



FAQs for people who employ a paid carer or personal assistant

Direct Payments Helpline: If you have any queries about managing your Direct Payment, please contact the Direct Payment Helpline

Telephone 0116 3052486

Or email ascengage@leics.gov.uk

The helpline is open Monday to Friday between 10am and 12pm and then again 2pm to 4pm. There is an answerphone available at all other times.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PAs should use PPE for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids.

If you are having difficulty obtaining PPE please contact the DP helpline.

View the [full government guidance on COVID-19 and PPE](#).

My paid carer/personal assistant needs to fetch essential items for me and needs proof they are supporting me

We are aware that some supermarkets and police units are questioning paid carers and personal assistants about why they are out and about or accessing shops at reserved times.

Please contact the Direct Payments Helpline on 0116 305 2486 or ascengage@leics.gov.uk if you need an approved letter that your paid carer or personal assistant can use as proof of their work and support to you.

My paid carer / personal assistant has self-isolated as they or someone in their household have shown signs of the virus. What should they do?

Your paid carer / personal assistant should self-isolate.

[NHS Coronavirus self-isolation advice](#)

They are legally defined as being unfit to attend work and this should be classed as sickness. Please read the detailed Government guidance on staying at home due to a possible Coronavirus infection, this will tell you how long your paid carer should stay off for:

[Government Coronavirus stay at home guidance](#)

If they are unable to attend work to support you, you should still pay them their usual weekly wage.

You may be able to claim some of this back through Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) please talk to your payroll provider or insurer for support with this.

Does my paid carer / personal assistant need to give me medical evidence?

Usually you can ask the employee for a medical certificate after the first seven days of absence. However, for self-isolation it is not needed as they are advised not to go to the GP and it is not appropriate if it is someone else who they live with. It would also be impossible for you to demand evidence of another householder's information.

Your employee should get an [isolation note via NHS 111](#).

What to do to get the support I need if I don't have my paid carer or personal assistant

This may be because:

- a. they are off sick (or self-isolating)
- b. I am self-isolating, and they refuse to come

You should do what you would normally do if your paid carer / personal assistant is not available.

If you have other employees, you may be able to ask them to attend work to cover absences. Check your contract of employment to see how clear your rights are. Casual workers can also be called upon to fill in hours.

If you have no other employees, you may be able to use a temporary agency. [Find information about some care and support agencies](#).

You can also employ another paid carer / personal assistant. If the position is temporary, you can employ them on a casual contract so there is no ongoing obligation beyond the work you offer.

The Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) are offering to fast track checks and offer free barring checks during this time.

[Government information about DBS during Coronavirus](#).

If you are in urgent need of care and tried everything you can to get replacement cover then call the Customer Service Centre (CSC) on 0116 3050004. You must also call the CSC if you wish to employ a family member who lives with you on a temporary basis.

What if you and/or anyone in your household have shown symptoms of the virus

You must

- follow the [government's stay-at-home guidance](#), that you can find here;
- tell your paid carer / personal assistant that you have symptoms

However, your paid carer / personal assistant is still allowed to come to work and support you.

If you are employ a paid carer / personal assistant to support you at home, you must make sure it is a safe place for them to work. You should continue to provide them with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where needed.

As you will know there is a country wide shortage, and everyone is finding it hard to get all the PPE they need. We are working very hard locally and nationally to try and sort this.

You should

- a) Keep trying your normal supplier. It is likely that you will be able to access PPE stocks this way because the quantities that you require are not large.
- b) Try other suppliers.
- c) Phone the Direct Payments Helpline tel: 0116 305 2486. They will take some details and forward your information to the Council's PPE lead who may be able to help in emergency situations.

See the [Government guidance on good practice in home care provision](#).

Make sure that Government advice on good practice for home care support is always fully explained to your workers and ensure to enforce them. Ideally a record should be made of the measures you have implemented and keep records of PPE obtained and used in your home.

Your employees should:

- carry on supporting you if they are not self-isolating;
- take very seriously any new rules on health and safety procedures you put in place. This is not just for their own protection but also to prevent the spread of infection to other people in the household, other workers and the public when leaving your home;
- not remove stocks of PPE from your home and they should tell you in as soon as they run low to allow you plenty of time to re-stock.

What my rights are if I would rather not have my paid carer / personal assistant come into my home whilst my household is self-isolating, and I believe I can cope without paid support for 14 days

If your paid carer / personal assistant is self-employed you can simply ask them not to come for that time.

If you employ the person you can ask them not to attend work and pay them in full for the 14 days.

If you use casual or zero hours workers and work has not already been agreed in advance, you do not have to offer them work or pay during this time.

[Government guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons](#)

What I can do if I or someone in my household falls into a high-risk category but I still need care

You can socially isolate and avoid going out in public as the Government have recommended, but still have workers come into your home to provide care. However, as you are a high-risk household you should ensure that your workers are keeping to the government hygiene rules:

[Government guidance on home care provision](#)

My worker is in the high-risk category and is refusing to attend work, what can I do?

In these circumstances you can't insist that your employee comes into work. They have a right to follow the government's guidance. If they themselves are in the high-risk category, they are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

If your employee is unable to attend work to support you, you should still pay them their usual weekly wage.

For information about replacing your care please see Q17.

My worker is in the high-risk category but wants to continue to attend work, can I allow them to?

Yes, you can. The Government have made recommendations for high-risk individuals to stay at home, but it is not mandatory.

If your employee continues to attend work, it would be wise to increase your hygiene and health and safety procedures, so you are doing everything you can to prevent the risk of spreading infection between you. Make a written record of steps you have taken to protect everyone.

I am in the high-risk category and do not want to take the risk of having workers coming into my home. I'd prefer unpaid support from family, what can I do?

There are lots of things to think about here and we strongly advise that you talk to your insurer before making any decisions. You must then contact the council on 0116 3050004 to also discuss what you want to do.

As I want to self-isolate for more than 14 days, can I use the direct payment to employ and pay a family member who lives with me?

If you employ a paid carer / personal assistant:

It is generally not fair to dismiss an employee because of a preference for someone else. However, the restrictive measures in place for the movement of vulnerable people may be relevant. You should discuss any potential dismissal with your insurer before taking any actions.

If you currently buy care from a care provider and want to employ family members:

There are restrictions on using direct payments to employ a family member. However, it may be possible considering Government guidance to minimise social interaction; contact the Customer Service Centre on 0116 3050004 or your allocated worker who will consider how the rules can be relaxed temporarily.

It is essential that you seek advice from the Council before employing a family member.

If the position is temporary, you can employ the family member on a casual contract so there is no ongoing obligation beyond the work you offer.

My employee is employed to help me socialise in the community. As I can't go out anyway do I have to keep them on?

If you are proposing to stay at home for a long time and you genuinely have no use for your employee, you may want to consider making them redundant as their work as diminished entirely.

Make sure you have carefully thought through any alternative options and sought advice from your insurer before you decide and discuss with your PA.