

Title of occupation: Peer worker

Level of occupation: Level 3

Typical duration of apprenticeship: 15 months

Occupation Profile

This occupation is found in...

a range of services that embed peer-led roles within third sector, community, social enterprise and statutory sectors, including the NHS, health, justice, housing, and private providers of specialist services. Peer support has a long history in social justice, human rights and community action. The occupation is unique in that it is only open to those who have expertise by experience. Career progression opportunities may include:

- peer leadership roles such as Peer Lead, Peer Support Development Workers, Peer Co-ordinator, Lead Peer Mentor
- training and development
- coaching
- health and social care professions.
- The occupation is highlighted in the NHS Long Term Plan and the NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20–2023/24 as a key workforce deliverable for people across all age groups with:
 - severe mental distress
 - mental health crises
 - perinatal mental health difficulties
 - long term conditions
 - addiction problems
 - problem gambling
 - rough sleeping

The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan expects 4000 new Peer Workers to be recruited over the life of the plan. As peer support is rolled out, the role is evolving to take on new responsibilities requiring knowledge and skills extending beyond that which has traditionally been covered in the training of Peer Workers.

The broad purpose of the occupation is...

to work alongside other professionals in hospital, justice and community settings, providing peer support for individuals using knowledge gained from their own lived experience of health or social problems and/or using services. Peer support is founded on a non-coercive, human rights-based approach that focuses on building relationships. Working within clearly agreed boundaries, Peer Workers purposefully share their own experiences, and through the mutual sharing and commonality of experience, they can embody hopefulness. They maintain equality with, and work alongside, others facing similar experiences and challenges in their health and wellbeing. Their work is underpinned by mutuality and reciprocity, widely recognised as core principles of peer support, with the central focus being on building relationships rather than intervention. As an autonomous member of the multi-professional team, the Peer Worker works with individuals through 1-to-1, group-based, drop-in and online/remote contact, focusing on building relationships and opportunities to learn together. They draw on their own lived experience as the foundation for supporting individuals to move towards user-led goals. Peer Workers support individuals to build skills through modelling, signposting, and advocacy. They work directly with individuals, enabling them to find their own ways of understanding their circumstances in order to move forward. Creating a safe and trusting space provides for an honest and open dialogue in which different experiences can be shared and different ways of understanding can be considered. Using knowledge from their own lived experiences of challenges, accessing support and navigating a range of services, a Peer Worker can provide purposeful and safe disclosure of their personal experiences to share and model self-help and self-management skills. They work as part of a team to provide peer support in combination with the individuals' service-led care and support plans. They complement, as well as provide alternatives to a wider package of care and support involving multiple agencies. They will report to the Team Manager/Care Co-ordinator and will have access to both line management and peer supervision that can be in either a 1-to-1 or group setting. Peer supervision opportunities are used by the Peer Worker to reflect on, evaluate and develop the way they work. Examples of peer supervision conversations include discussing issues of mutuality and equality, ethical dilemmas and when to challenge practices that exert power and control and restrict the choice of individuals. They provide intentional peer support within the context of empowerment, choice, self-determination, and self-managed care. They support individuals and carers to gain an increased sense of control within their own unique circumstances and connection to local communities. They also facilitate mutually-negotiated practical assistance, promoting the individual's awareness of social networks, activities, groups or other opportunities in which they have expressed an interest, and how these can be accessed.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with...

the wider team working alongside other professionals and has direct contact with individuals as well as their families and carers. As members of multi-professional teams, their key relationships may include;

- GP
- Practitioner Psychologist
- members of the nursing team
- housing support workers
- Psychiatrist

- Social Workers
- Occupational Therapists
- custodial and probation services
- police
- teachers

Peer Workers may also interact with:

- external partnership agencies
- local Recovery Colleges
- employment programmes
- self-help groups
- education settings
- leisure and community centres which promote social inclusion opportunities

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for...

