

DETERMINING THE TRAINING

NEEDS OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

WORKING DIRECTLY DIRECTLY

WITH PERSONAL ASSISTANCE USERS

INDEPENDENT
LLVING
ALTERNATIVES



THE TRAINING NEEDS OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS WORKING DIRECTLY WITH PERSONAL ASSISTANCE USERS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Independent Living Alternatives (ILA) was established in 1989 and has a track record of providing flexible and creative User controlled personal assistance services. ILA promotes the right of disabled people to live independently. ILA is an organisation managed and controlled by disabled people providing a comprehensive range of personal assistance services.

1.2 ILA received funding from Awards for All to explore training for Personal Assistants from a PA User perspective.

1.3 This report outlines the findings of ILA's research which is based on a questionnaire circulated between December 2006-February 2007 and a Forum held on 18th June 2007. The aim of the research is to explore and analyse the training needs of Personal Assistants (PAs) from the perspective of both the PA and PA User and specifically examine:

- Current NVQ in Social and Health Care provision and the relevance of this qualification to PAs working directly with PA Users
- A structured generic programme of training suitable for PAs working directly with PA Users
- The funding of training for PAs working directly with PA Users
- Current training opportunities available for free to both PAs and PA Users
- Training for PA Users to provide direct training to PAs

COMMENTS

"For Personal Assistants, often their professions are not recognised as important."

"I sincerely hope that this questionnaire is not just another questionnaire and that some action will be taken."

"The day was in an open discussion format, which was great in terms of hearing different experiences and suggestions."

"I am not a fan of training for PAs but it could be good to put the situation into context as long as it is absolutely on the money, philosophically. The problem is

one person's on the money is another person's slightly off. It is up to the PA User to explain what and how they want things done and their personal take on the PA/User relationship."

"In my opinion it's a good idea to hear directly from the PAs' perspective, maybe they don't want to be trained or they are working towards a degree."

"What has been discussed today is invaluable for PAs"

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 As a provider of personal assistance services, ILA is registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (the government regulatory body of all "domiciliary care providers" in England and Wales).

2.2 The Care Standards Act 2000 which is the legislation regulating "domiciliary care providers", requires that ***all staff in the organisation are competent and trained to undertake the activities for which they are employed and responsible***. The Act goes further to state that ***by 1st April 2008 all personal care... [is] to be delivered by workers NVQ [level 2 or 3] qualified or equivalent, or better***. However, emphasis is being placed on NVQ training that neglects the very specific needs of Personal Assistance Users who do not want to be perceived as "passive recipients of care services to be treated with dignity". PA Users want to be able to directly manage and control the services that they use in their every day lives.

2.3 The recent review of the Independent Living Funds highlighted ***self-determination is an increasingly important concept within notions of independent living***. Self-determination must be reflected in this new and very different workforce which is **Personal Assistants**.

2.4 The Kings Fund Inquiry into Care Services for Older People found that whilst ***London experiences labour shortages in... social care. The London care workforce benefits from staff coming from overseas***, many of whom are taking up positions as personal assistants. The Inquiry also found ***that workforce issues are said to be one of the biggest factors likely to limit the development of care services***. In this research, The Kings found that ***Care NVQs are the focus of considerable discontent. A Care NVQ must be***

something that can be viewed as a sound and reliable indicator of competence. Radical change is needed to transform the image into one that better reflects the reality of work and which builds on the wealth of experience of staff, and develops their skills and knowledge appropriately, underpinned at all stages by attention to core underlying values (including principles of individuality, identity, rights, choice, privacy, independence, dignity, respect and partnership, equal opportunities and confidentiality). ILA's own research found that the majority of people working as PAs are not looking for a career in this field, but are committed to what they perceive as a valid and worthwhile employment whilst furthering their own careers.

2.5 It is to this purpose that ILA believes that there is a need for a fundamental review of training opportunities available to this new workforce. Training opportunities that reflect the role of personal assistants as workers who are supporting the lifestyles of individual disabled people who in turn are the managers directing the day to day activities of their personal assistants. Training must be:

- Relevant
- Appropriate
- Freely available

Most importantly, training must reflect the new environment of independent living which places the PA User in direct control.

3 CURRENT TRAINING OPTIONS

3.1 In December 2006, CSCI introduced *Experts by Experience* stating that *working with people who use services has been vital to improving the way we inspect...we can make sure that we are looking at things that are going to make a real difference to people's quality of life.* However, within the limitation of the legislative framework, CSSI is duty bound to standards which do not reflect the unique group of people who lead autonomous lifestyles which happen to require personal assistance.

