

Overview: The Importance of References When Recruiting a Personal Assistant

When recruiting a Personal Assistant, professional and character references play a crucial role in confirming their qualifications and character. These references are especially important for verifying professional experience and evaluating personal attributes, ensuring that the candidate is well-suited for the responsibilities in social care.

This information sheet will explain the importance of seeking references and at the end of the information sheet there are two different reference request templates for you to utilise if you wish.

Why Are Professional/Character References Important When Recruiting a Personal Assistant?

Professional and character references are vital for confirming a Personal Assistant's qualifications and character. They are especially crucial for verifying professional experience and evaluating personal attributes.

Importance of Credibility and Reliability

In the social care sector, Personal Assistants are entrusted with the well-being of the individuals they support. Therefore, credibility and reliability are paramount. A referee can provide unique perspectives and first-hand accounts of a Personal Assistant's professional journey, supporting the claims made in their CV and during interview.

Distinguishing Between Employment and Character References

When recruiting a Personal Assistant, it's important to understand the two main types of references they may provide: employment references and character references.

Employment References

Employment references are provided by previous employers or professionals who can verify the Personal Assistant's work history, skills, and expertise in a social care setting.

Character References

Character references come from individuals who can speak around the Personal Assistant's personal qualities, such as responsibility, kindness, and ethical standards.

Both types of references are valuable, offering a comprehensive view of a Personal Assistant's professional capabilities and personal attributes, ensuring they are well-suited for the responsibilities in social care.

Securing References When New to the Job

Personal Assistants new to the role or social care may worry about their lack of professional references. However, references from other employment, volunteer positions, or academic lecturers can still be valuable. These references can speak to your transferable skills, reliability, and commitment, all of which are relevant to the role of your potential Personal Assistant.

Reference Template 1: Character / Professional Reference

All answers will be treated in strict confidence. All referees may be contacted to verify the details provided.

Applicants name	
Position applied for	
Your name	
Preferable contact number	
Preferable email address	
Relationship to applicant	
How long have you known the applicant?	

Please answer the following:

In your opinion and from your experience, how does the applicant rate in the following:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Punctuality				
Reliability				
Even tempered				
Trustworthy				
Honest				
Ability to work				
Hard working				
Ability to work with children (If applicable to role)				
Quality of work				
Team work				
Work ethic				
Professionalism				

This post may involve working one to one with disabled children or adults in various environments.

Please describe your views of the applicants:

Social skills (eg communication and outlook within work):

Positive attributes:

Any weakness you are aware of:

Please answer the following where appropriate:

Are you aware of any convictions either past or outstanding? Yes /No

If yes, please specify:

Would you re-employ the applicant? Yes /No

If no give details:

Completed by:

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Employer's Use Only			Additional Information
Received:	Date	Signed	
Verified:	Date	Signed	

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Insert the Referee's address

Or email address

Please ask for:
[Insert your name]

Direct dial:
[Insert telephone
number]

**Please quote this
reference:
[Insert reference number]**

Email: [Insert your email address] Date: [Insert Date]

Dear (Insert Referee's name)

RE: [Insert Personal Assistant's name]

The above named has applied for a position with me and has given your name as a referee. Brief details of the appointment are **enclosed** and I'd be grateful if you would kindly complete the attached reference request. Please give your frank opinion on the applicant's suitability for the post. Referees are reminded that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission.

Some of the questions are relevant only to the current or former employers of the applicant. Please ignore those aspects that are not relevant to your relationship with the applicant and mark those questions as "not applicable".

If you require further information in order to identify the applicant, please contact me on the above number or email address.

I am committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and adults and expect all staff to share this commitment. My recruitment and selection processes relating to references are rigorous and comply with national and local guidance.

If it would be easier for you to respond using another method other than electronically please contact me as shown above, so arrangements can then be made.

It would be helpful to receive your response by [insert reasonable return date, maybe two weeks.]