the delivery of peer-based approaches as agreed with individuals and groups within the peer relationship. Peer Workers use intentional, experiential sharing to support individuals to identify and work toward self-defined goals. In their interactions, they draw on their lived experience of overcoming challenges and accessing resources, whilst being mindful of applying peer-based approaches when sharing those experiences, e.g. underpinning conversations with a trauma-informed approach. Through the peer relationship and principles of co-production, the individual and Peer Worker will co-develop and work towards self-defined goals. The Peer Worker supports individuals through significant changes in their life circumstances and facilitates access to different sources of support to build or re-establish trust and relationships with services. They will collate information on available services for the individuals they are supporting, such as housing, benefits entitlements and wider community resources. Using effective communication, Peer Workers support individuals to understand their rights and choices so they are in a better position to self-advocate. They challenge risk-averse workplace culture and encourage positive risk taking when supporting individuals to move towards self-defined goals. Peer Workers take an active role in promoting and modelling peer values within the service setting they work in, for example promoting a strengths-based approach or co-production. They aim to improve the organisational understanding of lived experience which can lead to wider discussions within the service setting they work in around systems change and improving staff well-being. They can be actively involved in service improvement initiatives, contributing ideas to the multi-professional team or other relevant staff committees to encourage commitment to a recovery and wellbeing-orientated culture. They also support training and development activity, which can include awareness training for staff around the role of Peer Workers and wellbeing training. Peer Workers embody the values of peer support and use peer-based approaches in all their work-related interactions. By safely sharing their lived experiences, they can help to positively challenge stereotypes that co-workers and partner agencies may have toward, for example, mental health or substance misuse. Issues they may challenge in these

situations include the stigma that can surround individuals with mental health experiences, low expectations (e.g. of workplace capability), and discriminatory practices against such individuals. Peer Workers recognise the importance of self-care. They maintain accurate records of their work as required. Where appropriate, records will be co-produced with the individual they are supporting. They are also responsible for ensuring that resources are managed effectively. They may work shifts including unsocial hours and weekends

Typical job titles

- Peer Support Worker
- Peer Mentor
- Peer Coach
- Peer Link Worker
- Peer Care Navigator
- Carer Peer Support Worker
- Lived Experience Practitioner

Entry requirements – Must have lived experience relevant to the role.

Duty	Skills	Knowledge
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish safe, supportive and respectful relationships with individuals, carers and families 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. develops and maintains a mutual and reciprocal peer relationship 2. mutually establishes the purpose and boundaries within the peer relationship 3. work effectively with difference; demonstrate respect for an individual and their family and/ or carers 4. engage and support families and carers 5. manage and prepare for the ending of the peer relationship 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the core values and principles of peer support 2. legislation related to equality, diversity & inclusion 3. the boundaries of the Peer Worker role and the importance of establishing and adhering to boundaries 4. empowerment & its role in peer support 5. the rights of carers & the organisation's families and carer strategy/carer engagement protocol 6. how to manage & prepare for endings 7. legislation and organisational policies that apply when working with the individuals being supported 8. the significance of culture & identity and how this can influence a person's experience and needs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Safely discloses personal experiences with individuals and models self-help and self-management skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. purposefully shares lived experience within the context of the peer relationship 7. establishes connections with the individual based on shared understanding of experiences 8. models self-help and self-management approaches 9. supports the individual to develop self-management and problem-solving skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. the history and value of the peer support movement 10. the purpose of sharing lived experience, and how much to share in a relevant way 11. self-help and self-management approaches 12. how to support individuals to develop self-help and self-management approaches through modelling 13. problem solving skills

<p>3. Use co-production and lived experience to support individuals and groups to identify and work toward their self-defined goals</p>	<p>10. supports individuals to identify opportunities, overcome setbacks and challenges in achieving self-defined goals</p> <p>11. supports individuals to work toward self-defined goals using peer-based approaches in 1:1, drop-in or virtual settings</p> <p>12. supports individual led activities</p> <p>13. collaboratively discusses care and support options with the person</p> <p>14. actively contributes to individuals care and goal plans with the individual</p> <p>15. sets up and work with groups to facilitate working toward individual or shared goals within the group setting</p> <p>16. supports individuals to safely access support for goals through digital platforms</p> <p>17. supports the individual during changes in their life circumstances. Changes in circumstances can include changes in accommodation, starting/ losing a job, bereavement or moving between services</p> <p>18. discusses concerns with the individual and when necessary raise any issues with an appropriate colleague or supervisor</p>	<p>14. the principles of involvement and co-production</p> <p>15. goal setting and how to support individuals to establish self-defined goals using co-production</p> <p>16. care planning, the individual's current care & support needs and where to find that information</p> <p>17. the principles of trauma informed approaches and how to apply them</p> <p>18. where to find information on care and support options available in the organisation & local community</p> <p>19. the importance & value of building links with local community organisations as sources of support</p> <p>20. the differences between guidance, advice and information</p> <p>21. how to facilitate and manage groups effectively</p> <p>22. restrictions on access to sources of information that may apply to individuals</p>
<p>4. Facilitate individuals to self-advocate and understand their rights and choices</p>	<p>19. support the individual to self-advocate and through self-determination make choices and control of the care and support options open to them</p> <p>20. supports the individual to prepare for reviews, complete applications or</p>	<p>23. the rights and choices of the individual</p> <p>24. principles of advocacy and self-advocacy</p> <p>25. how to support the individual to prepare for reviews, complete applications or referrals</p>

