

A Guide to

Recruiting

Personal Assistants

Useful tips based on the personal experiences
of Active Independence members



Introduction

The tasks involved in recruitment can be summarised as:

1. Writing a job description
2. Deciding where to advertise
3. Short listing
4. The interview
5. Contracts
6. Induction

1

Job Description / Application Pack

This will be based on your needs identified in your care plan. Make a note of exactly what assistance you need, what tasks need to be carried out and how many hours you need someone for. This is the Job Description. Then make a list of what skills and experience your assistant must have (essential) e.g. experience of care work, and what things you would like them to have (desirable) such as moving and handling training. This is your Person Specification.

You then need to put together an Application Pack which will contain the Job Description, Person Specification and Application Form and a covering letter. Get several packs ready for when you advertise. If you don't want to include your home address you can set up a PO Box number through the Post Office.

2

Advertising

Most members of our group have found the best place to advertise is the local paper. This got a much better response rate than the Job Centre, shop windows, supermarket notice boards, GPs' etc. but it is still worth trying some of these. Costs for a press advert will vary so check exactly how much you are paying, what size the advert is and for how many weeks it will be included. Your Budget should cover advertising costs.

Think carefully about what information to include in the advert. You need to capture the essential information: Job title, hours, pay and contact details.

Some members have used the phrase 'no experience necessary' and this has produced a much higher response rate. Not everyone is familiar with the term 'Personal Assistant' so it may be helpful to add 'support worker' or 'carer'.

You might also want to mention any essential requirements.

Remember to make a note of anyone who contacts you for an application pack.

3 **Short Listing**

When you receive the completed application forms you need to decide if any of the applicants are suitable. Use your Job Description and Person Specification as a guide. Few applicants will meet all your requirements but make sure they have any essential skills or experience. Try not to make judgements based on handwriting, background, names, circumstances etc.

4 **Interviewing**

Most people tend not to interview in their own home for safety reasons. Most have booked a room in a public building. You need to allow about one hour for each interview and have someone with you to take notes and offer support. Write a list of interview questions based on your Job Description and Person Specification. It is a good idea to have a practice run through your questions to make sure they are clear and understandable and cover everything you want to find out from the applicant.

An interview is your chance to find out if you will get on with this person and for them to decide whether they would like to work for you so try to be as relaxed and friendly as possible. One member of our group held a second interview at home, which is worth considering if you cannot decide between two applicants. Do not forget to take up references, most people do this after offering someone the job but before they start work, but you could collect them all before interviewing.

We strongly recommend you request a CRB check for your new PA. Your local Council for Voluntary Services will have details of who offers this service locally.

5 **Contract**

Once you have offered someone the job you need to draw up a Contract of Employment which details all the terms and conditions under which they will be employed. There are example contracts you can use to adapt to your own specific circumstances. Include a 'Probationary Period' to give you time to see if they are able to do the job and if you get on alright with each other.

6 **Induction**

Put together an Induction Pack containing their contract and any other policies and procedures they need to be aware of, such as Disciplinary Procedures and Time Off Work policy, and go through them together. Plan a proper induction / settling in period of about a week during which you introduce your PA to their job and to your routines.

Active Independence has examples of all the forms you will need. Please contact us for any help, information or support on recruiting a personal assistant.

We are a **user-led** organisation **committed** to raising **aspirations** and **confidence** amongst Disabled people

We are working towards increasing **choice** and **control** to promote and support **independent living**

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