3.2 The Care Standards Act refers to *all personal care... [is] to be delivered*

by workers NVQ [level 2 or 3] qualified or equivalent, or better. ILA wants to explore the concept of **or better**. With current commitment from Government to independent living through the Improving Life Chances Report (2005), ILA wants to establish a training programme that reflects the unique role of personal assistants working directly with PA Users and is not based in the outdated mode of "domiciliary care" whereby service Users are not in direct control of the day to day services provided to them. In internal research of 140 PAs working for ILA, the NVQ has little bearing on the reality of being a Personal Assistant. 58% of PAs are already qualified to NVQ 5 level in their chosen field and only 7.8% were below the level 3 standard of 2 A-levels. (See Appendix 4 and 5). Level 3 NVQs (Appendix 3) are equivalent to 2 A-levels and require considerable autonomy and control or guidance of others in the workplace in order to complete the qualification. This is not a feasible qualification to undertake when working as a PA' A PA cannot attain the qualification as they are not exercising autonomy nor are they in a managerial capacity.

3.3 A National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) is the vocational awards in England and Wales that are achieved through assessment and training. They are practical qualifications based on being able to do a job. Level 2 NVQs are equivalent to 4-5 GCSE's at grade A-C and require demonstration of a wide range of prescribed work tasks examples of which include:

- Communicate with, and complete records for individuals
- Ensure your own actions support the care, protection and well being of individuals
- Carry out & provide feedback on a specific plan of care activities
- Support individuals in their daily living
- Support individuals to meet their domestic & personal needs
- Support individuals to access & participate in recreational activities
- Support individuals during therapy sessions
- Help address the physical comfort needs of individuals
- Support individuals with their personal care needs
- Support individuals to manage continence
- Observe, monitor & record the condition of individuals

- Support individuals to undertake & monitor their own healthcare
- Contribute to working in collaboration with carers in the caring role

3.4 On the surface many of these headings are positive, however the emphasis is placed on the Social Care Worker providing these services rather than the PA User directing these tasks. There is a wide scope for Social Care Workers to draw upon what they have been taught as opposed to what the PA User wants. PAs at the Forum highlighted conflicts of interest arising when:

- I want to leave the bedroom window open all night
- I want to take a double dose of medication
- I don't want to partake in social activities
- I don't want my home to resemble a nursing home
- I don't want to be observed, monitored and recorded

4 ILA QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

4.1 Skills for Care published a report *Developing the Role of Personal Assistants* (2005) which determined that: ***The work of personal assistance is about people skills: common sense, experience, knowledge and the right disposition. There is considerable agreement about the range of tasks for which assistance is required and the personal qualities that are sought by people getting direct payments, and their families:***

- ***Personal care activities*** requiring hands on contact
- ***Household tasks*** such as cooking cleaning, washing, ironing and pet care
- ***Knowledge of a person's biographical life*** and background
- ***Being effective communicators and listeners, and demonstrating empathy and sympathy***
- ***Trustworthiness***
- ***Sharing activities and pastimes*** feature most for young people, older people, people with complex disabilities and mental health problems.

4.2 Interviewees also described personal assistants ***personal qualities***, perhaps captured by the phrase ***going the extra mile***. e.g. doing more than the hours for which they are paid.

4.3 ILA's research expanded upon this list of essential skills for a Personal

Assistant of mainly innate abilities that cannot be *taught* to individual PAs to include:

- **Privacy**
- **Discretion**
- **Honesty**
- **Punctuality**
- **Patience**
- **Empathy**
- **Good communication**
- **Flexibility**
- **Common sense**
- **Follow directions**
- **Intelligence**
- **Sensitivity**
- **Trustworthy**
- **Sense of self reliability**
- **Show initiative**
- **Good disposition**
- **Friendliness**
- **Tolerance**
- **Open minded**
- **Sense of humour**
- **Maturity**
- **Enthusiasm**

The only "learnt" skills given to ILA by PA Users were:

- **Moving and handling**
- **Awareness of the social model of disability**

PAs wanted:

- **Basic nursing or first aid training**

4.4 Much of the current research around training and independent living is being set against a backdrop of traditional methods of delivering services. The Skills for Care research found that it was evident too that the label 'personal assistant' was not applied consistently. With one exception, people thought of themselves as carers. ILA's research found that the majority of responses saw a clear distinction between Personal Assistants and Social Care Workers. The primary difference being the emphasis placed on the PA User being in direct control of the work provided. This fundamental difference highlights a significant flaw in the approach to applying NVQ social care training on Personal Assistants and Personal Assistance Users. Indeed the Skills for Care research found that: ***The majority of people receiving direct payments, and their relatives, valued neither 'formal training' nor appointing personal assistants with experience of working in care- settings.... but most wanted to play a lead role in customised training. A few spoke of wanting to offer training***

opportunities to their personal assistants but had not done so since there was no dedicated funding for this purpose. Neither did they know about social care training routes and opportunities. They confirmed that training 'on the job' had its limitations.