	referrals e.g. housing, medication review, food bank, benefits	
5. Identify, facilitate access to or signpost resources within the service and communities that promote choice, informed decision making and are aligned to personal goals	21. develops and maintains a detailed knowledge of existing sources of support 22. able to search out new resources or community projects 23. able to raise awareness and understanding of the opportunities available to people 24. acts as a community connector 25. support people to navigate through systems to access support and signposts people to resources that they can access independently relevant to their circumstances and self-defined goals	26. the need to identify gaps in sources of support and how to search out new resources 27. how to raise awareness of sources of support & connect people to the right resources for them 28. the need to signpost in a way that's most likely to be most useful and used independently by the individual 29. stigma and how this affects individuals 30. factors that may limit the individuals access to resources and how to overcome these 31. the need to follow up with the individual to determine if signpost has been relevant/would like to look for alternatives
6. Support development activities and service development	26. supports co-production and delivery of learning and development activities to raise awareness and understanding of the Peer Worker's role and remit 27. uses service development activities to tackle stigma and encourage culture change 28. gives presentations and deliver training to small groups 29. promotes the lived experience perspectives and concerns of people being supported across organisations and services	32. how to get involved in service development activities 33. the value of promoting the peer worker role 34. the value of promoting lived experience perspectives and raising the concerns of individuals being supported 35. how organisational policy influences partnership working for Peer Workers 36. how to present information to individuals and groups 37. how individuals learn and how to tailor training delivery to the audience

7. Work as part of the team and contribute to service improvement	30. contributes to the work of the team embedding peer-based approaches 31. uses meetings to facilitate understanding of the individual's perspective and their rights 32. works effectively with other organisations or services 33. positively challenges low expectations and discriminatory practice to influence system change and enhance services 34. seeks advice, support or assistance from the appropriate person when they have reached the limits of their responsibility and competence 35. able to manage own time and work priorities and use resources effectively 36. develops and maintains peer and professional networks	38. how to work effectively in a team setting 39. how to advocate for the individual 40. the value of peer and professional networks 41. the limits of responsibility and competence of the peer worker role & where to seek advice, support or assistance when these limits are reached 42. how to positively challenge low expectations 43. the action to take in line with organisational policy when discriminatory practice or behaviour is observed 44. how to manage own time, work priorities and resources effectively
8. Maintain their peer perspective by using personal development and supervision to reflect on the role	37. actively participates in team and peer supervision 38. reflects on and applies learning to practice 39. recognises the importance of self-care and takes appropriate action when required 40. participates in appraisal and personal development planning	45. the purpose & value of supervision, appraisals and personal development planning 46. reflective practice & how to use effectively 47. the importance of self-care & available support structures
9. Maintain the safety of themselves and others and encourage positive risk taking putting the best interests, needs and preferences of the individual first	41. identifies risks and contributes to required risk assessments 42. facilitates discussions with individuals and between the individual and the services they use on potential risks to	48. how to identify risk & undertake risk assessments following organisational policies and procedures 49. how to facilitate discussions on risk, acknowledge different perspectives on

	<p>their health and safety when working toward their self-defined goals</p> <p>43. promotes positive risk taking and different perspectives on risk within the team</p> <p>44. takes appropriate action where there are safeguarding concerns</p> <p>45. recognises high-risk situations and takes appropriate action</p>	<p>risk and how to promote positive risk taking.</p> <p>50. how and when to escalate concerns in regard to risk</p> <p>51. the principles of safeguarding</p> <p>52. legislation and organisational policy regarding risk and safeguarding</p>
<p>10. Communicates effectively with individuals, colleagues, and other services in the context of peer support and provides feedback to individuals</p>	<p>46. communicates effectively and appropriately with others</p> <p>47. supports people who are experiencing distress</p> <p>48. provides appropriate feedback to the individual in the peer relationship</p> <p>49. actively seeks feedback from individual or group on the support provided</p> <p>50. maintains accurate records. Where records are about the individual being supported these are co-produced</p> <p>51. applies legal and organisational requirements when dealing with confidentiality, consent and information sharing</p>	<p>53. how to communicate effectively and appropriately</p> <p>54. labelling and how this effects individuals</p> <p>55. how to support someone experiencing distress</p> <p>56. how to give feedback effectively</p> <p>57. how to seek and receive feedback</p> <p>58. the organisation's policy on record keeping</p> <p>59. the legislation and organisational requirements on confidentiality, consent & information sharing</p>

Behaviours (mindsets, attitudes or approaches needed for competence)

B1 Committed

B2 Empowering

B3 Holding hope

B4 Inclusive

B5 Innovative

B6 Mutuality