All replies will be treated in strict confidence and in accordance with GDPR. With the exception of the relevant factual content of the reference, which may be discussed with the applicant at interview, details of the reference will not be disclosed to the applicant unless you give your consent by ticking the box in the Declaration section at the end of the questionnaire.

If, due to company policy, you are unable to use our standard proforma, please ensure you quote the "My Reference" number stated at the top of this letter, on your correspondence.

Thank you in advance for your help and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]

REFERENCE REQUEST FORM – STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Reference no:	Name of Applicant:
Job title: Personal Assistant	

A. Employment details (This may be discussed with the applicant)

- 1. Dates of Employment/Course:
From: Please confirm _____
To: Please confirm _____

Can you confirm that these dates of employment are correct?

Yes No

If no, please give correct dates:
.....

2. In what capacity do you know this person?
.....

3. How long have you known this person in this capacity (give dates):
.....

4. Job title/role and key duties/responsibilities:
.....
.....

5. Has the applicant been subject to a formal disciplinary/capability procedure? (Where available, please check with your HR department that this information is still appropriate/not “spent” before responding.) Yes No
If Yes, please give details of reasons and actions taken:-
.....
.....

6. If applicable please give reasons for the applicant leaving your employment (this is particularly important if you are children's services or vulnerable adults service provider):-

.....

7. This post involves working with disabled children/adults.

i) Please give details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children/adults and the outcome of those concerns. (However, if following a full and proper investigation, it was concluded that the allegation or concern was wholly without foundation, there is no need to provide details.):-

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ii) Have you made a referral of any misconduct for possible barring?

Yes No

B. Performance at work (Please see Section C - Declaration)
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Please rate the applicant by ticking the appropriate box. All boxes should be completed:

	Not relevant	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Written communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to meet deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisational ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time-keeping/Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding of equalities and diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Honesty & Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to take on responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance as part of a team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to develop & improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adaptability to change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perseverance/Commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationships with colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationships with managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationships with clients/public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Managing/supervision of team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Overall performance</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please comment on areas which you have rated as poor:-

.....

.....

Use this space to add any comments you deem relevant to the applicant's suitability or otherwise for this post with me. Please take into account the confidential nature of work involved and any potential risks (where applicable) to children/ adults. You may continue on a separate page and attach it if you wish.

.....

.....

Would you re-employ the applicant if a suitable vacancy arose?

Yes No

Where relevant, are you completely satisfied that the applicant is suitable to work with children/adults?

Yes No Not applicable

C. Declaration

I declare that all of the information supplied presents a true and accurate record of the above named individual's performance with our organisation.

I have no objections to any of this information being disclosed to the applicant.

I do not wish this information to be disclosed to the applicant*

*The reference will remain confidential unless the applicant makes a subject access request, in which case we will notify you of the request prior to making a decision to release the information.

Signed:.....

Print Name:.....

Date:

Name and address of organisation:

.....
.....

Telephone contact number:.....

Organisation Stamp:

Thank you for your help and co-operation in completing this reference

Employer's Use Only			Additional Information
Received:	Date	Signed	
Verified:	Date	Signed	

The Direct Payment Support Service hope you have found this information sheet and the templates useful.

The Direct Payment Support Service is available Monday to Friday from 9am until 5pm using the telephone number and email address below and on the first page of the information sheet. Any emails that are received will receive a reply within three working days.

The Direct Payment Support Service contact details: -

Tel: 0370 779 1300

Email: dpsupportservice@hants.gov.uk

The Direct Payment Support Service has further information sheets on various topics, including:

- Introduction to Direct Payments
- Information on Advocacy
- Acting as an Authorised / Nominated person
- Introduction to PPL Virtual Wallet
- Information on Insurance providers
- Information on Payroll providers
- Introduction to employing a Personal Assistant
- Guide to employing your own Personal Assistant
 - Including interview question templates and job advertisement templates
- Ending a Direct Payment