

Recruiting a Personal Assistant

From advertising to offering the position



PA Employer Guides: part 1

WORKING TOGETHER AT ITS BEST



Disability Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group



Table of Contents

0 2	Introduction
0 3	Create a job description
0 4	Advertise the role
0 5	Things to include in the advert <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortlisting• Contacting those you wish to interview
0 5 - 0 7	At the interview
0 8	Do the checks and offering the job
0 9	Useful information - blanks and templates
1 0	Useful links and support available

Introduction

There are lots of benefits to employing Personal Assistants (PAs). It offers flexibility and puts you in control of deciding who supports you and when. It allows you to be more independent and make decisions that are important to you.

If you are considering recruiting a PA, it may feel daunting at first but there are many people, organisations and resources offering help, advice, coaching and mentoring support.

A great place to find information is the comprehensive Skills for Care Employing Personal Assistants Toolkit. Website:

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Employing-your-own-care-and-support/Information-for-individual-employers/Information-for-individual-employers.aspx>

Or call them on 0113 245 1716. Also you can refer to the list of support services at the end of this document.

This information has been created by both people who employ their own PAs and PAs themselves, so it gives you a true reflection of what you need to think about and put in place to be a good employer. It has been developed to provide you with information and advice on the steps you should think about when recruiting a new PA.

Remember, you don't have to organise everything or make all the decisions by yourself, or deal with lots of extra paperwork. You are in control so you can decide to do as much (or as little) as you want to; as long as you (or someone you have chosen) uses this advice to follow the correct procedures.

Create a job description

When you employ a PA you will need to create a job description. Your job description should list the tasks you expect your PA to do. Every employee must be given a job description.

Developing one will help you think about the type of person you want and what you want them to do. Please remember there is support available to help you with this and the tasks below are just for you to think about.

You may want to think about:

- the sort of skills or personal qualities the PA will need to do the job properly. For instance, do you need your PA to drive?
- it may be helpful to look at the information from your Assessment and Support Plan which describes what your eligible support needs are. The list of tasks you need support with could be used as a job description.
- think about the things you like to do or enjoy. You could include these as some of activities your PAs can support you with.
- think about the standards you expect from your PA including what you will do as their employer. It's also a useful way of clarifying what you want your PA or PAs to support you with.
- consider the pattern of hours and degree of flexibility you would like the PA to have.
- consider the level of supervision you, or your child (if you're a parent) may need both within the home and on outings. Will the PA need to understand risks and how to manage them?
- if you're employing a PA for another person remember to discuss the role with them to make sure everything they want and need is covered.
- discussing the job description with your new PAs will make sure the roles and expectations are clear and prevent any misunderstandings.

Advertise the job

We don't recommend that you include your address in your advert.

Options to consider:



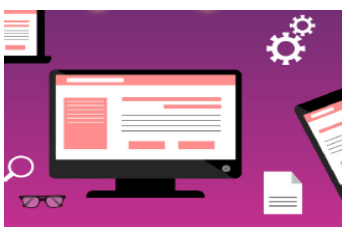
Word of mouth.

You may know someone who you know and trust, and who may be interested in being your PA (Do think about how your relationship may be affected if you became their employer).



Keep it local. You can place your Ads locally in places such as cafes, shops, local activity centres, and places you like to visit.

If you're recruiting a PA for your child, then perhaps advertise at their school (Teaching Assistants can often be PAs). Advertising at universities (students often look for PA work to complement their study).



Online. Some websites offer free adverts, like Gumtree: www.gumtree.com, FreeAds: www.freeads.co.uk, Indeed: <https://uk.indeed.com/>, and Jobsite: www.jobsite.co.uk. Also think about using Social Media - Facebook Jobs listing.



Jobcentre plus. They will advertise your job for free and will often help you to write your advert. You can request a visit www.gov.uk/advertise-job. Or call 0345 606 0234.



Disability Sheffield. They have a PA Register where PAs looking for work add their details: www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk/support-for-individual-employers-and-personal-assistants.

Things to include in the advert

Keep it short but include essential information, such as:

- what qualities or skills you are looking for
- hours of work or shift patterns
- rate of pay
- location
- tasks involved in the role
- contact details (we suggest an email or phone number)

Think about wording, for example not everyone recognises PA as a personal assistant. Depending on the tasks required you could ask for a cleaner, home help, paid carer, support worker, etc.

Shortlisting

To decide who to invite for the interview stage, you may want to think about:

- the people that fit closely with the job and type of person you want.
- stay within the law. Equal opportunities law says you cannot discriminate against someone because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- where your PA is providing intimate personal care you may specify that you want a PA of the same gender but you must state that in the advert

Contacting those you would like to interview

Think about the information you send when asking someone to an interview:

- make sure they know the time and location of the interview.
- let them know what will happen in the interview, if there will be any tests, etc.
- make sure you ask them to bring ID and outline what is acceptable.

