

Lived experience work

Introduction

- This workshop has been developed by Therapeutic productions CIC to provide a comprehensive overview of different jobs based on Lived experience. We seek to provide knowledge and advice on the availability of jobs that hire people due to Lived experience.
- In the context of this workshop a lived experience job role is a job that requires direct experience of a particular circumstance that is related to the job. For example there may be a job that requires lived experience of mental health challenges; this means the person most suited to be hired for this job should have experienced having mental health difficulties.

Jerome Sewell

- Managing director Jerome Sewell has worked in the charitable sector for over 5 years and is a director of a number of socially driven companies. He is a film producer, writer and project manager. Over this time, he has raised over £700,000 for companies, created feature films that have been featured on the national news and in the newspapers, created a film and media department which included management of over 20 projects and personally delivered interventions to over 500 people.
- He has worked previously as an Expert by experience, Service user representative, Peer trainer, Workshop facilitator and Group lead. He has worked for the Royal college of psychiatrists and NHS.

ICE BREAKER

- What job have you done in the past?

Lived experience job roles

- In the UK there are various job roles in a variety of sectors. The following slides describe different types of jobs that usually Require lived experience.

1. Peer worker

- A peer worker is an individual that provides one on one support to people who have experienced similar things in life to them. This support can include providing advice and guidance, providing emotional support, supporting them with day to day life, referring people to other services that may help them or helping someone to do practical things like complete a job application.
- A peer worker in the criminal justice system for example may have been in prison or been involved in crime and will give someone advice on how to rehabilitate and not reoffend in the future, they might speak to the prisons and probation officers and give letters of support about progress.

Case study

- In 2026 a young man who was released from prison was referred into a service that works with ex offenders. He was assigned a peer worker who gave him advice and guidance on how to stay on track and not reoffend and also wrote the young man a supporting statement for a court case that was coming up that was given to his solicitor and presented to the court.

2. Youth worker

- A youth worker is someone who provides support to young people. They usually provide emotional and life skills support to young people in either one on one or group settings. This could include setting up and running activities like sports classes, providing referrals to other services or providing guidance to young people on what challenges they may be facing in life.

Case study

- In 2021 A youth worker organised a sports class for a group of 5 young people from a council estate. The sports sessions were led by a martial arts instructor. After the sports classes finished the mentor spent one hour talking to the group about how to manage their emotions and deal with difficult situations like violence in their neighbourhood.

3. Managing director

- In some cases there are individuals who set and run companies or charities that provide services to individuals that have faced the same thing in life they have. If they set up a service and register their own company they are a managing director. The role of a director can vary if they are working in a team but generally they are responsible for the running of the business, the delivery of its services and where it gets money from.

Case study

- Therapeutic productions CIC is an initiative led by a team of artists, project managers and social entrepreneurs who have chosen to use their artistic skills to raise awareness of and highlight social issues through film, music and art whilst using the process of creating art to assist those from underrepresented groups. To this end we focus on mental health related, cultural heritage, youth and urban community projects. To date Therapeutic productions have worked with over 200 mental health patients, young people excluded from mainstream education, young offenders, NEET youth, ex offenders and urban artists.
- Therapeutic productions CIC is an initiative founded by a team of former mental health patients.

4. Consultant

- A live experience consultant is someone who uses their personal experience of certain issues to provide advice and guidance to individuals, companies and organisations. They are usually recruited to give advice and information to services that work with people. The NHS, local authorities and police forces hire lived experience consultants.

Case study

- Aisosa Henkoma is a lived experience consultant who specialises in human trafficking and modern day slavery. As a child he was trafficked by gangs after leaving his home country in Africa and travelling to the UK. In 2025 he delivered a presentation to world leaders at the United Nations and is advising the UN on how to stop human trafficking around world by providing his experience and advice.

5. Workshop facilitator

- A workshop facilitator is someone who delivers presentations and workshops to groups or individuals. They run a program of activities to ensure people learn information that is beneficial to them.

Case study

- In 2024 a workshop facilitator who had spent time in prison decided to create a workshop about creating music and delivered this to a group of people who had spent time in prison. He created slides on Microsoft PowerPoint, created content and then delivered this session.

6. Peer trainer

- A peer trainer in the mental health sector is someone who designs and develops workshops and delivers courses on the subject of mental health.

