

# Putting you first

## Factsheet 1 **Employing a personal assistant: an introduction**

This range of fact sheets has been designed to support and advise you through the process of employing a personal assistant.

We know that some of the things mentioned in these fact sheets are quite complicated so please don't worry if you find any of it difficult to understand - the self directed support team can offer you help, advice and information.



You can discuss a referral or assessment by contacting Adult Social Care Direct on **0191 433 7033**.

You can also contact the team on **0191 433 2379 / 433 2425** or email **[selfdirectedsupportteamenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:selfdirectedsupportteamenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk)**

## Employing a personal assistant

Self directed support is the new way of giving you more choice and control about how your care and support is delivered. Following an assessment, which will identify your eligible needs, the council can work out the amount of money required to meet these needs.

This is called a personal budget. The money can be spent by social services on your behalf or can go straight to you in the form of a direct payment. Employing a personal assistant may be one option you consider to spend your direct payment on.



# What is a personal assistant?

- A personal assistant is someone you employ to support you to live independently
- A personal assistant is someone who can be employed directly by you to help you with everyday tasks such as getting up, getting dressed and getting around.
- A personal assistant is not a 'carer' - you employ them to do a job, so they work for you.

# What does it mean to be an employer?

If you wish to employ your own personal assistant you will be responsible for:

- Recruiting your personal assistant - including reading applications, deciding who you'd like to interview and selecting the person you would like to work for you.
- Managing the money you are given for your personal assistant through your personal budget



- The health and safety of your employee
- The tax and National Insurance deductions from your employee's wages
- Training your personal assistant to use appliances in your home
- Fair disciplinary procedures

# The employer and personal assistant relationship

It is important to remember that the relationship between you, as an employer, and your personal assistant, can be a very complicated one.

In most cases, this is a one-to-one relationship and this can naturally become very intense and personal.

So, you need to consider the needs of both you and your personal assistant. To make any problems or upsets less likely, it may be useful to think about how you will make sure that you treat each other with dignity and respect. This way you both know exactly what your responsibilities are. For example, you are required to give your personal assistant written terms of employment and it is a good idea to provide a job description.

## Glossary of terms

**Personalisation:** Personalisation means thinking about care and support services in an entirely different way. This means starting with the person as an individual with strengths, preferences and aspirations and putting them at the centre of the process of identifying their needs and making choices about what, who, how and when they are supported to live their lives.

**Employee:** A person who works for another person or business for money.

**Employer:** This is a person or a business which pays other people money for their work.

**Interview:** A formal meeting with those shortlisted to assess whether they are right for the job.

**Tax:** Money taken by the government to pay for public services, you can be taxed on your income and your home and as an employer you need to make sure your employees' taxes are in order.

**National Insurance / National Insurance contributions:** This is another payment employers and employees make to the government, it helps provide money for the unemployed, the sick and the retired.

**Wage:** Money that is paid or received for work or services hourly, daily, weekly or monthly.

**Disciplinary / disciplinary procedure:** Employers use disciplinary procedures to tell employees that their performance or conduct isn't up to the expected standard and to encourage improvement.

## Useful contacts

**National Centre for Independent Living** [www.ncil.org.uk](http://www.ncil.org.uk)

**Government information site** [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk)

The other fact sheets in this series help you think about some of these issues so you can decide if you want to employ a personal assistant.

Other fact sheets in the the 'Employing a personal assistant' series are:

**Factsheet 1: an introduction**

**Factsheet 2: pay and tax**

**Factsheet 3: recruitment and selection**

**Factsheet 4: choosing a personal assistant**

**Factsheet 5: contract of employment**

**Factsheet 6: health and safety**

**Factsheet 7: being a good employer - supervision**

**Factsheet 8: disciplinary and grievance**

**Factsheet 9: ending the employment period**

