

PA workforce implementation plan

A plan for the implementation of the 2011 'PA Framework', Working for personalised care: a framework for supporting personal assistants working in adult social care.

Summer 2012



PA workforce implementation plan - A plan for the implementation of the 2011 'PA Framework', Working for personalised care: a framework for supporting personal assistants working in adult social care.

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1. Executive summary

This implementation plan summarises the key ambitions and actions as follows:

1. **Better understanding of personal assistant (PA) working**

Overall ambition: to raise awareness and understanding of the uniqueness and impact of the PA role.

To achieve this we will have a clear and coherent pathway for:

- gathering information and intelligence on good practice on PA working
- sharing this with all relevant stakeholders through planned and effective medium determined by development of a communications strategy.

2. **Recruitment and retention**

Overall ambition: to attract and retain a diverse PA workforce that will be capable and competent to deliver quality, bespoke care.

To achieve this we will:

- showcase the diversity of the PA role through case studies and promote a range of resources to support recruitment
- advise local authorities on a minimum level of local information available to support safe recruitment of a PA
- brief Jobcentre Plus advisers on PA working and individual employers
- promote partnerships to support safe and effective recruitment practices between Jobcentre Plus and direct payment support organisations/centres for independent living.

3. **Learning and development**

Overall ambition: to enable employers and PAs to have access to flexible learning and development opportunities and funding.

To achieve this we will:

- develop a flexible learning and development framework which reflects the skills PAs have developed.

4. Supporting PAs and employers

Overall ambition: to support individual employers to be good employers. Both PAs and employers to have clear expectations about what support is available.

To achieve this we will:

- in partnership with Learn to Care and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care, produce an advice note for local authorities on minimum standards of support offered to individual employers and PAs
- identify and promote support available to PAs through local networks.

5. Enabling risk management

Overall ambition: to support people who receive care and/or who employ a PA to manage risk and find solutions.

To achieve this we will:

- promote best practice in prevention and self care and embed safe practice through a learning and development framework, and promote good practice in recruitment and positive working relationships
- explore the scope for a voluntary register for social care workers and PAs
- promote national minimum training standards and a code of practice.

The implementation plan is structured around the five areas of action summarised above.

2. Introduction

Working for personalised care: A framework for supporting personal assistants working in adult social care was published by the Department of Health in July 2011. It is commonly known as ‘the PA Framework.’ The framework sets out a direction of travel to enable and support the PA workforce and their employers. The framework is intended to begin to address some of the challenges of increasing the capacity and capability of the PA workforce to deliver high quality personalised support and to offer good practice examples which illustrate how these are being tackled.



Skills for Care is working with the Department of Health as the lead delivery partner and has been commissioned to produce this implementation plan to manage and progress the delivery of the PA Framework. This will be done jointly with other government departments, national partner organisations, local authorities, people who use services, carers, user-led, voluntary and charitable organisations.

The *Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens* (DH 2010) heralded further growth in personal budgets with a view to all those being eligible for care being in receipt of a personal budget by 2013. Ideally this would be in the form of a direct payment to maximise choice and control. Therefore the employment of PAs, and the development of this model of working, is central to the government’s commitment to the delivery of high quality personalised care. The PA Framework sets out a direction of travel that supports an evolving PA workforce, therefore a major shift towards support for PAs and their employers will be necessary to meet the increase in demand for PA roles. Social care is a growth sector and so attracting people who are unemployed or not in education, employment or training into the sector, and working in partnership with other government departments, will be necessary to meet the demand for PAs.

The recently-published care and support white paper, *Caring for our Future* (DH 2012) includes proposals relating to adult social care workforce, in particular the PA workforce, and the development of high quality services. Broad workforce themes to develop the workforce include developing leadership, increasing workforce capacity and enhancing workforce capability. The workforce proposals build on high profile policy areas and include a commitment to further development of personalised care and support. Continuing development of the PA workforce acknowledges that with more personalised care and support and more direct employers, the PA workforce will have a key role to play with increasing numbers, directly employed in new, creative and person-centred ways to meet individual needs.

Purpose of the role

The main purpose of the PA role is to support a person to have autonomy and make informed choices. This requires PAs to have a range of skills, knowledge and abilities that enable, for example, easy access to information, advice and guidance, to work with someone in a person-centred way that achieves personal outcomes and understands risk, and to engage constructively and openly with their employers. To ensure that people coming into the role of PA are capable of providing the quality of care expected there will be a need for investment in excellent recruitment and retention practices and learning and development for both PAs and their employers.

