

A Guide to Training Personal Assistants



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Local authorities may use the resource freely, inserting local information relevant to their own local authority and using alternative formats such as Large Print, Braille, Audio tape/CD, Electronic format or Easi-read.

Introduction

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for people employing personal assistants (PAs) who wish to know more about their responsibilities and options for training their PA.

What is the purpose of the Guide?

The guide aims to help those accessing direct payments to understand:

- what training is
- how training can be delivered
- why training your PA is so important

What is a PA?

A PA is someone who you pay to do the things that will make your life easier and make you more independent.

Instead of Social Services arranging for one of their staff to help you, you are given the money to employ someone yourself.

When you take on a PA, you become their employer . . . and as their employer you are in charge of their learning and development.

PART ONE

Why Train?

Understanding the benefits of training



Why Train?

Understanding the benefits of training

What is training?

Training is learning how to do something.

It is not just about being told how to do something or being given information. It is about learning how to **do** something differently, hopefully better. Training can happen in all sorts of different ways:

- Coaching or mentoring
- Being directly taught how to do something
- E-learning - learning by using a computer
- Going on a training course
- Watching someone else do the job
- Attending seminars or networking events
- Self-study by using books and training materials.

If you show your PA that you are interested in their development and their training, it will certainly increase their job satisfaction . . . and a happy PA is more likely to stay in a job where they feel valued.

Value of Training

There are lots of good reasons to offer training to your PA:

- It helps you to recruit and retain skilled PAs
- It helps reduce risks to you and those around you

- It helps the PA do their job better
- It shows them that you care about their development
- If training with others it reduces possible feelings of isolation
- It helps the PA to feel and become more professional

Your legal obligation

To comply with the law on Health & Safety you must provide information and training for your PA(s).

If you don't do this your Employer's Liability insurance may be invalid in the event that a claim is made against you. It could be that you just need to provide information on your care needs, explain the lay-out of your home, or how to use equipment such as a hoist. Or you may find that you need to provide more formal training in, for example, Health & Safety, Moving & Handling or First Aid.

Both you and your PA will enjoy the benefits of the right training . . . and it is a legal requirement you need to consider.

PART TWO

The Induction

Helping your PA to help you



The Induction

Helping your PA to help you

How do you know what training your PA needs?

The Induction is your PA's introduction to you and the work you wish them to do. A good Induction will help you to find out your PA's training needs and should cover:

- 1. Your lifestyle: how your PA can play a role in helping you**
- 2. General aspects of the job**
- 3. House rules and boundaries**
- 4. Tasks linked to their Job Description**
- 5. The Contract of Employment**
- 6. When things don't go as planned**

The Induction should take place as soon as your PA starts to work for you.

You will want to make sure that he or she understands your needs, your likes and dislikes, and how best to support you. This is the time to talk to your PA about what they enjoy, how they like to work, and how they like to train (more of this later).

The Induction is a great opportunity to get to know each other. If done well, it can make all the difference to your future relationship . . . so it's important to get it right. Think of it as building the foundations of your future together.

How you carry out the induction is up to you. You might plan it as a formal meeting, or you may be more comfortable discussing these things over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

The important thing is that your PA's Induction is a comfortable session in which you are both able to discuss your needs openly and honestly.

The following section takes you through the Induction discussion in more detail:

1. Your lifestyle

Take time to talk about the lifestyle you want and how they can play a role in helping you achieve that lifestyle.

Your PA may have concrete ideas about their role in supporting you which you don't agree with. Now is the time to sort out those differences to ensure that you get the best from each other.

2. General aspects of the job

You need to communicate clearly to your PA on certain aspects of their job, eg:

- How you like to be addressed.
- Dietary requirements and plans for eating - who decides on meals and drinks; who buys ingredients; when and where you wish to eat.
- Medication - what role they will have (if any) in administering medication.
- What happens on a day-to-day, hour-by-hour basis.
- How you like to be moved.
- Break periods for your PA - when, how frequently and for how long.
- How your equipment works and your expectations of your PA in using this.
- Emergency procedures.
- Whether you have religious beliefs which mean you like things done in a certain way.

3. House rules and boundaries

The induction is also the time to introduce your 'House Rules' and boundaries.

Your PA is likely to have a very personal relationship with you. So it's important that you both understand how that relationship will work from the start.

Communication is the key.

You will need to help your PA to understand how he or she can best meet your personal needs. Agree what the 'House Rules' are.

Topics you may wish to include in your House Rules include: smoking, language, habits, hygiene, privacy, confidentiality, cleaning, choice of food, clothing. The following table could help you to carry out this activity. Delete or add other areas for discussion depending on your needs:

Area	Boundary (examples only)
Confidentiality	Our relationship will centre on trust. This means you will not disclose personal information about me to anyone without my consent.
Smoking	You will not smoke in my home, but it is ok for you to smoke in my garden.
Telephone	You will be able to use my phone for emergencies and I would prefer you not to use your own mobile phone to take or make calls whilst with me.
Do the shopping	I want to choose where to shop and what for. When we are out, if people ask you about me when I am there or when I can hear them, ask them to talk to me directly.
Go out with my friends	I would like you to be there to help me when needed but not to be part of my social group.
Walk my dog/ feed my cat	I want to choose where you walk my dog when reasonable e.g. weather permitting.
Cook	I would like to choose what to eat and when and where to eat it on a daily basis.
Refreshments	You will bring your own food to work, but I will provide some refreshments such as tea and coffee.
Privacy	I would like to retain as much privacy as possible, this is really important to me. The sitting room is to be my private area.
Breakages	Within reason I will pay for any breakages.

