**Job Description**

**Job title** Personal Assistant

**Hours** 9 hours per week - Saturdays (4 hours over lunch)

5 hours to be split over 2 evenings per week

**Rates of pay** £8.90 per hour

**Location** Fenham

**Purpose of Job**

We are looking to employ a Personal Assistant to work with our 7 year old son Amir. He has autism and is non-verbal. Amir is the youngest of the family and lives with us, his Mum and Dad, and two older sisters aged 9 and 12. Dad works full time and Mum looks after the family home.

The main part of this role is to support Amir with going out and about and taking part in different activities, as well as social interaction at home. Due to the nature of the role we would prefer a car driver with own car, however this isn’t essential.

Amir goes to a special needs school and requires constant care and supervision once he is at home. A very important part of your role will be to ensure Amir’s safety at all times. He has no awareness of danger and if you are outside he can run off if you don’t have control of him, so it is very important that you hold his hand at ALL times when you are outside of the family home.

Amir likes adults to smile at him, reassure him and be positive around him. He responds to females better, he follows Mum wherever she goes in the house! He loves being cuddled and responds better to being talked to slowly and in short sentences. Once you get to know Amir you will get to understand his way of communicating and when is happy or unhappy. He will point to things he wants or likes and lead you to places he wants to be.

Amir can become frustrated due to his difficulty with communication, this can sometimes result in him becoming aggressive. Reasons for this are not always apparent, it could be due to pain, not being happy with something or not enjoying what he is doing. During these times you should feel confident enough to calm Amir down and take him to a safe space, whether this is within the family home or if you are out in the community.

Amir likes to have his comfy blankets and ribbons on him. He keeps himself to himself and doesn’t engage in meaningful play at home with his sisters or when outside. Due to this we would like the Personal Assistant to be able to engage with Amir, rather than sit back and let him play on his own. We envisage you assisting him with his communication skills, more specifically using PECS and encouraging him to use this way of communication. It would be ideal if you had experience of this and if you have experience working with children with autism and challenging behaviour.

We would also like the PA to assist Amir to become familiar with routines. This could be getting his coat and shoes on before going out, teaching him about putting things back where he got them from and encouraging him to put litter in the bin. Also, help us train him in using the toilet. This would be a gradual process and these things wouldn’t happen straight away, but this is something we would like you to work on with Amir.

As the Personal Assistant you will work mainly alongside us and under our direction to meet Amir’s needs. Previous experience of working with children is preferable, particularly children with special needs, but we are happy to consider applicants who do not have prior experience or knowledge of working with people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

We are looking for somebody who is enthusiastic and pro-active in their work, reliable, punctual and prepared for some flexibility in their working hours. You must also be able to respect our privacy and have an understanding of the need for confidentiality in all areas of your work.

Amir’s Personal Assistant must be able to handle all aspects of behaviour associated with autism. Some physical skills will occasionally be required e.g. lifting down from play equipment. Good general health is important. We consider patience and enthusiasm to be essential attributes for this job.

**Main Duties**

As Amir’s and the family’s needs will vary it is important that the Personal Assistant is flexible about what the work involves and agrees to undertake any reasonable Personal Assistance tasks we request e.g. accompanying the family on outings. You will be required to carry out the following tasks on a flexible basis:

**Personal Assistance**

* Amir wears nappies so you will be required to change these when needed.
* Help us to toilet train.
* Amir does not always let you know when he needs a drink, so you should be aware of when he last had a drink and consider the activity he is taking part in as to whether he may need a drink.
* Helping with washing and changing clothes if necessary.
* Describing the surrounding to Amir when in new places
* Assistance to communicate

**Social Assistance**

* Supporting in fun and stimulating activities inside and outside of the home.
* Assisting Amir to take part in meaningful play.
* Spending time playing with and talking to Amir.
* Supervising to ensure he is safe and generally responding to his needs. This is particularly important outside the home because Amir isn’t aware of the world around him, the dangers, where he is, etc. so his hand needs to be held at all times.

**Training**

There are no formal qualifications needed to do this job. However we would prefer someone who has experience working with children with autism and possibly some knowledge on PECS. The tasks and types of assistance involved can be learned through the Personal Assistant working with us.

**Person Specification**

To be our son’s Personal Assistant you should:

* Have some experience of working with disabled children or adults. Particularly children with Autism and challenging behaviour
* Have a positive attitude towards disability
* Be willing to work under our direction
* Be able to work flexibly to meet our son’s needs
* Be a non-smoker
* Not drink alcohol when working for me
* Have good general health
* Be a driver and have a clean driving license (preferred but not essential)
* Be reliable and trustworthy
* Be a good time keeper
* Be able to work at short notice
* Be able to work in different settings
* Not discuss our household and domestic circumstances with others, other than with my specific permission
* Keep information gained in the course of your employment confidential
* Be able to respond appropriately in an emergency
* Be able to accept responsibility and work on your own initiative
* Respect our son’s privacy and that of our family and friends
* Be patient when doing repeated tasks
* Have at least basic reading, writing and number skills

You do not need any formal qualifications but you must be willing to learn how to do the job under my direction.