



Fact Sheet DP3 August 2012

Recruiting people and staying safe

Recruitment



If you decide to recruit a Personal Assistant (P.A.) yourself and not use an agency, it is important to do this safely.

“Contact the Direct Payments Advisory Service if you need any advice or support with recruiting people, to help you stay safe.”

Here are some **Top Tips** for staying safe when recruiting Personal Assistants.

Advertising

You can find a Personal Assistant by following up a recommendation from a friend or relative.

You can also advertise for a Personal Assistant in the following ways:

- displaying an advert in a local paper
- displaying an advert on an internet job website, such as Gumtree
- displaying an advert at your local Jobcentre Plus. Please discuss this with a Jobcentre Plus Adviser first.

Introductory Agencies

You can also go through an introductory agency to find a Personal Assistant. This is an agency that introduces customers to potential Personal Assistants.

Another option is to find an agency that also offers an introduction service.

First you will need to prepare a job advert. Here are some tips to help you with this:



Tip 1: Think carefully about where you put your advert for a Personal Assistant to help attract the right kind of person.

Tip 2: Don't include your home address or home phone number in your advertisement.

Some disabled people's organisations will agree to receive applications on your behalf.

This way you avoid sharing your home address if you decide not to employ a person you interview.

Tip 3: Set up a P.O. Box for replies to advertisements. A P.O. Box allows you to collect mail from your local Royal Mail delivery office.

You then don't have to give out your home address to anyone you do not want to employ.

To set up a P.O. Box, visit your local post office or go to the Royal Mail website.

Website: **www.royalmail.com**

Tel: 08457 950 950

Interviewing

Tip 4: Arrange interviews at a different place and not at your home.

This allows you to keep your home address private from someone you decide not to employ.

You could choose to have the interviews at a relative's home or a public place, such as your local library.

If you have a Jobcentre Plus Adviser, they may be able to provide a room at the Job Centre for interviews.

Tip 5: Use a withheld, unlisted or different phone number to arrange interviews.

This allows you to keep your home phone number private, if you decide not to employ someone.

Tip 6: Have another person with you. For extra safety, ask a relative, friend or someone from a voluntary agency to be with you when interviewing people.



Tip 7: Carry out checks.

For your safety, you should carry out an **enhanced** Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check on anyone you employ.

The Direct Payments Advisory Service can support you with the CRB check and will pay for it.

References

After the interview, you will need to ask for references for the worker you want to employ.

A reference is a written statement about a person's character, qualities, work ability, training and skills.

Tip 8: Before someone starts working for you, ask for at least two references.

One of these references should ideally be from the person's last employer.

Tip 9: When you ask for a reference, think about what qualities you want in a Personal Assistant.

Ask questions about these qualities when you request references.



Tip 10: Don't accept telephone references unless they are from an office number you recognise.

Tip 11: Never take a reference over a mobile phone. Written references are the safest way to get a reference.

Tip 12: Ask for references on a company's headed paper wherever possible.

Tip 13: Check that the person has the training needed to support you safely and well. Ask to see their training certificates.

“Ask the Direct Payments Advisory Service for the ‘Training for Personal Assistants’ fact sheet.”

Here are some examples of questions you might ask:

- do they arrive on time?
- do they act in a trustworthy way?
- are they flexible?
- do they treat people with dignity and respect?



The Direct Payments Advisory Service can give you templates for:

- job adverts
- job descriptions
- application forms
- interview questions
- reference request letters
- contract between you and your Personal Assistant
- job offer letters
- letters for when things are not going well with your Personal Assistant
- other letters and forms you must use when employing people



Skills for Care is an organisation that helps to ensure that care staff are well trained and have the right skills for care.

It has produced a Personal Assistant Toolkit with templates and advice for people employing a Personal Assistant.

You can find the toolkit and other useful information on the Skills for Care website.

Website: www.skillsforcare.org.uk

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If you need this factsheet in a different format or language, please contact the Communications Officer for Adult Social Care and Health on:

Tel: 020 8359 7150

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