



How to be a great

**personal assistant for  
someone with autism**

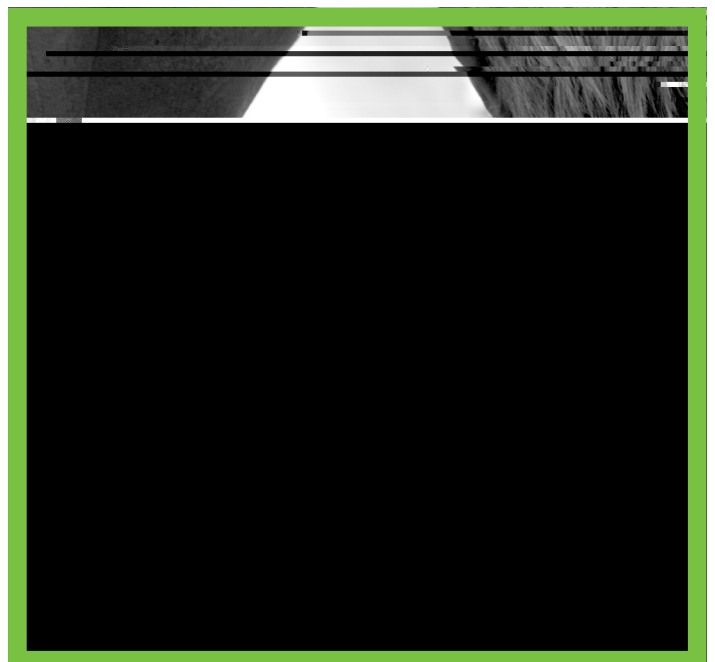
**How to be a great personal assistant for someone with autism**

## Are you are a personal assistant already or perhaps are thinking of becoming a personal assistant (PA) for someone who has autism?

Have you ever considered what makes a really great personal assistant for someone with autism? What attitudes and knowledge are needed? And how much your actions can actually make a difference?

The content of this guide has been written by people with autism, their carers, families and professionals because they want to help you understand how to be the best PA you can be.

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# The best and worst workers

Most people who work with people want to do a good job and that's no different for personal assistants with employers who are autistic. The majority of personal assistants want to know how they can best assist and support their employer. Sometimes people don't realise that the things they say and do are actually causing more harm than good. Working together to find ways of communicating is essential and for people with autism 'sitting down and talking about it' is often not the best way. Your role means being open to all forms of communication including written, behavioural, verbal, technological and non-verbal and being sensitive and willing to explore new ways of finding out what your employer wants.

To try and help personal assistants who work, or want to work, with autistic people, the next three pages identify some examples of the best and worst attitudes, knowledge and actions workers might have or do.

The best workers are always...

**100% devoted to their work  
during the timest and.o972i11 TIT**

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## Actions

The best workers...

**Do exactly what they say they are going to do! (or honestly explain any differences)**

The best workers...	The worst workers...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>listen attentively</li><li>build a rapport to create a trusting relationship</li><li>help to find information</li><li>make reasonable adjustment for my needs, especially communication</li><li>accept the individual's language</li><li>don't leave me waiting</li><li>agree time scales</li><li>be patient</li><li>go at my pace</li><li>give me time to regulate sensory problems</li><li>believe me</li><li>get other people involved when needed (with my permission involve my family)</li><li>look for solutions, addressing access and communication needs</li><li>have a holistic approach</li><li>are person-centred and help me plan for the future</li><li>explain everything</li><li>are available and responsive</li><li>work flexibly</li><li>accept and admit mistakes</li><li>accept the person's presentation</li><li>are friendly and approachable</li><li>find out what makes me angry and upset.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>disrespect my style or home (different for each person)</li><li>hand pick people who are easy to work with, avoiding people with complex needs</li><li>let their personal life affect the way they behave at work</li></ul>

## How this guide was developed

In June and July 2015 a group of people worked together with Skills for Care and Skills for Health to think about what really makes a great personal assistant for someone with autism.

The group included:

people with autism

carers and family

advocates

personal assistants

direct employers

health and social care professionals with a specific interest in autism.

## Useful links and references

The autism skills and knowledge list, Skills for Care/Skills for Health, 2011.

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

The National Autistic Society has detailed guides, training and resources for a range of professionals. [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

## Acknowledgements

Autism guides development group (which included individuals and groups representing people with autism, family carers and professionals working in social care, health and the police)

Autism guides wider consultation group

Leeds Asperger Adults - [www.leedsaspergerblog.wordpress.com](http://www.leedsaspergerblog.wordpress.com)

Leeds Autism AIM - [www.autismleeds.org.uk](http://www.autismleeds.org.uk)

The National Autistic Society - [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

Insight Autism Consultancy - [www.insightautism.co.uk](http://www.insightautism.co.uk)

Department of Health - [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health)

Skills for Care - [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

Skills for Health - [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

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