4.5 ILA's research highlighted the following customised training as the most important to the role of a personal assistant:

PA Users thoughts:

1st Aid training
Food hygiene
Infection control
Confidentiality
Moving and handling
Health and safety

PAs thoughts:

1st Aid
Protection of Vulnerable Adults
Food hygiene
Infection control
Moving and handling
Health and safety
Disability Equality Training

4.6 Other training was suggested that falls outside of the remit of formalised personal assistance training:

- Manicures
- Hair care and makeup
- Telephone and computer skills
- Being a positive advocate during times of ill health
- Using public transport
- Personal centred planning
- Wheelchair and equipment maintenance

4.7 More than one person stated that ***all training is important*** but in conjunction to this ***anything that reinforces traditional stereotypes must not be promoted***. It was clear that those PA Users who directly employ their own PAs believed that it is essential that any training must include ***what is independent living and the principles of independence in contrast to traditional care models along with providing an understanding of the importance and significance of the social model of disability***.

4.8 Interestingly, the PAs wanted the training to be provided predominately from

a PA User perspective whilst PA Users cited a much wider range of bodies including the PA User perspective but also both local and national government and the Independent Living Fund.

4.9 Almost 71% of PA Users are confident in providing training to PAs. Three quarters of PAs are satisfied to receive training from PA Users. Reasons given for providing training prior to starting work as a PA included:

- **Gives confidence**
- **Gives a basic knowledge**
- **I do not have speech – communication**
- **Less time spent training = more independence**
- **My welfare depends on this**
- **If they are trained it will help them understand clearly the work of a personal assistant**

4.10 However, the significant reasons for not providing external training were:

- **Everybody's needs are different – training would be too static**
- **Training is variable and some training is rubbish**
- **Sometimes the personal assistant will refuse to help you because they have experience and think they are right**
- **Attitude and communication training should be given, the rest can follow**
- **The PA User can tell the PA what to do each time so basic training is enough**

- Around 54% of PA Users are happy to accept a PA who has not been trained
- Around 56% of PA Users believe there should be an NVQ in Personal Assistance/Independent Living.
- 50% of PAs believe there should be an NVQ in Personal Assistance/Independent Living
- 75% of PA Users would not be willing to fund training directly and believe that such training should be funded through the local authority and Independent Living Fund in direct payments

- Interestingly, 37.5% of PAs would consider funding their own training.

5 ILA FORUM FINDINGS

5.1 The event was lively and informative both for the Forum organisers and for participants. The speakers and workshops generated a significant level of discussion and questions; there were opportunities for people to experience different perspectives and understand the wide ranging issues relating to training PAs.

5.2 The event highlighted and acknowledged that there is no one solution to training and that needs vary and fluctuate according to the PA's working environment. The Forum was however specifically looking at the training needs of PAs working directly with PA Users who are managing their own personal assistance. No one denied the need for PAs to have access to training; the issue is over the type of training necessary. The current training provisions are highly paternalistic placing responsibility on the worker to support the care, protection and well being of individuals. The current NVQ provision is trying to service the needs of too broad a range of people and situations and in doing this a primary group of people who are able to manage their day to days lives through the use of personal assistance are being ignored.

6 THE VALUE OF TRAINING

Is formal training important for PAs?

YES 64% NO 33% No answer 3%

NB: Formal training in this context is defined as training provided by a professional body and not by the PA User.

Comments (YES)

- It is essential that all training is User led and follows the social model of disability. All training must reflect the individual needs of the PA User.
- There must be flexibility and choice by the PA User if they want to provide the training or choice to send PAs to a formal/external training course
- It must be recognised that some disabled people lead such busy and demanding lives they don't have time to train PAs

- The skills required by a PA are dependent on individual need and therefore training needs to be flexible
- Core training is necessary as it provides a level of competence and consistency to be met which can then be developed and moulded by a PA User. This reduces the training required when working in a new setting. Core training includes those areas that are uniform and have little variation from individual to individual including food hygiene, fire safety, health and safety, first aid, disability equality training, community care legislation.
- There is a need for User-led formal training to be developed by disabled people for PAs to reflect the growing body of people working as PAs and to enable them to be supported in their careers. Formal training and professional accreditation would recognise personal assistance as a career option and give a level of status that will attract people to PA and see personal assistance as a career rather than just a job.
- Legislation must be rebalanced to meet the personal needs of PA Users as well as that of PAs. For example the current definitions of risk assessment in relation to disabled people and the misconceptions around lifting and moving are in conflict and often deny basic human rights by suggesting that everyday activities are outside of the remit of legislation and therefore are not permitted.