4. Tasks linked to their Job Description

Once you have clarified the general role of the PA it is time to talk about the essentials of the job. Your aim is to ensure that your PA has no confusion about their role. Make sure your PA understands:

- Which tasks you want them to carry out
- Which tasks you **do not** want them to do
- When, where and how frequently these tasks are required

A good place to start is with the Job Description. This clearly details the day-to-day tasks, what you want your PA to do, how often, when and where. It also states the number of hours they will be working.

You can now break these tasks down into manageable steps. This is your chance to explain activities in more detail. **Use this discussion to identify any training your PA may need** by working through the list and assessing whether your PA already has the skills required. You can do this through discussion with and by looking at their prior experience or qualifications. Encourage your PA to ask questions about your needs, or about any medical or technical terms you are using. Have an open and honest discussion about your condition, explaining how this relates to what you can and cannot do for yourself.

Once you have identified your PA's knowledge or skill gaps, find out how your PA prefers to train. This will help you decide which way of learning would best suit your PA.

People learn in different ways. Some are happiest reading how to do something – so workbooks and written materials might suit them better. Others like to be shown or told how to do something, in which case attending a practical course might be better. Some like to simply 'get on with it' and learn from their mistakes as they go along. In this case, you would just have to decide if you can cope with a PA who prefers this way of learning!

The important thing to realise is that training doesn't just mean 'going on a course'. There are many different options for training your PA, and at the end of this discussion you should have a good idea of what training your PA will need.

5. The Contract of Employment

Next, it is often useful to work through the Contract of Employment (see example, Annex 1). Make sure your PA knows:

- Their hourly rate
- Their holiday entitlement
- What to do in the event they are off work with sickness
- How you will pay them and when

6. When Things Don't Go as Planned

The relationship between you and your PA is a close one, and sometimes it is only when someone starts working for you that you find out if they are the right person for you. That's why it is such a good idea to build in a probationary period, during which time you can check that everything is going well for you both.

Sometimes problems arise, such as poor time-keeping or behaviour that makes one or other of you uncomfortable. For this reason, it can be helpful to agree a set of guidelines to follow in the event that either you or your PA has a problem. This will help you both to resolve problems quickly and with the minimum amount of fuss. As well as talking about these rules and guidelines at the Induction, you should review them again, once your PA has been working with you for a while.

There is some information on grievance and disciplinary actions in the Contract of Employment section, but for more comprehensive advice visit www.acas.co.uk or your local Direct Payment support office.

PART 3

Next steps

What to do when you have identified training needs



Next steps

What to do when you have identified training needs

There will be a range of skills and knowledge that you may wish you PA to have, some of which may be pertinent to your own condition and needs. For this type of information, some of the organisations listed in the Annex will be able to supply useful information and guidance.

In addition, there are likely to be 'core' skills that your PA needs. This might include things such as:

Topic	Information needed
Understanding Direct Payments and Self Directed Support	Your local authority will provide information to help explain these terms. Also take a look at the In-Control and ILA information provide (see useful contacts).
Employment Rights and Issues for PA's	You will want to ensure that your PA understands their rights. They can gain this information by working through their Contract and their Terms and Conditions of Employment with you (see Annex 1) in order to address each issue, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sickness (what to do in the event of sickness, and when there is a need for self-certification or doctor's certificate)• Holidays (entitlement)• Payment (hourly rates)• Probationary period (what it is and how long it will last)• Notice period (length and process)• Disciplinary and Grievance (the procedure which will be used, when it will be implemented) Confidentiality (what it means and how to ensure discretion)

Risk Assessment

This process looks at and considers what could cause harm to you, your PA or others in the workplace (your home). This allows you to take the necessary precautions to prevent harm.

The process includes:

- Identifying potential hazards - such as a damp floor in the bathroom, cupboard doors left open, equipment that needs to be lifted, loose carpets, training in food hygiene.
- Weighing up the risks and taking a decision on the precautions needed.
- Deciding who might be harmed and how.
- Recording the findings and putting them into action.
- Identifying the safest way of moving you from one place to another.
- Checking that the PA knows how to lift you safely without hurting themselves. This training could be offered by your local authority and it will ensure that you are meeting your legal obligation to ensure safe working.
- Reviewing the assessment and updating if necessary.

See Annex 2 for more detailed information

Health & Safety

Your PA also needs to know what to do in the case of an emergency.

Do they know where the First Aid Kit is? Do they know how to use it? Do they know who to contact?

Health & Safety affects everyone at work, regardless of where the work place is located. Once you start accessing Direct Payments and employing a Personal Assistant, you have a responsibility to make sure that they work safely in a safe environment; in this case, their workplace is your home.

This means PAs need to know any procedures relating to lifting and handling, good hygiene and infection control (see Annex 3), and accident reporting.

PAs must always wear any protective clothing or equipment provided, and must be made aware that if your condition changes there may be an increase in the risk to you and their own health and safety.

Mental Capacity Act

This is focused on helping people who are not able to make some decisions for themselves.

Your PA must make sure that they find out what is in your best interests by listening to you, and by talking to people who know you. It applies to everyone working in health and social care. The key things for PAs to know in the context of the Mental Capacity Act are that:

- You can make your own decisions.
- They will give you all the support you need to help you make decisions.
- They will not stop you from making a decision just because they or someone else thinks it is wrong or bad.
- If they find that they have to make a decision on your behalf, it must be in your interest.
- If they do something or decide something for you they must try to limit your freedom and rights as little as possible.

