Information on Volunteering as an Individual Assistant

What are volunteer individual assistants?

Volunteer individual assistants are people who provide low-barrier individual care and/or relief activities to support nursing care patients in their everyday lives. These activities generally take the form of voluntary help provided to neighbours or friends by individuals.

Why does a volunteer individual assistant fill out the form to confirm their support activities?

By filling out the form and signing it, the volunteer individual assistant confirms that they observe the framework conditions for performing support activities for daily life for nursing care patients. With this, their support in the activities of daily life is recognised. A copy of the completed and signed confirmation must be appended to the invoice for the support activity performed (relief amount) as per § 45b para. 1 clause 3 No. 4 of the German Social Security Code (SGB) XI.

If an activity by a volunteer individual assistant begins in the future, does the start date have to be applied for or submitted, and is a notification of the end date required?

No. It is sufficient to complete the form “Confirmation of Activity as a Volunteer Individual Assistant.” A copy of this confirmation is only sent to the statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support as part of the regular invoicing of the support activities provided.

Is it necessary for a volunteer individual assistant to formally register their activities with the statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support or with a local nursing care provider or other municipal authority? No. It is sufficient to complete the form “Confirmation of Activity as a Volunteer Individual Assistant” and this is considered recognition of the support activities provided to the nursing care patient.

What prerequisites does a volunteer individual assistant have to fulfil?

A person can be a volunteer individual assistant who is

- over 16 years of age,
- undertakes the support voluntarily and does not support more than two people simultaneously,
- is not related to the nursing care patient by fewer than two degrees by blood or by marriage,
- does not live in the same household as the patient,
- is not employed as a carer for the nursing care patient.

What must be considered is the volunteer individual assistant is a minor?

The legal guardians must provide a declaration of consent.

Why is the volunteer individual assistant limited to only supporting two nursing care patients?

It is a prerequisite for recognition that a volunteer individual assistant may only support up to two people simultaneously. If compensation for expenses is paid for the support of a nursing care patient of care class 1 or higher, this may be considered a “customary duty” as per § 3 no. 36 of the Income Tax Code (EstG) and therefore tax free. The prerequisite for tax-free status, however, is that not more than 2 people are cared for at the same time.

Why are persons excluded from becoming volunteer individual assistants who are related to the nursing care patient by two degrees or fewer?

Persons are excluded from providing services as volunteer individual assistants who are related to the nursing care patient by two degrees or fewer because those who are related to the nursing care patient by two degrees or fewer are particularly at risk of becoming overburdened and should therefore themselves receive support activities to help them in their own daily lives.

People related to the nursing care patient by two degrees or less include parents (1st degree) and grandparents (2nd degree), children (1st degree) and grandchildren (2nd degree) as well as siblings (2nd degree). The same applies to relationships by marriage: The parents of the partner, i.e. parents-in-law (1st degree), and grandparents of the partner (2nd degree), children of the partner if no adoption has taken place (1st degree) and grandchildren of the partner (2nd degree), as well as siblings of the partner (2nd degree).

Who is the nursing care provider of a nursing care patient and therefore cannot simultaneously provide support activities for this nursing care patient as a volunteer individual assistant?

According to § of the Social Security Code (SBG) XI, a nursing care provider is someone who does not provide professional nursing care to a patient in their home environment.

Do future volunteer individual assistants need to become qualified or attend training courses prior to performing support activities for nursing care patients?

No, it is expected that the majority of volunteer individual assistants will perform their low-barrier support activities in the surroundings of nursing care patients personally known to them from their own neighbourhood. Therefore there is no training requirement. However, there are a number of voluntary qualification offerings which offer content that might be helpful and useful to you in your role a a volunteer individual assistant. The statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support can provide information about where to find qualification offerings locally or online. The volunteer individual assistant can decide for themselves whether they would like to attend a first-aid course prior to performing support activities for a nursing care patient.

What activities are considered support activities of volunteer individual assistants?