Comments (NO)

- When the PA User is providing the training it demonstrates that they are in control; nobody can provide better training than the PA User
- The qualities that make a good PA cannot really be 'learnt' with formal training
- Informal training is more specific to individual need; the area of training is too vast and formal training has no bearing on the core role of most PAs
- Formal training does not address the real needs of the individual involved in the employer/employee relationship
- Formal training is no indication of a good PA-they may have completed the training but have no understanding of how to relate to a PA User

- Formal training is embedded in an outmoded view of disability based on traditional and medical models

Comments (NO ANSWER)

- Formal training should be a choice not a requirement
- Is it feasible to have a PA Training School to save continual training of PAs
- Alternatives to training include monitoring and shadowing
- Employee/employer relationship and equality important.

6.1 The message from this workshop was very clear. People answering yes wanted formal training but only in a specific framework that is:

- User controlled and rooted in the social model of disability
- a choice not an obligation

6.2 People answering no and not answering opposed training because it does not currently meet the framework that was proposed. Therefore there is a universal response that current training provision is not suitable to meet the needs of PAs or PA Users.

7 NVQ IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

SPEAKERS: Dot Johnson and Jo Whisker: Greenwich Association of Disabled People: Personal Assistants Agency

7.1 Greenwich Association of Disabled People is an organisation of disabled people which supports and campaigns for disabled people to have rights, choices and control of their lives. GAD PA Agency started in 1992 from a PA Management training course whereby participants wanted all the benefits of personal assistance but not the bureaucracy. GAD PA Agency found that they had no common ground with college based NVQs that are based around residential care. As a result they found a training provider who could offer NVQs based in the agency's philosophy and was funded externally. GAD has an internal assessor for NVQs which eliminates the need for strangers observing PAs' work. GAD also provides short courses to their PAs. The best thing that has happened since GAD have been providing NVQ training-a PA who have never got a qualification in her

life was so proud when received her NVQ certification –a nationally recognised award.

7.2 This workshop gave participants a list of topics covered in an NVQ in Health and Social Care. Participants determined the current NVQ syllabus.

TABLE 7.1: NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	
☺ acceptable ☹ mixed response ☹ remove	
Communicate with, and complete records for individuals	☹
Promote effective communication for individuals	☹
Support the health & safety of yourself and individuals	☺
Develop your knowledge and practice	☹
Ensure your own actions support the care, protection and well being of individuals	☹
Promote choice, well-being and the protection of individuals	☹
Promote, monitor and maintain health, safety and security in the working environment	☹
Carry out & feedback on a specific plan of care activities	☹
Support individuals in their daily living	☺
Support individuals to make journeys	☺
Support individuals to meet their domestic & personal needs	☺
Support individuals to access & participate in recreational activities	☺
Support individuals to take part in developmental activities	☺
Support individuals during therapy sessions	☺
Provide food & drink for individuals	☹
Help individuals to eat & drink	☺
Help individuals to keep mobile	☺
Help address the physical comfort needs of individuals	☺
Undertake agreed pressure area care	☺
Support individuals with their personal care needs	☺
Support individuals to manage continence	☺

Maintain the feet of individuals who have been assessed as requiring help with general foot care	☹
Assist in the administration of medication	☺
Support individuals prior to, during & after clinical procedures	☹
Contribute to moving & handling of individuals	☺
Observe, monitor & record the condition of individuals	☹
Support individuals to undertake & monitor their own healthcare	☺
Support individuals who are distressed	☹
Contribute to working in collaboration with carers in the caring role	☹
Gain access to & ensure individuals homes are secure	☹
Protect yourself form the risk of violence eat work	☺
Reflect on and develop your practice	☺

Comments

- It's great to have as much training as possible, but we need to be realistic about the time and costs training involves and which part of training is more beneficial to be delivered directly by a PA User.
- I think that all areas are valid; it is the approach which is important.
- The above is far too prescriptive and open to interpretation and may or may not be relevant to an individual PA User
- An NVO **must** be based on the social model of disability/independent living ethos and remain true to maintaining choice and control to the PA User.

8 THE SOCIAL MODEL OF TRAINING FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

8.1 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. They have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure that England has a workforce of world-class standard. The LSC is responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training for everyone in England other than those in universities. The vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce.

8.2 There is currently a large governmental drive towards educating the social care work force. The drive has been a part of a government campaign to attract people to consider working in the field through offering subsidised training through employers.

8.3 SPEAKER: Iain Speed. All Inclusive is a consultancy providing keynote speakers for conferences, disability awareness training and access audits. Iain's PA is vital to ensure he is understood at meetings, typing and some basic personal care. Iain spends more time with his PA than with his partner or friends and therefore it is fundamental to have a good working relationship. Personal assistance cannot be learnt from a text book or college course. It is about PA Users interviewing and training PAs, in Iain's case it is about his PA spending time listening to his speech impediment to be able to repeat what he wants to say. PAs make living possible and without them in whatever sphere of life would be very difficult.