Communication At the heart of good communication is good self awareness.

Basic skills such as looking at people when communicating with them, saying words clearly, listening carefully and checking for understanding are key. Being patient and offering unhurried time is also essential to ensuring good communication. To help your PA to understand that it is you who chooses how things are done, you could provide them with a few examples of things you would like them to ask you, such as:

“Are there things that you would like to do today?”

“How can I help you today?”

“Today is Tuesday. Are there things that you like to happen on a Tuesday? Do you have a schedule?”

Your PA's Specialist Training Needs

There are a number of people and organisations providing advice and information about training your PA, including:

Who	How to find out more
Your local authority	More and more local authorities (social services departments) are offering training to PAs, in topics such as First Aid, Basic Food Hygiene and Manual Handling as well as in other more specific areas. To find out more visit www.logontocare.org.uk or contact your local authority directly.
Local colleges and private training providers	To find out who is offering training in your area visit: http://www.employersguide.org.uk/egt/advanced_search Or just contact your local college and ask for the social care department.
Health and Social Care professionals such as Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Community Nurses	Professionals are often on hand to provide training in manual handling. Talk to your Direct Payments team about how you might be able to arrange any suitable training.
Voluntary and Community Organisations	Some voluntary or community organisations provide training, such as the Red Cross who provide First Aid training. Contact your local authority for more information about the organisations that might be able to assist in your area.

There are a number of organisations and websites providing helpful information which are listed at Annex 4.

Remember that you are one who best knows what you want, so be prepared to show and instruct your PA so that they can carry out tasks in the way you want.

Remember too that your PA can learn in different ways. It's not just about finding a course for them to go on. You telling the PA what you want, work shadowing, or support from Occupational Therapists, Community Nurses and Social Workers is of course also possible – check with your Local Authority.

Would NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) and VRQs (Vocationally Related Qualifications) be useful?

NVQ

In some social care settings there is a requirement to get staff qualified with an NVQ. It is not a formal requirement for PAs, but if your PA gains an NVQ it may prove useful in their support of you.

There are two levels of NVQ that may suit your PA:

- Health and Social Care Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs Grade A – C)
- Health and Social Care Level 3 (equivalent to A levels)

NVQs are assessed in the workplace and training providers may be able to come out to your home to support the assessment process.

For more detail on the content of an NVQ, and a breakdown of the Units which make up an NVQ please see Annex 5.

Funding for NVQs

PAs may be able to get an NVQ and other nationally recognised training completely funded through **Train to Gain**.

Train to Gain is the national skills service supporting employer's access to the right qualifications for their employees, to provide them with improved skills and a recognised qualification.

For many employees this qualification is fully funded by **Train to Gain**.

If you meet certain criteria, your PA will be able to access government funding for some NVQs. The level of NVQ your PA can undertake will depend on the tasks they are carrying out.

If you meet funding rules, you will be able to access the award free.

There are several ways you can find out more:

- Phone the **Train to Gain** number on 0800 015 55 45
- Go to their website www.traintogain.gov.uk

- Contact your local College and speak to someone in the Social Care Department who will be able to advise you if they can support you through the qualification.

You will be offered one to one advice and someone will support you in identifying the right qualification for you and your PA.

If you don't know a training provider, the **Train to Gain** service will help you by arranging for the right person to meet with you at a time and place to suit you.

VRQ

It may be that a VRQ would be more suitable for your PA. VRQs tend to be more traditionally delivered, usually in a classroom, enabling the trainee to go back to the workplace to apply the skills and information they have gained. The assessment is usually undertaken at the end of the course.

VRQs hold the same value as NVQs.

The Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) makes it possible for trainees to mix and match various bits of awards to make up a whole qualification. The QCF is a new way of recognising skills and qualifications by awarding credit for qualifications and units (small steps of learning). It enables people to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes. The advent of QCF will allow you to closely match what you need your PA to learn with a qualification which equips them with just the right skills.

If this sounds right for you and your PA, your PA will need to register with a College or a Training Provider who offers those NVQs and VRQs.

There may be funding available to pay for the whole qualification, but your PA will need to meet certain criteria. Check this information with the training provider.

See www.logontocare.co.uk and www.traintogain.gov.uk for further details.

The Training Record

An easy to follow plan

In view of your legal obligation to train your PA, it is a good idea to record the training that they do.

A simple table like the one below can help you do this. You may wish to supplement this with specific guidelines (see example relating to Bed Baths):

Example of Training Plan

Training	How delivered	Date	PA's Comments	Review date
House Rules and Boundaries	As part of Induction	13/01/09	Helpful	31/03/09
Bed Baths	As part of Induction	13/01/09	Additional sheet given as attached (example below)	13/01/10
First Aid	Course : Local Authority	24/03/09	Useful	24/03/10
Dementia awareness	www.logonto care e-learning	31/03/09	More awareness of dementia	31/10/09

Bed Bath (example to accompany Training Record)

It is important to retain as much of my personal dignity as possible when giving bed baths.

Equipment

Basin of warm water

Soap and soap dish

Towels and washcloths (two or three of each, if possible)

Procedure

- First of all put all the things needed in reach.
- Check the room is warm and that the door is closed to protect my privacy and dignity.
- Wash your hands.
- Fill the basin with warm water, and test temperature on wrist to prevent scalding.
- Help me to the side of the bed.
- Remove clothes while providing warmth and privacy with a covering such as a blanket.
- Take a flannel and wrap this around your hand tightly, forming a mitt. This stops splashing water on you, me and the bed!
- Hand me a soapy flannel so I can wash my own face, right arm and upper body.
- Bathe my left arm, stroking the arm from wrist to shoulder.
- Provide the basin for me to soak my hands.
- Scrub my fingers nails.
- Change the water.
- I will clean my abdomen and perennial area. Please provide a flannel and towel close by to allow me to do this in privacy.
- Change the water.
- Bathe my feet.
- Soak my feet in a basin.
- Change the water.
- Help me lie on my side and wash my back and give me a backrub.
- Wash your hands.
- Help me dress.