The following, among other things, are considered neighbourly supplemental support and relief activities for nursing care patients and their familial carers or comparable persons:

- Accompanying the patient on walks or when visiting a doctor or public office,
- Shopping or domestic assistance, such as support in outdoor areas of the home, such as yard work,
- Helping to read or fill out forms,
- Encouragement and support for leisure activities and social contact

Nursing care activities and other activities which do not fall under supplemental support and relief activities include e.g. the maintenance of buildings and landscaping, or repair work.

Where can I receive advice on supporting persons with dementia?

The Alzheimer Gesellschaft Baden-Württemberg e.V. has provided information about dementia on its website and also offers training and continuing education programmes on the subject of dementia.

Who can advise nursing care patients, their family carers and volunteer individual assistants as to when more comprehensive care for the patient might be indicated?

The first point of contact in this instance is the statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support or the local professional nursing care provider.

When can a volunteer individual assistant end their activities?

At any time. A volunteer individual assistant may end their activities at any time for personal reasons, e.g. moving away or feeling overwhelmed by the support situation. It is not necessary to give any reason. It is not necessary to notify the the statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support that the volunteer individual assistant has ended their activities.

Can a compensation for expenses be paid to the volunteer individual assistant for their support activities?

Yes. The services of the volunteer individual assistant are provided voluntarily. Any compensation for expenses or financial income from voluntary activities must be declared to the tax authority in their full amount. Income from nursing care support activities or assistance in domestic chores—as compensation for expenses arising from voluntary activities—fall under the tax-free “trainer allowance” (currently up to €3000/year) if these activities are carried out as a “customary duty” towards the nursing care patient.

The tax authority assumes that this is the case if

1. not more than two nursing care patients are cared for at the same time and
2. the volunteer individual assistant does not receive more than is reimbursed by the statutory nursing care insurance company.

The amount of the compensation for expenses is agreed individually between the individual assistant and the nursing care patient. There is no legally required amount, though experience shows that compensation of between €12.50 and €20.00/hour is common. Any concrete questions regarding income tax should be clarified with the responsible tax authority. Even if the income arises from activities as a volunteer individual assistant is tax free, it must still be declared in your income tax declaration.

What are the payment terms? Is it possible for volunteer individual assistants to invoice the statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support, or is it necessary to obtain written permission from the nursing care patient?

When the invoicing form is submitted to the statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support, this is also an application for the provision of relief payments of up to €131/month for the support activities received from the volunteer individual assistant according to § 45 para. 1 clause 3 No. 4 of the Social Security Code (SGB) XI. A copy of the confirmation of the activities of the volunteer individual assistant is appended to the invoicing form. This allows the statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support to determine whether the support in daily life provided by the volunteer individual assistant falls under § 45a SGB XI. The statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer of the nursing care patient receiving the support reimburses the costs arising from the receipt of these support activities from the volunteer individual assistant. The relief amount is dispersed after the fact. The nursing care patient submits the invoice. The invoice may be submitted by the volunteer individual assistant if a signed notification of assignment is provided. For all questions regarding invoicing, please contact your statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer.

Via the so-called “carry-over entitlement”, 40% of the unused non-cash nursing care budget may also be used to finance the volunteer individual assistant. Please consult your statutory nursing care insurance company or private health insurer as to whether a “carry-over entitlement” can be granted.

Is it necessary to insurance coverage in order to act as a volunteer individual assistant?

Accidents or injury to property or persons can happen at any time. This risk is always a part of private life. Most of the time, volunteer individual assistants are active in a private setting. Volunteer individual assistants therefore must have sufficient insurance coverage for any injuries to property or persons which they might cause or suffer in the context of their activities. With regard to protection in case of injury caused to others, private liability insurance is generally necessary. You may be insured via the statutory accident insurance company, however, there is no generic, legally provided accident insurance protection. In case of an accident, please contact the statutory accident insurance company to find out whether insurance coverage might apply in your individual case.