9 THE PERFECT TRAINING IN PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

<p>PERSONAL ASSISTANCE – GENERAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding the role of the PA ● Generic principles of moving, handling and transferring ● Health & Safety in and outside of the home ● Bathing ● Dressing/undressing ● Going to the toilet ● Hygiene/Personal hygiene for PAs and PA Users ● Personal intimate care eg ears, teeth 	<p>PERSONAL ASSISTANCE - SPECIFIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using a hoist ● Transferring ● Medication ● Pain management ● Impairment specific management issues ● Recognising sexual needs ● Bladder & bowel care ● PEG tube feeding ● Skin care-pressure management ● Communication with deaf people
<p>INDEPENDENT LIVING/DISABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disability Discrimination Act ● Community Care Act 	<p>PRACTICAL SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cooking, food preparation and food hygiene ● Shopping

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fundamentals of the independent living movement ● The role of a Personal Assistant ● Disability Equality Training ● Social model of disability ● Communication skills ● When is it necessary to be active and when is it better to be 'invisible'? ● Recognising boundaries ● Empathy training ● Listening training ● Advocacy ● Confidentiality training ● Cultural awareness ● Equal opportunities ● Empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Driving & car maintenance ● Light gardening ● Housework ● Pet care ● Basic household maintenance ● DIY ● Window cleaning ● Swimming ● Wheelchair (tyre and brake) maintenance ● Hobbies ● Computer skills eg word, email ● Office administration including filing ● Management skills ● First Aid training ● Social & communication skills
<p>OTHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Massage ● Hair care ● Make up ● Alternative therapies ● Time Management ● Manicures and pedicures ● Facials ● Waxing ● Active listening 	<p>MISCELLANEOUS IDEAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication skills (Learn from your employer) ● Importance of well being ● Respecting each other ● Dealing with my family

10 SPEAKER: Penny Pepper: PA User networks in relation to training

10.1 Penny Pepper has a personal and professional interest in issues around independent living and was contributor to 'The Rough Guide for Managing

Personal Assistants'. Penny's session examined several structures implemented to "safeguard" disabled people needing personal assistance including NVOs, POVA and CRBs. Her concern is over the sense of security that these can instil. Penny related specific experiences of *bouncy PAs turning up for interview armed with bulging folders of NVOs* who want to control her life because they know best as they have studied all about providing care [sic]. Personal assistance needs to be professionalized, but by PA Users through Disability Equality Training that is flexible and responsive to individual need.

11 THE VALUE OF TRAINING TO PAS AND PA USERS

Do you think that the opportunities available are appropriate for PAs working directly with PA Users? YES 23% NO 54% No answer 23%

- The courses the PAs attend should give them a basic knowledge of the type of work they will be doing.
- PA Users need to know more of what is available and what is being taught
- I quite like being shown how to act in daily life by a peer not a training course
- Training is not individual enough: All training needs to be individualised because everybody's needs are different.
- Individual PA Users don't have enough finances to sponsor the training.
- It's been quite clear from the presentations that NVOs are very limited. No value is placed on equality training.
- There should be opportunities for skills based training but in addition there should be training to support PAs to understand their role as employee with the context of social model of disability.

Would you consider sending your PAs on the free training available?

YES 65% NO 15% no answer 20%

Would you tell PAs about the training opportunities available?

YES 73% NO 8% no answer 19%

Would you include the training opportunities available as part of your training for your PAs? YES 69% NO 8% no answer 19% BOTH 4%

- Some training is better than nothing and it can add to the experiences

already gained through the workplace, however it is essential to look at type of training and what outcomes are anticipated.

- To enable PAs to progress in their careers and get better salaries.
- Training can enhance the training provided directly by PA Users but the costs cannot be met by current direct payment allocations
- Training is suitable for a specific need, but not a generic NVQ course.
- Training can avoid confrontation on issues eg washing hands!
- If the PAs would like to attend courses and possibly achieve a qualification, they should be fully supported
- Having heard the experiences of PA Users today, I would be reluctant to send a PA on just any training. I would need to ensure that the delivery of the training had a User-led approach and also allowed the PA to interpret the learned skills as tools to be used at the direction of the PA User.