Framework implementation

Within the context of the vision for adult social care and the white paper noted above, this implementation plan supports the delivery of Skills for Care's overall workforce development strategy, *Capable, Confident and Skilled – A workforce development strategy for people working, supporting and caring in adult social care* (SfC 2011). The realisation of the vision and the importance of delivering the personalisation agenda will depend on the quality of the personal assistants working in the sector.

The workforce development strategy states that:
“The strategic framework for personal assistants... will aim to introduce a greater degree of clarity to some of the complex issues facing personalised care and support, and offer a coherent response to support the development of quality personal assistance, capable of meeting the current and future needs of people who use services.”

There is a commitment to develop a diverse PA workforce in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Every effort will be made to enable excellent recruitment and retention practices that impact on a wide range of people entering the workforce from a variety of backgrounds, including carers and volunteers.

White paper Caring for our future – reforming care and support

The government’s white paper Caring for our Future: reforming care and support (DH 2012) focuses on key principles highlighting that:

- personalisation is achieved when a person has real choice and control over the care and support they need to achieve their goals, to live a fulfilling life, and to be connected with society
- a caring, skilled and valued workforce delivers quality care and support in partnership with individuals, families and communities.

Developing a quality workforce is fundamental to increasing personalisation, choice and support to ensure that services are better integrated around people’s needs. Improving the quality of the workforce through learning and development will enable more effective prevention and intervention. There will be an increasing need to ensure timely information and advice is available to citizens to access support through a more diverse and responsive range of sources and people who will enable them to live life safely and independently.

The white paper prioritises a continuing commitment to offer PAs and their employers greater support and training to improve recruitment, retention and the quality of the care and support they deliver, through access to the Workforce Development Fund and exploration of the development of a PA Index to facilitate greater clarity and transparency for employers when recruiting a PA. In future, more people will need to make their own decisions about the care they buy using their personal budget. It follows that choosing the services of a personal assistant to deliver the support they want will continue to increase.

Structure of the implementation plan

The implementation plan is based on an overarching strategic objective supporting the aims of the PA Framework:

- To support future growth within the PA workforce, through addressing the barriers to developing PA working and by sharing examples of good practice.

3. The plan

3.1 Better understanding of PA working

Overall ambition: To raise awareness and understanding among people receiving care, employers and the workforce, of the uniqueness and impact of the PA role by gathering evidence around what information is available to employers, identifying gaps, and sharing good practice and resources through workshops, networks and websites.

Policy context: The role of a PA varies considerably according to the needs of the individual employer. This diversity is a positive sign of person-centred care and as such is one of the benefits of working as a PA. This variation also presents a challenge to increasing the wider understanding of the role as there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

We will work to raise the profile and understanding of the PA role. This will include improving the knowledge base about PA working, promoting examples of best practice that support a quality workforce and, working with key partners, use this intelligence to improve the profile and understanding of PA working as well as the support that can be offered to individual employers (See also the DH 2012 white paper).

Action summary:

Action	By whom	By when
On-line access to resources and links through Skills for Care website	Skills for Care	July 2012
An event to mark the progress in the implementation of the PA Framework and to examine the outcomes over the next five years needed to embed personalised working and a PA workforce.	Skills for Care	October 2012

Action	By whom	By when
<p>Review and promote resources, such as the PA Toolkit, and <i>Personalisation and Partnership: a successful working relationship, to support people to employ personal assistants and build positive relationships.</i></p> <p>Develop a communication strategy to support dissemination and use of the tools.</p>	<p>Direct payments support organisations, User-led organisations (ULO), Skills for Care</p>	<p>October 2012</p>
<p>Undertake literature review and gather evidence of good practice in PA working. Analysis of the literature review to identify further areas for development.</p>	<p>Skills for Care</p>	<p>September 2012</p>
<p>Carry out baseline survey with Learn to Care and ADASS on levels of support for individual employers and access to appropriate advisory services. With ADASS and Learn to Care develop an advice note on minimum standards.</p>	<p>Skills for Care, Learn to Care, Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS)</p>	<p>October 2012</p>
<p>Joint workshops with Think Local Act Personal to promote PA working and support employers to achieve Making it Real – Markers of Progress. Review of progress through feedback from employers.</p>	<p>Think Local Act Personal, Skills for Care, Disability Rights UK</p>	<p>March 2013</p>

3.2 Recruitment and retention

Overall ambition: To attract and retain an increasing number of new people to form a diverse PA workforce that will be competent and capable to deliver bespoke care that will enable, empower and facilitate people to be active citizens. In order to achieve this we will develop a range of case studies which showcase the diversity of the PA role. Together with ADASS, produce an advice note for local authorities on a minimum level of local information available to support safe recruitment of a PA. Work with Jobcentre Plus to promote the PA role together with models of safe and effective recruitment practices.

