

# PEER WORKER

## Details of standard

### Occupation summary

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 through lived experience.

Peer Workers support individuals across all age groups who may be experiencing:

- severe mental distress
- mental health crises
- perinatal mental health difficulties
- long term conditions
- addiction problems
- problem gambling
- rough sleeping.

The broad purpose of this 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 trusting 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 self-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:

- GPs
- Practitioner Psychologists
- members of the nursing team
- housing support workers
- Psychiatrists
- 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 that promote social inclusion opportunities.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for 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 with the individuals they are supporting, such as housing, benefit 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 personal 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 include:

**Carer peer support worker****Lived experience practitioner****Peer care navigator****Peer coach****Peer link worker****Peer mentor****Peer support worker**

## Entry requirements

There are no formal entry requirements but apprentices must have lived experience relevant to the role.

## Occupation duties

**DUTY****KSBS**

**Duty 1** Establish safe, supportive and respectful relationships with individuals, carers and families

K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 K6 K7 K8 K9 K10 K11

S1 S2 S3 S4 S5

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

**Duty 2** Safely discloses personal experiences with individuals and models self-help and self-management skills

K12 K13 K14 K15

S6 S7 S8

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

**Duty 3** Use co-production and lived experience to support individuals and groups to identify and work toward their self-defined goals

K16 K17 K18 K19 K20 K21 K22 K23  
K24

S9 S10 S11 S12 S13 S14 S15 S16 S17

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

**Duty 4** Empower individuals to self-advocate and understand their rights and choices

K25 K26 K27

S18 S19 S20

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

**Duty 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

K28 K29 K30 K31 K32 K33

S21 S22 S23 S24

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

**Duty 6** Represent and promote peer support within development activities and service development

K34 K35 K36 K37 K38

S25 S26 S27 S28

B1 B2 B4

**Duty 7** Work as part of the team and contribute to service improvement

K39 K40 K41 K42 K43 K44 K45

S29 S30 S31 S32 S33 S34 S35

B2 B4

**Duty 8** Maintain their peer perspective by using personal development and supervision to reflect on the role

K46 K47 K48

S36 S37 S38 S39

B1 B2 B4

**Duty 9** Maintain the safety of themselves and others and encourage positive risk taking putting the best interests, needs and preferences of the individual first

K49 K50 K51 K52 K53

S40 S41 S42 S43 S44

B2 B3 B4 B5

**Duty 10** Communicates effectively with individuals, colleagues, and other services in the context of peer support and provides feedback to individuals

K54 K55 K56 K57 K58

S45 S46 S47 S48 S49 S50

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

## KSBs

### Knowledge

**K1:** The core values and principles of peer support

**K2:** Legislation related to equality, diversity & inclusion

**K3:** The way unconscious bias can affect peer relationships

**K4:** The importance of establishing and adhering to the boundaries of the peer relationship

**K5:** Empowerment and its role in peer support

**K6:** How health and socio-economic inequalities can influence the individual's experience and needs

**K7:** The rights of carers and the organisation's families and carer strategy/carer engagement protocol

**K8:** How to manage and prepare for the ending of the peer relationship

**K9:** The significance of culture and identity and how this can influence the individual's experience and needs

**K10:** Ethical dilemmas that may arise within the peer relationship

**K11:** The history and value of the peer support movement and its relationship to systems, inequalities, power and civil rights

**K12:** The purpose of sharing lived experience, and how much to share in a relevant way

**K13:** Self-help and self-management approaches that can be used by individuals being supported

**K14:** How to support individuals to develop self-help and self-management approaches through modelling

**K15:** Problem solving skills that can be used by individual's being supported

**K16:** The principles of involvement and co-production within own scope of practice

**K17:** Goal setting and how to support individuals to establish self-defined goals using co-production

- K18:** Care planning, the individual's current care and support needs and where to find that information
- K19:** How to apply trauma informed approaches in own work
- K20:** Where to find information on care and support options available and what they provide within their organisation and the local community
- K21:** The importance and value of building links with local community organisations as sources of support
- K22:** The differences between guidance, advice and information
- K23:** How to facilitate and manage groups
- K24:** Types of settings where restrictions on access to sources of information may apply to individuals
- K25:** The rights and choices of the individual within the context of their circumstances
- K26:** The importance of advocacy and self-advocacy in relation to the individual being supported
- K27:** How to support the individual to prepare for reviews, complete applications and referrals
- K28:** The importance of maintaining up to date knowledge of existing resources, identifying gaps in sources of support and how to search out new resources
- K29:** How to raise awareness of the sources of support available and connecting individual's to the right resources for their needs
- K30:** The importance of signposting in ways that are the most likely to be used independently by the individual
- K31:** How stigma and labelling can affect individuals
- K32:** Factors that may limit an individual's access to resources and how to overcome these
- K33:** The importance of following up with an individual to determine if signposting has met their needs or whether alternatives should be sought
- K34:** How to get involved in service development activities to provide a peer perspective
- K35:** The value of promoting the peer worker role to encourage understanding and acceptance of the role
- K36:** The value of promoting lived experience perspectives and raising the concerns of individuals being supported
- K37:** How to present information to individuals and groups
- K38:** How individuals learn and how to tailor training delivery to the audience
- K39:** How to work effectively in a team setting
- K40:** How to promote the service user perspective within the team

**K41:** The value of peer and professional networks

**K42:** The limits of responsibility and competence of the peer worker role and where to seek advice, support or assistance when these limits are reached