Does your local authority/Personal Assistant Support Service provide a PA User support network? YES 39% NO 39% Don't know 22%

Does your local authority provide a PA support network for PAs working directly with PA Users? YES 12% NO 54% Don't know 34%

Do you feel that there is any benefit to such a network for either PAs or PA Users? YES 69% Don't know 31%

- It is important to establish a good employer/employee relationship and facilitate an open dialogue to resolve working issues. Although it could be difficult for some people to express difficulties to some PA Users.
- To share experiences. However there is a danger of picking up bad habits from other PAs.
- Good for PA Users to discuss mutual difficulties and to brainstorm.
- PAs are extremely isolated and may never have done this type of work before and it is essential PAs can access support especially if alone and away from home and it provides an opportunity for people to meet new people and make friends.
- It is always good for support to share experiences/concerns as an informal

supervision. It is too easy to become isolated and not find appropriate mutual support.

- Any network would have to be focused, keep confidentiality and avoid complaints.
- There are serious concerns that any “problem sharing” information could become a breach of confidentiality.

Do you have any other comments relating to training PAs that have not been cover today?

- The disabled person is the best qualified trainer. Many disabled people would benefit form DET, independent living and Personal Development Training.
- How to train new PAs, you have to work at short notice.
- The disabled person is the best qualified trainer. It may be beneficial to provide training for PA Users on recruiting and training PAs. As many disabled people would benefit form DET, Independent Living and Personal Development Training.
- If a PA User wants to employ someone without an NVQ they should be allowed to do this. PA Users should not be restricted by PA NVQ requirements as an essential or statutory requirement; PA Users should be able to take risks!
- More bespoke training could be arranged at an affordable rate for PAs and PA Users
- Communication is key to independence and some people are denied this most basic of rights.
- Ideally, there should be NVQ modules covering topics on first aid and hygiene and most importantly communication, flexibility and negotiation skills. Then a choice of optional modules including advocacy, empowerment and the social model of disability. There should be an emphasis made, during training for PAs to be able to shape their NVQ around the PA Users personal lifestyle choices, hobbies and interests. Critical reflection on one’s

own values and principles must be incorporated and challenged during training.

12 CONCLUSIONS

12.1 As the Independent Living Bill is likely to become a reality and both central and local government are demonstrating their commitment to both independent living and direct payments alongside a hopeful expansion of individualised budgets, the necessary training for this emerging group of workers is not being acknowledged.

12.2 Both PAs and PA Users want training opportunities; people believe in the premise that training strengthens a workforce and provides the necessary tools to excel in the workplace. However, the appropriate training is not currently available. The consensus was clearly a need for generic training around disability and personal assistance; in deed some people felt this was desperately lacking and essential to the role of a PA. However, other areas should be add-ons: PA Users want to be able to identify training suitable to their identify training suitable to their specific need and not send PAs to be trained on general concepts irrelevant to their work. **It is clearly paramount that *all* training must be userled.**

12.3 Personal Assistants working directly with PA Users are at best being pigeonholed into existing and often inappropriate training rather than exploring the dynamic and specific training required to work under the direction of a PA User.

12.4 There is a fundamental need for training from the perspective of the social model of disability that is based in empowering disabled people through Personal Assistants that actively understand the role of a personal assistant as opposed to that of a traditional social care worker.

12.5 Training is recognised a basic requirement of any job, yet very few PA Users are allocated with a training budget as part of their direct payment or offered any subsidised training for their PAs. Whilst there is a national drive to increasing the skills of the workforce, this distinct group of people are being marginalised

because they work directly for a disabled person.

12.6 Very few PA Users are offered free or subsidised training opportunities for their staff through the numerous training agencies. Training needs to be:

- easy to access through distance learning
- non obtrusive to the PA User: does not involve work based practical assessments or endless activities to be carried out “with” the PA User
- modular so that both PA and PA User can opt in and out of modules to establish a relevant training programme

12.7 Both PAs and PA Users saw the need for training as parallel to support and supervision. There is a large disparity amongst the services offered by Direct Payment Support Schemes in relation to support and supervision. One of the highlights of the Forum for both PAs and PA Users was the ability to meet face-to-face and discuss issues, to network on significant matters, to receive fundamental support and information and to generally flourish in the atmosphere that arises from any peer support setting.

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www.skillsforcare.org.uk
- *Experts by Experience, CSCI*, (December 2006)
http://www.csci.org.uk/about_csci/press_releases/experts_bring_experience_to_so.aspx
- *Improving the life chances of Disabled People*, (2005) Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk
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- *Review of the Independent Living Funds*, (March 2007)
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2007/independentliving/>
- *Trends in the London Care Market 1994-2024*, (July 2005)
www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications

Dear Colleague,

Independent Living Alternatives promotes the right of disabled people to live independently. ILA is an organisation managed by disabled people providing a comprehensive range of personal assistance services.

ILA has received funding from Awards for All to explore training for Personal Assistants from PA User perspective.

The purpose of the attached questionnaire is to establish the specific areas of training deemed essential by Personal Assistance Users and Personal Assistants.

