

## Ruils

# Youtube videos for personal assistants and their employers

Ruils created five short films which provide skills instruction and discussion points for personal assistants (PAs) and their employers. They help both parties to understand their roles and offer a channel for development and learning.

## Background

- To build an effective working relationship between personal assistants and their employers – who may have a range of health or mobility-related needs – requires both parties to have mutual understanding, respect for each other's needs and specific skills. Yet the role and duties of PAs are little understood not only by individual employers and their carers but, quite often, by personal assistants themselves.
- There are various barriers to training PAs and to providing employers with an understanding of their own roles and duties. They include cost, the limitation in both courses and training providers that focus on this specific group and the difficulty in allocating training time. There is also the difficulty of communicating with employers and their personal assistants so as to ascertain individual training needs and to provide guidance.

This Workforce Development Innovation Fund (WDIF) project involved Ruils, a small user-led charity operating in the London Borough of Richmond, in creating five unique training films aimed at personal assistants who work for individual employers in their homes. The films have been made professionally to high production values and featured personal assistants, individual employers, carers and specialist trainers all of whom were heavily involved in approving their content.

## What we wanted to achieve

- The films are specifically aimed at PAs who can watch them in their own time and as often as needed either for introductory or refresher training. The objective was also to make films that PAs and their employers could watch together to help develop their relationship, learning and understanding.
- Ruils set out to make each of the five films as a stand-alone instructional aid which provides ideas, information and insights into a particular skill or topic. The five subjects covered in each film are:
  - The Role of the Personal Assistant
  - Health & Safety
  - Moving and Assisting
  - Working with Clients with a Learning Disability
  - Working with Clients with Dementia

“Throughout the films what you see and hear shows the stories and views of personal assistants and individual employers told in their words and reflecting their unique relationship. We supplemented this approach with the use of disabled actors to anchor the key messages.”

Cathy Maker, Project Lead at Ruils

- In each skill-related film, Ruils sought to provide a training tool which was lively, appealing and realistic and which encapsulated good practice in each subject so that viewers learned basic skills that they could build upon. By watching the films the individual employers and personal assistants could discuss further and put into practice what they have learned.
- The film about the role of the personal assistant was produced to offer useful generic insights reflecting people’s direct experience of this work.
- Put together, the five films are intended to provide an appealing, comprehensive introduction to the role of PAs, their relationship with individual employers and the different skills and qualities in the PA/ employer relationship which make a foundation for good care.
- Another key objective was to make films that were long-lasting and would remain relevant and useful because of their high production values and the input of specialist trainers informing their content. Finally, the scalability of the project would be ensured by making the films widely and freely accessible.
- as a specialist in health and safety and another in moving and assisting); working with script writers to create scripts; casting contributors; finding locations; and checking content with trainers. There were some scheduling challenges during the film production period and time commitments attending the shoot days and approving the edits.
- According to Cathy Maker, project lead at Ruils, “Throughout the films what you see and hear shows the stories and views of personal assistants and individual employers told in their words and reflecting their unique relationship. We supplemented this approach with the use of disabled actors to anchor the key messages.”
- Each of the more directly instructional films was cast with personal assistants and their employers. As to preparing the content of each film, Cathy said: “We’ve worked with many individuals to understand their expectations surrounding the PA and employer relationship. Over the years, we’ve gathered this information through service user engagement, feedback surveys, supervision with staff and group meetings. And having worked closely with personal assistants we know about the pitfalls and challenges that they face.”

## What we did

- With a budget set for the film production, Ruils sought bids from several film companies and selected Pretzel Films for the contract on the basis of perceived quality and value for money. Working against a tight schedule, the pre-production period was particularly challenging and time-consuming. This involved recruiting personal assistants, individual employers and professionals (such
- Ruils was also careful to work with professionals to ensure that the films reflected the principles and latest learning in their specialist areas.
- To distribute the films, Ruils decided to use YouTube. “Made by a small charity in Richmond but watched anywhere in the world! What could be better when our intention is free and wide distribution?” said Cathy.

- Ruils launched the films to personal assistants a week before the general launch. Emails were also sent to individual employers registered on Ruils' two recruitment and employment websites encouraging them to watch the films with their personal assistants.
- The completed films were made available on Ruils' website, Facebook page and YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/RUILSUK](http://www.youtube.com/user/RUILSUK).

## What we achieved

- All the personal assistants registered with Ruils have been encouraged to watch all five skill-building training films. Ruils have also promoted this to everyone registered on their Find a PA website.
- It is difficult to assess the impact of the film in a traditional way because the usual approach of completing evaluation questionnaires after watching the films is not applicable. Ruils therefore intends to send out a questionnaire later in 2013 to find out how the films may have affected the practice, skills and attitude towards training of PAs who have watched them.
- By early June 2013, the 'Role of the Personal Assistant' topped the popularity charts with well over 700 viewings on YouTube while the other films have also had hundreds of viewings.
- Cathy Maker has been approached by various organisations, including training providers, who have asked if they may provide links from their websites to the films for use as training aids, or use the films directly for training. Ruils encourages and promotes this practice.
- "We've received hugely positive feedback," she says. "The films have achieved our initial objectives and we're hopeful that many more people will make use of them, particularly given YouTube distribution supported by other organisations' website links."

## What we learnt

- One of the major lessons from the project was that investment in high value production using professional film-makers and scriptwriters

resulted in five films that are likely to serve their purpose for years to come. By setting the bar high at the outset, Ruils were able to produce films that are compelling and enjoyable to watch, and offer freely available instruction to new and prospective personal assistants as well as to those already engaged in the role.

- Another factor that has led to a successful outcome was ensuring that individual employers and personal assistants were involved in every step of the process – for example, because it was important that the scripts reflected a genuine relationship between a personal assistant and individual employer they were signed off by an individual employer.

“ I have just watched the films that you have made on YouTube and they are excellent. I employ six PAs on behalf of my daughter. These will be a wonderful resource for training present and new PAs. Thank you.”

Feedback from Individual Employer

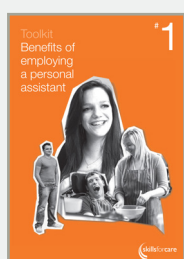
## For more information please contact

Cathy Maker  
Project Lead  
Ruils  
[cathymaker@ruils.co.uk](mailto:cathymaker@ruils.co.uk)

## Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care continues to produce various resources that can help those involved in dementia care, from formal qualifications to related guidance and information. We have listed a few of these below.

### Employing Personal Assistants Toolkit



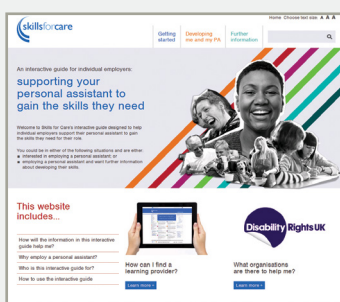
This helps guides you through the process of employing a personal assistant, what to do when they

are working for you as well as helping you to understand your responsibilities as an employer and your legal obligations.

[www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk](http://www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk)

### An interactive guide for Individual Employers

This resource has been designed to help individual employers support their personal assistant to gain the skills they need for their role.



[www.paskills.org.uk](http://www.paskills.org.uk)

### Individual Employer Funding

Individual Employer can now apply for funding to support the training and development of themselves and their personal assistants.

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

Skills for Care  
West Gate  
6 Grace Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2RP  
telephone 0113 245 1716  
email [info@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:info@skillsforcare.org.uk)  
web [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

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