Case study

- In 2021 the Recovery college at the Royal Bethlem hospital provided a course based on spirituality and mental health. They recruited patients in the hospital to give ideas for the content of the presentation and worked with the patients to deliver the slides to a group.

7. Expert by experience

- An expert by experience is an individual hired because of their experience of something. They can be hired for many types of roles such as advising public organisations, delivering presentations and helping to design public services.

Case study

- In 2018 a patient in a psychiatric hospital set up a group for other patients discussing their views and things that need to change in the hospital. This group was successful and the patient who created it was hired by the hospital as an expert by experience to deliver a presentation at a conference to 100 people explaining how he created the group.

8. Service user representative

- In the mental health and other sectors a service user representative is an individual who is hired to represent the views of similar people they share experiences with. In this role they may be called on to provide their guidance to organisations and others to help improve and strengthen services.

Case study

- In 2021 The Royal college of psychiatrists set up a group called the Equality advisory group which recruited former mental health patients as service user representatives to be apart of the group. This group advised the Royal college of psychiatrists on many projects including the setting up of sexual clinics in hospitals and how the Royal college of psychiatrists was run.

Guest speaker slot

9. Project manager

- A project manager is an individual who is responsible for running an initiative that provides products or services to people. They are responsible for managing teams, managing budgets that funds the service, ensuring the quality of the service provided is at a good standard, collecting data and reporting to investors and funders.
- In certain cases if an organisation is providing services that effect certain people a project manager will need to have lived experience of these things.

Case study

Therapeutic productions work on End-to-end services in the project management process which includes:

- Building partnerships
- Facilitating recruitment
- Organising and facilitating delivery of services
- Evaluating and monitoring services
- Managing delivery teams
- Reporting to funders

10. Monitoring and evaluation lead

- A monitoring and evaluation lead is an individual who is responsible for collecting data and information about how effective a service is, they also write reports which explain what a service is achieving and needs to improve on, they report back to funders and the heads of a company.
- In certain cases if an organisation is providing services that affect certain people a monitoring lead will need to have lived experience of these things.

Case study

- My job role includes Compiling and consistently updating the records of clients, creating multiple databases, leading monitoring reviews-Jerome Sewell CV

11. Business development lead

- A business development lead is a person who generates finance and income for an organisation. This could be from pitching to investors, funders or other means. In certain cases if an organisation is providing services that effect certain people a business development lead will need to have lived experience of these things.

Case study

- I Assisted with corporate sponsorship campaigns, securing of contracts for content- JEROME SEWELL CV

Bidwriter

- A Bidwriter is someone who writes and submits bids which are a type of written proposal pitch for an idea to receive money. In certain cases if an organisation is providing services that affect certain people a bid writer will need to have lived experience of these things.

Case study

- Established relationships with local and national funding bodies such as National Lottery Fund, Youth Music etc. which resulted in the acquiring £650,000+ of funding for the successful delivery of a variety of projects – *Jerome Sewell CV*

13. Department head

- Different companies may have different services and sometimes these services will have different department heads. For example a youth organisation may have a head of youth services, head of monitoring, head of recruitment and other heads who oversee different parts of the organisation. In certain cases if an organisation is providing services that effect certain people they will need to have lived experience of these things.

Social worker

- Social work is an academic discipline and practice-based profession concerned with meeting the basic needs of individuals, families, groups, communities, and society as a whole to enhance their individual and collective well-being.-Wikipedia
- A social worker provides support to individuals and families with their different needs such as helping to secure housing, benefits and other things. To enter this job you will need certain qualifications but having lived experience and working in lived experience job roles can be a stepping stone.

Family worker

- A family support worker is a person who provides vital support to families to help empower parents, ensure the wellbeing of children, create a healthy family environment and prevent problems and risks from developing that could lead to children going into care.-High speed training
- For some family support workers working with individuals with certain experiences, lived experience can be a benefit.

Case study

- In 2022 a young man was excluded from school. The school called in a youth worker to work as a family support worker to provide advice to the young man, build a relationship with him and support the family to manage his behaviour.

Samaritan

- A Samaritan is a volunteer who works in Prisons and other places to provide emotional support and advice and guidance to those going through the system. Samaritans often have lived experience and volunteering with them can give someone enough experience to get a paid role in other organisations.