ILA will produce a report outlining the main findings of the study which will be used to promote the training needs of Personal Assistants and Personal Assistance Users and to develop a training programme available to people living and working in the Capital.

ILA will also hold a conference in 2007 to explore and analyse the training needs of Personal Assistants from the perspective of both the Personal Assistant and Personal Assistance User with the aim of promoting the career opportunities available to Personal Assistants.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Tracey Jannaway
Director



**RESEARCH
TRAINING FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS**

Independent Living Alternatives promotes the right of disabled people to live independently. ILA is an organisation managed by disabled people providing a comprehensive range of personal assistance services.

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ILA will also hold a conference in 2007 to explore and analyse the training needs of Personal Assistants from the perspective of both the Personal Assistant and Personal Assistance User with the aim of promoting the career opportunities available to Personal Assistants.

Are you a Disabled Person? Personal Assistance User Personal Assistant Other (please state) _____(you may tick more than one box)

Do you currently use Personal Assistants? YES NO

If yes, are they: Directly employed social services provision agency Other (please state) _____(you may tick more than one box)

Are you currently working as a Personal Assistant? YES NO

If yes, are you: Directly employed social services provision agency Other (please state) _____(you may tick more than one box)

Do you believe the training for a Social Care Worker is different to that for a Personal Assistant?
YES NO

Please give reasons for your answer: _____

What skills do you believe are essential for a Personal Assistant?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Have you attended as a Personal Assistant or provided as a Personal Assistance User, training specific to the role of Personal Assistant? YES NO

If yes, what training was provided and how would you rate the benefits of this training to the job role of a Personal Assistant?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

What training do you think should be provided to Personal Assistants? Please rank the following as

1: very important; 2: useful; 3: not important

1st Aid _ NVQ 1/2 _ Protection of Vulnerable Adults _ Fire Safety _

Food Hygiene _ Infection Control _ Confidentiality _

Moving and Handling _ Equal Opportunities _ Risk Assessment _

Health and Safety _ Disability Equality Training _

Other training you consider to be very important:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Other training you consider to be useful:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Training that is not important

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Who should provide personal assistance training? _____

Are you confident in providing training to your Personal Assistants? YES NO

Are you satisfied with receiving training from your Personal Assistance User? YES NO

Do you think that it is necessary for Personal Assistants to be trained prior to starting work as a Personal Assistant? YES NO

Please give reasons for your answers: _____

Are you happy to accept Personal Assistants who have not been trained? YES NO

Should there be a NVQ in Personal Assistance/Independent Living? YES NO

Would you be willing to fund training? YES NO

If no, who should fund training? _____

Any further comments: _____

Would you be happy to answer more questions by email? in person? phone?

Would you be interested in attending a conference on training for PAs? YES NO

Would you like to receive a copy of the report when it is produced? YES NO

Would you like more information about ILA PA Services? YES NO

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS OR IF YOU WISH:

Name _____

Email _____

You can return this form by email to PA Services@ILAnet.co.uk (please remember to click save when you finish) or by freepost (no stamp required) Independent Living Alternatives, FREEPOST 12214, LONDON NW7 1YE

THANK YOU FOR HELPING ILA WITH THIS VALUABLE RESEARCH

APPENDIX THREE

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

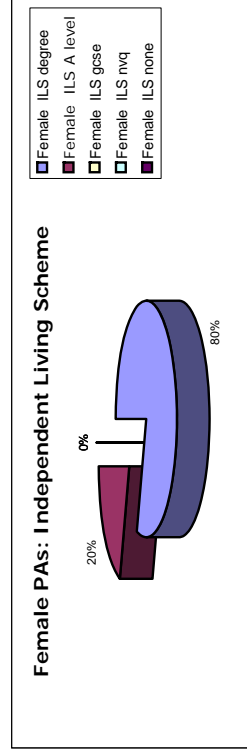
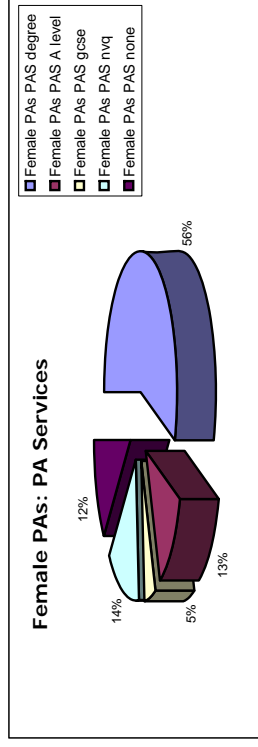
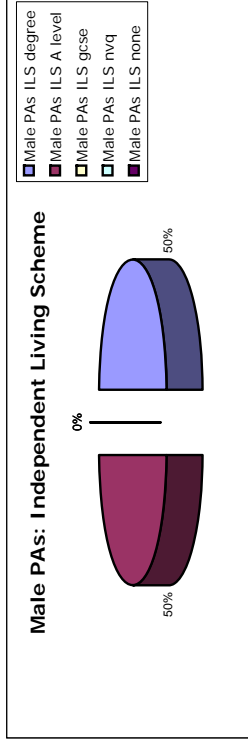
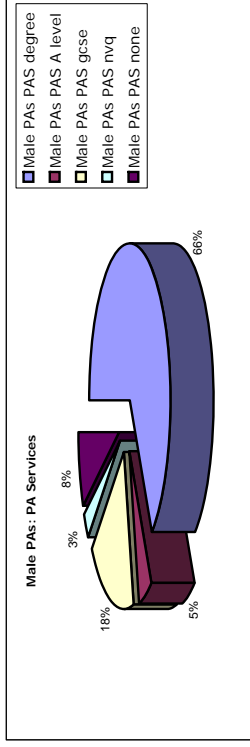
A National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) is the vocational awards in England and Wales that are achieved through assessment and training. They are practical qualifications based on being able to do a job. Level 2 NVQs are equivalent to 4-5 GCSE's at grade A-C and require demonstration of a wide range of prescribed work tasks examples of which include:

