

# A Guide to Supporting your Personal Assistant





Direct payments can help you take greater control over the support that you have been assessed as needing. For some people employing a Personal Assistant of their choice, someone they can get to know, and trust can be life changing and enables them to live a fuller and more independent lifestyle. However, with this option also comes some responsibilities. Employing a personal assistant means that you need to understand and comply with certain employment rules to ensure that you treat your personal assistant well and that you both get the best outcomes from the arrangement.

The Flintshire direct payments support service has produced a range of direct payments related information designed to give you relevant information and help you make choices that are right for you. Your allocated direct payments officer will discuss this information and the options available to you and provide appropriate support at every stage.

You can also access a variety of useful information at our web site, so please visit:

<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/Direct-Payments/Home.aspx>

**Please note:** The FCC Direct Payments Support Service cannot provide you with employment law advice, however they can support you to access appropriate advice and guidance via your dedicated direct payments insurance company.

If you have chosen to employ a Personal Assistant, this booklet will guide you through the key steps required to becoming a good and supportive employer.

Please remember that Support is available from the Direct Payments Support Service at every step of this process, so if you have any questions, please contact the team:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: [dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk)

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## **Step 1**

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### **Welcoming your new Personal Assistant to your employment**

Now that you have recruited your Personal Assistant it is important that you introduce them to working with you and begin to establish a positive working relationship.

#### **Induction**

Induction is the process through which your new employee will adjust or acclimatise to their new job. Every employer has a responsibility to have an induction that provides employees with a positive experience of their new employer.

Your induction doesn't have to be too detailed but should help your Personal Assistant understand what is expected from them in their role. The induction should also familiarise your new employee with their working arrangements relating to time, location, and flexible working, if available as well as the culture you want. Talk to your new employee about the things that are important to you, like trust, respect, privacy etc. Your induction should also provide information specific to your Personal Assistant's role.

Discuss your Personal Assistants probationary period and ensure that they are clear about how it will be used. The probationary period usually lasts for the first 6 months of their employment and is a two-way process. The probation period should help you decide whether the PA is fulfilling your expectations and enable them to think about whether they are suited to the job. Set aside some time to speak with your Personal Assistant during the probation period so that you can talk about what is working well, or not going so well. You could also use this as an opportunity to talk about any training that your personal assistant may need.

At the end of the probationary period either confirm that you would like your employee to continue their role or that you'd like to extend the probationary period. If you are worried about any aspect of their work, and have previously discussed this with them, then you may extend their probationary period by one to three months or end their employment.

For support and an induction checklist to help you manage your Personal Assistants first couple of weeks please speak with your allocated direct payments support officer or contact the Direct Payments Support Service:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: [dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk)

#### **Personal Assistant Handbook**

Talk through the handbook with your new personal assistant and provide them with a copy. This booklet has been designed to help you to welcome your new employee and to help them, understand expectations of the role. Ask your personal assistant to sign up to the voluntary code of conduct for personal assistants working in Flintshire and answer any questions they may have.

This code sets out the conduct expected from your Personal Assistant and will help establish a mutual understanding.

The code is intended to complement rather than replace or duplicate existing employers' policies and it forms part of a broader package of resources that relate to the employment of staff.

For support and a copy of the Personal Assistant Handbook please speak with your

allocated direct payments support officer or contact the Direct Payments Support Service:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: [dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you can download a copy of the handbook by following the link below:

<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Social-Services/Direct-Payments/Personal-Assistant-Handbook.pdf>

## Employee Assistance Program

You may want to consider supporting your personal assistant with an optional support scheme. Such schemes demonstrate your commitment to the well-being and professional growth of your personal assistant.

By investing in your personal assistant in this way you can improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates. Employers that prioritise the well-being of their personal assistants and provide them with professional resources and rewards gain a positive reputation that could help reduce recruitment time.

Employee Assistant Programmes commonly offer the following key benefits to personal assistants:

- ✓ Personal ID Badge
- ✓ 24/7 counselling and advice line
- ✓ 24/7 Telephone access to personal legal support
- ✓ 24/7 Telephone access to personal financial and debt information & support
- ✓ Well-being support
- ✓ Exclusive rewards and discounts

If you would like further information about available Employee Assistant Programmes, please speak with your allocated direct payments support officer or contact the Direct Payments Support Service:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: [dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk)

## Working time, hours & breaks

This will be the hours you want your personal assistant to work. Talk to your personal assistant about the hours of support you need, flexibility and expectations. You want the arrangement to work for both of you so good communication is key.

It is also an opportunity to say what the process is if your personal assistant is going to be late or is unable to turn up for work.

Whilst it is recognised that from time to time you may ask your personal assistant to work additional hours, it is not best practice to regularly expect them to work more than 48 hours per week.

Your personal assistant is entitled to regular rest periods. This is in addition to any holiday entitlement.