Policy context: Having a high quality, diverse and sufficiently large PA workforce to meet the future demand for care and support will be crucial to the successful implementation of the PA Framework. We will develop a demand and supply model for the future PA workforce. Key to achieving a diverse workforce will be bringing together all the available resources that can attract new recruits at the same time as we retain those currently employed in these roles. There will be a particular emphasis on recruiting people who are unemployed or not in education, employment of training. This will involve partnership working with a range of stakeholders to promote greater understanding and awareness of the role, including the rewards and opportunities for career development that working as a PA offers.

Action summary:

Action	By whom	By when
Briefing sessions for Jobcentre Plus (JCP) to ensure recruiters have a good understanding of the PA role and how PAs support independent living.	Skills for Care, JCP, Department for Work and Pensions	March 2013

Action	By whom	By when
<p>Workshops across the country to introduce JCP to work in partnership with user-led organisations using a model that supports the safe/effective recruitment of the right PA(s).</p> <p>Review impact of the model through feedback from individual employers and PAs. Examination of numbers of PAs recruited through JCP.</p>	<p>JCP, ULO, DPSO, Skills for Care</p> <p>JCP, ULO, DPSO, Skills for Care</p>	<p>March 2013</p> <p>October 2013</p>
<p>Promotion of PAs as apprentices – DVD/ case study, individual employers guide to support taking on a PA apprentice. Promote the development of a PA apprentice model.</p>	<p>Skills for Care</p>	<p>March 2013</p>
<p>Review and where necessary update resources to support people to recruit personal assistants. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A set of case studies promoting the range and diversity of the PA role ■ PA toolkit ■ ‘Finders Keepers’ recruitment and retention toolkit ■ Sector route-way ■ Career pathways e-tool. 	<p>Skills for Care</p>	<p>October 2012</p>

Action	By whom	By when
Development of the Care Ambassador schemes to attract new PAs into the sector	Skills for Care	March 2013
Recruitment Information Strategy for local authorities and support organisations. Outline of what local information should be available to someone to recruit a PA.	Skills for Care	November 2012
Interviews with individual employers and PAs to develop a knowledge base of factors underpinning the retention of good PAs with a view to developing good practice case studies about employment practice.	Skills for Care and partners	October 2013

3.3 Learning and development

Overall ambition: To enable employers and their PAs to have equitable access to learning and development opportunities and funding, including the Workforce Development Fund, to support this. To develop a flexible learning and development framework, which reflects the learning and skills that PAs have developed. This will help shape a career pathway for PAs which also meets the requirements of employers.

Policy context: Having sufficient numbers of the right people with the right skills, knowledge, values and qualifications to meet the future demand for care and support will be crucial to the successful implementation of the PA Framework and supply of a high quality workforce. Supporting learning and development will be fundamental to increasing the capacity and capability of the PA workforce to deliver high quality personalised support. Achieving this will require a greater understanding of PAs and employers' learning and development needs. Like the rest of the care workforce, PAs and employers will need equal access to applicable learning and development opportunities and we need to ensure that the appropriate resources and infrastructure are in place to support these activities.

Action summary:

Action	By whom	By when
Build evidence base with Learn to Care and ADASS on consistency of support and funding for learning and development. Develop proposals for improvement and advice for individual employers.	Skills for Care, Learn to Care, Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS)	June 2012

Action	By whom	By when
Co-produce, with employers and PAs, a learning and development framework for PAs and individual employers to support the development of PA working.	Skills for Care, Think Local Act Personal	March 2013
Communications strategy and implementation to promote the Learning and Development Framework.		June 2013
Review the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Workshop with individual employers and PAs	Skills for Care	March 2013
In partnership with UK Home Care Association, explore opportunities to enable PAs to access learning and development opportunities locally.	UKHCA, Skills for Care	March 2013 (on-going)

3.4 Supporting PAs and employers

Overall ambition: To support individual employers to be good employers with clear expectations about what support is available locally from local authorities and support organisations. To support PAs as employees through independent information, advice and guidance and peer support. In order to achieve this we will, in partnership with Learn to Care and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, produce an advice note for local authorities on minimum standards of support for individual employers and PAs. Identify and promote support available to PAs through local networks.