- Communicate with, and complete records for individuals
- Support the health & safety of yourself and individuals
- Develop your knowledge and practice
- Ensure your own actions support the care, protection and well being of individuals
- Carry out & provide feedback on a specific plan of care activities
- Support individuals in their daily living
- Support individuals to make journeys
- Support individuals to meet their domestic & personal needs
- Support individuals to access & participate in recreational activities
- Support individuals to take part in development activities
- Support individuals during therapy sessions
- Provide food & drink for individuals
- Help individuals to eat & drink
- Help individuals to keep mobile
- Help address the physical comfort needs of individuals
- Undertake agreed pressure area care
- Support individuals with their personal care needs
- Support individuals to manage continence
- Maintain the feet of individuals who have been assessed as requiring help with general foot care
- Assist in the administration of medication
- Support individuals prior to, during & after clinical procedures
- Contribute to moving & handling of individuals
- Observe, monitor & record the condition of individuals
- Support individuals to undertake & monitor their own healthcare
- Support individuals who are distressed
- Contribute to working in collaboration with carers in the caring role
- Gain access to & ensure individuals homes are secure
- Protect yourself from the risk of violence at work

Appendix Three: Academic background of PAs working for Independent Living Alternatives

Source: January 2006

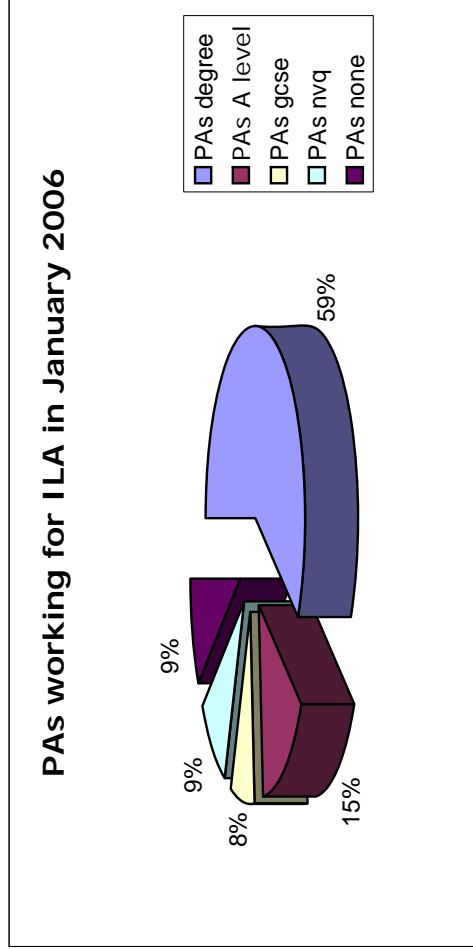
Male PAS	PAS	degree	25
		A level	2
		gcse	7
		nvq	1
		none	3
Male PAS	ILS	degree	7
		A level	7
		gcse	0
		nvq	0
		none	0
Female PAS	PAS	degree	46
		A level	11
		gcse	4
		nvq	12
		none	10
Female	ILS	degree	4
		A level	1
		gcse	0
		nvq	0
		none	0



Appendix Four: Academic background of PAs working for Independent Living Alternatives

Source: January 2006

PAs	degree	82
	A level	21
	gcse	11
	nvq	13
	none	13



**ILA is an organisation controlled by disabled people
PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE SINCE 1989
CHARITY NUMBER: 802198**

**INDEPENDENT LIVING ALTERNATIVES
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