Understanding the Role of the Personal Care Assistant: e-learning training course

This e-learning course, Understanding the Role of the Personal Assistant, is broken down into four easy-to-follow units - an introduction and three study units. Using case studies and examples, it aims to give learners an insight into what a personal assistant's role is, how the recruitment and employment process works and the funding options available to people with learning disabilities.

The course will also help learners to understand the importance of working closely with a person's PA, as well as others in their support network, in order to provide the people in their care with the assistance they need.

Unit 2 describes what personal assistants do and identifies why people with learning disabilities can benefit from employing one. Learners will watch and listen to some real-life scenarios where personal assistants provide support. This will give them an insight into how PAs can help those with learning disabilities to lead more independent lives and to have more freedom to make their own choices. The unit concludes by looking at the process of employing a PA.

Unit 3 provides learners with an understanding of the funding options available for people with learning disabilities, and to define the terms *direct payments*, *personal budgets* and *individual budgets*. This unit also provides examples of how funding can be used to employ PAs and how this fits in with self-directed support, sometimes referred to as personalisation. Learners will also look at two strategies in place - *Putting People First* and *Valuing People Now* and learn about their aims in terms of improving the lives of people with learning disabilities, as well as the people who support them.

Unit 4 provides learners with more detailed information about helping people to recruit and employ a PA and looks at the steps to take should problems arise. The unit goes on to underline the importance of working closely and co-operatively with personal assistants and others involved in a person's support network. The course concludes by asking learners to consider how effectively they and other support workers and personal assistants work together, and whether any improvements can be made.

The objectives for each study unit are that learners will be able to:

1. define the role of a personal assistant
2. give examples of a PA's responsibilities
3. explain why someone might want to employ a PA
4. describe how people go about employing a PA
5. access information about how to appoint a PA
6. explain the meaning of the terms direct payments, personal budgets and individual budgets
7. understand how these payments can be used to employ a PA
8. recognise how funding fits in with personalisation
9. describe what the aims are of Putting People First and Valuing People Now
10. suggest sources of advice and guidance for people wanting to recruit a PA
11. access support for people to help them to become effective employers
12. understand the importance of working with others in the support network
13. identify ways in which they can help to improve working partnerships in their own work situations.