someone's wishes
- carrying out household tasks like cooking, cleaning, meal preparation, shopping, organising paperwork, and, in some cases, pet care
- going with them to their hospital and other appointments
- to develop a new skill or get a job.

Personal Assistant



Why become a PA?

Working as a personal assistant can be a very rewarding career with lots of opportunities to progress, and learn new transferable skills.

The opportunity to focus directly on the needs of an individual and the diversity of the role, is what often attracts people to this type of work.

Working as a personal assistant has a number of advantages:

Job satisfaction

Because a personal assistant is employed directly by the individual, you'll support for the time they need, and tasks can be done well without the need to rush. This also means you can build a longer-term professional relationship with your employer.

Flexible

Individual employers need support with different parts of their life, at varying times of the day, which means personal assistants can find a job with hours to suit when they are able to work, around your other commitments. Personal assistants can also work for more than one person if you want to.

Variety

There are opportunities to provide a wide range of support for different individual employers, who want or need different things. Personal assistants could also work with someone who has the same interests as them.

Attractive pay and conditions

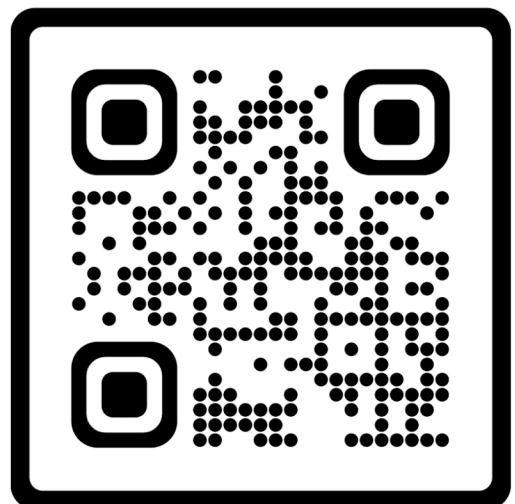
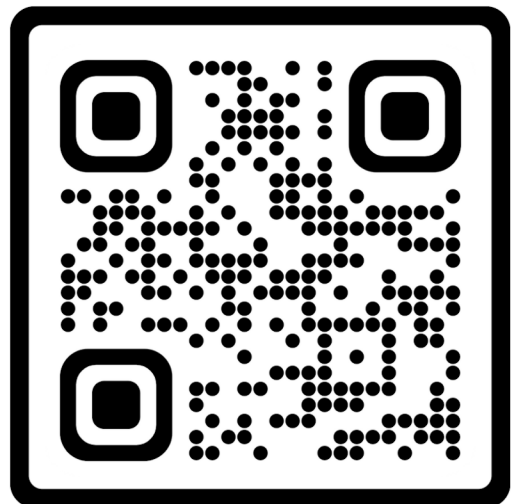
As a personal assistant you can often be better paid than working through a care agency and are more likely to have permanent working hours. Work times can be flexible with a variety of work times available

Personal Assistant



Where to find work?

There are lots of ways to find a job as a personal assistant, and here are a few examples of where to look. You may also be able to find a job through friends or family.



Personal Assistant

A Day in the Life of..



My name's James. I'm 29 years old, and I've been Duncan's PA for two years. Duncan is 43 and lives in his own flat. Duncan likes living on his own and enjoys going out meeting people, especially when it's at his local snooker club. Duncan has two PAs. He has a learning disability and needs people around to remind him to do some things and to support him when he goes out. I'm going to tell you about a typical day with Duncan...

9.15am I meet Duncan at his flat. When I arrive, Duncan has already started to get ready, so I help him finish off getting dressed by helping with his socks and shoes. Each morning I remind Duncan to take his tablets too. Then I help Duncan make his breakfast –today it's scrambled eggs on toast! We spend some time tidying Duncan's flat and put his washing in the washing machine.

10.00am Duncan and I head out to the shops. Duncan likes to do his food shopping on a Tuesday.

11.00am When we get back from the shops we put all the shopping away. Each item has its own place in Duncan's kitchen. This helps him remember where to find things when his PAs aren't around. After that we sort out the laundry and I put the kettle on. We spend a while talking about the latest football news and open the post. I finish at 12 o'clock today because Duncan goes to his college course for the afternoon. Duncan has other support while he's at college. It suits me finishing early today because it gives me time to go to the library before it shuts. Before I go, I make sure Duncan has got everything ready for college and arrange a time to come back tonight.

8.30pm I'm back at Duncan's tonight because he goes to the local snooker club where he meets his friends. We all shoot a few frames and have a good laugh.

10.00pm Back at Duncan's flat I help him get ready for bed and make sure everything is switched off and safe before leaving.

Personal Assistant



A Day in the Life of...

My Hi, I'm Jo. I'm one of two PAs who support Diane at work in her senior management job.

I usually arrive at Diane's at 8.45am and my first job is to put the kettle on! I then have a chat with Diane about the day ahead, any meetings that are in the diary or any travel that needs to be planned. Sometimes Diane is working from home and other times we need to travel by bus or car into the office. If we are going out, I'll help Diane to get ready and we make sure that her bag is packed with everything that she needs for the day.

I take notes for Diane in meetings, help to manage her diary and keep on top of logistics, edit documents, create leaflets and diagrams, organise her space, keep a steady flow of hot drinks coming and any other tasks to enable Diane to do her to do her job.

Around midday, I prepare lunch for Diane, and we eat together, which is a nice chance to have a break from work and have a natter and catch up. Throughout the day, I help Diane with some personal care under her direction, we work together to do this and have a giggle, especially if things don't quite go to plan! It's usually back to work in the office in the afternoon, but I also run errands for Diane, which may involve getting out and about. At the end of the day, I make sure Diane's office is left ready for the next working day, leave a note for my fellow PA and check if there's anything she needs before I go. I really enjoy the variety of the role and the fact that it's different each week.

Personal Assistant



A Day in the Life of...

There's nothing typical about this job, but a recent working day was spent helping Sam and her family and friends prepare for a big birthday party. When I arrive at Sam's at 9.30am, my first job is to help her print out party menus, confirm the running order and to check lights and speakers are working before loading the car with all the party supplies and fancy dress, ready to be dropped off later.

It's then back to routine jobs for a couple of hours, helping around the house with washing and ironing. In no time we are ready for some lunch, Sam says she would like mushrooms on toast and a cup of tea, so I make this before taking a 30 minute break.

In the afternoon, I help Sam to get ready to go out before I drive us to the party venue and meet a group of her friends who are also helping to decorate it with an array of coloured paper lanterns and lights under Sam's expert artistic direction! We consult on how to display the lanterns and figure out the best way to hang them. Sam is travelling back with her husband, so I head home at 5pm after a busy but fun day.

The party takes place on the following Saturday and I'm invited. It's brilliant to enjoy this occasion with her and her family and friends. One of the best things about the job, is the close friendship that you form with your employer.