



PLT Link Worker

Job Description

Reporting to: Senior MH Link Worker

Location: Based at: 51 John Street, Sunderland, SR1 1QN

The post holder will be required to work flexibly from a variety of locations throughout Sunderland, including SCS office base, GP surgeries, Mental Health Hubs and other community venues.

Hours: Full time = 37.5 hours

The post holder will be entitled to 30 days annual leave at normal salary rate or pro rata for part of a year. In addition, entitlement to all statutory public holidays will be given at a normal salary rate.

Salary: Agenda for Change band 5 comparable (currently £29,970)

General Description:

The post holder will be employed on a fixed term contract of one year which will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months. As this is a pilot project, continuing employment is subject to obtaining ongoing project related funding.

The post holder will work as a link worker in a new pilot project, set within a unique independent mental health charity, which is acknowledged for its contribution to the community by mental health professionals, health practitioners and local and regional voluntary and statutory agencies.

This new project will provide support to meet the needs of people with mental health problems in Sunderland who present at the Emergency Department at Sunderland Royal Hospital. The project will use a holistic, person centred

approach to collaboratively supportive people to manage emotional, social and environmental stressors within a recovery-based approach.

This intervention will:

- be personalised, offering flexibility to meet a range of needs in the short term
- act as a bridge between the Emergency Department, Psychiatric Liaison Team and the Primary Care Networks with the aim of reducing potential distress for the patient and reduce future incidents requiring ED visits.
- act as a wraparound provision for people struggling to engage/access primary care/alternative services, who need additional non-clinical support.
- connect people into local community services that can help to bolster their wellbeing, build confidence and resilience as well as improve outcomes for people engaging in support.

The intervention will initially target people who:

- Have presented at the Emergency Department, where there are additional needs affecting their mental health which may be impacting on their ability to engage in Primary Care e.g. housing, finance, domestic violence, substance misuse. For this cohort, the intervention will provide short term emotional and practical support and will actively support people to access relevant specialist services, going beyond simple sign posting. This may include accompanying people to appointments and following up if they do not attend. This may be sufficient to resolve their mental health issues on its own, or it may enable that person to then access talking therapies or other mental health services.
- Have accessed ED and require low-intensity supportive interventions within the community around their mental health such as emotional support or developing coping strategies to facilitate engagement with Primary Care teams.
- Have accessed ED and make frequent repeated visits due to issues around emotional or practical difficulties which are ongoing. For this cohort, link workers will make contact with the patient, to see what additional support they may need, build relationships with them and thus be able to intervene early, should their mental health worsen. In this case, building relationships will allow a person centered understanding of that individual's support needs, what their triggers may be and what support plan needs to be put into place, enabling the patient to access support from their PCN.

Future enhancements to the project can include supporting people who:

- present at ED and are successfully accessing PCN but who are identified as needing additional non-clinical support that primary care may not have the capacity to provide.
- present at ED and are accessing secondary care mental health services, who need additional non-clinical support that secondary care services may not have the capacity to provide.

This activity is envisaged as additional emotional and practical support to wrap around existing mental health and primary care services, to support people to engage in or be retained in treatment, prevent deterioration, maximising treatment outcomes and supporting independence. It is **NOT** intended to operate as a crisis service or an alternative to crisis services, but rather as a bridge to support people to access the most appropriate service for their needs. It is not envisaged as a clinical intervention and would not take on care planning or case management functions.

The post holder will work with individuals identified by clinical staff within PLT or primary care, who will direct individuals to the link worker for additional, non-clinical support.

A holistic, person centred plan will be developed between the link worker and individual to enable the link worker to provide support and guidance with a focus of “what matters to me” approaches. This may include direct emotional or practical support, signposting, providing self-help materials, a check in system, identifying a suitable package of specific support and making any necessary onward referrals.

The post holder will work with frequent attenders to PLT through attending formulation sessions/MDT to identify any themes and to support implementation of any plans to prevent re attendance at SRH.

The post holder will be supported by regular operational line management provided by the Senior MH Link Worker as well as appropriate clinical supervision.

To allow flexibility and to respond to client need, services may be delivered from the PCN bases as well as SCS city base and other community venues in Sunderland such as the Mental Health Hubs. The post holder will be called upon to use a personal means of transport while engaged in the work of the service for which travel expenses will be available.

Main Responsibilities:

The post holder will:

- Evaluate potential client needs following assessment from PLT and PCN staff for clients referred to the service in order to determine suitable support measures
- Provide non-clinical practical and emotional support to clients referred to the service.
- Provide education and reassurance regarding mental health presentations and treatment options.
- Take a holistic and system focussed view of need.