Disclaimer

Whilst the authors of this guide have endeavoured to provide accurate information, we make no warranty or representation of any kind with respect to the information included herein or its completeness or accuracy. We are not responsible for any action taken as a result of relying on or in any way using information contained in this guide and in no event shall be liable for any damages resulting from reliance on or use of this information. We also make no representations as to the accuracy of the information provided on any of the sites linked to this guide and obviously cannot be responsible for any information contained at those sites.

Users should, as with all information or reference material, use their own best judgment as to the usefulness and accuracy of any information presented. None of the information provided is intended as legal advice and users should take specific advice from a qualified solicitor or other professional if necessary. This guide could contain inaccuracies, and changes to the information contained herein may be made at any time.

Annexes

The Contract of Employment

When you have chosen someone that you are happy with, it is important to have a written contract. With this, the PA knows what is expected of them, and it can be helpful in sorting out misunderstandings. It also helps you to be clear in your own mind about what you are expecting from them.

The contract should include clear information about what the job involves, pay, holidays, notice and disciplinary procedures. You can add to/delete from the following example to meet your needs.

Contract of Employment

You are strongly advised to seek advice from your local Direct Payment Team before committing to a contract. This example is given as general guidance only. Further advice along with an opportunity to create a contract of employment is available at www.businesslink.gov.uk.

I (*your name*):

Of (*insert your address*):

Am employing you (*insert your PA's name*):

Of (*insert your PA's address*):

To work as my Personal Assistant, starting (*insert date*):

The job

You will carry out the activities listed in the attached sheet (*you will need to attach a sheet which lists the activities*).

Place of work

Your place of work will be (*insert full address*) although there may be occasion that you will work away from this place with, or without my presence, e.g. to carry out shopping tasks. You are not expected to work overseas.

Probationary period

You will firstly work for me on a Probationary Period for (*insert 3 to 6 months*). Either of us may end this contract by giving one week's notice during this time. We will meet at the end of this period to discuss whether the contract will be made permanent.

Hours worked

The shift pattern you will work is as follows:

(*insert days and times to be worked*)

Additional days/hours that you may be asked to work include (*insert if wish to include bank holidays, weekends, overtime*). I will give reasonable notice of requests for additional work (*insert how much notice, such as one month*). You will have (*insert length of time they have to confirm acceptance of request such as a week*) to let me know whether you are happy to meet this request.

Payment

You will be paid on the last day of the month (*state whether by cheque, bank transfer, other*) as follows (*insert payment*):

£x per hour gross Monday to Friday

£x per hour gross Saturday and Sunday

£x per hour gross Bank Holidays

£x per hour gross overtime

Holiday entitlement

You are entitled todays holiday per year. This excludes public holidays. Your holiday year begins on.....

Sickness

If you are unable to come to work because of illness, then you will let me know as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made.

In the event of sickness, self-certification is allowed for three days after which you must provide a Doctor's Certificate. You will be entitled to a maximum ofdays' sick pay in any one year. This is subject to the requirements to notify

me and provide evidence of your incapacity. After this you may be entitled to statutory sick pay.

Pension scheme

There is no company pension scheme and therefore there is no contracting out certificate in force for this employment under the Pension Schemes Act 1993.

Notice

After the probationary period I will give (*insert minimum one*) week's notice if you have been continuously employed for up to two years, and a further week's notice for every additional year worked up to a maximum of twelve weeks' notice. I reserve the right to pay you your salary in lieu of notice instead of you working your notice period. In the event of gross misconduct or gross negligence I may end your employment immediately.

You will give me four weeks' notice if you wish to leave.

Confidentiality

You will respect my privacy and will have a professional approach at all times, will keep information about me confidential and will not discuss my household and domestic circumstances with others without my permission.

Trade union

You are entitled to join a Trade Union of your choice.

Disciplinary procedure

It is my policy that the following procedure will be followed when you may be being disciplined or dismissed. The procedure provides that in normal cases a series of warnings will be given before discipline or dismissal is contemplated. The stages of the procedure that apply when discipline or dismissal is being contemplated comply with the statutory dismissal and grievance procedures.

Matters which may be dealt with under this disciplinary and dismissal procedure include discipline and dismissal for the following reasons:

- misconduct
- sub-standard performance
- harassment or victimisation
- misuse of company facilities including computer facilities (e.g. email and the Internet)

- poor timekeeping
- unauthorised absences

Minor cases of misconduct and most cases of poor performance may be dealt with by informal advice, coaching and counselling. An informal oral warning may be given, which does not count as part of the formal (or statutory) disciplinary procedure. No formal record of this type of warning will be kept.

If there is no improvement or the matter is serious enough, you will be invited to a disciplinary meeting at which the matter can be properly discussed. You will be allowed to bring a work colleague or Trade Union representative to the meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated to you. There are the following possible outcomes:

An oral warning in the case of a minor infringement. You have the right to appeal against a formal oral or written warning.

