

## Skills Checks for Personal Assistants

### 1. What Is 'Personal Assistance'?

#### Employer's pack

##### Contents

- Skills Check activity
- Feedback form
- Personal development form

Summary	
<b>Suitable for</b>	Personal assistant
<b>Skill checked</b>	Reading comprehension, spoken communication
<b>Covers</b>	Importance of communication for the employer–personal assistant relationship
<b>Learning for employer</b>	Can the personal assistant read and discuss with understanding a short text about communication between personal assistants and employers?
<b>Learning for personal assistant</b>	What it is like to require personal assistance, the difference between personal assistant, carer and friend and problems arising from poor communication
<b>Approx time needed</b>	Total: 30 minutes (20 minutes for Skills Check and 10 minutes for feedback)
<b>How it works</b>	Offers information on communication in personal assistance. Use it to develop a short discussion. Use the discussion to gauge the person's reading comprehension and spoken communication skills.
<b>Notes</b>	Let the person read part 1 to themselves then discuss together. Repeat for parts 2 and 3. If the person does not understand, explain it to them.

**We welcome suggestions to improve this Skills Check. Please use the contact form on our website at [www.scie.org.uk/careskillsbase](http://www.scie.org.uk/careskillsbase)**

# Being a personal assistant: What is 'personal assistance'?

Effective personal assistance depends on good communication.

This sheet looks at what that means in practice.

## 1. What would you want?

Imagine that you needed help from a personal assistant to

- wash, use the toilet, dress, feed yourself etc.
- move about your home, cook, clean things, care for pets, care for plants etc.
- do things outside, e.g. shop, visit a friend, attend a family gathering, go to a meeting etc.

What sort of relationship would you want with your personal assistant?

Here is what one person said about this.

I want my personal assistant to

- see me as a person, not just someone who needs help
- help me do things the way I want to do them, without making judgements
- listen to me – and ask if they don't understand what I mean
- be there when I need them, but give me space when I want time on my own
- keep what they know about me to themselves
- discuss any problems between us openly, honestly and respectfully.

Do you agree with this? What would matter most to you?

## 2. What's the difference?

A personal assistant helps someone to accomplish the tasks of daily life.

Carers and friends also do this.

How would you describe the difference between a personal assistant, a carer and a friend?

## 3. Where can things go wrong?

Listen to some problems that people have had.

"I know my body, but my personal assistant kept telling me how to get up. They wouldn't listen."

"I got really annoyed that my personal assistant kept taking calls on their mobile."

"We had a problem because my personal assistant kept making comments about what I was doing."

"My personal assistant got much too friendly with my family. I didn't like that."

What went wrong with the communication in these situations?

<b>Feedback form</b>	Date:		
Personal assistant (PA)			
Employer			
<b>1. Employer's view</b> The PA ...	<b>No</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a. Read the activity sheet with understanding (reading skills)			
b. Took full part in discussion (spoken communication skills)			
c. Showed understanding of issues raised in activity			
<b>2. Employer's reasons</b> The PA...	<b>No</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a. Responded to the activity sheet appropriately			
b. Spoke in a way that was easy to understand			
c. Expressed him/herself clearly			
d. Engaged in discussion effectively (i.e. listening and responding to what was said, offering own ideas, interacting appropriately)			
e. Other reasons:			
<b>3. PA's view</b> (Note any comments the PA wishes to make)			
<b>4. Next steps to help develop skills and knowledge for the job</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
a. Learning to develop PA's job-related knowledge and skills			
b. Learning to develop PA's communication skills			
<b>5. Employer's signature</b>	<b>PA's signature</b>		

*Use the other side of this sheet for notes.*

<b>Personal development form</b>	Date:	
Personal assistant (PA)		
Employer		
<b>1. Learning aims</b>	<b>Tick (✓) if 'yes'</b>	
<b>a. Job-related knowledge and skills to be developed</b>		
<b>b. Communication skills to be developed</b>		
<b>2. How will the learning happen?</b>		
<b>3. What support and resources will be needed to make the learning successful?</b>		
<b>4. When will the learning happen?</b>		
<b>5. How will we know the learning has been successful?</b>		
<b>6. Progress review date:</b>		
<b>7. Employer's signature</b>	<b>PA's signature</b>	