If your personal assistant is aged 16 or 17, they are referred to as a young worker and certain restrictions apply.

Please refer to current Government guidelines for further information as these may change periodically. If in any doubt, please contact the Direct Payments Support Service who will be happy to signpost you to the information you need.

### **Reasonable paid & unpaid time off**

You must allow paid time off for your personal assistant to attend things like:

- Ante-natal classes
- Training

You must also allow your personal assistant unpaid time off. This includes for things like attending to family emergencies, and time to perform public duties like jury service or acting as a school governor.

### **Annual Leave**

You should talk to your personal assistant about how much holiday they are entitled to each year and when the holiday year starts and ends. You should both keep a record of annual leave taken to avoid any misunderstandings.

Every employee has the right to paid holiday whether they work:

- Full time
- Part time
- Under a casual contract

The number of days they are entitled to can depend on a range of factors.

For support to calculate and/or manage your personal assistants holiday entitlement please speak with your allocated direct payments support officer or contact the Direct Payments Support Service:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: [dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk)

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## ***Step 2***

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### **Supervising your Personal Assistant**

It is important that you regularly talk to your PA to ensure that you are both satisfied with the arrangement and any difficulties are addressed before they become a problem. Your PA will need to know when they are doing a good job and similarly if there are things that they could do differently.

#### **Supervision**

Your Personal Assistant has been employed to help you to achieve the things that are important to you and to help you live a better life with the support you need. In many ways they are your most valuable resource and effective supervision plays a key role in supporting them to provide you with high quality care and support.

Effective supervision supports good working relationships, helps you to address issues and celebrate achievements, gives you the opportunity to discuss learning and development and ensure that they are competent and confident to carry out their role.

For support around supervising your personal assistant, supervision templates or further information please speak with a member of the Flintshire Direct Payments Support Service:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: [dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk)

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## ***Step 3***

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### **Annual Appraisal**

Appraisals can also play an important role in helping your personal assistant develop and improve within their role.

- Appraisals are an annual event
- This is an opportunity for you and your personal assistant to look at what has been achieved and review any goals that had been set.
- Appraisals are an opportunity to motivate and celebrate successes over the past year as well as identify any lessons learnt and training needed.

Appraisals don't need to be complicated, but the time taken to check that everything is working in the way you want it to will be time well spent.

For support around conducting an Appraisal with your personal assistant, templates or further information please speak with a member of the Flintshire Direct Payments Support Service:

Tel: 01352 701100

Email: [dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:dp.support@flintshire.gov.uk)

### **Why do appraisals & supervisions?**

- ✓ They help ensure your personal assistant knows their job and what is expected of them.
- ✓ As their employer it helps keep you informed of how they are doing.
- ✓ Ensures your personal assistant understands what the expected values and behaviours at work are.
- ✓ Provides your personal assistant with a regular opportunity to voice concerns and highlight positives.
- ✓ Identifies learning and development needs for both your personal assistant and you as an employer.
- ✓ Ensures your personal assistant is feeling valued and supported in their role.
- ✓ Identifies your personal assistants' strengths and areas for development.
- ✓ The well-being of your personal assistant is being cared for and it shows that you are a conscientious employer.



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## Step 4

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### Training & Development

Ensuring that your personal assistant gets opportunities for personal development and to receive the training they need to do their job well is critical. Having well trained personal assistants helps ensure the safety of both personal assistant and the recipient of the care and support.

Adequate training helps instil the essential attitudes, behaviours, skills, and knowledge required to deliver high quality, safe and person-centred care & support. Training can also equip your personal assistant with the knowledge they need to reduce risks and respond appropriately should a situation arise whilst they are working.

#### Why should I provide training for my personal assistant?

- ✓ Meeting your responsibilities as an employer
- ✓ Developing your personal assistant's knowledge and skills
- ✓ Ensuring a safe working environment
- ✓ Demonstrating your commitment to and value of your employees
- ✓ Ensure the delivery of safe and effective care and support
- ✓ Creating a positive and supportive workplace culture.

### Flintshire Social Services Workforce Development

Flintshire Social Services provide and/or arrange a broad range of training to the whole social care workforce. Your personal assistant is eligible to apply for any training that would assist them in carrying out their role effectively.

#### E-Learning

Flintshire Direct Payments Support Service have worked with a highly regarded training provider call Grey Matter Learning. GML have developed a bespoke package of 7 training modules for Flintshire personal assistants to be completed as part of their induction. Once completed each personal assistant will receive a certificate and payment for the 6 hrs it has taken them to complete the modules. Once enrolled personal assistants can access a wide variety of additional eLearning that they can complete in their own time.

#### Specialist Training

Occasionally personal assistants require training of a specialist nature that cannot easily be provided locally. If this applies to your situation, please discuss with the direct payments support services using the contact details below.

For further information or support to access any training for your personal assistant please speak with a member of the Flintshire Direct Payments Support Service:

Tel: 01352 701100

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