Community link advisor

- Community link workers are practitioners that provide support with personal, social, emotional and financial issues. The overarching aims of a community link worker are to support people to live well through strengthening connections between community resources and services. –Bridge support
- These roles emphasise having lived experience.

People participation group advisor

- A People participation advisor is someone who provides their knowledge to ensure that lived experience shapes public and private services, decisions, and improvements.-Jason Harris
- These individuals often have lived experience.

Case study

- In 2022 a hospital in London recruited former mental health patients as People participation group advisors to sit through job interviews of new staff who would join the hospital and help decide who should be hired.

Lived experience group facilitator

- A group facilitator is someone who manages and runs the activities of a group of people who are facing certain challenges. These groups may provide spaces to talk or engage in leisure activities for example.

Exercise

- What job roles presented interested you the most? –Group discussion

Employers who often recruit for posts

- There are a number of organisations that hire and recruit people with lived experience. The following Slides name some of those organisations.

1. Royal college of psychiatrists

- We are the professional medical body responsible for supporting psychiatrists throughout their careers from training through to retirement, and in setting and raising standards of psychiatry in the United Kingdom.
- We work to secure the best outcomes for people with mental illness, learning difficulties and developmental disorders by promoting excellent mental health services, training outstanding psychiatrists, promoting quality and research, setting standards and being the voice of psychiatry.- Royal college of psychiatrists
- <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/about-us/work-for-us/vacancies-at-the-college>

2. Recovery colleges

- Recovery colleges are course providers that are often connected with psychiatric hospitals. They provide courses that are based around people's lived experience of mental health. Recovery colleges train people to become peer trainers and deliver their own courses.
- There are various Recovery colleges across London but here are a few:
- <https://www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk/>
- <https://swlstg.nhs.uk/recovery-college>
- You can search for others depending on where you are based.

3. Universities

- Universities and other educational institutions sometimes hire people with lived experience as visiting lecturers to teach their students and deliver workshops. Some universities that do include:
 - Kings College University
 - University of Birmingham
- There are many others who you can reach out to directly particularly those in the criminology, forensic psychology and social work departments.

4. Prisons

- Prisons hire Peer support workers and other roles to assist people in prison with their path to rehabilitation and support. You can find these jobs on the ministry of justice site:
- <https://jobs.justice.gov.uk/careers/SearchJobs>

5. Community teams

- Mental health community teams are professionals that are responsible for providing support to those who suffer from mental health problems and live in the community. They often hire peer support workers and others. There are many community teams and we would advise to search there sites and reach out to them.

6. NHS

- The NHS as a medical service offers a wide variety of roles first people with lived experience particularly in the areas of learning disabilities and mental health. You can find there jobs here:

Community centre

- Most local community centres hire youth workers to work with the youth they service. You will often start by volunteering and may be offered a paid job or can apply if they are recruiting directly.
- If you search for community centres in your locality you can contact them directly.

Local authorities

- Many local authorities such as local councils hire people with lived experience as expert by experiences, peer support workers and youth workers. As well as other roles.
- If you search your local authorities website they will provide information and what jobs are available.

YMCA

- There are essential building blocks for a full and rewarding life: A safe home; acceptance; guidance; friendship; physical and mental health; academic support; employment skills; and access to real opportunities. Many young people have never known these things; other people have lost one or more as they grew up, but we all need them. All of us At YMCA, we provide these critical foundations for a fresh, strong start for young people and a better quality of life in the community. –YMCA

St Giles trust

- St Giles was established in 1962 to provide emergency relief for people experiencing distress and poverty.. Today, there is still a vital need for this work: 2 in 10 adults and 3 in 10 children were in poverty in 23/24. 4 in 10 of these were in 'deep poverty' with incomes significantly below the poverty line (source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation). Employment can be a vital route out of poverty, but only when it's stable, fairly paid, and secure. For many people we work with, accessing employment is a powerful step toward independence, improved wellbeing, and a brighter future. But work alone doesn't always guarantee financial security. Insecure hours, low wages, lack of progression, and the rising cost of living mean that some people remain trapped in poverty – even while working. At St Giles, we support people to not only find work but to find better work. Our aim is to help people build careers that offer dignity, security, and real opportunity. –St Giles trust

Mencap

- Mencap supports and helps those with learning disabilities and campaigns to make society fairer for those with these needs.

