

A black and white photograph of two women smiling. The woman in the foreground is wearing glasses and a dark top. The woman behind her is also wearing glasses and a dark zip-up hoodie. They are standing in front of what appears to be a bookshelf or a display cabinet.

# Supporting people to become an individual employer to meet their care and support needs

**As a social worker you might support people to assess and decide what care and support they want and need to access. It's important that people are told about all the options available to them, so that they can make an informed decision.**

One of these options is how people can, if they want to, arrange their own care and support by becoming an individual employer. This leaflet tells you the benefits of employing personal assistants and how Skills for Care can help.

## What is an individual employer?

An individual employer is someone who needs care and support and uses a direct payment, or their own money, to employ personal assistants (PAs). This gives people the choice and control over who supports them, and how and when this is done.

People employ PAs for many reasons, but some may do so to ensure they have continuity of care, improve their wellbeing, maintain or increase their independence and/or to support them at work.

The number of people choosing to become an individual employer is growing, so it's important that you, in your role as a social worker, are able to let people know how they can do this and where they can find useful information.



Around **70,000** direct payment recipients were employing their own staff.



Individual employers, on average, employed **2** PAs each.



There were an estimated **140,000** PA jobs for direct payment recipients.

## How can people pay for a personal assistant?

People usually pay for their own care and support in one or more of the following ways.

- **Direct payment** – if someone's assessed by the local council, trust or NHS team as needing support with their care, health or wellbeing, they can choose to have a personal budget and receive this as a direct payment to arrange the care and support that has been agreed.
- **Self-funding** – some people use their own money to arrange their care and support.

## What happens next?

If someone decides they want to employ their own care and support, they become an individual employer. They take on the role and all of the responsibilities of an employer, including recruitment, induction and training.

This can seem a daunting prospect as there's lots to think about and arrange, but you can reassure them that there's lots of support available. You could arrange for them to speak with someone who already employs their own care and support, so they get a good idea of what's involved and how it can benefit them.

## Support for individual employers

### Employing personal assistants toolkit

Skills for Care's 'Employing personal assistants' toolkit guides individual employers through the process of recruiting, managing and training their PAs. You might find it useful to read the toolkit and familiarise yourself with this process.



You can access the toolkit online at: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/individualemployers](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/individualemployers) or email [marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk) for a free, printed copy.

Individual employers can also email us for a free copy, or you can request one on their behalf.

### Local support organisations

Local direct payment, disabled people's and user led organisations can offer a range of support, for example, with payroll, training about how to be a good employer, information, advice and guidance, recruitment and peer support.

There's a list of support organisations at: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/supportorgs](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/supportorgs).

### Funding for training

It's vital that individuals have the right skills and knowledge to be a good employer, and that PAs have the opportunity to develop. That's why individual employers can apply for funding to pay for training for themselves and their PAs.

Skills for Care funds lots of courses including assisting and moving, first aid, British Sign Language, being a good employer and health and social care qualifications.

Find out more about funding at: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/iefunding](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/iefunding).

Help us to spread the word. You can email [marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk) to request printed leaflets about the funding.

## Ongoing support for social workers

Sign up to our monthly social work bulletin to keep up to date with the latest news and developments, including around becoming an individual employer.

You can do this by registering for or logging into your account on the Skills for Care website and ticking the box to receive the 'Social work briefing'.

Visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/register](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/register).

You can also get in touch with your locality manager who can signpost you to relevant information, tools and events in your area.

Find your locality manager at [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/inyourarea](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/inyourarea).

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