



PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES INFORMATION FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS USED IN THIS INFORMATION

- PERSONAL ASSISTANCE**-the help provided to a disabled person
PERSONAL ASSISTANT (PA)-people who provide help to disabled people
PA USER (PAU)-people who use personal assistance

INTRODUCTION

Independent Living Alternatives (ILA) was established in May 1989 to promote the right of disabled people to live independently. ILA provides **Personal Assistants (PAs)** to people (**know as PA Users**) who need **personal assistance** in day-to-day living; people generally classified by society as having 'severe disabilities' and who need a high level of personal assistance.

- ILA is an organisation controlled by disabled people providing a comprehensive range of personal assistance services
- ILA provides personal assistance either by supplying personal assistants or by enabling individuals to employ their own personal assistants

ILA is not a traditional domiciliary care provider and does not work with people who are ill but people, who need physical assistance in their daily lives. ILA enables PA Users to determine their own actions and lifestyles by enabling self-definition of physical and practical support needs.

PAs are not qualified carers or nurses and have no particular qualifications; PAs need only to have an open mind and an empathy with the philosophy of the organisation and the disability rights movement. 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.



Ms Smith has a muscular disability, which means that she has a general weakness in her muscles. She doesn't walk and uses an electric wheelchair. She needs help to get dressed, go to the toilet and have a bath. She also needs help at work with lifting books and someone to drive her to meetings. During the night she needs someone to help her change her sleeping position.

Mr Jones has cerebral palsy and as a result has little control over his arms and legs. He is often seen as being stupid because he has speech impairment, but he is actually studying for a degree in sociology. He needs help to get dressed and to do the cooking and housework. He needs someone to push his wheelchair and to take notes at university.

Within society it is taken for granted that, as adults, we make our own decisions. It is natural that we decide when we get up or go to bed, when we have a bath or go to the toilet, whether we work or play, whether we have a night on the town or stay in and watch television, however, this right is denied to many disabled people. Disabled people are often sentenced to being second-class citizens and viewed by society as being in-valid.

A distinction must be made between disability and society. The majority of problems faced by disabled people are socially constructed and do not have to exist. Disability must be seen as a part of an individual and accepted and not be seen as something abnormal, it must be accepted in the same way as race, sexuality and gender.

ILA PA Users have a strong sense of commitment to their own rights and self-acceptance, which is fuelled by a determination to develop themselves within society.

THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT PROFILE

What is a Personal Assistant? A Personal Assistant (PA) is not a carer or nurse. The role of a PA is to follow the instruction and direction of the disabled person (PA User), to enable that individual to live independently in the manner in which they choose.

A Personal Assistant must:

- Respect and maintain strict confidentiality
- Have an understanding of and a commitment to disability equality
- Have an understanding of the role of a PA
- Have good verbal and written communication skills

- Know when to use their initiative and when to take a back seat
- Be reliable and punctual
- Be willing to provide personal care
- Be willing to undertake training relevant to their work
- A full and clean driving licence is useful, but not essential. You do not need to have your own a vehicle.

The skills that ILA looks for in a PA are an ability to follow the direction and instruction of the PA User as opposed to someone who can go in and take over. In our experience someone who is open-minded and flexible is preferable to someone with a wealth of previous “care” orientated experience.

What are the terms and conditions?

Hours: the hours of work vary from post to post, starting at a few hours per week to a day or two through to working a full week

Salary: ILA aims to pay the national living wage for all placements, however some funding authorities do not enable this. ILA *always* displays the current salary for each vacancy plus holiday pay and pension contribution where applicable – there are also many opportunities for over time if a PA wants extra work.

