

# Putting you first

## Factsheet 6 Employing a personal assistant: health and safety

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)**

## Health and safety

You need to make sure that:

- You provide a working environment that does not put your personal assistant at risk of injury.
- The equipment they use is safe, well maintained and they are properly trained on how to use it.
- You provide any necessary safety equipment e.g. protective clothing and make sure it is used properly.
- There are no obvious hazards.
- Your personal assistant is never asked to do anything that could endanger themselves or you.



- You are aware of any statutory health and safety measures, including working time regulations.
- Your personal assistant is aware that they also have a responsibility not to do anything that might endanger either your safety or their own.

You can keep an accident book or log where incidents can be written down immediately - both you and your personal assistant should agree what went wrong and why.

## Risk assessment

Before you employ your personal assistant you should do a risk assessment to identify things that could put them or you at risk. Some things may be common and avoidable - like sharp knives - but other things are unnecessary, like electrical appliances that are incorrectly wired, or cleaning materials that are not properly labelled.

It is important to take time to meet with your personal assistant and look at what health and safety risks there might be in your home and in the work that you are asking them to do.



## Manual handling

It is also your responsibility to ensure that your personal assistant meets your manual handling needs correctly, as sometimes there is a difference between what professional people and those with a disability think is the best solution for moving and handling.

It is your body and you know best what is comfortable and safe for you, so you can advise your personal assistant of this. However you must ensure that your personal assistant is also safe, properly trained and equipped.

## Insurance

Things to consider:

- If you employ a personal assistant you need to have the relevant insurance to make sure you are covered for a number of possible scenarios.
- You must have employer's liability insurance cover in case your employee has an accident or becomes ill whilst working for you and you may be held responsible.
- You also need public liability insurance cover in case you or your employee causes a member of the public damage or injury when they are working for you.

- You need to be aware of all of the requirements associated with your insurance and that all of the tasks likely to be carried out by your personal assistant are covered, including driving you around.
- If you are unsure of the level of cover you need it is a good idea to send a copy of your personal assistant's job description to your insurer and ask them to confirm cover in writing.
- You might also want to consider personal accident insurance and legal costs insurance

## Glossary of terms

**Working Time Regulations:** As an employer it is important that you are aware of this because the government has set restrictions on what people can work and these have to be followed by law.

**Insurance:** A way of guaranteeing against loss or harm. This can help you financially if anything goes wrong.

You will have to pay a contribution to the insurance company.

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

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

## Useful contacts

**Health and Safety Executive**  
call 0845 345 0055

**British Insurance Broker's Association:** call 0870 950 1790  
or log on to [www.biba.org.uk](http://www.biba.org.uk)

**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**

