

Isle of Wight Council Adult Social Care

Personal Assistant Policy

August 2021

1 Document Information

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3. Purpose, Scope and Aims

The Isle of Wight Council's (IWC) Personal Assistant Market Development Team are committed to support people already working as a Personal Assistant (PA) and encourage people who wish to become a PA. The policy also provides information, advice and signposts anyone wishing to employ a PA.

Individuals can choose to have a PA to provide the care and support they require to help them live the life they want to lead. The IWC supports individuals who choose to move away from more traditional commissioned services and to take control over how their care and support needs are met enabling them to live their life as independently as possible.

The IWC recommends that people use the PA Noticeboard to source an accredited PA. People may also source a PA through an agency, another organisation or appoint a family member or representative.

4. What is a PA?

A personal assistant is someone employed by an individual who provides personal and practical care and support to help individuals live the life they choose. PA's can be employed directly by the individual or self-employed and will support the individual, promote independent living and may be involved in many aspects of the person's life at home, at leisure or at work.

More information about Personal Assistants can be found by clicking [here](#) or <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Care-Support-and-Housing/Adults-Services/Adult-Social-Care-Personal-Assistants/What-is-a-Personal-Assistant>

5. What do PAs do?

The role of a PA is unique as what the PA does will be determined by the person that they support and will be unique to each relationship. The PA's role is to focus directly on the individual to provide care and support which helps them to achieve the outcomes which they have identified in a Care Act Assessment (see Sections 6 and 7 below). PAs are there to enable the individual to take control and to support them in living as independently as possible. Depending on the person's circumstances, this may involve assisting with day to day activities in their home or their community or personal care related tasks.

6. Becoming a PA

If a person would like to become a PA to enable them to provide personal and practical support to an Individual to promote their independence and help them live

the life they choose, they can do so either as an employee of that individual or on a self-employed basis.

- Self-employed PAs work directly for themselves and are responsible for complying with all relevant legislation including that relating to paying their tax and national insurance, liability insurance, working time directives, health and safety and safeguarding. The PA is responsible for providing their own equipment to carry out their role (including personal protective equipment) and in addition is responsible for ensuring that there is continuity of support for the individual if the PA is unable to attend (for example if they fall ill or are on holiday).
- Employed PAs are directly employed by the individual they support. They will enter into a contract of employment with the person and will be PAYE for tax and national insurance purposes. The individual will be responsible for payroll as well as for the provision of equipment and compliance with legislative requirements.

Both Self-employed and Employed PAs can accredit and enrol with the IOW PA Noticeboard and can secure work through this route. Whilst accreditation and enrolment to the IOW PA Noticeboard is optional for PAs it is recommended if the care and support provided is to be funded through a Personal Budget Direct Payment the PAs delivering this support are accredited.

7. What is the PA accreditation process?

The IWC requires all PA's being paid via a direct payment to accredit and enrol on the PA Noticeboard. Accreditation and enrolment involve a series of checks. This is known as the accreditation process. In addition, PAs are required to sign and agree to a Code of Conduct (see appendix1).

The accreditation and enrolment process involves:

- Completing an online accreditation via the IOW PA Noticeboard that captures skills, qualifications, work experience and location the PA would like to work in
- An enhanced DBS check. (The PA Market Development Team can support the PA with this process if required. The PA Market Development Team use an independent company, to carry out the enhanced DBS checks.)
- Undergo right to work checks if required

Ongoing accreditation checks will be carried out to ensure all training and documents are in date and in place. These checks will involve

- Undergo regular audits- The PA Market Development carry out monthly audits to ensure these documents are in place if they are not the PAs account will be suspended and they will not be able to access the IOW PA Noticeboard for further work.
- All individuals receiving PA support will be informed if their PA does not have valid documentation in place this will also result in the PA's account being suspended from the IOW PA Noticeboard until the relevant documentation has been submitted

In addition to the above process, self-employed PAs will also be required to:

- Provide evidence of their unique tax reference issued from HM Revenue & Customs
- Provide evidence of their public liability insurance
- Provide evidence of vehicle insurance for business use, if required
- Complete any mandatory and recommended training

The IWC PA Market Development Team can provide PA's with support, advice and training both on accreditation and once becoming a fully accredited PA. If you require further details, please contact the PA Market Development Team (See section 15 for contact details)

8. About the IOW Personal Assistant Noticeboard

The IOW PA Noticeboard is the council's preferred choice to source accredited PAs. It is a free service that provides a safe 'platform' for individuals looking for PAs to support them in their home and to access the community to find a PA they can work with who can help to meet their care and support needs. In addition, the IOW PA Noticeboard provides job opportunities for PAs looking for work. The PA noticeboard is a secure web-based community which can be found at <http://isleofwight.panoticeboard.org.uk/>.