Professional you work with

- Sometimes if you are working with a mental health team, prison or probation officer they may know of opportunities available. It is worth reaching out to them.

CQC

- CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. We regulate health and adult social care, we work together with the public, systems and providers of care to protect people, and to promote and improve the quality of care. -CQC

Q and A

- Q and A with someone who works in these services.

Qualifications and experience needed for different types of roles

- Generally speaking different roles you apply for will require different skills and levels of experience. Some might prefer certain qualifications. In the following slides we list of these.

1. Lived experience

- Many roles may require people to have lived experience in a particular way through having directly encountered and been exposed to certain things in life.

2. A Degree is a bonus

- Having a university degree is not necessary but can be a bonus because it proves you have studied and learnt particular skills. Those in the system and can study through the Open university and other providers.

3. Train the trainers

- As a reference recovery colleges offer a training course which is a two day course for someone to become a peer trainer and be qualified to deliver courses.

4. Youth work

- Many training providers offer youth work qualifications which offer you a qualification to become a qualified youth worker and work in different places.

Below are training providers who provide these courses:

<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/courses/610/providers?location=London%20Fields,%20Greater%20London&distance=10>

<https://nya.org.uk/nya-academy/l2-award-youth-work-principles-self-led/>

<https://www.youngwestminster.com/level-up-westminster/>

Information advice and guidance level 3

- The Level 3 Certificate in Information, Advice or Guidance (IAG) is a 24-credit qualification designed for professionals providing direct support, such as mentors, support workers, and advisors.

Course providers

- https://www.edt.org/level-3-nvq-in-advice-and-guidance/?utm_source=instagram&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=skills_st&utm_content=Promote
- <https://www.cwc.ac.uk/courses/section/course/city-guilds-level-3-diploma-in-advice-guidance>
- <https://business.open.ac.uk/professional-development/vocational-qualifications/advice-and-guidance-level-3-nvq-certificate>
- <https://freecoursesinengland.co.uk/iag-qualification/>

The Care Certificate

The Care Certificate is a mandated set of 15 standards for health and social care workers in the UK, designed to ensure quality, compassionate care. It is aimed at new staff and covers subjects like safeguarding, hygiene, and dignity. It requires both online theoretical training and practical, in-person workplace assessment.

Course providers

- <https://lead-academy.org/course/care-certificate-training-london>
- <https://careskillsacademy.co.uk/courses/care-certificate/>
- <https://cpdonline.co.uk/course/care-certificate/>

Peer Support Worker Training (3 months)

- Peer support worker training equips individuals with lived mental health or addiction recovery experience to support others, focusing on empathy, boundary-setting, and recovery-focused care. Programs usually include modules on communication skills, ethical practice, and crisis support, enabling workers to turn personal experience into professional support tools.

Course providers

Below are a list of course providers:

<https://www.imroc.org/nhs-england-training-programme>

<https://uclpartners.com/mental-health-peer-support-worker-training-programme/>

<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/courses/682/providers/10004144?location=EC1V%201NH&distance=10>

<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/courses/682/providers/10036736?location=EC1V%201NH&distance=10>

5. Bid coordinator apprenticeship

- If you choose the path of being a bid writer to generate money you do not need a qualification but you can study a bid coordinator apprenticeship as a qualification to show you have the skills which might make you a Strong candidate.

Below are a list of providers for this course:

<https://www.jga-group.com/bid-and-proposal-coordinator-apprenticeship/>

<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/courses/400/providers>

Exercise

- In your opinion what are the most important skills that need to be learnt? –Group discussion

6. Workshop design and facilitator

- Learning how to design and deliver workshops is a useful skill as this is required for many jobs. You can learn this by taking courses, Shadowing and volunteering.

Running groups

- Learning how to deliver groups is a useful skill as this is required for many jobs. You can learn this by taking courses, Shadowing and volunteering. This also helps to deliver communication skills.

8. Delivering talks and presentation

- Learning how to design and deliver presentations is a useful skill as this is required for many jobs. You can learn this by taking courses, creating your own talk and speaking to groups who might be interested, Shadowing and volunteering.

9. Voluntary work

- Volunteering with charities and other groups is one way to prove your skills, build experience and secure employment.

Skills needed for different roles

- Different job roles require different skills and in the following slides we will give a comprehensive list of skills.

