

Kent County Council

Direct Payments Factsheet #6

The relationship between the employer and their Personal Assistant

1. Who is this factsheet for?

This factsheet is for people who receive direct payments. It is about the relationship between an employer and their Personal Assistant (PA) and is produced by Adult Social Care and Health. If it does not give you all the information you need, please contact us; our details are at the end of this factsheet

2. The relationship between an employer and their PA

The relationship between an employer and their Personal Assistant (PA) is a unique and intimate one; the PA spends many hours in your home doing all the jobs that you would normally expect to do for yourself.

Keeping the balance within this employer / employee relationship can be difficult. It is easy to get confused about the difference between a friend and a PA. Sometimes friends are temporary PAs and sometimes employed assistants become good friends.

Some people have had better experiences when they have let their PAs become friends. They do not find it difficult to keep control of the employer/employee relationship. Others have found success when the arrangement is formal and wholly contractual. **What is important is that you must always feel comfortable and confident asking your PA to do the things you need them for.** You should always feel that you can ask your PA to do things:

- when you want
- how you want
- and involving who you want.

When a PA has more control than you do, this can become an abusive situation.

When we think of abuse, we often hear about sexual or physical abuse. However, emotional and financial abuse can be just as harmful.

If you recognise that some of the things listed below are happening more frequently – things that you feel are ‘not right’ and it worries you or makes you feel uncomfortable or afraid – contact your Practitioner or Direct Payment Support Worker as soon as possible:

- Your PA starts telling you to do things or feel a certain way because they know what’s best for you.
- Your PA is controlling when you see friends and family.
- Your PA discourages your efforts and does more for you than you have asked.
- Your PA seems unaware of how they make you feel (upset, worried, scared to ask things, unhappy).
- Your PA does not respond or change their way of working when you talk to them about issues.
- Your PA repeatedly says things like, “I’m going to be about half an hour late tomorrow... and will have to leave early.” A PA should always be punctual and should not be dictating their work times if you have a proper contract for work hours.
- You feel you can’t approach your PA about any problems because they would take it out on you later by refusing to do something or behaving around you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

3. Points to consider

Training: In order to get the best from your PA you will need to instruct them in the most appropriate ways to assist you. They will need to be familiar with your bathroom/bedroom/household routines and your preferred ways of jobs being done.

Disability Equality Training: It is useful if your PA has at least a basic knowledge of Disability Equality issues. Gradually you should be able to introduce them to The Medical and Social Models.

Feedback: It is useful to regularly assess a PA’s performance, suitability, commitment etc.

If you have any concerns or questions you can contact your Practitioner, your Direct Payment Support Worker, or the Direct Payment Support Team:

Telephone: 03000 413 600 or email: direct.payments@kent.gov.uk

Or you can find more information on: www.kentdp.co.uk