**K43:** How to positively challenge an individual or organisation's low expectations of the individuals being supported

**K44:** The action to take in line with organisational policy when discriminatory practice or behaviour is observed

**K45:** How to manage own time, work priorities and resources effectively

**K46:** The purpose and value of supervision, appraisals and personal development planning

**K47:** Reflective practice how to use it effectively

**K48:** The importance of self-care and available support structures

**K49:** How to identify risk and undertake risk assessments following organisational policies and procedures

**K50:** How to facilitate discussions on risk, acknowledge different perspectives on risk, promote positive risk taking and how and when to escalate concerns regarding risk

**K51:** The principles of safeguarding

**K52:** Legislation and organisational policy regarding risk and safeguarding

**K53:** How to communicate with the individuals they support and the wider multi-disciplinary team

**K54:** How to create and hold a safe space with someone experiencing distress

**K55:** How to give feedback to the individuals being supported

**K56:** How to seek and receive feedback from the individuals they support and the wider multi-disciplinary team

**K57:** The organisation's policy on record keeping

**K58:** Legislation and organisational requirements on confidentiality, consent and information sharing

## Skills

**S1:** Develop and maintain mutual and reciprocal peer relationships

**S2:** Mutually establish the purpose and boundaries within the peer relationship

**S3:** Engage with and support families and carers

**S4:** Manage and prepare for the ending of the peer relationship

**S5:** Purposefully share lived experience within the context of the peer relationship

- S6:** Establish connections with the individual based on shared understanding of experiences
- S7:** Model self-help and self-management approaches for the individual they are supporting
- S8:** Support the individual to develop self-management and problem-solving skills
- S9:** Support individuals to identify opportunities and overcome setbacks and challenges when trying to achieve self-defined goals
- S10:** Support individuals to work toward self-defined goals using peer-based approaches in 1-to-1, drop-in or virtual settings
- S11:** Support individual-led activities
- S12:** Collaboratively discuss care and support options with the individual
- S13:** Actively contributes to an individual's care and goal plans with the individual
- S14:** Sets up and work with groups to facilitate working toward individual or shared goals within the group setting
- S15:** Support individuals to safely access support for their goals through digital platforms
- S16:** Support the individual during changes in their life circumstances
- S17:** Discuss concerns with the individual and when necessary raise any issues with an appropriate colleague or supervisor
- S18:** Support the individual to self-advocate and through self-determination, make choices and control the care and support options open to them
- S19:** Signpost to advocacy services
- S20:** Support the individual to prepare for reviews and complete applications or referrals, e.g. housing, medication review, food bank, benefits
- S21:** Identify new resources or community projects that could be accessed by individuals being supported
- S22:** Raise awareness and understanding of the opportunities available to the individuals being supported
- S23:** Act as a community connector to build links with community resources
- S24:** Support individuals to navigate through systems to access support, signposting resources relevant to their circumstances and self-defined goals that they can access independently
- S25:** Support co-production and delivery of learning and development activities to raise awareness and understanding of the Peer Worker's role and remit
- S26:** Use service development activities to tackle stigma and labelling to encourage culture change
- S27:** Give presentations and deliver training to small groups

- S28:** Promote the lived experience perspectives and concerns of the individual being supported across own workplace and other organisations and services
- S29:** Promote and embed peer-based approaches in teams and services with which they work
- S30:** Use meetings with other multi-disciplinary team members to facilitate understanding of the individual's perspective and their rights
- S31:** Work collaboratively with the multi-disciplinary team and other organisations or services
- S32:** Positively challenge low expectations and discriminatory practice to influence system change and enhance services
- S33:** Seek advice, support or assistance from the appropriate person when the limits of own responsibility and competence has been reached
- S34:** Manage own time and work priorities, using resources effectively
- S35:** Develop and maintain peer and professional networks
- S36:** Actively participate in team and peer supervision
- S37:** Reflect on and applies learning to practice
- S38:** Recognise the importance of self-care, taking appropriate action when required
- S39:** Participate in appraisal, personal development planning and continuous professional development
- S40:** Identify risks and contribute to required risk assessments
- S41:** Facilitate discussions with individuals and between the individual and the services they use on potential risks to their health and safety when working toward their self-defined goals
- S42:** Promote positive risk taking and different perspectives on risk within the team
- S43:** Take action in line with organisational policy where there are safeguarding concerns
- S44:** Recognise high-risk situations and takes action in line with organisational policy
- S45:** Adapt their communication to meet the needs of others
- S46:** Support individual's who are experiencing distress
- S47:** Provide relevant and supportive feedback to the individual in the peer relationship
- S48:** Actively seek feedback from individuals or groups on the support provided
- S49:** Maintain accurate records, ensuring where records are about the individual being supported, these are co-produced
- S50:** Follow legal and organisational requirements when dealing with confidentiality, consent and information sharing

## Behaviours

**B1:** Through sharing mutual experiences establishes the peer relationship and inspires hope

**B2:** Acknowledges diversity of experiences and works in an inclusive way

**B3:** Develops and shares a commonality of mutual experience and establishes equality within the peer relationship

**B4:** Compassionate, showing respect and kindness to self and others

**B5:** Explores choices in a non-directive and non-judgemental way with the individual being supported and empowers them to come to their own decisions

## Qualifications

### English & Maths

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

## Additional details

### Occupational Level:

3

### Duration (months):

15

### Review

This apprenticeship standard will be reviewed after three years

## Version log

VERSION	CHANGE DETAIL	EARLIEST START DATE	LATEST START DATE	LATEST END DATE
		Not set	Not set	Not set