

Peer Worker Apprenticeship Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes which are designed to help employers train people for specific job roles. At the same time, apprentices get a paying job with valuable training while they work towards a nationally recognised apprenticeship standard or framework.

What is a Peer Worker?

Peer Workers are people who have lived experience of challenges themselves. They use these experiences and empathy to support other people and their families. Peer Workers join other members of someone's care team to help support their wellbeing.

Who can do an apprenticeship?

Anyone in England aged 16 years old and above, whether employed or leaving school, can do an apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit however where there is a statutory or professional body requirement for people in a particular role to be aged 18 or over, a minimum age limit would apply. For the Peer Worker apprenticeship, people will need to demonstrate that they have previous lived experience relevant to the role.

Why was the Peer Worker Apprenticeship developed?

A group of employers came together to define an apprenticeship standard for Peer Workers who are employed in a variety of work settings including health, justice and the third sector. These employers agreed that the time was right to agree an apprenticeship standard that would provide a reference for employers of Peer Workers, can inform job descriptions, gives recognition as an occupation in the same way as other employees in the sectors and can be a steppingstone into a career path for those who want to progress.

The employers and other stakeholders involved in developing the apprenticeship recognise that there are many different approaches to peer support and are not imposing any model on any employer, agency, or representative group. Similarly, no employer is obliged to adopt the apprenticeship standard for their Peer Workers.

Were Peer Workers involved in the development of the apprenticeship?

Peer Workers were actively involved in drafting the proposal, they co-wrote the skills, knowledge, and behaviours and there are Peer Workers from the employers on the Trailblazer group. The Trailblazer group has lobbied for and supported the involvement of Peer Workers with lived experience at every level.

What is a Trailblazer group?

Trailblazer groups are responsible for developing apprenticeships. They need to remain active once their apprenticeship is approved for delivery, to respond to any [change requests](#). The role of a trailblazer group is to:

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- develop a new apprenticeship for an occupation. This involves writing the [occupational](#) and [end-point assessment \(EPA\) plan](#), and collating funding evidence to inform our [funding band recommendation](#), for an agreed [occupation proposal](#)
- revise the apprenticeship as needed. This may result from a [route review](#) or [change request](#)

Is the HEE Mental Health Peer Support Worker competence framework the same as the apprenticeship?

No, the competence framework is aimed specially at Mental Health PSW's; the apprenticeship is different in that it is aimed at a variety of Peer Workers from across the health and justice sectors.

The length of the training is also different, the competence framework is typically 10 days training, and the apprenticeship is 15 months in duration.

Could Peer Workers do the competence framework and then progress to the apprenticeship?

Yes, the competence framework provides standard competencies for MH PSW's and would allow for progression on completion of the framework to the peer worker apprenticeship, should the service of individual want to. Learners would probably be able to use some of their learning from the competence framework as evidence in the apprenticeship.

Are there other training routes for Peer Workers?

In addition the HEE MH competence framework and the Peer Worker Apprenticeship there are also other frameworks which offer different approaches, such as:

- peer-led approaches to peer support (Intentional Peer Support, Hearing Voices approach)
- in-house trainings developed by employers
- co-produced open-source training
- or approaches to peer mentoring, befriending or peer coaching

Will there be support and guidance available about the apprenticeship?

Yes, the national Talent for Care Team and Trailblazer group will be developing ways to guide colleagues in understanding and implementing the apprenticeship, this will include:

- Employer scoping
- Small and large provider meet and greets / engagement sessions
- Development of national guidance material
- Targeted support both regionally and nationally
- Development of a national procurement framework

Where can I find more information?

You can find the draft standard [here](#)

You can also find lots of useful information about apprenticeships on our website, where you will find a wide range of apprenticeships, case studies, resources and all the latest apprenticeship news - <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>

Employer Questions

How much should I pay Peer Worker apprentices?

Employers decide the salary they pay apprentices but must not pay below the apprentice minimum wage which is set by the Government. Details of the minimum pay and conditions for apprentices can be seen [here](#)

Who pays for the apprentice's salary?

Employers pay the salary of the apprentices, and the government pays for the training and assessment. The amount of government funding varies depending on whether the employer is a levy payer or non-levy payer. Details can be seen [here](#)

Can I use apprenticeship levy funding to pay for my apprentice's salary?

Apprenticeship levy, reservations and transfers do not cover salary costs so your organisation will need to fund the apprentice's salary.

Can I recruit part time apprentices?