1. Teamwork

- Teamwork in the form of working with people is essential so that you can collaborate on designing and delivering services and working towards a shared objective. Being respectful and open to people's differences, Being able to lead and also follow when necessary and Contributing are all marks of good teamwork.

2. Communication skills

- Understanding how to convey your message and contributions to different teams and services is important. In today's field employers try to cater for a wide range of different communication styles but the following can help:
 - Using clear language
 - Not being afraid to speak
 - Being respectful
 - Contributing

3. It skills Microsoft package

- Although not always essential having some computer skills which allow you to create documents, presentations, spreadsheets and other things could be quite important.

IT course providers

Here are a list of providers for IT courses

<https://www.shu.ac.uk/digital-skills/online-learning/microsoft-office-specialist>

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-learn>

https://www.thedigitalcollege.co.uk/course/basic-microsoft-word-and-excel?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23516929819&gbraid=0AAAAADPljgncDT0qfhGa0-65X3QGRjdVu

<https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/microsoft-it-support-specialist>

4. Email skills

- Knowing how to communicate by email appropriately in a digital world is important whether it is to set up meetings, pitch ideas or many other things. The following can help with this:
- Knowing how to introduce yourself,
- Use proper English language
- Being clear and concise

5. Partnership building

- Knowing how to build professional relationships and partnerships is key. This comes down to:
 - clear communication
 - Professionalism
 - Motivation
 - Ability to adapt change and be open to new ideas

6. Note taking

Recording meetings and staying on top of things and tasks is important.

7. Presenting skills

- Knowing how to present is something that can assist with areas of work whether it is when you are meeting with your team or people you are providing services to. The following can help with this:
- Being confident and yourself
- Having good language and written skills
- Being approachable and respectful
- Being able to research and remember information

8. Networking

- Whether building partnerships or contacts for yourself networking helps to grow your career and prospects. The following can help with this:
- Being approachable
- Being able to start a conversation
- Being helpful
- Being well informed
- Being open to new ideas

9. Idea generation

- Knowing how to create ideas is a much sought after skill in certain roles. The following can help with this:
- Being able to research and gather information
- Being able to think outside of the box
- Being able to think of solutions to problems

Guest speaker slot

Process

- In terms of securing the different jobs discussed there are different avenues. The following slides provide information on some of these routes.

Shadow and learn from experienced executive

- A way of getting employed by an organisation is by connecting with an experienced company member and requesting to learn from them, volunteer with them and shadow them.

Come with an idea

- One way of getting recruited into a company is to develop your own ideas and pitch this to an organisation. If the idea is well developed and liked this can often lead to you collaborating with a company. This can lead to the company sponsoring this idea or pitching together for funding.

Standard route

- The standard route of applying for a job and going through an interview is still available. This is often best done after building experience elsewhere.
- Charities jobs is a website that shows many types of jobs available.

Contacting schools and colleges directly

- In terms of Youth work it is possible to Pitch your services directly to a school or college. You would need to liase with there safeguarding lead.

Partnerships with professionals

If you have built a relationship with a professional in the prison or mental health system then partnering with them to deliver a service is possible. It is best to do this by developing an idea and approaching them with this. If there is a budget available this can lead to paid work.

Referrals

Some organisations we have discussed like the Involvement register and Recovery colleges provide new letters that outline different organisations who may wish to hire those with lived experience

Recovery college

- In terms of Recovery colleges once you train under them and join team meetings You put your self forward to deliver courses they have or pitching your own courses idea.

Becoming a director

- To start a company involves many things and some of these include Registering your company, building a team, building policies, undergoing training, designing projects, fundraising, delivering projects, recruitment of service users, buying materials, evaluating your project and building relationships with funders.

Job expectations if you secure a role

- If you secure a role there will be certain expectations of you. We list some of these on the following slides.

Professionalism

- You will be expected to be professional this means being punctual, having good time keeping, being respectful and polite, being disciplined and motivated.

2. Undergoing training

- Many jobs will expect you to undergo regular training to keep your skills fresh.

3. Commit to set amount of hours

- Most jobs will ask you to commit a certain amount of time and agree to this.

4. Undergo supervision

- If you are an employee you might be asked to review your work and see how you are getting on in your job. This is called supervision.

5. Admin

- You might be expected to file paperwork and be organised.

Conclusion

Q and A