

# Personal assistant: Other experience from abroad



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## Independent living (UK)

Disabled people should be able to decide where and how they live, with access to a range of services (including personal assistance) to support their life in the community.

## Independent living (UK)

**Personal assistance:** to be able to customize services to your unique individual needs by either employing your assistants and deciding who works with what, how, when and where or by buying services choosing freely among many competing service providers. Independent living does *not mean that disabled people must do things for themselves or live on their own.*

## Functions of personal assistant-companion (UK)

- Mainly: help in house, work, education of disable people and etc.
- In some cases: social help; help with recreation activities;

## Functions of personal assistant-companion

- Island and Belgium include to this care of children
- Netherlands: help to find a job, medical help

## Personal assistant (USA)

- Personal care
- Household tasks
- Assist people outside the home environment
- Attending work, college, and social activities
- Activities directed by the person with the disability

## Who can have a personal assistant? (USA)

- 18 and 65 years old
- Significant physical or sensory disability
- Local council

## How is personal assistant funded? (USA)

- Local council providing disabled person with a direct payment or personal budget to buy own services from the person his/her choice
- Paying for own services from own funds
- An hourly basis
- An employer

## Functions of personal assistant (USA)

- Functions depend *on employer* requirements
- Read
- Play
- Speak
- Accompany/Drive
- Plan travels or excursions
- Help to write letters
- Pay bills
- and so on
- Sometimes housework

## Who can have a personal assistant? (LV)

- First group disabled people who needs special care;
- Second group disabled people, who have long-term development problem;
- And disabled children, who needs special care and help (according to VDEĀK)

## Personal assistance for disable school children (LV)

- Since 2012.09.01 ( for 7-18 years old disable children); (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> group);
- 40 hours per week;
- Assistance: help moving from one place to other one; help to care self;

## Financing and salary system (LV)

- Three main approaches to financing personal assistance :
  1. Personal assistance is funded via a personal budget or a direct cash payment;
  2. Personal assistance is allocated as a service;
  3. Personal assistance is funded by individuals' benefits;

## Financing and salary system

- Using a system whereby personal assistance is funded via a personal budget or a direct cash payment to the disabled person themselves or the organization managing the support
  - Germany
  - Belgium
  - Netherlands
  - United Kingdom
  - Denmark
  - Slovakia
  - Sweden
  - Finland
  - France

## Personal assistance is allocated as a service

- Disabled people receive personal assistance as a service in terms of an allocation of hours, rather than as a budget or a cash payment.
  - Portugal
  - Italy
  - Norway
  - Estonia
  - Romania
  - Ireland
  - Bulgaria

## Personal assistance is funded by individuals' benefits

- Pay some or all of the costs of this support, using their benefits or other financial means.
- Iceland
- Austria

## Staff requirements (Europe)

- Care basements;
- Age
- Education
- Courses in various fields
- Other Skills learnt not officially
- Features of person character



## Who is Eligible to Receive Personal Assistance? (SE)

- Persons with an intellectual disability, autism or a condition resembling autism;
- Persons with a significant and permanent intellectual impairment after brain damage in adulthood due to an external force or a physical illness;
- Persons who have other major and permanent physical or mental impairments

## Who is Eligible to Receive Personal Assistance? (SE)

1. Personal hygiene
  2. Eating
  3. Dressing and undressing
  4. Communicating with others
  5. Other help
- 20 or more hours of assistance per week

## How is personal assistant funded? (SE)

- Försäkringskassa (Social Insurance Agency)
- Local municipality

## Who is Eligible to Receive Personal Assistance? (SE)

- open-ended interviews
- individual argues for assistance,

## How is Personal Assistance Provided? (SE)

- Municipality
- Private for-profit companies
- Individually or collectively by joining a users' cooperative

## How is Personal Assistance Provided? (SE)

- Users who receive their assistance allowance have a right to receive payment from municipalities covering the costs (i.e. sickness benefits) arising from personal assistants' illnesses.
- This is viewed as a part of municipalities' fundamental responsibility for assistance, as it is their obligation to provide assistance services for users who do not choose another way of delivery.

