

Shaw Trust Direct Payments Support Services

Information Sheet 8: Training your Personal Assistant

Sheet Outline:

- Providing an induction
- Training your staff

Outcome:

- To increase awareness of the benefits of training employees

Introduction

To comply with current Health and Safety regulations you have a legal duty to provide information, instruction, training and, where required, supervision for your employees. For example you should provide information on the layout of your property such as fire exits and location of toilets etc., instruction on how to use specific machinery such as lifting equipment/hoists etc. and training in relation to Health and Safety Awareness, Moving and Handling Awareness etc.

If you do not provide relevant training your Employers Liability Insurance may be invalid in the event that a claim is made against you.

Records of all training given to your Personal Assistant should be kept and training should be regularly updated.

Ask your Support Officer for a Training Record Template which can be adapted to suit your situation or go to www.shaw-trust.org.uk/dp.

Providing an Induction

The purpose of induction is to ensure the effective integration of staff into or across an organisation for the benefit of both parties.

(Source: www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/recruitment/induction)

Research has shown that tailor-made programmes increase staff retention.

A good induction programme contains the following elements:

- Describing where the facilities are;
- Showing how the employee fits into your team;

- Health and safety information - this is a legal requirement;
- Explanation of terms and conditions;
- Details of culture and values; and
- A clear outline of the job/role requirements.

Induction may be undertaken in a number of different ways:

- A formal course or programme of learning;
- Shadowing or working alongside an experienced colleague;
- Completion of a workbook, checklists and other forms of open learning; or
- A combination of all three.

A good induction should tell your Personal Assistant when they first start working for you the main things that they need to know. In all employment situations induction is one of the key things that can mean the difference between good working relationships and bad experiences for everyone.

An induction programme helps you to start to build an effective working relationship with a Personal Assistant and makes it clear that you are the one they should go to for advice and information.

How you organise each induction will be influenced by the experience, attitudes and needs of your Personal Assistant. As well as including practical tasks, you might want to explain to a Personal Assistant the kind of lifestyle you have and what attitudes and approach you expect them to adopt when working for you. This is very important as people can have very set ideas about the role of supporting disabled individuals which may not meet with your needs.

Many problems can be avoided if you make it clear to your Personal Assistant right from the start of your working relationship their job role and how they should do their work tasks, when they should do them and what they should not do.

It is up to you to tell Personal Assistants what they need to know. If you do not manage or plan how you will do this, a Personal Assistant can end up confused and your relationship with them will get off to a bad start. Induction also provides you with the opportunity to get to know a bit more about your Personal Assistant, what they like, their ideas, what drives them to do the job and so on. Take the time now and it could pay off in the future.

Induction Checklist

The following notes could help you to plan a successful induction.

1. **Arrange an early meeting with your Personal Assistant:** It is a good idea to talk to your new Personal Assistant about their job, the terms and conditions and your 'house rules' before they fully start working for you. Put aside time and make sure you will not be interrupted when you first meet your Personal Assistant.
2. **Make a checklist:** Write down a list of everything that you need to tell your new Personal Assistant. This could include:
 - What you like to be called.
 - What medication you take and when.
 - How and when you like your food and drink prepared.
 - Any religious or cultural rules that you follow.
 - Where your equipment and materials are.
 - Any parts of your home that are private to you.
 - Your daily routine.
 - How you like to be moved.
 - How to use any of the equipment that you may have.
 - What to do in an emergency.
 - Health and safety procedures.
3. **Talk to them about their experiences and any needs they may have:** If they have anything they want to tell you, any suggestions or ways they like to do things which might work better then give them the time to do this – you can be open to suggestion without giving up control.
4. **Job Description:** It is important to go through this with them so that your Personal Assistant clearly understands what they are paid to do. Ask if they have any concerns or worries about any of the tasks. Doing this at this stage ensures that there is no confusion about what is expected by both parties. However, don't forget that you and the Personal Assistant need to be flexible as your needs and wishes may change over time.
5. **Terms and conditions:** As per the contract of employment, go through your Personal Assistant's hourly pay, when and how their wages are paid, arrangements for holiday and sick pay, when and where they will work, parking facilities, who pays for breakages, whether you pay for a Personal Assistant's refreshments and meals etc. You will probably have gone through all of this when you recruited them but it is a good idea to repeat this in the induction.
6. **House rules:** Unlike working in a shop or office, your PA is working in your home so it is a good idea to prepare a list of any issues that are important to you and that you want your PA to respect. For example, you might not want them to smoke in your house or use your TV without permission; you might have certain standards of tidiness; you may also wish to set a

standard of behaviour when around your friends, family and work colleagues.

7. Training: At the induction, discuss with your PA any training you will provide.

Training your Staff

A Personal Assistant will need training to be able to do certain tasks safely and in the manner in which you require – for example, using a hoist or pushing a wheelchair. It is important to identify early those areas where the Personal Assistant needs training and agree how this will be done.

Training can be done by:

- Demonstrating the skill or task your Personal Assistant needs to learn – either by you or by another of your Personal Assistants.
- Observing your Personal Assistant trying the skill or task and giving positive feedback.

Don't expect to be able to train your Personal Assistant in every task during their first shift. Begin with the most important tasks first. If you already employ Personal Assistants, it might be a good idea to ask one to assist you with the training.

In addition, it may be a good idea to see what training is available for your Personal Assistant.

Direct Payments Support Services recommend that you provide **Health and Safety training including an introduction to manual handling, hygiene and fire procedures** as a minimum. Offering training may also help your Personal Assistant to develop confidence and feel valued at work.

Ask your Support Officer about access to training courses in your area.

Specialist Personal Assistant Training

Some Direct Payments Support Services can deliver specialist training for Personal Assistants, the cost of which would be met by the Direct Payment and charged directly to the DP user. Modules include:

- Introduction to working as a PA;
- Disability Equality & Communication;
- Introduction to Health and Safety;
- Introduction to Hygiene;
- Introduction to Moving & Handling;

- First Aid Awareness;
- Recognising & Responding to Abuse;
- Developing Yourself as a Worker.

Speak to your Support Officer to find out if specialist training courses are available for your Personal Assistant.

Training Records

For each Personal Assistant you should keep a record of any training that you have given or supplied them. This is essential to comply with Health and Safety legislation as in the event of a serious accident the HSE and the insurance company will need to see evidence of what training has been carried out and the appropriateness of this training with each Personal Assistant.

All training records should be kept up to date and any training provided reviewed on a regular basis.

Ask your Support Officer for a Training Record Template which you can adapt to suit your situation or go to www.shaw-trust.org.uk/dp.