A written warning if the infringement is more serious or there is no improvement in conduct after a formal oral warning. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement or change in behaviour required and timescale allowed for this, the right of appeal and the fact that a final written warning may be given if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. A copy of the written warning will be kept on file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after (*specify period e.g. 12 months*).

A final written warning where there is a failure to improve or change behaviour during the period of the prior formal written warning as above, or where the infringement is sufficiently serious. This will give details of the complaint, warn that failure to improve will lead to dismissal and refer to right to appeal. A copy of the final warning will be kept on file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after (*specify period e.g. 12 months*).

Dismissal

If your conduct or performance still fails to improve then the final step will be to contemplate dismissal. I will follow the 'Standard Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure' in order to do this as follows:

The Standard Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure

Step 1: Employer gives employee a written statement and calls a hearing

The employer will set out in writing your alleged conduct, characteristics or other circumstances which lead the employer to contemplate dismissing or taking

disciplinary action against you. The employer will inform you, in the written statement, of the basis on which he has made the allegations against you. If possible the employer will provide you with copies of any relevant evidence against you. The employer will invite you to a hearing to discuss the matter.

Step 2: Meeting is held and employer informs employee of the outcome

The meeting will take place before any action, other than suspension on full pay, is taken. The meeting will be held without undue delay but only when you have had a reasonable opportunity to consider your response to the employer's written statement and any further verbal explanation the employer has provided. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

After the meeting the employer will inform you of his/her decision and notify you of your right to appeal against the decision if you are not satisfied with it. You must appeal to complete the statutory procedure.

Step 3: Appeal against the disciplinary decision if necessary

If you wish to appeal you must inform me in writing within a reasonable time. If you do this the employer will invite you to attend a further meeting. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. If practicable a more senior manager not previously involved in the disciplinary procedure will hear the appeal. The appeal hearing may take place before or after dismissal or disciplinary action has taken effect. After the appeal hearing the employer will inform you of his/her final decision and will confirm it in writing as soon as practicable.

Gross misconduct

If after investigation it is confirmed that you have committed one of the following offences (the list is not exhaustive), you will normally be dismissed:

- theft
- fraud and deliberate falsification of records
- physical violence
- serious bullying or harassment
- deliberate damage to property
- serious insubordination
- misuse of an organisation's property or name
- bringing the employer into serious disrepute
- serious incapability whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs

- serious negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- serious infringement of health and safety rules
- serious breach of confidence (subject to the Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998)

While the alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, you may be suspended, during which time you will be paid. Any decision to dismiss will be taken by your employer only after a full investigation.

The Standard Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure applies to dismissals for gross misconduct.

Modified Dismissal Procedure

In a few cases of gross misconduct the employer may be justified in dismissing immediately without conducting an investigation. In these cases a two-step 'Modified Dismissal Procedure' will be followed, otherwise the dismissal will be automatically unfair.

Step 1: Employer gives written statement

The employer must give you a written statement setting out the conduct that has resulted in the dismissal and informing you of the right to appeal against the decision to dismiss. You must appeal to complete the statutory procedure.

Step 2: Appeal against the disciplinary decision

If you wish to appeal you must inform (*insert name*). A meeting must be held (in accordance with the general principles set out above). The employer must inform you of his decision following the meeting.

General principles

The following principles apply to the Standard Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedure and the Modified Dismissal Procedure set out above:

1. The person who has authority to discipline you in accordance with this procedure is (*insert name*).
2. You have the right to be accompanied to any meeting by a Trade Union representative or a fellow employee.
3. Each step in the procedure will be taken without unreasonable delay and hearings will be held at reasonable times and locations.

4. Meetings will be conducted in a manner that enables both employer and employee to explain their cases.
5. Records will be kept detailing the nature of any breach of disciplinary rules or unsatisfactory performance, your defence or mitigation, the action taken and the reasons for it, whether an appeal was lodged, its outcome and any subsequent developments. These records will be kept confidential.

Grievance Procedure

It is company policy to ensure that any employee with a grievance has access to a procedure which can lead to a speedy resolution of the grievance in a fair manner.

Most routine complaints and grievances are best resolved informally in discussion with your immediate line manager.

Where the grievance cannot be resolved informally it will be dealt with under the following procedure that complies with the statutory standard three-step grievance procedure.

The Standard Grievance Procedure

Step 1: Employee gives written statement of grievance

You must put your grievance in a written statement of grievance and send a copy to (*insert name*). Where the grievance is against the line manager the matter should be raised with a more senior manager if there is one.

Step 2: Meeting is held and employer informs employee of the outcome

The employer will invite you to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance. The meeting will only take place once you have informed the employer of the basis for the grievance you have set out in your written statement, and the employer has had a reasonable opportunity to consider what response to make. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

After the meeting the employer must inform you of the decision taken in response to the grievance and notify you of your right to appeal if you are not satisfied with the employer's decision. You must appeal to complete the statutory procedure.

Step 3: Appeal if necessary

If you wish to appeal you must inform the employer. The employer will then invite you to attend another meeting. You must take all reasonable steps to attend. If

reasonably practicable, a more senior manager who has not been involved in the grievance procedure so far will deal with the appeal. After the meeting the employer must inform you of the decision taken.

The Modified Grievance Procedure

The Modified Grievance Procedure will apply in relation to your grievance only if:

- You no longer work for the employer
- You have agreed with your employer in writing that it will apply
- You raised it before you left, but the standard procedure wasn't completed
- You didn't raise it until after you left

There are two steps within the Modified Grievance Procedure:

Step 1: Employee gives written statement of grievance

You must put your grievance in a written statement and send a copy to the employer.