Policy context: Becoming a individual employer is, for some, a daunting task as it often requires new skills and knowledge to successfully and safely adapt to a new role. Navigating through systems and finding the right information to support this journey can be difficult and complex. There is much to be learned and shared by those who have already become individual employers and from the range of support that is already available. Key to supporting PAs and employers is having a greater understanding of what support and resources already exists and where there are gaps. We will promote a collaborative partnership approach to developing a greater understanding of what works. We will share this knowledge and research across the sector and promote its wider adoption.

Action summary:

Action	By whom	By when
Carry out research with Learn to Care and ADASS on levels of support for individual employers. Report with recommendations/guidance to ADASS.	Skills for Care, Learn to Care, Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS)	October 2012

Action	By whom	By when
Development of case studies from research material. Promotion of best practice information through a range of workshops and presentations with partners, web sites, partner networks.	Direct payments support organisations, ULOs, Skills for Care, Think Local Act Personal, Disability Rights UK	October 2012
Mapping of PA networks/support mechanisms across the country and promotion of information and resources through PA networks.	Skills for Care	March 2013

3.5 Enabling risk management

Overall ambition: To support people who receive care from a personal assistant, and/or who employ a PA, to manage risk and find solutions using a person-centred approach. To achieve this we will promote best practice in prevention, self care and improved health and wellbeing. This will be underpinned by a learning and development framework that embeds safe practice and positive approaches to risk as well as the continuous development of a high quality workforce. We will also promote safe approaches and good practice in recruitment and employment as well as how to develop and maintain positive and safe working relationships. To further support this we will explore the options for developing a voluntary register for PAs and social care workers, underpinned by a code of conduct and minimum standards.

Policy context: As we strive to achieve high quality personalised support that is more preventative, more focused on delivering the best outcomes and more integrated around people's needs it is essential that we help people to make their own decisions as safely as possible and support workers and employers to better understand and manage risks.

Action summary:

Action	By whom	By when
Promote the use of the PA tool kit and supporting information to help people make good/safe recruitment decisions e.g. Working Together - Action on Elder Abuse	Skills for Care, Direct payments support organisations (DPSOs), ULOs	August 2012
Disseminate good practice in supporting people to live with risk, linked to a communications strategy.	Skills for Care, DPSOs, ULOs, social care providers	March 2013

Action	By whom	By when
Using the learning and development framework – promote a positive and informed approaches to risk management.	Skills for Care	March 2013
Explore the scope for voluntary register for social care workers and PAs. Promotion of national minimum training standards and codes of practice.	Department of Health, Skills for Care	2013-14

4. Next steps

The Department of Health is committed to embedding personalisation and supporting people to live independently. There is therefore a long term commitment to continue to develop understanding of PA working and to identify and overcome barriers.

To understand the direction of travel for PA working we require a more in-depth understanding of demand for PAs, how this compares with current supply and a projection of short, medium and long term growth/gaps. This will shape outcomes necessary to meet the growing requirements.

Developing mechanisms for review and impact at short, medium and long term intervals will form part of the next steps for the implementation plan. In order to achieve this we will develop metrics to evaluate the implementation of the plan. This would include using workforce intelligence, such as the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC), the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, Think Local Act Personal Making it Real - Markers of Progress and other survey data as appropriate on an annual basis. This would enable actions to be traced back to the overall strategic objective - growing capacity, addressing barriers or disseminating information.

The concept of personalisation is applicable in much wider circles than social care. Links with the health sector and those working in communities are necessary to develop personal assistant roles that enable people to live independently in the widest possible sense.

Establishing the key outcomes necessary to embed personalised working will shape the direction of travel. In order to begin to outline what these outcomes look like, Skills for Care has organised a seminar in October 2012 to highlight what work has been done over the last twelve months and identify the outcomes needed to support and embed personalised working and to develop a PA workforce for the next three-to-five years.

An equalities impact assessment will be carried out as part of the next steps process.

5. Useful resources

Caring for our future: reforming care and support (Department of Health)
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/07/White-Paper-Caring-for-our-future-reforming-care-and-support-PDF-1580K.pdf>

Working for Personalised Care: A framework for supporting personal assistants working in adult social care (Department of Health)
http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_128734.pdf

A toolkit to help people employ their own personal assistant (Skills for Care)
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/patoolkit

Personalisation and partnership: a successful working relationship (Skills for Care)
http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/workforce_strategy/new_types_of_worker/personalisation/NToW80.aspx

Working together: A guide to safely recruiting and working with PAs (Action on Elder Abuse)

Making it Real: Markers of Progress (Think Local Act Personal)
<http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Resource/?cid=9091>

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