**Leeds Direct Payment & PA Support Hub**

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Employer Essentials Guide

Information for anyone employing their own staff to provide care and support

Contained in this guide:

* Employer’s Essentials Briefings
* Benefits of Employing a PA
* Contracts of Employment
* Employers and Public Liability Insurance
* PA Recruitment and Where to Advertise
* What to Include in an advert
* Job Description & Person Specification
* Choose Who to Interview
* Where to Interview
* Job Offer & Employment Checks
* Payroll - Paying your PA
* PA Induction & Training
* Probationary Period
* Regular Performance Reviews
* Day to Day Management

**Who or what is the Leeds DP and PA Support Hub?**

We are a team of people employed by Leeds City Council who support disabled, and older people, and families with disabled children to manage their own support and staff so they are in control of how that is provided.

We support employers of Personal Assistants (PA’s) to:

* Help them meet their employment responsibilities
* Recruit & manage PA’s to help find them find the best person and get the best from them
* Access training and development opportunities for themselves and their PA’s

**Employer Essentials Briefings**

When you employ a Personal Assistant, this means you become an employer. Our ‘Employer’s Essentials Briefings’ are designed to improve your confidence and empower you to be an effective employer. We will help you think about the responsibilities & legal obligations you will have as an employer and the support available to help meet these responsibilities, and guide you through advertising, contracts, and payroll, along with other key employment areas. Each briefing lasts around 1.5 hours.

**Benefits of Employing a Personal Assistant**

Employing a Personal Assistant can help you live independently. It ensures that you, are able to have control over how and when your support is provided, to suit the needs and lifestyle of you and your family. One of the main benefits of employing a Personal Assistant is that you can choose who you employ and which days they work.

**Contracts of Employment**

As an employer, you have responsibilities and rights and so does your PA. The terms of employment are covered in a contract of employment, listed below are the type of things included:

* Your name & the name of your PA
* Job title & your PA’s main duties
* Hours of work & Place of work (e.g. your home address)
* Start date & Probationary period
* Training & Induction
* Salary, Pay Day dates & Pension agreements
* Sick leave, Lateness & Notice periods
* Holiday entitlement & what happens when you’re away
* Confidentiality & Security
* Disciplinary, Grievance & Dismissal

Leeds DP and PA Support Hub will let you know where you can access a contract template. A ‘contract of employment’ must be issued on or before the PAs first day of work.

**Employers and Public Liability Insurance**

If you are an employer, for example if you employ a personal assistant, you are required by law to have certain insurance cover in place. Get yourself protected & make sure you take out Employers and Public Liability Insurance before you even begin advertising for a PA.

You need to ensure that you have the correct policies and procedures in place and that Employment Law is followed.

**Why do I need to have insurance**?

If your employee is injured whilst working for you and you are held legally liable, you will be protected to cover legal costs and compensation. It also covers you from claims for compensation if you or your employee causes injury or damage to someone else or their property.

In our experience, if there is good communication between an Employer and their PA, there are very few problems that cannot be amicably resolved, however, if things do go wrong your insurance company will provide you with legal advice an advise you on what you need to do – Leeds DP and PA Support Hub can give you more details.

**How do I arrange my insurance?**

You can contact them directly to arrange cover or a member of the DP and PA Support Hub can support you with this if needed.

**How do I pay for the insurance?**

Funds to cover the cost of the insurance are included in your Direct Payment.

**What are the choices of Insurance provider?**

Insurance cover to protect people using direct payments to employ their own personal assistants is provided by the companies below or you may want to use your own:

* Mark Bates Ltd/Premier Care – t: 01476 514478, w: markbatesltd.com
* Fish Insurance – t: 00333 331 3770, w: fishinsurance.co.uk
* Surewise – t: 01268 200 020, w: surewise.com

The terms of cover are pretty standard and they all offer similar additional support services such as a telephone helpline for advice on employment issues.

**Recruiting a PA and Where to Advertise**

You may already know who you would like to be your PA. However, if not, then the Leeds DP and PA Support Hub can help you find someone. We can help you can access a number of PA registers & know plenty of other places to advertise, including University job sites. It is best to make an advert as clear and personal as possible.

**What to Include in an Advert**

**1 - Hours, type of work & main duties**

Days & times which you would need your PA to work.

**2 - Rate of pay**

You will need to pay at least the minimum wage. We will be able to provide information about standard hourly rates.

**3 - General location**

So applicants will have an idea of the location they will be working at and to make sure that they are able to get there when you need them. Do not give out your home address!

**4 - Experience and/or qualifications**

Things to consider are if you would like someone who has particular work experience to meet your needs. Also to think about whether it is important if your PA is a man or a woman, e.g. if you need help with intimate personal care and you want someone of the same gender. You need to be careful here, because of the ‘Equalities Act’. (The Act bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities.)

**5 - Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS check)**

A DBS check is a way for employers check a persons criminal record, to help decide whether they are a suitable person to work for them. We strongly recommend that all PA’s have a DBS check. If your PA will be caring for your children or working unsupervised in the house when there are children in the house then a DBS Check is essential. It is important that you are clear in the advertisement if a DBS check will be needed.

**7 - Other information**

Extra specifics e.g. whether they have to be a driver.

