

Länsi-Uudenmaan hyvinvointialue
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Plain-language guide Service voucher for personal assistance

Plain-language guide for clients

Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County
Family and Disability Services

Purpose of the guide

This guide explains clearly what a service voucher for personal assistance means, how to choose a service voucher provider and how to use the service.

This guide will help you understand how to use the service voucher and your rights and possibilities as a service voucher user.

What is a service voucher?

A service voucher for personal assistance is one way of organising personal assistance.

The Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County can grant you a service voucher if you are entitled to personal assistance.

A service voucher gives you the opportunity to choose the service voucher provider yourself. You can choose a service voucher provider from the list of service voucher providers approved by the wellbeing services county.

A service voucher is not money that is paid to you. The wellbeing services county uses the service voucher to pay the costs of personal assistance to the service voucher provider.

You do not have to pay for personal assistance when you use a service voucher for the purpose for which it was granted to you.

If you buy some other service from a service voucher provider, for example an additional service, you will have to pay for it yourself. You have to agree separately on any additional services.

Why have the service voucher providers been approved?

The Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County approves the service voucher providers before they can provide personal assistance with a service voucher.

In the approval process, the wellbeing services county checks that the service voucher provider meets the requirements set for it.

For example, the wellbeing services county checks that the service voucher provider has submitted the necessary reports, that its operations are reliable and that it is able to provide the service safely.

Contractor's liability refers to a background check. Before approving a service voucher provider, the wellbeing services county checks that the provider follows laws and fulfils its obligations. They will check things like taxes and insurance. The goal is to make sure that the service is safe for the client.

Safe assistance

If an employee works with a person with a disability, the service voucher provider must ask the employee to present an extract from the criminal record. This also applies to assistants working with adult disabled clients as required by law.
When services are provided, the child's or young person's age, developmental stage, opinion and safety are taken into account.

Confidentiality and data protection

Assistants and service voucher providers are bound by the obligation of secrecy. Assistants are not allowed to tell anyone what they see or hear in their work. This confidentiality obligation also applies after an assistant's work has ended.

The service voucher provider must process your personal data carefully and securely. You have the right to be informed of how the service voucher provider processes your personal data.

The service voucher provider has a privacy statement for clients in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation. The privacy statement explains how the

service voucher provider processes your personal data and what rights you have in relation to your data.

Parties' roles in brief

Client	Service voucher service provider	Wellbeing services county
Chooses a service voucher provider from the approved options.	Provides personal assistance in the agreed manner.	Grants a service voucher and decides on the organisation of the service.
Agrees on the practices of the service with the service voucher provider.	Is responsible for their employees, the quality of the service and safety.	Approves service voucher providers and oversees services provided with a service voucher.
Can give feedback and file a report if the service is not working.	Notifies the wellbeing services county of any material changes and shortcomings.	Guides the client and can reassess the need for services.

What does personal assistance mean?

Personal assistance is help with everyday matters.

You might need help at home, outside the home, in studies, at work, in hobbies, when running errands, using services, in leisure time or for keeping in touch with other people.

In personal assistance, the assistant does not make decisions on your behalf. The purpose of personal assistance is to support you in making your own choices and living a life that is your own.

Personal assistance is meant to make everyday life possible. It can reduce the impact of a disability in daily life. It allows you to do things that you would do personally if you did not need the help of another person.

Personal assistance is not a care service

Personal assistance is not a care or nursing service. It focuses on everyday support, inclusion and the opportunity to follow your personal choices.

The assistant helps you with the things that are covered by the personal assistance granted to you. The assistance can be related to mobility, running errands, using services, hobbies, studying, work, leisure time or keeping in touch with other people.

You determine what kind of help you need and how you want the help to be carried out. The assistance is done based on your decision and established practices.

How can you get a service voucher?

Contact the Family and Disability Services of the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County.

A social welfare professional will assess your service needs. The assessment will determine whether you need personal assistance and whether a service voucher is suitable for your situation.

If you are granted a service voucher, you will get an official decision on it. The decision will explain what kind of personal assistance you will get, how many hours of assistance, how long the decision will be valid and how the service will be organised.

Tip: Make sure not to lose the decision.

The client can choose the service voucher provider

The service voucher gives you freedom of choice. You get to choose the service voucher provider from the providers for personal assistance approved by the wellbeing services county.

A service voucher provider is a company, organisation or other approved operator that clients use to order personal assistant services.

You can compare service voucher providers on the service voucher system list. If necessary, you can ask for help for choosing a service voucher provider from Family and Disability Services or your worker.

The online address of the list is: https://parastapalvelua.fi.
Select the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County as the area and personal assistance service voucher as the service.

