

Peer support worker

Peer support workers are people who use their lived experience of mental health problems to support others.

You'll use your own experience and empathy to help people with mental health problems and their families. Peer support workers join a patient's care team to help provide support and inspiration for recovery.

Male support worker talking to female client

Life as a peer support worker

Peer support worker (sometimes called peer worker) is a new role being developed as part of the Government's commitment to increasing mental health and wellbeing support.

You'll work with a range of people living with mental health problems, either in hospital or in the community. They will all be different, but what will connect you with them is your own experience of living with mental health problems.

You'll work as part of a team including nurses, social workers, therapists and doctors. In some services, you may also work alongside people's carers, families and friends.

Your exact role will depend on the type of service you're based in, but could include:

- working one to one with service users or patients
- helping people with mental health problems to develop goals and recovery plans
- supporting people in care planning
- helping people engage with activities
- supporting group work

The training programme focuses on providing peer support in formal settings that deliver NHS-funded care, such as NHS trusts or independent providers. This could include community, crisis, inpatient, criminal justice and recovery services.

Once trained, you could also work in more informal settings, such as local drop-in centres and cafes, for example, with organisations such as charities and community groups.

You will be provided with ongoing supervision to help you engage in self-reflection, seek and respond to feedback, and develop your professional knowledge and skills.

Kelli Rush

Community lived experience practitioner

The best part of my day is working with the people who use our services and their family, friends and loved ones. I really understand the difficulties they're dealing with on a daily basis.

[Read Kelli's story](#) ^[1]



How much can I earn?

If you're employed by the NHS, you'll be on a national pay and conditions system called [Agenda for Change](#) ^[2] (AfC ^[3]).

There are nine pay bands and as a peer support worker you'll usually be paid at band 3 or 4 with opportunities to progress with experience. Terms and conditions can vary if you are employed outside the NHS.

It is also possible to be a voluntary peer support worker.

You'll undertake a training programme delivered by other people with lived experience.

How about the benefits?

As a peer support worker, you can:

- make a difference
- use your own experience to do something positive for others
- work flexible and part-time hours

If you're employed by the NHS, you'll also have good holiday entitlement and access to:

- an excellent pension scheme
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

Your own experience is your greatest asset in this role, but in order to help other people, you'll need a range of skills, including:

- an understanding of your personal recovery journey and being able to use your lived experience in a positive and appropriate way to help others
- a keen awareness of people and their behaviour
- the ability to empathise with others and build positive relationships
- excellent communication skills and the ability to relate to a wide range of people
- the ability to work on your own as well as in consultation with others
- a responsible, professional approach, respecting the confidentiality of patients
- emotional resilience and maturity
- self-awareness
- an openness to addressing issues of prejudice and oppression

You'll also need to be able to demonstrate the [values of the NHS Constitution](#) [4].

Entry requirements

The key elements to being a peer support worker are:

- having relevant lived experience for the service you wish to work in
- wanting to support others going through similar experiences
- being willing and able to receive training on how to work with people to do this

You will also need good communication skills – both written and verbal – in your work with patients and service users.

How to become a peer support worker

To help you develop the skills you need to be a peer support worker, you'll undertake a training programme delivered by other people with lived experience, with support from the NHS. You'll also be provided with on-the-job training as appropriate.

Look for vacancies on the [NHS Jobs website](#) [5]. Some peer support worker apprenticeships are available and you can see some current vacancies below.

Where a career as a peer support worker can take you

You'll be encouraged to develop your career, with training in management or facilitation skills. With experience, you could go on to hold a senior peer support position or undertake further training in one of the other psychological professions, such as psychological wellbeing practitioner.

It's important to note that a two-year psychological professions funding rule policy was implemented on 1 April 2022. This means that if you start NHS-funded psychological professions training from April 2022, you won't be eligible for NHS funding for further psychological profession training for two years from the expected completion date of your first training, where it would lead to a change in your job role.

Visit the [funding for psychological professions training programmes web page](#) [6] for more information about NHS funding.??

- **Live vacancies**

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

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- **Peer Support Worker**

Shrewsbury, SY3 8DS

Salary:

£24937.00 to £26598.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Peer Support Worker job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[7]

- **Peer Support Worker**

Chelmsford, CM1 7LF

Salary:

£24937.00 to £26598.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Peer Support Worker job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[8]

- **Peer Support Worker**

Rochdale, OL12 9RD

Salary:

£24937.00 to £26598.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Pennine Care NHS FT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Peer Support Worker job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[9]

- **Peer Support Worker - Medway**

Canterbury, CT17EE

Salary:

£23910.00 to £24877.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mental Health Matters

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Peer Support Worker - Medway job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[10]

- **Clinical Lead- Peer Supported Open Dialogue**

Canterbury, CT1 3HH

Salary:

£47810.00 to £54710.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Lead- Peer Supported Open Dialogue job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[11]

- **Senior Peer Support Apprentice - South Oxfordshire PCMHT**

Wantage, OX12 9YN

Salary:

£27485.00 to £30162.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxford Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Peer Support Apprentice - South Oxfordshire PCMHT job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[12]

- **Home Treatment Team Peer Support Worker (PSW)**

Beckenham. Kent, BR3 3BX

Salary:

£31081.00 to £33665.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Home Treatment Team Peer Support Worker \(PSW\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[13]

○ **Peer Support Worker - Younger Adults (18-25)**

Middlesbrough, TS4 2QX

Salary:

£27661.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Teesside Mind Ltd

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Peer Support Worker - Younger Adults \(18-25\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[14]

○ **Peer Support Worker (18-month fixed term contract)**

Portsmouth, PO1 4JT

Salary:

£24625.00 to £25674.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Peer Support Worker \(18-month fixed term contract\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[15]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Education mental health practitioner](#) ^[16]
- [Children's wellbeing practitioner](#) ^[17]
- [Employment specialist](#) ^[18]
- [Support, time and recovery worker](#) ^[19]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles-psychological-therapies/peer-support-worker?field_field_role=291&page=2

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[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles-psychological-therapies/peer-support-worker/real-life-story-kelli-rush> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates/agenda-change-pay-rates> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-constitution> [5] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> [6] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/mental-health/psychological-professions/nhs-funding-psychological-professions-training-programmes> [7] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9301-25-0925> [8] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9364-25-0793> [9] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9311-25-0567> [10]

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