



Thinking about becoming a

PERSONAL ASSISTANT



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The Scottish government defines a Personal Assistant as:

An employee of a person needing care or support. If the person is under 16 or has an appointed decision maker, the parent or guardian/person with power of attorney is the employer.

WHAT IS A PERSONAL ASSISTANT?

The role of a personal assistant.

A personal Assistant is someone who supports someone else in whichever way they need. The job is varied and depends entirely on the person you will be supporting.

Some folk will want you to help them go to events, concerts, groups or clubs and some folk might want you to help them prepare meals or give a hand with housework.

Your main ambition is to help the person to be as independent as they can be and to build a relationship of trust and support.

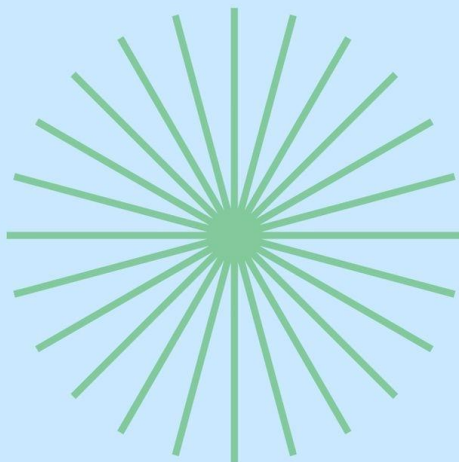
THE *HISTORY* OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE THEY PLAY



The Independent Living Movement has campaigned for many years for disabled people to have the right to have choice and control over their own lives and the assistance needed to live those lives to the fullest. The role of the Personal Assistant emerged from that campaign.

Personal Assistance is a fundamental necessity to enable people to live a full independent life. Independent living means having the same choices and control in everyday lives that non-disabled people take for granted. Personal Assistants (PAs) are people who support their disabled employer to live an independent life.



Your employer

Your employer is someone who has been assessed by social work as requiring support.

The employer is normally the person needing support *or* someone acting on their behalf (for children and young adults this will normally be their parent or guardian).

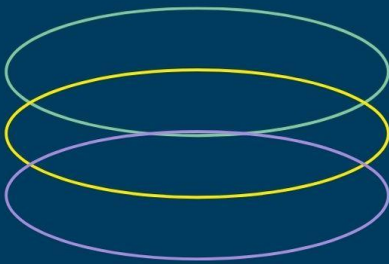
Your contract of employment will name who your employer is.

WHO IS MY EMPLOYER?

Direct payments

Your employer received a budget from the local authority called a Direct Payment. They are using this money to employ you.

The Direct Payments package allows your employer to choose their own care through **Self Directed Support**, rather than receiving care and support services that the local authority provide.



WHAT IS MY ROLE.

The role of a Personal Assistant is unique.

Every supported person will require personalised care through different levels and types of support.

No two roles will be the same, because each job is specific to the needs of the person you are supporting.

The goal of the job is to keep the person you support happy and healthy. A positive relationship together is paramount.

Your job may include:

- Assisting with getting up, washed and dressed
- Preparing meals
- Taking out to clubs, events, groups
- Helping with housework
- Medication
- Supporting with physiotherapy
- Exercise
- Supporting communication
- Being a friend



CONTRACT

Your employer will present you with terms of employment through a contract which will detail employment rights, responsibilities and duties.

WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE?

PA's have the same statutory rights as any other employee in the UK, this includes the right to:

- Statutory holiday pay
- statutory maternity/paternity/adoption leave
- statutory sick pay
- statutory redundancy pay
- a contract of employment
- not be unfairly dismissed
- join a trade union
- work in a safe environment

HOURLY RATE OF PAY

All employers in the UK must pay at least the national living wage, many Personal Assistant employers pay more than this.

The hourly rate will be determined by your employer based on their Direct Payments budget and amount and type of support they require.

Your rate of pay will be in your employment contract along with any enhancements (i.e. overtime, mileage, etc)

Your hours

PA work can be very flexible, contracts can range from a few hours a week to full-time equivalent roles depending on the person.

You should be careful not to overcommit yourself. It is important to remember that **your employer is depending on you** being reliable and punctual.

Skills

Remember that your goal is to help the supported person achieve their goals and your role is to enable that.