If a service voucher provider is not suitable for you, you can change the service voucher provider. You have to agree on the change with the service voucher provider and, if necessary, with Family and Disability Services.

If you change the service voucher provider in the middle of a month, notify the new service voucher provider of the assistance hours you have used in that month.

If you have more than one service voucher provider, you have to keep track that the number of assistance hours provided by different service voucher providers does not go over the number of granted hours. If you exceed the number of hours, you will have to pay for the extra hours yourself.

Contact the service voucher provider

Once you have selected a service voucher provider, contact them and arrange a meeting. In the meeting, you will discuss what kind of help you need and what kind of assistant is suitable for you. If the service voucher provider is able to provide the help you need, you can sign an agreement on starting the service.

Give the service voucher provider the service voucher identifier so that the provider can use the identifier to find your service voucher in the PSOP system.

The service voucher provider checks that the service voucher is valid and that you have hours left.

Tell the service voucher provider at least

- when you need an assistant
- where the assistance starts
- where the assistance ends
- what help you need
- how you would like the help to be carried out
- how you will reach out if the plan changes
- what important things does the assistant need to know about you? For example, do you have pets, do you use a wheelchair and how do you communicate with others?

Sign an agreement with the service voucher provider

Before the service begins, sign an agreement with the service voucher provider.

The agreement describes things like what the service includes, when the service is provided, how you will agree on changes, how the service is cancelled, how long the agreement is valid and what the parties are responsible for.

The agreement must be understandable to you.

The agreement is only between you and the service voucher provider. The Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County is not a party to this agreement. The wellbeing services county has done an advance approval on the service voucher providers that can provide the service with a service voucher and monitors that the service is carried out in the manner required by the county from the provider.

How can you place an order for an assistant?

You place an order for an assistant from the service provider.

Whenever you place an order for an assistant, tell the service provider the following:

- What time will you need the assistant?
- Report the time to the nearest half hour, for example 8:30 or 9:00.
- Where will you meet the assistant?
- What time will the assistant's work end?
- Report the time to the nearest half hour, for example 10:30 or 11:00.
- Where will the assistant's work end?

There is no minimum length for an assistance visit, unless otherwise has been agreed in the agreement between you and the service voucher provider.

What does an assistant do?

The assistant helps you with the things that are covered by the personal assistance granted to you.

The assistant does not plan the assistance work themselves. You tell the assistant what kind of help you need. You can express it yourself or with support. The service voucher provider is responsible for ensuring that the assistant is able to perform their work safely and appropriately.

Personal assistance is not the same as home care or medical care. An assistant does not administer medication, unlike nurses. If you mainly need care, nursing or supervision, Family and Disability Services will assess which service is suitable for your situation.

You can tell the assistant things like:

- how you communicate
- how you move around
- what you need help with
- what things are important to you
- how you want to be assisted

Hours and use of the service voucher

The decision tells you how many hours of personal assistance you can use.

Only use the hours for the purpose for which they were granted.

You must keep track of the number of assistance hours and make sure that you do not exceed the number of hours granted. You can keep track of your hours in PSOP or by using a paper form where the assistant signs off the hours.

If your need for assistance changes, contact Family and Disability Services. The number of hours or the method of providing service may be re-evaluated.

The service voucher must be valid when you use the service.

Additional service

The service voucher only covers the service that has been granted to you in the decision.

If you order some other service from the service voucher provider, it is an additional service. You have to agree on the additional service separately and pay for it yourself.

The service voucher provider must clearly tell you what is included in the service voucher and what is an additional service that you will have to pay for.

Cancellation of service

If you have placed an order for an assistant but want to cancel the order, cancel it with the service provider. Do not cancel the appointment by contacting the assistant.

Cancel the booked assistance no later than 24 hours before the agreed time, unless otherwise agreed in your agreement. If you do not cancel the assistance in time, you will lose the assistance hours.

If the assistance service has to be paused, notify the service provider. You can pause assistance when you are on holiday or in rehabilitation, for example.

If you have to go to hospital or the service is interrupted for some other reason, notify the service voucher provider as soon as possible.

You and the service voucher provider have a two-week notice period, unless otherwise agreed in your agreement. The period of notice is calculated from the day following the date of termination.

If the service is not working

If something is not working: Contact the service voucher provider first.

Tell them what is not working in the service.

You can ask the service voucher provider to fix the situation.

If the issue does not get resolved or you are concerned about the safety of the service, contact Family and Disability Services.

You can also give feedback to the wellbeing services county.

Further information

If you need more information about the service voucher, contact Family and Disability Services.

If your matter is not urgent, you can send a message in **Lunna** at any time. We respond to messages within three working days. Select "disability services" as the reason for your message.

You can also call **029 151 2425**. The telephone service is open from Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 16:00.