



Getting the support you need

Health and Safety

Once you've made the decision to use Direct Payments to employ a Personal Assistant, you'll need to be aware of and comply with a number of Health & Safety regulations.

Why should I know about health and safety?

In the UK, Health & Safety law affects everyone who works, regardless of where their work place is located. You and your Personal Assistant are responsible for ensuring that work is carried out healthily and safely in your home.

Your responsibilities:

- ensuring that your Personal Assistant works safely,
- making sure that your home is a safe environment in which to work,
- taking practical and reasonable steps to reduce risk in any activity where risk has been identified (see over),
- making sure that your Personal Assistant knows what to do in an emergency (who to contact; how to get out in case of a fire; where to find your the first aid kit, for example).

Your Personal Assistant's responsibilities:

- not to do anything which might cause you, themselves, or others injury or harm.

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment involves a careful examination of the workplace (your home) in order to identify potential causes of harm. It is designed to help you decide whether you have done enough to ensure that your home is healthy and safe, or whether you need to do more. You are legally required to carry out a risk assessment and put in place a plan to control any risks. The questions on the other side of this leaflet will help you carry out a risk assessment.

Carrying out a risk assessment

Step 1 Identify hazards

Review the tasks that you're asking your Personal Assistant to carry out (you could use the job description to remind you) and write down list of any potential hazards arising from these. Consider these tasks, for example:

- handling loads - is your Personal Assistant required to lift heavy objects or to help you move from one place to another?
- handling food - is your Personal Assistant trained in food hygiene if they will be preparing meals or snacks for you?
- using electrical equipment - does your Personal Assistant need to use electrical equipment cleaning and washing machines, for example, to carry out their tasks?
- using hazardous substances or materials for example, medicines or certain cleaning materials.

Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how

Alongside the list of hazards that you wrote down in Step 1, decide whether you or your Personal Assistant could potentially be harmed by each one, and in what way. Perhaps, for example, your Personal Assistant is at risk of injuring their back when they help you get up from the chair?

Step 3 Evaluate risks and decide on precaution


Decide how likely the risk is and if there is anything you can do to help prevent it. For example, it's unlikely that your Personal Assistant would give you too much medicine, however, keeping it clearly labelled in a safe and tidy place will minimise the risk of this happening.

Step 4 Record your findings and implement them

List the jobs in order of importance and get on with doing them!

Step 5 Review your assessment and update if necessary

Keep your Health & Safety risk assessment notes in a safe place and review them whenever you recruit a new Personal Assistant, move home, or change your circumstances. Most things to do with health and safety are common sense, but remember, if you're not sure about any aspect, SILC is here to help.



SILC is a voluntary organisation run by and for disabled people. To find out more about the help we can offer you with your Direct Payments call 01483 458111 or email admin@surreyilc.org.uk
Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) registered charity number 1088220