

Independent Living Alternatives (ILA) was established in May 1989 to promote the right of disabled people to live independently.

- ILA is an organisation controlled by disabled people providing a comprehensive range of personal assistance services
- ILA aims to enable people who need personal assistance, to be able to live independently in the community and take full control of their lives and thereby have individuality and spontaneity
- ILA provides personal assistance either by supplying personal assistants or by enabling individuals to employ their own personal assistants
- ILA establishes the necessary personal assistance as a direct part of an individual's life to enable disabled people to have direct control over their own lives

ILA is not a traditional domiciliary care provider, it is about 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. PA Users are responsible for arranging and managing the placement, working to a philosophy whereby there is equality and a working partnership.

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. PAs are often graduates who are looking for direct work experience, people from overseas who wish to improve their English and people looking for a supplementary income whilst studying or establishing their own business.

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.

The role of a PA is to provide personal assistance to enable a PA user to live independently by the PA following the direction of what the PA User wants and

needs. 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.

PAs provide personal assistance to people to assist in everyday living. They help to do things like getting dressed, going to the toilet, washing, dressing, cooking, driving, shopping, etc always following the direction of the PA User. PAs do not need any experience as all the training is provided by the PA user with regular support from ILA staff.

A PA is not provided as a servant or a master and nor is the PA user. Respect each other and you will be respected in return. Be free to be yourself, say what you feel, but try not to judge, impose or control. Also, remember as a PA, you have your own time to live your life, a PA user is always dependent on having someone to assist in their daily life.