Step 2: Employer gives written response

The employer must write back to you giving his response to the points you have raised.

Principles applicable to the Standard and Modified Grievance Procedure

1. Each step in the grievance procedure should be carried out without unreasonable delay. The times and locations of meetings should be reasonable.
2. Meetings must be conducted in a way that allows both parties to explain their case.
3. Records should be kept detailing the nature of the grievance raised, the employer's response, any action taken and the reasons for it. These records should be kept confidential.
4. You have the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a Trade Union representative or a fellow employee.
5. There are some cases in which the statutory procedure does not have to be followed or does not have to be followed in full, for example where your

grievance is about the fact the employer intends to dismiss you. In these cases, the employer will not necessarily follow the statutory procedures set out above.

If you want to seek resolution of a grievance you must contact (*insert name*).

Signature of Employer:

Date:

Signature of Personal Assistant:

Date:

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment helps you to focus on the risks that really matter in your home – now deemed the workplace.

Assessing risk and minimising risk is usually straightforward and often common sense; for instance, making sure spills are cleaned up promptly so no-one can slip, or ensuring mats are not ruffled to avoid tripping.

Risk assessments form part of the Health and Safety at Work Act. The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as “reasonably practicable”.

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or need to do more to prevent harm. Workers and others have a right to be protected from harm which is caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures.

You are legally required to assess the risks in your workplace so that you can put plans in place to control the risks.

Five steps to a risk assessment

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Review your assessment and update if necessary

In many cases the risks are easy to identify. You know what puts you at risk and you can work with your employee to identify risks. For instance, what is the safest way to assist you in moving from one position to another? Does the PA know how to lift you safely without hurting themselves or you? Check that you have taken reasonable precautions to avoid injury.

As the employer, it is for you and your PA to work out the safest way for tasks to be carried out with minimum risk, and to review this periodically. This could include things like how to use lifting equipment properly, training in food hygiene if their role involves preparing your food, or allowing sufficient time to undertake a task.

Most of this simply involves common sense. If you talk about it, you will know what puts you at risk, and your PA will know what puts her or him at risk.

When thinking about your risk assessment, remember:

- A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm, such as carrying or moving loads, climbing on chairs, loose carpets.
- The **risk** is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Step 1: Identify the hazards

This is your home and because you live here every day it is easy to overlook some hazards. So, here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

- **Move around** your home/workplace and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.
- **Ask your PA** what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you.
- **Check manufacturers' instructions** on chemicals and equipment as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards (e.g. bleach is harmful to skin).

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk.

Think about:

- Some workers have specific requirements and may be at particular risk, e.g. new and young workers or expectant mothers.
- Do you have more than one person coming into your home/workplace for different tasks?
- Talk to your PA and ask them if they think you may have missed anything.

In each case, identify how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Having spotted the hazards, you need to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything “reasonably practicable” to protect people from harm.

So, first look at what you’re already doing. Have you already minimised the risk? Is there more you should be doing? Decide:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

When controlling risks, apply the principles below - if possible in the following order:

- Try a less risky option (e.g. switch to using a less hazardous chemical);
- Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. put a fire guard up in front of the fire);
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard
- Issue personal protective equipment (e.g. overall, plastic gloves);
- Provide safe and healthy facilities (e.g. first aid and washing facilities)

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. Involve your PA, so that you can be sure that what you propose will work in practice and won’t introduce any new hazards.

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

If you have fewer than five employees you do not have to write anything down. However, it is useful to keep a record, so that you can review it at a later date if something changes.

When writing down your results, keep it simple, for example:

“Slippery bathroom floor after bathing. Slip mat provided. Employee instructed to ensure it is used. Check for any wear on mat regularly”

You need to be able to show that:

- A proper check was made
- You asked who might be affected
- You dealt with all the obvious hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved

- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low
- You involved your employee

If you find that you need quite a lot of improvements, don't try to do everything at once. Make a plan of action – prioritise and tackle the most important things first. As you complete each action, tick it off your plan.

Step 5: Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

Few places stay the same.

Sooner or later, you will bring in new equipment, substances and procedures that could lead to new hazards. So it makes sense to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. Every year or so, formally review where you are to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back. Look at your risk assessment again. Have there been any changes? Are there improvements you still need to make? Has your employee spotted a problem? Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

During the year, if there is a significant change, don't wait – check your risk assessment and amend it where necessary. If possible, it is best to think about the risk assessment when you're planning your change. That way you leave yourself more flexibility.

Here is an example of a risk assessment form you can use to check for any hazards in your home. You can add to it, change it or make up your own version.

Activity to risk assess	Is there a risk? YES	Is there a risk? NO	Comments and actions
Personal Care			
Does my personal assistant help me to get in and out of the bath?			
Does my personal assistant help me with my toileting needs?			
Is the bathroom difficult to move around in?			
Does the floor get wet and slippery?			
Does my personal assistant need to bring any equipment into the bathroom – e.g. wheelchair?			
Has my personal assistant got protective clothing?			
Does my medical condition give us both a risk while I am having a bath?			
Is the water a safe temperature?			
Date completed:	Completed by:		

Infection Control

What is infection control?

Infection control means doing everything possible to prevent the spread of infection amongst PAs, other health care workers, visitors and YOU.

Why is infection control important?

Your PA may work in other care settings where frequent contact is made between people who have an infection or can spread one, or people who can become easily infected. This doesn't have to be a care setting – home settings carry nearly as many germs.

