



FIRST CONTACT CLINICAL
ENABLING HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Link Worker Competency Framework

FIRST CONTACT CLINICAL

27 November 2019

Mandatory Requirements

Due to the key responsibilities of a Link Worker role some requirements are mandatory.

Link Worker, Link Worker Coach and Psychosocial Link Worker

- Full driving license, access to own transport and ability to travel across the locality on a regular basis
- Willingness to visit people in their own homes, including lone-working where appropriate
- Meet DBS reference standards and have a clear criminal record, in line with the law on spent convictions

Practitioner Skills

Link Workers require competences to deliver interventions to change lifestyle behaviours that affect health. Link Workers are required to take a holistic approach which supports a person's choices, wishes and needs as far as possible, enabling them to be in control of their own life. "What matters to you?" Our framework is designed to support a tiered approach to interventions for behaviour change, across different behaviours, to different people and groups of people.

Link Worker

- Demonstrate conversations skills adhering to an evidence-based framework
- Ability to engage an individual by listening and empathising with them, adapting your communication method to meet their preferences and needs (ENGAGE)
- Ability to provide person centred support, helping individuals identify and utilise their own strengths and resources to achieve their wellbeing goals (EVOKE)
- Manage differing agendas and expectations and maintain focus within a session (FOCUS)
- Co-develop a personalised support plan with the individual that includes realistic goals, milestones and review points (PLAN)
- Work within and maintain clear boundaries of the role
- Maintain a calm and sensitive approach when dealing with people in distress
- Be able to close a professional relationship with individuals

- Recognise the symptoms and behaviours indicating a mental health crisis and have the ability to seek appropriate support
- Understand the importance of brief advice to promote healthy lifestyles and behaviours including an awareness of screening and immunisation programmes
- Perform a basic holistic assessment of an individual's needs, including identifying the wider determinants and factors impacting on the individual's wellbeing and barriers to change, face to face or over the telephone
- Monitor progress and outcomes to evaluate impact using agreed tools including PAM and WEMWBS
- Be able to manage your own caseload of individuals

Link Worker Coach

(in addition to the above)

- Demonstrate active listening with individuals to enable the building of trust and therapeutic relationship
- Be able to adapt in response to an individual's presentation and apply the most appropriate behaviour change intervention
- Ability to explain an intervention used and the theory underpinning the practice
- Ability to appropriately pace a conversation and an intervention to the individual's needs
- Be able to deliver interventions with group settings

Psychosocial Link Worker

(in addition to the above)

- Experience of working with vulnerable adults or those from a disadvantaged community
- Be able to implement behaviour change techniques in a flexible and coherent way, selecting what is most appropriate whilst adapting to an individual's needs, including when faced with counter-productive behaviours
- Demonstrate a range of behaviour change techniques which you are able to implement and support with theory, across differing levels of intensity and complexity across all health behaviours
- Be able to identify, prioritise and appropriately respond to an individual's complex physical health, mental health and social care needs

Personal Development and Learning, Leadership and Supervision

Link Workers need to be committed to our culture of continuous learning and be enthusiastic to apply new knowledge and skills. Link Workers learn significantly through experience, therefore reflection on practice (as an individual and as a team) are essential competencies to ensure personal and service development. For support to be person-centred and to meet the needs of an individual, Link Workers must demonstrate a range of underpinning knowledge and practice across a range of areas.

Link Worker

- Understand own role, responsibilities and purpose of the service
- Demonstrate commitment to learn and develop within the role
- Take personal responsibility for self-reflection and personal development
- Understand and engage with personal development and learning processes including supervision, appraisal, line management and caseload management
- Engage with group learning process including team meetings, action learning sets and peer supervision
- Understand and engage in quality improvement
- Work flexibly and enthusiastically within a team or on own initiative
- Understand where the organisation fits within the broader context of NHS and social care systems
- Demonstrate an understanding of safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant legislation, for example Data Protection Act, Care Act and Mental Capacity Act

Link Worker Coach

(in addition to the above)

- Contribute to the delivery of education, training and supervision of others
- Provide supportive and constructive feedback to other staff
- Provide supportive feedback about the learning and assessment in practice

Psychosocial Link Worker

(in addition to the above)

- Contribute to the planning and development of education, training and supervision of other staff and the organisation
- Co-ordinate and conduct formal shadowing of and feedback to other staff as part of their continuous learning and development
- Identify training needs of current and future staff
- Demonstrate maintaining up to date knowledge of relevant policy and practice

Professionalism and Communication

Link Workers working at all levels are required to demonstrate professional behaviour, attitude and attributes that support person-centre care. We require a commitment to develop expertise, self-awareness and working with integrity. Effective communication underpins person-centred care and helps build lasting, trusting relationships. Link Workers are required to communicate effectively in verbal and written form, with a wide range of people and professionals from different cultural and organisational backgrounds, including health, social and voluntary sectors.