Annual Leave: 5.6 weeks pro rata

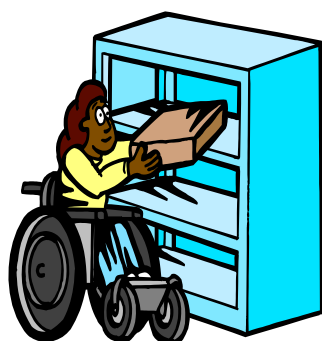
The main duties of a PA may include any or all of the following:

- Providing intimate personal care which includes going to the toilet, having a bath, putting on and taking off clothes, repositioning, moving arms and feet into comfortable positions, etc.
- Providing non-intimate personal support, which includes picking things up, making coffee, washing up, fetching lunch, housework, shopping, ironing, preparing and cooking basic meals, cleaning, washing clothes, etc.

It can also include:

- Driving (if you have a valid driving license – please note that this is NOT essential)
- Accompanying someone to a meeting, the doctor, shopping, cinema, etc.
- Taking and typing up notes at meetings
- Assistance with physiotherapy/exercising.

PERSONAL ASSISTANTS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH PA USERS



A Personal Assistant (PA) becomes part of someone’s life providing personal, physical and practical assistance, when necessary, in an atmosphere of equality; not as a ‘carer’ or ‘facilitator’. The relationship between PA User and PA is complex and unique. Both PA Users and PAs are dependent on each other, as fundamentally one cannot survive without the other. Within this relationship both PA User and PA can expect to be treated with respect and

equality. The most essential criterion to enable a successful placement is communication between both PA User and PA.

Every ILA placement is unique. It is about equality and flexibility. However, because ILA is working with individuals there are no hard and fast rules and no fully defined roles.

Working for ILA has given me an understanding of the problems faced by disabled people and an insight into myself working in a one-to-one situation.

Joe

The only aspect of the physical support that really bothered me was helping the PA User go to the loo. Helping someone go to toilet is one of society's strongest taboos, but like all the other things, I quickly got used to it.

Pete

A PA is not provided as a servant or a master and nor is the PA User. Respect and accept the PA User for what s/he is and the PA User will accept you for what you are. Be free to be yourself, say what you feel, but try not to judge, impose or control.

You will see a PA User's life with all its rough edges. There are few secrets and as the placement progresses you will learn much about each other, bear in mind that there are things that happen in a placement that are confidential. PAs share a PA User's ups and downs, successes and failures; you will be interacting with a PA User's friends, family, colleagues and lovers. Some people you will like and others you will not.

Also remember you have your own time to live your life, a PA User is always dependent on having someone to assist in their daily life. People need their own space, always remember that you both need space and you will not always be needed: understand that sometimes, particularly in the case of close relationships, three people can be a crowd. Good communication is the essence of a successful placement.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE



RETURNING AN APPLICATION FORM: Applicants must complete an application form. The application form is shown to PA Users so please complete the application form in word and include as much information as possible to assist ILA in deciding your suitability for working with the organisation.

PROVIDING REFERENCES: ILA will write to your referees and ask them to complete a form on your suitability to work with the organisation. A referee must be an employer or a tutor. Your friends and family are not acceptable as referees.

INTERVIEW: You may be invited to ILA for an informal Zoom interview. This meeting is to explain further how ILA works and gives you an opportunity to ask questions about the organisation and determine your suitability to work for the organisation.



PA USERS: Application forms are passed to PA Users so that they may select the applicants that they wish to interview.

2ND INTERVIEW: This interview is usually held on Zoom and if successful you will be invited for a trial shift.

PLACEMENT: When both a PA User and an applicant are happy to work together an offer of a placement is made to the applicant. There is a one-month probation period on all of ILA's placements.

INDEPENDENT LIVING ALTERNATIVES

SOLAR HOUSE

915 HIGH ROAD

LONDON

N12 8QJ

020 8343 6084

Recruitment@ILAnet.co.uk

www.ILAnet.co.uk

TRACEY JANNAWAY: DIRECTOR

STEPANKA BULIROVA: PA CO-ORDINATOR

NWE ZIN SHAUNG: RECRUITMENT OFFICER

SYED SHAH: PA OFFICER

MELISSA TURNER: OUT OF HOURS