Did you know that every time you cough, you send germs into the air at speeds faster than 100 mph! More than 90% of colds and other upper respiratory infections are caused by viruses - not bacteria. So, it's important to be aware that some types of procedures can increase a person's risk of infection.

Preventing infections is important to help people recover quickly and stay as healthy as possible.

Who can get an infection?

Anyone can get an infection, but some people are at special risk because their immune systems are weak. Others are at risk because they have had a procedure that, while saving their life, may have increased their risk of infection.

What are the conditions that must be present for a person to get an infection?

- First, there must be a germ: bacteria or virus, fungus or parasite.
- There must be a place for the germ to live in a person, an animal, a plant, food, or soil.
- The person must be at risk from an infection and unable to fight it off.
- There must be some way for the germ to enter the person or 'host' through tubes, needles, or body sites (open skin, the mouth, or the nose). An expectant mother can also pass germs to her unborn baby.

How can infections be spread?

- By direct contact, such as touching an open wound with unwashed hands.
- By indirect contact, such as when a person has contact with something that is contaminated (dirty).
- By being carried through the air, such as when people sneeze or cough.

How can you keep from getting an infection or spreading one to someone else?
Cleanliness is the key to infection control. The best way to prevent the spread of infection is through good hand-washing.

How should you wash your hands?

Wash your hands by rubbing them together for 10 to 15 seconds, using soap and lots of water.

When should you wash your hands?

- After using the toilet, blowing your nose, or sneezing.
- After handling contaminated (dirty) items.
- Before and after eating, drinking, or handling food.
- When your hands look dirty.
- Everyone should wash his or her hands before they start their care duties.

How else can you help prevent infections?

- Always use good personal hygiene.
- If you have an illness that could be dangerous to others, don't visit them or go to work while you are infectious.
- If you have questions about certain situations, ask a doctor or nurse.
- Be aware of infection possibilities and early signs of infection (redness, swelling, fever).

Other things to know:

- To keep germs from growing, foods must be refrigerated as needed.
- Food left unrefrigerated or in the open may attract flies and grow bacteria.

Additional Information and Support

Websites

www.logontocare.org.uk - a resource providing social care information about learning in the Thames Valley region, and free on-line interactive training modules in topics such as dementia awareness, diversity awareness, Health & Safety in care, Infection Control, managing challenging behaviour, managing medication, Mental Capacity Act and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

www.caringwithconfidence.net - provides a range of learning options for unpaid carers. Much of this information will be relevant to PAs.

www.panet.org.uk - provides information and guidance to PAs and those employing or considering employing a PA.

www.learndirect.co.uk - a national provider of on-line learning.

www.cis-assessment.co.uk – providers of online assessments in partnership with Local Authorities and voluntary and community organisations linked to the Skills for Care Induction Standards.

www.ncil.org.uk - the National Centre for Independent Living is a not for profit organisation that is run and controlled by disabled people and which aims to promote independent living.

Organisations

If you wish to contact **local support organisations**, your local council should be able to provide you with details. You can also obtain information about local support organisations from the National Centre for Independent Living. A list of local services is published on their website as below.

National Centre for Independent Living

4th Floor, Hampton House, 20 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TJ

Tel: 020 7587 1663

Fax: 020 7582 2469

Textphone: 020 7587 1177

Website: www.ncil.org.uk

Email: ncil@ncil.org.uk

Values into Action

Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2 6HG

Tel: 020 7729 5436

Fax: 020 7729 7797

Website: www.viauk.org

Email: general@viauk.org

People First

299 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2TJ

Tel: 020 7485 6660

Fax: 020 7485 6664

Carers UK

20/25 Glasshouse Yard, London EC1A 4JT

Tel: 0808 808 7777

Fax: 020 7490 8824

Website: www.carersonline.org.uk

Email: info@ukcarers.org

Contact a Family

209–211 City Road, London EC1V 1JN

Tel: 020 7608 8700

Fax: 020 7608 8701

Textphone: 0808 808 3556

Helpline 0808 808 3555 For parents and families with disabled children
(10am–4pm, Mon–Fri)

Website: www.cafamily.org.uk

Email: info@cafamily.org.uk

Council for Disabled Children, National Children's Bureau

8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE

Tel: 020 7843 1900

Fax: 020 7843 6313

Website: www.ncb.org.uk

Email: cdc@ncb.org.uk

MIND (The Mental Health Charity)

15–19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ

Tel: 020 8519 2122

Fax: 020 8522 1725

Website: www.mind.org.uk

Email: contact@mind.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

Gordon House, 10 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1PH

Tel: 020 7306 0606

Fax: 020 7306 0808

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Email: enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk

Help the Aged

207–221 Pentonville Road, London N1 9UZ

Tel: 020 7278 1114

Fax: 020 7278 1116

Website: www.helptheaged.org.uk

Email: info@helptheaged.org.uk

The National Centre for Disabled Parents

Unit F9, 89–93 Fonthill Road, London N4 3JH

Tel: 0800 018 4730

Fax: 020 7263 6399

Textphone: 0800 018 9949

Website: www.dppi.org.uk

Email: info@dppi.org.uk

Disability Alliance

Universal House, 88–94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA

Tel (voice and minicom): 020 7247 8776 **Fax:** 020 7247 8765

Website: www.disabilityalliance.org

Disabled Parents Network

81 Melton Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 8EN **Tel:** 08702 410450

Website: www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk

Border and Immigration Agency

Information on work permits

Website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk

Skills for Care

Skills for Care, Albion Court, 5 Albion Place, Leeds LS1 6JL

Tel: 0113 245 1716

Website: www.skillsforcare.org.uk

In Control

In Control Support Centre, Carillon House, Chapel Lane, Wythall, West Midlands B47 6JX

Tel: 01564 821650

Website: www.in-control.org.uk

Publications

Direct Payments Guidance. Published by the Department of Health. Copies are available from Department of Health, PO Box 777, London SE1 6XH or email at dh@prolog.uk.com.

