



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



# Personal assistants

## Guidance on jobs in adult social care in England



**May 2025**

This guidance is in Easy Read.

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# Easy Read



This is the Easy Read booklet about personal assistant jobs.

The full guidance which is not in Easy Read is on our website.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-workforce-pathway-for-adult-social-care/personal-assistant-role-category](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-workforce-pathway-for-adult-social-care/personal-assistant-role-category)



This Easy Read booklet uses clear words and pictures.

People might still want help to read it.

## **Bold** word



Some words are **bold**.

We tell you what the words in bold mean.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#).

This means they are links to websites or email addresses.

You can click on these links on a computer.

# Who we are



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

We are the Department of Health and Social Care.

We are part of the UK government.

We help lead health and **adult social care** in the UK.



**Adult social care** means helping people who have disabilities or who are ill for a long time. For example, people with

- A mental health illness



- A physical disability

- A learning disability



- **Autism**

Autism means someone's brain works differently so they might think or feel in ways that are different to most people.



- **Dementia**

Dementia is an illness that makes it hard for people to remember and do everyday things.

# About this booklet



There are lots of different **roles** in adult social care in England.

A role is another word for a job.



We put these roles into different groups.

We call these groups **role categories**.



This booklet tells you about the **personal assistant** role category.

# What personal assistants do



Staff in this role category help people who need support to live their lives.

**Personal assistants** support people to be independent. We say **PA** for short.



There are different jobs in this role category and these jobs can have different names.



People employ PAs to give them **self-directed support**.

**Self-directed support** means that the person employing the PA chooses the kind of support they get.



Sometimes a family or an **advocate** will employ the PA to give someone support.

An **advocate** is someone who stands up for someone else.



PAs normally support people at home but can also help at work or out and about.

# Values that PAs need



A **value** is an idea or belief that helps us to make choices and do things.



In this role category it is important to have these values

- Being kind and understanding
- Seeing the **whole person**  
This means not thinking of someone as just one thing, like being old.



- Showing people respect.

- Being brave.

- Being honest.



- Being proud of good work.

- Being happy to change and learn.



# Behaviours that PAs need



A **behaviour** is how someone acts or the way they do something.

People who get care choose what behaviours their PA should have.



Staff in the PA role category might need to show behaviours like

- Be kind and show respect.
- Listen to what support people want.
- Listen to what people say and be ready to work differently.
- Work together and show interest.
- Be happy to learn more digital skills so people can go online.
- **Advocate** for the rights of the person they support to get the life they want. Advocate means stand up for.
- Communicate in a way that the employer is happy with.





# Knowledge and skills that PAs need



**Knowledge** means what someone needs to understand to do their job well.

**Skills** are how someone uses this knowledge to do their job well.

All PAs need to have knowledge and skills in these areas.



## Understanding person-centred work

**Person-centred** means putting people first by listening to what they want or need.

PAs should understand how to work in a person-centred way.



## Understanding what the job is

PAs should understand what their job is and how to get more skills and training.



## Communication skills

PAs should understand how the person they support wants to communicate.

And what help PAs can give.



## Understanding privacy

PAs should understand how to care for someone in a **dignified** way.

This means PAs do not embarrass people or share private or personal information.



## Safeguarding

This means keeping people safe from abuse or harm.

PAs should follow guidance and understand what it means for their job.



## **Being inclusive**

This means being fair and not leaving people out.

PAs should understand what inclusive work is and why it is important.



## **Health and safety**

PAs should understand how to follow rules to keep people safe.

PAs must know what medication and healthcare the person they support needs.



## **Know where to get support**

PAs should understand why dealing with stress is important and where to get help when work is hard.



## **Disability**

PAs should understand the person's disability and any support with it.



## Understanding mental capacity

When people do not understand the choices they make we say they do not have **mental capacity**.

PAs must know how to plan support for people without mental capacity.

## Other skills

Employers decide what kind of help they need and how much.

PAs might also need knowledge and skills to support people with

- Personal care
- Looking after a home
- Money
- Help at home
- Getting out and about
- Shopping
- Cooking and eating
- Working or learning
- Caring for children
- Seeing family and friends
- Going online.



# Ways staff can learn and get more skills



PAs can do training and get certificates.

For example in

- Adult social care
- Medication
- Food safety
- Maths and English.



PAs can do training to get the skills for their workplace.

For example in

- Dementia
- End of life care
- Mental health
- Digital skills
- **Positive Behaviour Support** training  
This means helping people to get new skills to make their lives better.
- Oliver McGowan Training to understand more about learning disabilities and autism.



## Kate's story



Kate wants to try a new job and thinks she has the right values to be a PA.

She applies for a job and gets a call from Ahmed who needs a PA for his son Beni.



Ahmed and Beni interview Kate and offer her the job. She starts 2 weeks later.

Ahmed, Beni and another PA show Kate how to support Beni and what he needs.



Beni tells Kate what he can do for himself. He says what is important to him, like

- Starting work on time
- Not being on her mobile phone at work.

Kate watches how the other PAs support Beni before she supports him on her own.



Kate supports Beni for a long time.

She notices that Beni forgets things a lot.

The doctor tells Beni he has dementia.



Kate does some training to learn how to support people with dementia and carries on as Beni's PA.

She uses her skills and experience to support other people with dementia.

## Find out more



For news about this guidance you can follow the Department for Health and Social Care on Facebook.

[www.facebook.com/DHSCgovuk](https://www.facebook.com/DHSCgovuk)

If you have any questions you can contact



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