## Payment for Personal Assistance (SE)

- Government
- each year
- 2010 it is 252 SEK/h
- minimum wage
- *Raised assistance allowance*
- max. 282 SEK per hour
- special reasons

## Who Can Act as Employer for Personal Assistants? (SE)

- individuals, granted personal assistance services
- employ themselves
- entities, organized as private companies, corporations or cooperatives

## What Types of Employment Exist within the Personal Assistance Sector? (SE)

- Fixed-term employment
- Hourly employment
- Indefinite-term employment

## Fixed-term employment (SE)

- the right to choose who is going to work as personal assistant.
- Possible causes for dismissal are:
  - the user dies or chooses another provider;
  - dismissal based on a specific reason

## Hourly employment (SE)

- temporary nature
- for a certain number of hours per occasion
- Indefinite-term employment where the rules under apply without exception

## What are the Rules for Users Employing their Own Personal Assistants? (SE)

- If assistance users employ their own personal assistants and the employer has not signed a union agreement, the Law on Working Time etc. in Household Work is applied, since the assistants are working in their employer's household.
- Since the assistance allowance is not taxable, users employing their own assistants cannot use assistance allowance to compensate themselves for work with administration or supervision. Instead, they can choose to manage administrative work without extra compensation and use more of the allowance for higher salaries or costs connected to assistance.

## What are the Pros and Cons of Employing your Own Assistants?

- can decide which tasks they perform themselves and which tasks they have executed
- regulated under the Law on Working Time etc. in Household Work
- is the inability to employ a family member of the same household
- make profit

## Personal Assistants (SE)

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## Who can Work as a Personal Assistant?

- individual should have a decisive or very big influence on who is employed as personal assistant.
- two different union agreements are used

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## How many personal assistants?

- According to Socialstyrelsen [National Board of Health and Welfare] some 50.000 persons were working as personal assistants in 2004, a majority of these (77%) were women. The number was estimated to rise to 60.000 by 2010.



## Personal assistant SE

- four out of five personal assistants are women,
- most personal assistants are between 25 and 44 years old,
- every third assistant is of foreign origin - Finnish, Iraq, Norwegian and Bosnian origin is most common
- two out of three have worked more than three years as assistants,
- one out of four work full time
- eight out of ten are employed by municipalities

## What Qualification is Required to Work as Personal Assistant? (SE)

- no qualification is needed and the user can choose freely whom to employ.
- personal characteristics and references
- basic competence in e.g. ergonomics, ethics and duty of confidentiality.

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## What Qualification is Required to Work as Personal Assistant? (SE)

- free from perspectives existing in care qualifications
- individuals with experience from the service sector.
- care or health care qualifications
- sign language
- physical strength
- driving license

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## What Tasks a Personal Assistant is Allowed to Do? (SE)

- no legal regulations limiting
- does not value the work
- risk assessments
- task is legal

## Is Self-care of Personal Health Care Maintenance Allowed? (SE)

- self-care
- medical professionalism
  
- Self-care is defined as health care or medical activity, which an authorized health professional has deemed possible for an individual to perform by him/herself. Self-care, according to this definition, does not fall under the responsibility of the general health care system.

## Self-employed? (SE)

- A personal assistant can be self-employed
- doubtful

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- Delegation of health care activities to personal assistants is not viewed as a problem but as natural part of delegating the self-care. It is done by a medical professional (doctor or nurse). As there is a tradition of delegating health care activities in Sweden, medical professionals, for example nurses, do not feel their status to be threatened.

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- Private companies are very reliable as providers of personal assistance. They have more freedom of choice and influence. However, careful monitoring of this developing market should be done, as abuse of funds for personal assistance, though present in a few cases, has resulted in the reform being questioned by politicians.

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- Only 3% of the assistance users are employing their own personal assistants. Most users are unwilling to take on this responsibility. At the beginning , it was believed that many more assistance users would use the option of employing assistants themselves, but the percentage has remained constant over time.

## All in all

Personal assistance service, applied in many countries of the world are rather different depending on economic, cultural, political and social mentality.