

ILA is not a traditional agency, it is about a particular way of receiving personal assistance, which places the PA User in control of the service that they receive. ILA enables PA Users to determine their own actions and lifestyles by enabling self-definition of physical and practical support needs. A Personal Assistant is provided to enable a PA User to live the lifestyle s/he chooses within the remit of ILA's philosophy.

PA Users are responsible for arranging and managing the placement, working to a philosophy whereby there is an equality and a working partnership.

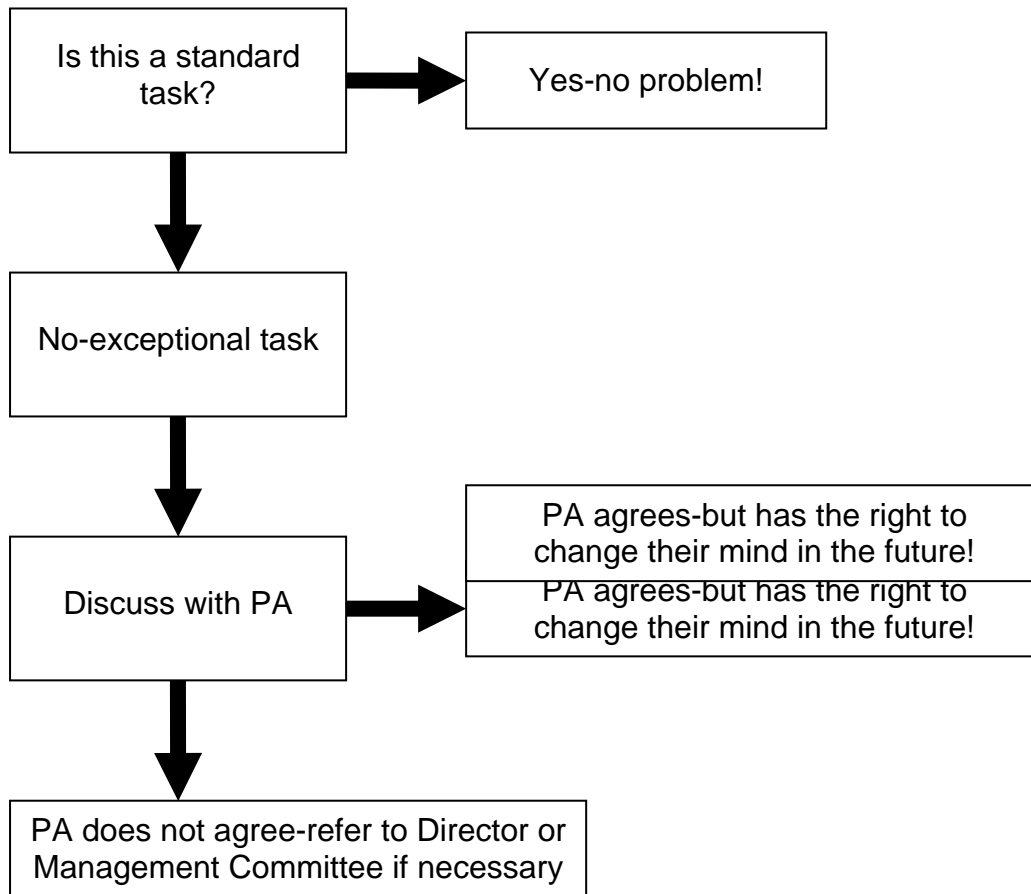
The PAs provided are not qualified carers, usually they are either graduates who are looking for direct work experience or people from overseas who wish to improve their English and live in England for a time. All of the PAs are interviewed by ILA before their application forms are passed to PA Users. PAs are recruited on the basis of having an open mind and an empathy with the philosophy of the organisation and the disability rights movement. Overseas applicants must all be able to speak English to a reasonable standard to be offered a placement.

ILA has a stringent application procedure for PAs. All PAs complete an application form and are interviewed by the organisation either in person or by tape. PAs must provide two references, a medical reference and Criminal Records Bureau check. Once these stages have been passed successfully, application forms are forwarded to PA Users, who then have an opportunity to interview each applicant either in person or by phone. Following the short-listing a PA User and PA have a one-month probation period to ensure that the placement is working and that there are no difficulties.

ILA very much stresses that there is no such thing as a perfect PA; each person is individual and in such a close working relationship, both parties get to know each other from both a positive and negative side.

WHAT CAN AN ILA PA DO?

The Task Definition Flow Chart:



Exceptional Tasks:

When is a task exceptional? Would you carry out this task for yourself?

- YES-why not for the PA User?
- NO-why not?
- Has this issue been discussed with the PA User?
- If not, why not? And will it be?
- Submit the task to the Director
- Final decision is with the Management Committee

CRITERIA FOR USING ILA

- A Personal Assistant is not provided solely for domiciliary support. A PA must be enabling a PA User to live an independent lifestyle whether that is to go to work, college, the cinema, shopping, etc.

- ILA's philosophy is based on mutual interdependency and equality between a PA User and a Personal Assistant. All PA Users are expected to treat their working relationships as an interactive process and to be open about building a relationship.
- PA Users are responsible for the training of all PAs and in directing how a placement operates.
- PA Users must be able to provide a separate bedroom in their own homes for a PA to use whilst they are working unless the placement does not require PAs to live-in.
- The relationship between a PA User and a PA must be non-exploitative.
- Independent Living Alternatives provides PA User support as and when necessary. ILA believes that the essence of a good placement is communication. It is essential to talk to a PA and tell them if they are doing something wrong.
- ILA believes that no disabled person should be financially penalised for the additional cost of having a disability. ILA charges fees for the services provided, which should be paid either by the Local Authority or the Independent Living Fund. ILA is a self-financing non-profit making organisation and the fees realistically reflect the cost of the services provided.
- ILA is committed to ensuring that PA Users have the support of a PA at all times. ILA will negotiate emergency funding to use a temporary worker in the event of a PA being ill or if a PA is unable to provide a service for whatever reason.
- ILA is a voluntary organisation that is self-financing with charitable status.
- All ILA staff have direct experience of disability or providing personal assistance.
- PA Users are expected to have insurance for Personal Assistants whilst they are working in your home.
- The Company is managed by a voluntary Management Committee. PA Users are encouraged to take an active role in determining the development of the Company.

- During the year ILA organises PA User meeting to discuss issues relating specifically to using ILA Personal Assistants, personal assistant and related issues.

PA Users must have an empathy and understanding of the aims of the organisation and must agree to ILA's working practices.