Link Worker

- Ability to explain and promote the service to individuals external to the organisation
- Ability to communicate clearly, sensitively and effectively both verbally and in writing with individuals at all levels
- Demonstrate good negotiation and problem-solving skills when working alongside partner agencies
- Represent yourself and the organisation in a positive manner at all external events and training
- Ability to interact with people from all backgrounds and communities, in a non-judgemental way, respecting lifestyles and diversity
- Be able to build trusting and professional relationships with colleagues
- Be able to identify individuals at risk or vulnerable and be able to initiate internal and local procedures accordingly
- Demonstrate self-awareness of your own bias (upon reflection)
- Be able to recognise inappropriate or ineffective relationships within teams

Link Worker Coach

(in addition to the above)

- Ability to confidently communicate with and promote the service to external multi-disciplinary teams and within group settings
- Effectively communicate a person's needs in a multi-disciplinary meeting
- Manage complex conversations
- Ability to recognise and manage conflict and reduce stress and anger
- Demonstrate self-awareness of your own bias (in action)
- Be able to manage inappropriate relationships within teams

Psychosocial Link Worker

(in addition to the above)

- Manage conflict within teams, between colleagues and with other agencies in a positive and diplomatic manner
- Ability to harness the positive aspects of conflict management to enhance learning and improve outcomes
- Effectively lead a multi-disciplinary meeting, overseeing agreed actions
- Ability and confidence to communicate sensitive and complex information to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders
- Proactively identify opportunities for colleagues to network and develop cross-sector relationships including collaborating with others in a mutually beneficial way
- Demonstrate self-awareness of your own bias in action (and respond appropriately within the moment)

Data, Information and Technical Skills

Accurate and accessible information and data underpin effective provision. Excellent communication with people, carers and other agencies can lead to improved experience and safety for the people we work with. Link Workers need to be able to appropriately use electronic records and systems to access, input, store and retrieve information. Data is important for service evaluation and improvement.

Link Worker

- Competent user of IT systems including Microsoft Office and the internet

- Apply the principles of data protection, working within legal limitations and company policies with access, storage and sharing of data
- Write and maintain clear, accurate records of people's data in required formats
- Analyse and present data and information to colleagues
- Organise, plan and prioritise on own initiative, including when under pressure and meeting deadlines, administrative tasks such as appointment, diaries and patient registers
- Research and interpret relevant information from a range of resources
- Understand the principles of and participate in audits and quality improvement
- Monitor progress and outcomes to evaluate impact using agreed tools and systems

Link Worker Coach

(in addition to the above)

- Analyse and present complex data and information to other stakeholders
- Research and critically appraise information from a range of resources
- Evaluate data including experience and outcomes to improve services

Psychosocial Link Worker

(in addition to the above)

- Assess and evaluate impact of the service to inform improvement and demonstrate impact
- Evaluate the validity and potential bias of information
- Use audits and monitor standards to design quality improvement tests and contribute to strategic planning issues

Enabling Access to Assets

An awareness of the assets that exist within a community is essential if Link Workers are to enable people to access services, activities and groups that are appropriate to their needs and preferences. A person's needs may not necessarily be best met by traditional health and social service professionals. This 'local intelligence' is actively and continually grown by the Link Workers themselves through asset mapping activities.

Link Worker

- Demonstrate a strong awareness and understanding of when it is appropriate or necessary to connect people to health or social care professionals or to other agencies, when what the person needs are beyond the scope of the Link Worker role
- Demonstrate an understanding of local (and where appropriate national) community profile, networks and assets across all the sectors, including arrangements for introducing people
- Facilitate an introduction for people when appropriate and when consent has been given
- Ability to access up to date, accurate information for a range of assets to provide support to someone
- Demonstrate initiative in finding and setting up new links with new and existing local assets
- Contribute to the recording and updating of local directories, provide timely feedback to colleagues around issues relating to access to assets
- Seek appropriate help when faced with barriers to accessing services
- Demonstrate initiative in marketing the organisation and service with local assets

Link Worker Coach and Psychosocial Link Worker

(in addition to the above)

- Confidence to challenge colleagues on professional boundaries and provide support to recognise when necessary to refer to another professional
- Identify gaps in provision and provide timely feedback to relevant stakeholders to help improve assets
- Demonstrate persistence and resilience when faced with barriers to accessing services