Formal qualifications are not always needed because personal skills, experience and attributes can be what an individual is looking for.

Training

Your employer will be responsible for arranging appropriate formal training if required.

You can do other courses above this if you wish.

There are lots of free courses on OpenLearn by The Open University.

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) offer a variety of “badges” which are free and you don’t have to be registered to complete them.

SUPPORT

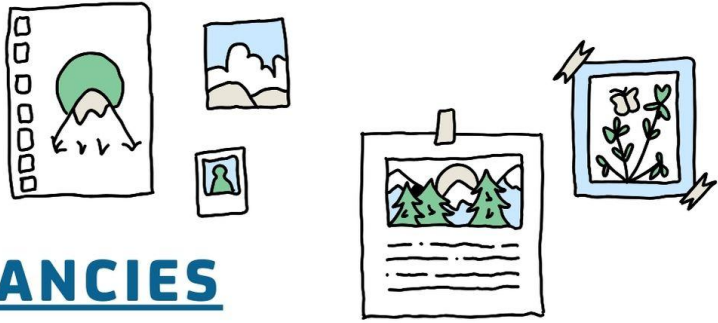
for personal assistants

There are a few places that can offer support for a personal assistant.

The **Personal assistants Network Scotland** can provide independent support to Personal Assistants by phone, email and online as well as arranging face to face events to meet local demand. They have a website www.panetworkscotland.org.uk where you can access advice, information and support when needed.

The PA Network also has a Shetland specific Facebook page (*Personal Assistant Network - Shetland Isles*) where you can find job opportunities, share stories, ask for advice, share news and any local events.

Shetland Community Connections hosts regular PA Mixer events, where we encourage you to come and meet other PAs and make connections. These events aim to provide you with a safe space to air out any frustrations, ask any questions and empathise with other PAs.



VACANCIES

There is currently no single place to find Personal Assistant job opportunities, however you will probably find success if you ask at any local support organisation.

FACEBOOK

The Personal Assistant Network - Shetland Isles facebook page is quite an active group where you can find potential PA work.

People advertise positions through an organisation or as individuals. Or *you could advertise yourself* as someone who is looking for work.

OTHER PLACES

You might find job listings in the local job centre, newspaper or posters in local shops. You may even be approached in person or know someone who is looking for a PA yourself.

SHETLAND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

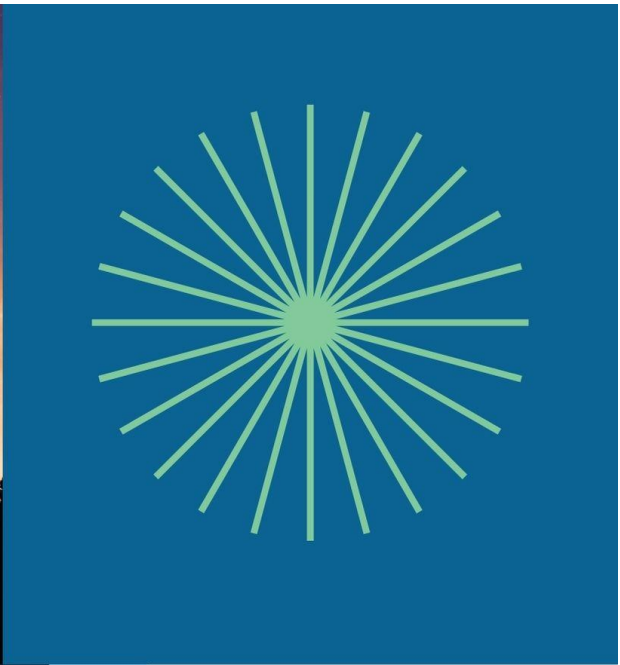
SCC list job opportunities on their website

www.shetlandcommunityconnections.co.uk/pa-opportunities

SCAN
me



If you find a job through this avenue, please be aware that SCC are not a recruitment agency. They can be at hand for advice and support but they are not your employer.



WHAT PEOPLE SAY

“To know that you are making a difference between someone being in care or being able to live an independent life in their own home is immeasurable”

“Going to work feels like hanging out with a mate”

“PA work has been the best move I have made yet. The fact that it is tailored to suit the families involved gives total job satisfaction”