Everything You Need to Know about Getting and Using Direct Payments.

Published by the National Centre for Independent Living, (address as above).

Independently, the newsletter from the National Centre for Independent Living, is available from www.ncil.org.uk (address as above).

The Rough Guide to Managing Personal Assistants. Published by the National Centre for Independent Living, (address as above).

Funding Freedom: 2000. Published by Values into Action (address as above).

Plain Facts: Direct Payments for People with Learning Difficulties.

Published by Values into Action (address as above).

Making Decisions: Best Practice and New Ideas for Supporting People with High Support Needs to Make Decisions. Published by Values into Action (address as above).

Publications relating to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 can be obtained by writing to: The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Helpline, FREEPOST MID 02164, Stratford-on-Avon CV37 BR, or by contacting the DRC helpline on 0845 7622 633 or textphone 0845 7622 644

National Vocational Qualification

There are two levels of NVQ that may be suitable for your PA to undertake:

- Health and Social Care Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs Grade A – C)
- Health and Social Care Level 3 (equivalent to A levels)

NVQs are assessed in the workplace and training providers may be able to come out to your home to support the assessment process.

The following is a breakdown of ALL the units in the Level 2 Award. To complete a full Level 2 you have to take the four mandatory units and two others of your choice. We have highlighted some that may be relevant to your role as a PA, but of course you should decide on units that suit you, the person you support and your role.

Level 2 National Occupational Standards

Unit title	NVQ Unit Link	Possible unit for PA role
Mandatory Units		
Communicate with, and complete records for individuals	HCS 21	
Support the health and safety of yourself and individuals	HCS22	
Develop your knowledge and practice	HCS23	
Ensure your own actions support the care, protection and well-being of individuals	HCS24	
Personal care and support needs	NVQ Unit Link	
Carry out and provide feedback on specific plan of care activities	HSC25	
Support individuals to access and use information	HSC26	✓
Support individuals in their daily living	HSC27	✓
Support individuals to make journeys	HSC28	✓

Support individuals to meet their domestic and personal needs	HSC29	✓
Support individuals to access and participate in recreational activities	HSC210	✓
Support individuals to take part in development activities	HSC211	✓
Support individuals during therapy sessions	HSC212	
Provide food and drink for individuals	HSC213	✓
Help individuals to eat and drink	HSC214	✓
Help individuals to keep mobile	HSC215	✓
Help address the physical comfort needs of individuals	HSC216	✓
Support individuals with their personal care needs	HSC218	✓
Support individuals to manage continence	HSC219	
Contribute to moving and handling individuals	HSC223	
Observe, monitor and record the conditions of individuals	HSC224	
Support individuals to undertake and monitor their own health care	HSC225	
Support individuals who are distressed	HSC226	
Contribute to working in collaboration with carers in the caring role	HSC227	
Relate to, and interact with, individuals	HSC233	✓
Enable individuals to negotiate specific environments	HSC235	✓
Manage and organise time and activities to support individuals in the community	HSC244	
Contribute to effective group care	HSC228	
Contribute to the care of a deceased person	HSC239	
Health and safety Needs		
Contribute to the identification of the risk of danger to individuals and others	HSC240	
Protect yourself from the risk of violence at work	HSC232	

Gain access to, and ensure individuals' homes are secure	HSC229	
Receive and monitor visitors	HSC245	
Maintain a safe and clean environment	HSC246	✓
Monitor, handle and maintain materials and equipment	HSC243	
Team Support		
Receive and pass on messages and information	HSC242	
Contribute to the effectiveness of teams	HSC241	
Ensure your own actions support the equality, diversity, rights and responsibilities of individuals	HSC234	
Imported units from Health	NVQ link	
Undertake agreed pressure area care	HSC217	
Maintain the feet of individuals who have been assessed as requiring help with general foot care	HSC220	
Assist in the administration of medication	HSC221	
Support individuals prior to, during and after clinical procedures	HSC222	
Manage environments and resources during clinical activities	HSC230	
Receive, and store medication and products	HSC236	
Obtain and test capillary blood samples	HSC237	
Obtain and test specimens from individuals	HSC238	

Vocationally Related Qualification

Care Worker Foundation Certificate (VRQ)

Unit 1: The Role of the Care Worker in the Care Team

Structure and purpose of the care organisation
Role and responsibility in the care team
Teams working together
Career Development needs

Unit 2: Valuing People's Equality, Diversity and Rights

People's rights and choices
Maintaining individuality and Identity
Equality & Diversity
Confidentiality

Unit 3: Health, Safety & Security

Health & Safety laws
A healthy, safe and secure environment
Dealing with accidents and emergencies

Unit 4: Effective Communication

Forms of communication
Communication skills
Overcoming communication barriers
Encouraging communication

Unit 5: Understanding & Dealing with Abuse and Neglect

Types of abuse and neglect
Signs, symptoms and effects of abuse and neglect
Responding to allegations
Reducing the risk

Unit 6: Basic Care Skills

Maintaining clients' personal hygiene
Dietary needs
Toileting needs
Prevention and treatment of pressure sores

Unit 7: Providing Support for Individuals

Leisure and recreational needs
Supporting clients through change
Supporting clients through loss