- Provide direct emotional and psychoeducational support for a range of issues which may include mental health issues or practical issues.
- Provide one off or short-term emotional support.
- Provide signposting and guidance to a range of community-based services that may be of use to clients.
- Provide signposting / referral / support into specialist services where needed.
- Complete check in calls with clients who are waiting to access other services.
- Provide self-help materials to clients or direct them to online resources.
- Encourage and support clients using the service, to enable them to identify, address and manage the issues and associated problems that are affecting their mental and emotional well-being.
- Make effective use of outcome measures to promote wellbeing for clients and contribute to achievement of service targets.
- Ensure that the service is accessible to the clients who need it, which will involve providing support face to face, by telephone or secure video platform and will involve working from a variety of locations across the city.
- Liaise and work in partnership with other agencies to ensure clients are referred on to appropriate services to receive the most effective intervention for their needs.
- Deliver information and awareness of the service and the role of a link worker to relevant staff within ED, PCN and community services.
- Attend MDT meetings when required.
- Complete accurate, appropriate, and timely case notes using an electronic case management system.
- Observe Sunderland Counselling Service written procedures and policies at all times.
- Engage in regular line management and clinical supervision sessions.
- Undertake training as determined by the service to ensure skills are up to date and relevant.
- Working with the larger team within Sunderland Counselling Service, participate in team development, and training.
- Be accountable for personal conduct and professional standards of practice in relation to all relevant legislation and statutory obligations, including the Children Act, Family Law Act, Health and Safety at Work, Equal Opportunities, local Safeguarding procedures and all Sunderland Counselling Service policies and procedures.
- Contribute to the further development and sustainability of the service.
- Work flexibly, effectively, and creatively which may include some evening work as service needs require.
- Monitor and evaluate service provision, providing statistics and other information to the Senior MH Link Worker and others as required.

- Professionally represent Sunderland Counselling Service in all dealings with external agencies.
- Undertake any other duties as required within the spirit of the post.



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Person Specification

	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Desirable</u>	<u>Assessment Method</u>
Qualifications	<p>Educated to A level standard or equivalent.</p> <p>Relevant qualification e.g. Level 3 Counselling skills, NVQ level 3 in Social Care, Advice & Guidance qualification, social prescribing qualification.</p> <p>Demonstrable commitment to personal and professional development.</p>	<p>Relevant degree e.g. psychology.</p> <p>Training in risk assessment and assessments of client support needs.</p> <p>Mental health training / qualification.</p> <p>Safeguarding training</p>	Application Form.
Experience	<p>Experience of supporting people with mental health difficulties either in a paid or voluntary capacity.</p> <p>Experience of carrying out assessments of client support needs, including risk assessments.</p> <p>Experience of working in a relevant community setting.</p> <p>Experience of accurately collecting and recording information and data whilst maintaining confidentiality.</p> <p>Experience of working collaboratively with different organisations, building trust, confidence and partnerships.</p>	<p>Experience of using outcomes measures.</p> <p>Experience of using electronic case management systems such as IAPTus or EMIS</p> <p>Experience in supporting individuals who may be experiencing acute distress or crisis.</p>	Application Form and Interview.

Skills & Competencies	<p>Ability to actively listen, empathise with people and provide non-judgemental support.</p> <p>Ability to create, sustain and disengage from productive interpersonal relationships, working within the boundaries of the role.</p> <p>Ability to appropriately advocate for a client's needs.</p> <p>Ability to handle others' emotions without becoming personally involved in them.</p> <p>Ability to identify risk to self and others, identifying and reporting safeguarding incidents.</p> <p>Understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Ability to make good use of line management, supervisory and support processes.</p> <p>Ability to evaluate effectiveness of interventions at an individual and project level.</p> <p>Ability to work in an unsupervised area and share information where appropriate, with the relevant personnel.</p> <p>Ability to challenge poor practice and identify and work to best practice standards.</p> <p>Ability to take responsibility for identifying and meeting own learning and development needs.</p> <p>Ability to evaluate and put in place the effect of training.</p>	<p>Willingness to contribute to and assist in the development of strategies that will make the service provision accessible to all clients.</p>	<p>Application Form and Interview.</p>
Knowledge	<p>Knowledge and understanding of emotional distress, mental wellbeing, and mental ill health</p>	<p>Understanding of talking therapies and specialist mental health services and</p>	<p>Interview.</p>

	<p>and how these can impact a person.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of relevant support services available in Sunderland.</p> <p>Sound knowledge of the associated issues facing the client group, including relevant legislative frameworks in relation to mental health, safeguarding and child protection.</p>	<p>services which may be relevant to a client's presentation.</p> <p>Understanding of Sunderland Primary Care Network.</p> <p>Knowledge of medication used in treating mental health problems.</p> <p>Knowledge of health and social care terminology.</p>	
Other Requirements	<p>Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office applications.</p> <p>High level of enthusiasm and motivation.</p> <p>Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including telephone skills.</p> <p>Able to write clear reports and letters.</p> <p>Ability to lone work as well as within a team and foster good working relationships.</p> <p>Ability to work under pressure.</p> <p>Ability to work within the boundaries of the role and within own competencies.</p> <p>Regard for others and respect for individual rights of autonomy and confidentiality.</p>	<p>Full clean driving license and use of car.</p> <p>Fluent in languages other than English.</p>	<p>Application form.</p> <p>Interview.</p>