Yes, the apprenticeship scheme can be undertaken on a part time basis if this is offered by the employer. If an apprentice works less than full time, the apprenticeship duration will be extended accordingly

On completion of the apprenticeship should I promote my Peer Workers into more senior roles?

There is no expectation that employers must promote Peer Workers into more senior roles once they achieve the apprenticeship, for some staff the apprenticeship will be accredited academic recognition of their current level of practice and expertise and they will continue in their current role and pay band.

There will be others who wish to progress, and the apprenticeship will support career progression into peer supervisor and leadership roles. You therefore may want to consider how the apprenticeship could form part of a career pathway within your organisation and the types of roles this would support.

What kinds of roles can Peer Workers progress into?

The apprenticeship can be a first step in a career path for those who want to progress. Career progression opportunities may include:

- peer leadership roles such as Peer Lead, Peer Support Development Workers, Peer Coordinator, Lead Peer Supervisor
- training and development
- coaching
- health and social care professions

How will application processes allow people from more diverse backgrounds equity of consideration when applying?

It is so important to ensure that for each course appropriate students are recruited and that this is fair process. The training providers will work collaboratively on the recruitment criteria to ensure it is appropriate to widening participation.

How can I access apprenticeship funding?

All employers with a pay bill of over £3 million each year pay the apprenticeship levy and the levy can only be spent on apprenticeship training. Your organisation's apprenticeship lead, who normally works within the training or HR departments, will be able to help you access the apprenticeship levy and start apprentices on programmes. If your organisation does not have an apprenticeship lead you can find out more about apprenticeship funding [here](#)

My organisation doesn't pay the apprenticeship levy, how can I access funding?

If an organisation does not pay the apprenticeship levy it can still access government funding for apprenticeships. It can either:

1. Reserve government co-investment: organisations can reserve funding, where the government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%.
2. Levy Transfers: levy paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship.

What is RoATP?

The register of apprenticeship training providers (RoATP) is a list of organisations that are eligible to receive government funding to train apprentices. Training providers that have met these conditions will be invited to join the register. It is not possible to apply directly. [Learn more about the register of apprenticeship training providers](#) on GOV.UK

The training provider I want to use isn't listed on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), will they be able to deliver the apprenticeship?

As part of the procurement process, we will be working with existing peer support training providers to explore how they can deliver the apprenticeship. For some this may mean registering on RoATP and others may decide to enter subcontracting and delivery partnerships with existing training providers already registered on RoATP.

Apprentice Questions

What is the duration of the apprenticeship?

All apprenticeships must be no less than 12 months if the apprentice is employed full time. If the apprentice is employed part time the apprenticeship is extended to take account of this.

What is 20% off the job?

Apprentices must also spend 20% of their time engaged in off-the-job learning. The off-the-job learning must take place within the apprentices normal contracted hours. For Peer Workers the off the job learning must take place with a training provider or FE college.

Who decides what is taught on the apprenticeship?

The apprenticeship standard will set out the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are needed to be an occupationally competent Peer Worker. Training providers then design the curriculum content to ensure the apprentices have the required skills and knowledge to pass the end point assessment. Apprentices where they don't already hold English and Maths qualifications are also required to complete these.

How will I be assessed?

All apprentices must undertake an End Point Assessment to determine whether they have met the standard set out in the apprenticeship. When published the end point assessment plan will outline the assessment methods for the apprenticeship.

What qualification will the I receive on completion?

On completion of the apprenticeship the learners will achieve a Level 3 Certificate from Institute of Apprenticeships, this is the equivalent to two A-levels. Learners will also obtain Functional Skills in Maths and English Level 2 (if they do not already hold GCSE grades A-C or equivalent).

Is the English & Maths requirement a pre-requisite or would I do this as part of the apprenticeship?

No, the apprenticeship standard will not set any academic entry requirements. If apprentices don't already have English and Maths at the appropriate level, they will do this as part of the apprenticeship. All apprentices must have achieved the required English and Maths qualifications prior to undertaking the End Point Assessment.

Could I be able to do the apprenticeship if I already have a level 3 qualification?

Yes, if the apprenticeship involves substantial new learning and is still a minimum of 12 months in duration. The apprenticeship would also be open to those who have higher qualifications if it would give them substantial new learning.

Which training providers offer the Peer Support Worker apprenticeship and when will the courses start?

The apprenticeship is not yet ready for delivery. Once the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education have approved the apprenticeship, HEE will support the implementation by a national tendering exercise. The aim of the exercise will be to source national and regional training providers who will be able to deliver high quality apprenticeship education.

Following the procurement, a full list of training providers will be published.