

Durham Community Peer Practitioner Application FAQs

Do you have any general advice on writing job applications?

To shortlist applications for invitation to our recruitment days or an interview, we look at which applications most meet the 'person specification' in the job description. Our general advice is to look at the person specification and then demonstrate in the application that you meet as much of it as you possibly can.

If you believe you don't meet, or are unsure whether you do meet, an essential criteria on the person specification then we would encourage you to apply and explain in your application if there are reasons why you could be treated as meeting or partially meeting the criteria, along with telling us what else you would bring to the role.

I don't have lived experience of mental health challenges and secondary (or tertiary) mental health services – can I apply?

Peer support roles are about creating jobs which explicitly value the expertise that people develop through lived experience of mental health challenges and services. If we can't clearly see in your application that you have your own lived experience of mental health challenges and receiving secondary (or tertiary) mental health services, then you will not be shortlisted for this role as you will not have demonstrated that you fulfil the essential criteria of the post. There are other options available to you for working in the Trust if you wish to support others but do not have this essential criteria required for this role. Find out more at <https://www.tevv.nhs.uk/careers/working-for-us/>.

I'm not sure if I've accessed secondary (or tertiary) mental health services?

Here are some examples of things which are secondary (or tertiary) mental health services. You don't need to have accessed all types of services, just one or more examples, and we understand that in some cases this care may have been provided by equivalent providers outside of NHS services:

- Have had an admission to a mental health hospital (either involuntary or voluntary)
- Have been an outpatient in a community mental health team
- Have been referred to a psychiatrist

Things like seeing your GP for mental health support or using IAPT services aren't usually considered secondary (or tertiary) mental health services.

I have lived experience as the carer of someone who has lived experience of mental health challenges and secondary mental health services - can I apply?

We recognise that many people are both carers and face their own mental health challenges for which they personally have used mental health services. We welcome applications from those individuals.

For those who identify as carers but haven't used mental health services themselves we can't shortlist you for these specific roles. We do though recognise and value the expertise that come with having been a carer of someone in mental health services. We hope to develop more roles that are specifically for those with these experiences in future.

There are parts of the person specification that say 'within agreed timescale'. I don't have these, what do I do?

Please don't worry about not meeting the criteria in the person specification where it also says 'within the agreed timescale'. The person specification explains both what we would like people to bring to the role and what we would need them to learn in the role to fulfil their job requirements. Where there are elements that we expect people will learn in the role we state 'within agreed timescale' in the person specification. They will be gained through training given after getting the role, or through on the job learning. Successfully completing this learning will be linked to your terms and conditions of employment if successful. Our advice would be to say in the application if you already have the items asked for.

How many hours are these roles for per week and when will I be expected to do my hours?

The number of hours for each role is negotiable between 22.5 and 37.5 hours. The hours would normally be worked for up to 7.5 hours per day between 9am to 5pm on Mon-Fri.

Successful applicants may (except when on annual leave) be required to work shift patterns which allow them to attend a weekly team meeting (day tbc dependant on team), and will be required to attend a meeting which takes place once a month (usually on a Wednesday).

If a slight adjustment to how many hours you work or a particular working pattern would make a big difference to you please do speak to us about this. We can also consider requests for job share.

Where will I be working?

These roles are located across the Durham Community Mental Health Transformation area footprint to work into the hubs emerging across the region. The service is a developing service and an initial base will be discussed at appointment, with the possibility this may change as the service and funding for the roles develops.

Do you have any advice for people without present or previous employers as references?

For new appointments outside of the NHS, we need to seek the necessary references to validate a period of three consecutive years of continuous employment or training immediately prior to the application being made. We appreciate that there may be applicants who apply for Peer Worker roles, who cannot provide a reference from a previous employer. For example this may be because you have never worked before, or have not worked for some considerable time, or the previous employer has ceased trading. In such cases, we would recommend that successful candidates seek a reference from their last known employer or somewhere where you have more recently volunteered, studied or attended. We would also ask that you source additional character or personal references in order to validate the required three year period. It may be helpful to some applicants to know that we will not request references until after a successful candidate has been given a conditional offer of employment. We will then try to work with successful applicants to find a way that they can provide acceptable references.

- **Applications from people who are currently using mental health services are welcomed. If you are presently in secondary services in TEWV and would like help with your application TEWVs IPS service can support you with this. Contact them at: tewv.ips@nhs.net**
- **If you have further questions related to the peer role you are applying for please contact Katy Hennon at Katy.Hennon@nhs.net or 07342 084334 with informal enquiries**