**UKCIL PA Recruitment Website**

There are lots of different places to advertise. One of these is UKCIL a secure, easy access recruitment tool in Health & Social Care. Benefits include: unlimited advertising, instant access to hundreds of PA’s in your area and auto-matching with PA’s who meet your requirements.

How to access UKCIL:

* Go their website: www.ukcil.com/employers
* Click on ‘Sign up’
* Create an account
* Advertising costs are included in your Direct Payment budget

**Job Description & Person Specification**

You need to provide a job description so people will know if the role is right for them.

**Job Description:** a list of tasks you would like your PA to do

**Person Specification:** a list of skills, experience & personal qualities you would like your PA to have.

If you have a support plan, you may have specific requirements that you will need to think about when writing the person specification. You can find job descriptions on the Skills for Care Employers Toolkit:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Employing-your-own-care-and-support

**Choosing Who to Interview**

One way to decide who to interview could be to **use the job description and person specification** to rate the applications. You must also **make sure your selection criteria is fair** and that you do not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of protected characteristics e.g. age, race, gender or sexual orientation. Leeds DP and PA Support Hub can advise you on how to keep safe during recruitment.

**Shortlisting**: narrowing down all the applications you have received to a short list of applicants to interview

**Selection Criteria**: a list of the essential & desirable skills, attributes & work experience required from applicants

**Candidates**: the people you choose to interview

Once you have made your decision, you can contact the candidates which best fit the support you need & ask them to attend an interview. We will be able to provide you with suggested interview questions or you can create your own.

**Where to Interview?**

We recommend conducting remote interviews to shortlist candidates in the first instance, for example by telephone or video calls. We recommend that any subsequent face to face interviews are conducted in a neutral venue. Location examples include: your local library, a social care centre, a community centre or a favourite coffee shop. Leeds DP and PA Support Hub can help you book a room in many Leeds City Council buildings across the city.

Meet in a public location where you feel safe and your well-being is not at risk. Remember you are meeting this person for the

first time so it’s best to be somewhere where other people are likely to be too.

**Job Offer & Employment Checks**

Once you have decided who you want to employ, contact them & offer them the job. Tell them that this is a provisional offer and that you will first need to carry out some checks:

**1. References**

* Are a good way of verifying that the information people have told you is correct.
* It is good to have the opinion of someone who knows the person you have chosen & knows about their job skills.
* You can ask for a reference via telephone or in writing.

**2. DBS Checks**

* Leeds DP and PA Hub will arrange these on your behalf - If a child is involved then a DBS check must be completed prior to the PA starting work.

 **3. Check their Legal Right to Work in the UK**

* You will need to check and keep copies of certain documents before your personal assistant starts. (Leeds DP and PA Hub can advise you about these.)

**Payroll – Paying Your PA**

As an employer, you are responsible for making sure that your PA is paid correctly. Leeds CIL are commissioned in Leeds to provide a payroll service for people using Direct Payments. A member of their team will contact you in due course.

Leeds CIL payroll service will:

* Calculate your PA’s wage based on the hours worked information you provide
* Ensure that your PA’s Tax & National Insurance Contributions are deducted correctly
* Payment paperwork & Tax Office (HMRC) issues on your behalf

Leeds CIL – t: 0113 2311125 e: info@leedscil.org.uk w: leesdcil.org.uk

**PA Training and Induction**

Good training and induction (we can provide you with an induction template) will make your PA feel valued & more confident in their job. This means you will get better support and your PA is more likely to stay with you for a long time.

A wide variety of training is available through Leeds City Council that is free for both yourself and your PA(s). Training is available as e-learning, webinars and classroom based. Please see the training available:

[www.leed.gov.uk/become a personal assistant](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/adult-social-care/looking-after-someone/become-a-personal-assistant)

Or email: ASCODTeam@leeds.gov.uk

If you have already identified what training you require please contact the team on the email address above and they will arrange this for you or speak to a member of the Leeds DP and PA Support Hub.

For your PA’s first day, make a list of things you need to tell them about the job and how best to carry out their tasks to suit you. Make it clear what you need your PA/s to be aware of on their first day

**Probationary Period**

Each time you employ a new PA we recommend that you tell them that there will be an initial probationary period of employment. (Normally anywhere up to 12 weeks, however, this can be extended to longer if required.) This can be an ideal time to see if they enjoy working for you and if you are happy with their work as your PA.

During the probationary period, if either you or your PA decide to end the employment you wouldn’t need to give a reason & would only need to give one week’s notice. This is especially useful in difficult circumstances between you & your PA. But after this time you need to be extremely careful as valid reasons would be needed.

**Regular Performance Reviews**

It’s a good idea for you to formally meet with your PA at set times to talk about the job, e.g. once a month during a probationary period and every 3, 6 or 12 months afterwards.

A performance review or supervision is a two-way discussion between an Employer and their PA.

* Helps assess if your PA is doing their job in the way that you want
* Gives you the chance to give constructive feedback & to praise your PA for their good work
* Gives you time to address any problems earlier & find solutions (e.g. offering training & finding different ways to carry out tasks)

**Day to Day Management**

1. Give your PA the support & development that they need
2. Imagine yourself in their position
3. Make sure they don’t have to choose between home & work
4. Have clear boundaries
5. Good communication

If your PA’s are happy in their job role & fairly treated, they are much more likely to stay with you.

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