It is only once the PA has completed the accreditation and enrolment process that they will be granted access to the IOW PA Noticeboard.

9. How does the PA Noticeboard work?

The IOW PA Noticeboard is accessible to PAs who have successfully accredited and enrolled. When a person is looking for a PA to support them, they are directed to the

IOW PA Noticeboard to find the right PA for them. The person will place an advert on the IOW PA Noticeboard and the PA's who are accredited and enrolled can respond to that advert. The person has complete choice and control over the PA they choose. Support to find a PA may be provided by the persons family, an advocate or by Adult Social Care. If a suitable PA is identified a meeting can then be arranged between the individual and the potential PA(s) to decide if it is mutually agreeable.

10. How to access the PA Noticeboard

If you are interested in accessing the IOW PA Noticeboard you can register on the website by clicking [here](#) or <http://isleofwight.panoticeboard.org.uk/register/> and complete your Profile.

11. Employing a PA

When an Individual chooses to employ a PA (either as an employee or self-employed) the person will need to do the following:

- Visit the IOW PA Noticeboard website
- Complete their profile
- Write a job description and person specification
- Write the job advert
- Advertise the job
- Choose who to interview
- Arrange the interview
- Establish if the PA will be employed or self-employed
- Offer the job
- Ensure the PA has the right skill set for the care and support needs
- Complete the right checks
- Keep records

Skills for Care have produced a Recruiting a Personal Assistant Toolkit that provides guidance on the recruitment process. The information can be read by clicking [here](#) or <http://www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk/recruiting-a-personal-assistant/>

Whilst usually the PA is independent of the person being supported, in exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to employ a family member who lives in the same property as the supported person. This must be agreed by the social care practitioner supporting the individual in advance and as per the direct payment regulations.

For a person seeking to employ their PA directly further support will be provided by the PA Market Development Team and Adult Social Care if required.

12. Funding a PA

There are various ways in which a PA can be funded

- If a person is eligible to receive Adult Social Care Services, a PA may be funded directly by the council through a direct payment personal budget (DPPB). The amount of funding available will depend on the amount of a person's savings or investments, most people pay something towards their care and support. The amount they pay depends on their individual financial circumstances. The council will carry out a financial assessment to work out how much they can afford to pay.
- If a person is eligible for Continuing Healthcare a PA may be funded through a Personal Health Budget (PHB).
- A person can choose to fund their own care and support through their income or savings. Further information on funding your own care and support can be found by [clicking here](#) or <https://www.iow.gov.uk/documentlibrary/view/funding-your-own-care-factsheet->

Anyone can request an assessment to determine if they are eligible for adult social care and support. Please contact the Initial Adult Social Care Contact Team on 01983 823340

13. Safeguarding

Keeping people safe is a priority regardless of how care and support is provided.

If anyone suspects someone is in immediate risk, harm or danger, telephone the Police on 999.

If anyone is concerned that an adult is, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, call the safeguarding team on 01983 814780 (outside office hours call 01983 821105) or email: safeguardingconcerns@iow.gov.uk

The PA Market Development Team work closely with the Safeguarding Adults Team to discuss any safeguarding concerns and how this could impact on the individual and the PA. If an allegation of abuse or neglect is reported, the council's internal process will be followed. The IWC reserves the right to suspend or remove a PA from the IOW PA Noticeboard where there are concerns in relation to safeguarding.

14. PA Suspension Process

The IWC will exercise its discretion and reserves the right to suspend a PA from accessing the IOW PA Noticeboard website in any of the following circumstances:

- If they breach the code of conduct of their accreditation and enrolment (appendix 1)
- If they are involved in a safeguarding investigation
- If another statutory body has informed us of concerns about a PA.
- If the person, their representative or a family member informs us of any concerns

Please see suspension process Appendix 2

15. Additional Information

Skills for Care are the employer-led workforce development body for adult social care in England. They work with employers across England to make sure their people have the right skills and values to deliver high quality care.

Skills for Care offer a variety of support to PAs and employers. More details can be found at: www.skillsforcare.org.uk and www.skillsforcare.org.uk/iepahub

Telephone 0113 245 1716

PA Market Development Team can provide advice and support to both individual employers and PA's looking to register for work

Telephone 01983 823340

IOW PA Noticeboard is free service for both the individual to find PA support and the PA to source work

<http://isleofwight.panoticeboard.org.uk/>

Appendix 1 – Personal Assistant Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct for Personal Assistants



1. Protect the rights and promote the interests of your employer and carers

This includes respecting diversity, as well as different cultures and values.

2. Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of your employer and carers

Being honest, trustworthy, reliable and dependable is essential. You must respect sensitive and confidential information. Absolute confidentiality is essential at all times, even when not at work.

3. Aim to be reliable and punctual providing in your role

If for any reason you are not able to attend work, you will need to arrange alternative cover and you must give your employer as much notice as possible. If you are working on a self-employed basis it is your responsibility to find holiday and sickness cover- It is vital that the person you are supporting is not left without care.

4. Promote the independence of your employer while protecting them from danger or harm as far as possible

This may involve bringing to the attention of your employer, or Adult Social Care Services, any difficulties that may get in the way of the delivery of safe care.

5. Respect the rights of your employer whilst seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people

Your employer has the right to protect and promote their health, wellbeing, independence and dignity, while at the same time not putting themselves or other people in harm's way. You may need to be aware of risk assessment policies and procedures within the care or support plan if applicable.

6. Be accountable for the quality of your work and taking responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills

This includes working in a lawful, safe and effective way. You need to undertake any training which is relevant to the post and update training as necessary.

What would be regarded as unacceptable conduct? Putting someone at risk of harm

This includes:

- Abusing, neglecting or harming your employer or any service user, carer or colleague
- Discriminating unlawfully or unjustifiably against your employer or any service user, carer or colleague
- Abusing the trust of your employer, other service users or carers, or abuse the access you have to personal information about them
- Failing to provide support, by not turning up at the agreed times, not arranging alternative cover with periods of absence and sickness. It is advisable when you commence employment, that a second PA is in place to cover periods of absence.

Breaching confidentiality

This includes:

Discussing information relating to your employer or their family members with others (through any means of communication, including posting comments on social media like Facebook or Twitter)

- Having access to or knowledge of your employer's PIN numbers, bank and credit cards or internet passwords
- Disclosing anything to anybody regarding your employer without their approval

Inappropriate relationships

This includes:

- Forming inappropriate personal relationships with your employer
- Accepting gifts or money (other than wages) from your employer
- Agreeing to look after valuable items belonging to your employer

Inappropriate behaviour at your place of work

This includes:

- Bringing children or anyone else (or pets) to the place of work

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- Smoking whilst working (including e-cigarettes and vaping), even if your employer invites you to
 - Consuming alcohol before or during work, even if your duties require you to accompany your employer to licensed premises (restaurant, bar, etc.)
 - Using any illegal substances or engaging in illegal behaviours
 - Using any personal items belonging to your employer that are not required to carry out your duties
 - Using any inappropriate behaviour at work, including abusive language and foul language

Breaching your employment contract

You should adhere to all contract terms. Questions about your employment should only be raised with your employer in the first instance

If you wish to cease your employment, ensure there is at least a 1week notice period

Personal presentation and appearance guidelines

These guidelines are essential to ensure your safety as well as your employer's safety. Following them also ensures good hygiene and shows good infection control practice.

Hygiene and appropriate clothing

- A high standard of personal hygiene is essential at all times
- Clean, suitable and practical clothes should be worn
- Hair should be tied back away from the face
- Wear sensible shoes
- Keep nails clean and short

What to avoid for Health and Safety reasons

- Avoid flip-flops or open-toed shoes
- Do not wear excessive jewellery or piercings as it could be caught in any machinery and cause injury to yourself or your employer
- Avoid nail extensions and false nails

Other things to keep in mind

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- ❑ Excessive use of toiletries (including perfumes, aftershaves) can be offensive to others and even detrimental to people with certain health conditions. Be aware of this and double check with your employer if in doubt.
 - ❑ Working excessive hours can impact on the way you carry out your daily tasks and possibly effect individual that you are supporting, you have a duty of care to the individual that you are supporting to provide the appropriate level of care and support, therefore please ensure your working hours are in line with government guidelines and the “working time directive” if this applies

This code of conduct is for guidance only and common sense should apply at all times. If there is anything you are unsure of, check with your employer or put yourself in your employer’s position and ask yourself ‘Would this be considered acceptable?’ If still in doubt – don’t!

To find out more about the **Isle of Wight Council (IWC)** and their codes of practice please contact the PA Market team pa.market@iow.gov.uk

PA Name:

Signed:.....

Date:

Appendix 2- PA Suspension Process