At the interviews

It's useful to make a note of the answers so that you can remember what each applicant has said. You may find it useful to ask a family member or friend to interview with you - two views may help you to decide!

At the start tell the applicant a little bit about yourself and the role.

Check any ID, documents or certificates you have asked them to bring with them. You may want to print the interview questions.

Here are some examples of questions you may want to ask at the interview:

- what are their relevant skills, qualities and expertise
- why they think they would be a good fit for the role
- what interested them in the role and why they applied
- if they have any relevant training
- what are their interests or about hobbies - it's nice to have similar interests
- if they're flexible or have other commitments
- if required, ask whether they have a current enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate. If you are recruiting for a PA to support a child or young person, tell them a satisfactory DBS will be required
- if they have any gaps in their employment history and, if necessary, ask them to explain why they weren't working.
- if they have ever been dismissed from previous employment or been investigated as part of a safeguarding concern
- if they have the right to work in the UK
- if they have any questions or want to tell you anything else
- if they have had 2 Covid vaccines or if they mind having them
- why did they leave their last job
- is there anything that might make them feel uncomfortable or anything they wouldn't do
- if they smoke (if this is relevant, if you have a preference)
- if they would join in activities you like?

At the end of the interviews

At the end of the interview, tell them how and when you will let them know your decision, and how you will check their references.

Ask if they're happy for references to be collected before or after a job offer is given.

Take a look at our interview help tools on the Skills for Care website:

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Employing-your-own-care-and-support/Information-for-individual-employers/Recruiting-a-PA.aspx>

Doing the checks and offering the job

Take time to make your decision, as it's important to get the right person. You may want to re-advertise if you haven't been able to find the right one.

Contact the person and offer them the job. Explain that the offer is subject to any checks including references or DBS checks, if needed.

A DBS check will always be required if a child is living at the property or visiting regularly when PAs are working. Sheffield City Council will arrange this for you and let you know if the person is able to work as your PA, based on the result of the DBS.

If you're an adult with no children living at your home, but you choose to have a DBS check, an umbrella company can provide this for you. Your Direct Payment can be used for this and you'll receive the DBS results and can make the decision on employment yourself.

If the applicant is not from the UK, check that they're allowed to work in the UK. Detailed guidance on the right to work in the UK is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work>.

This website provides a checklist of the documents you should review, and a form for the employer checking service from the Home Office. You must keep evidence to prove the person is allowed to work in the UK.

Get references from previous employers and check them carefully.

Once you're happy with the checks you should confirm the job offer again and agree the start date. It's helpful to put this in writing too.

Remember support is available with all these things, you're not alone.

Useful links and support available

Sheffield City Council's website for Direct Payments information and for Part 2 - Becoming an Employer Guide and for Part 3 - Being a Good Employer Guide

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/social-care/employing-a-personal-assistant>

For Downloadable and printable samples and support documents

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Employing-your-own-care-and-support/Information-for-individual-employers/Templates.aspx>

You'll find sample documents like:

- job description and person specification
- blank job description and person specification
- job advert
- job application
- letter letting people know they have or have not got the interview
- interview questions and preparation
- reference request letter
- letter offering or not offering the job
- contract

Make it personal with a personal assistant films

long version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2z kfTS8J_s

short version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMyx87Friig>

Covid-19 information and support

Local information

<https://www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk/peoplewhoreceiveadirectpaymenttofundtheirowncare>

National information

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Employing-your-own-care-and-support/Information-for-individual-employers/COVID-19-Individual-employers.aspx>

Helpful organisations

Sheffield City Council

Adult Social Care

Tel: 0114 273 4567, option 5. Email: asc.howdenhouse@sheffield.gov.uk

Children's Services

Tel: 0114 273 4567, option 4. Email: CYPF-LDD@sheffield.gov.uk

Mental Health Services

North Sheffield Recovery Service: Northlands: Tel: 0114 226 3636

South Sheffield Recovery Service: Eastglade: Tel: 0114 271 6451

NHS Sheffield

Clinical Commissioning Group

Tel: 0114 305 1000. Email: sheCCG.sheffield@nhs.net

Continuing Health Care

Tel: 0114 305 1700. Email: sheCCG.sheffieldCCG@nhs.net

Local voluntary and community organisations

For a list of voluntary and community organisations visit the Sheffield

Directory: www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk

Age UK Sheffield:

www.ageuk.org.uk/sheffield/ Tel: 0114 250 2850.

Disability Sheffield:

www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk Tel: 0114 253 6750.

Sheffield Mencap & Gateway:

www.sheffieldmencap.org.uk Tel: 0114 276 7757.

Sheffield Carers Centre:

sheffieldcarers.org.uk Tel: 0114 272 8362.

Sheffield Young Carers:

sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk Tel: 0114 258 4595.