

Risk Assessment Tool for Personal Assistants (PAs) Returning to Work

What is this guide?

This guide has been developed to support employers to think about how they might support their PAs to return to work and feel they are in a safe environment. The information in this document is only a guide and gives you topics and poses questions for you to consider when assessing the risks that might exist and how you may minimise these.

Why do I need it?

PAs may be returning to work after a period of shielding or self-isolating because of their own needs or for someone in their family's needs. Alternatively, they may have been asked to stay away from work because you or someone in your household was shielding or self-isolating.

In every situation you should always talk with your PAs and have an honest conversation about what risks they and you are worried about. You should all think about what options are available and how they can work. It may be that things need to work differently for a while or longer term.

Employing PAs is very much about being in control of your support and having the autonomy and personal choice about what you do and how you live each day. It also means that you are an employer and have certain duties and responsibilities to ensure your PAs are safe while at work.

The coronavirus pandemic has made us all have to act differently and made us change what we think is safe. This guidance is to be used only as a guide of what you could put in place so that you and your PAs are safe and comfortable.

How do I use it?

Look through the table below. It sets out what a risk assessment might cover by giving a topic and then asking what you can do to reduce risks of spreading coronavirus. You can record what you and your PA have agreed will happen. Let your PA have a copy and keep another copy on your PA's employment file.

It may be useful to write down what a typical day looks like, from the start of the shift through each activity, such as food preparation, personal care, cleaning and going out and about. You can both have an open discussion about what you would both like to happen to protect you both whilst maintaining a healthy happy relationship.

Remember to review

The government guidelines are continually being updated and the advice on topics such as PPE changes regularly. Keep up to date with these changes.

Revisit this risk assessment regularly and adapt it in light of changes to government guidance and changes in circumstances for you or your PA.

For more information

This guide was developed by Sheffield Individual Employer and PA Development Group by people who have experience of employing their own PAs and people who work as PAs.

[If you are an organisation supporting individual employers you could include links to your information and contact details]

Risk Assessment	
Things to consider	Record of what I have done and put in place
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	
<p>The Government guidance on PPE use has been shared and read by everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider how much PPE you will need and make sure you have adequate stock in advance <p>[Organisations supporting employers could include a link to information on ordering PPE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is your PPE stored safely and does everyone know where to find it? ➤ Is your PPE being used correctly? ➤ Does everyone know where to get and how and where to dispose of PPE? 	
Personal Hygiene	
<p>Frequent hand washing should be done for at least 20 seconds with antibacterial soap -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As soon as you get to work ● When you sneeze or cough ● When you have assisted with touching the face or any other bodily fluids, even after wearing gloves. ● Before handling food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is hand-sanitizer available? ➤ Do your PAs need to change into fresh clothes and shoes when entering your home (have a spare change at your home in a closed bag)? ➤ Do you want to ask PAs to avoid wearing jewellery on hands and wrists? ➤ Do you have individual towels for each PA for handwashing? ➤ Are individual towels changed when your PA is leaving each day? ➤ Do your PAs need to use separate, cups, plates, cutlery and are they stored separately? 	
Cleaning and Disinfecting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is there disinfectant available and does everyone know where to find it? ➤ What needs to be cleaned? e.g. work surfaces, kitchen appliances, toilets, taps, equipment such as hoists, shower chairs, wheelchairs, keys, key lock boxes, keypads, door handles, light switches, doorbell, mobile phones, computers, screens, keyboards etc. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How often or frequently do things need to be cleaned? e.g. after every use, every hour, beginning and end of shift ➤ How do you deal with laundry? 	
Food preparation and feeding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does PPE such as face masks, gloves need to be used when preparing food or feeding? ➤ When do utensils need to be washed, is this before as well as after using? ➤ Do you want your PAs to use separate utensils, crockery? ➤ Could I make multiple portions and freeze some to reduce cooking frequencies? 	
Personal Care	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is PPE available to PAs when assisting with showering, bathing, going to the toilet? 	
Reducing contact and social distancing when others live or work in the house	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can I have 'safe' spaces, rooms or zones which are just for an individual? ➤ Can PAs be 2 metres distanced when not performing personal support tasks? ➤ Are face masks to be worn at all times or just when within 2 metres for a prolonged time? 	
Shopping	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can shopping be done online? ➤ Is there a way I can minimise the need to go to the shops? ➤ Are some of my PAs happier to go to the shops than others? Discuss and agree together. ➤ Do staff that run errands have the appropriate PPE, have hand-sanitizer and know to keep social distancing? ➤ Are items that come into the house wiped down? 	
Going out, exercise or for work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Am I keeping 2 metres apart from other people, including my PAs, if possible? ➤ Can I change the times I exercise or got to work to support my PAs with their travel plans? ➤ Can I and my PAs avoid using public transport? ➤ If PAs drive my car is it cleaned inside before and after use? e.g. steering wheel, 	

door handles, dashboard, windows, gear stick, buttons, lever ➤ Is PPE and hand sanitizer available in my car?	
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Traveling to work

➤ Can my PAs walk or use their own vehicle? ➤ Can I be flexible with shift times to avoid busy travel times? ➤ Are there other methods of travel rather than public transport my PAs could use? [if you are an organisation supporting employers, you could include information or links to where extra funding may be available for extra travel costs] ➤ Is everyone aware of up to date public transport travel guidance?	
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People visiting the house

➤ Can I reduce the number or change the frequency that people come to my house? ➤ Do I know what risk assessments professionals such as chiropractors or hairdressers have done to ensure safe working practices, and have they told me how they will carry out their visit? ➤ Can visitors be confined to one room and kept away from other people in the house?	
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Signed		Employer	Date	
Signed		PA	Date	

To be reviewed on: