

Health and wellbeing coach FAQs

1. As a health and wellbeing coach, can I work with children and young people?

Health and wellbeing coaches have training and experience in working with people over the age of 18 but are not trained to provide health coaching to children and young people.

NHS England and NHS Improvement has not yet undertaken work to identify what additional skills and competencies health and wellbeing coaches would require working with children and young people and therefore it is not recommended that they work with people under the age of 18.

2. My local area has health trainers who have sessions in GP surgeries to help people with health and lifestyle changes. What are the similarities and differences between health trainers and health & wellbeing coaches?

We recognise that there are other roles already in existence that may be similar in some ways to the role of health and wellbeing coaches. The role of the health and wellbeing coach is:

- To work with people over a number of focused sessions guiding and supporting people to reflect on and change their health-related behaviours to help them reach their self-identified health and wellbeing goals.
- To support them to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to become active participants in looking after their own health.
- These sessions could be one to one or in small groups.

Health and wellbeing coaches tend to work with people with one or more long term conditions such as type 2 diabetes or COPD, or with risk factors for developing a long-term condition. Health and wellbeing coaches provide support for issues such as weight management, managing chronic pain, or living with depression and anxiety.

3. What should I do as a health and wellbeing coach if I am asked to undertake tasks which I don't think are part of my role?

The health and wellbeing coach role and the care coordinator roles are new roles in primary care, alongside the role of social prescribing link workers. It will take time to establish these roles in primary care, and part of this will involve people in these roles taking the time to get to know other members of practice teams and working out how they can best work together to support patients.

It is important to remember that we are in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic where all parts of the health service, including primary care, are under significant strain and where there are additional requirements to be accommodated, for example the roll out of the Covid vaccine. Therefore, it may be more likely at this time that you could be asked to help with tasks that would not in normal times be a part of your role.

It is important to discuss with your line manager if you are asked to perform tasks that you are not trained for or that you consider are beyond your competencies.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed a national support offer for the health and wellbeing coach and the care coordinator roles including a discussion forum and monthly sessions for people to connect, support each other and to offer support. We can also put people in contact with a local mentor to support. Please contact england.supportedselfmanagement@nhs.net for joining instructions.

4. How many sessions should I offer each client?

The general guidance is that 6 – 8 sessions is usually about the right number with each sessions lasting around 45 minutes. However, some clients may find that they have achieved what they wanted to in fewer sessions and for other clients a coach may consider that one or two extra sessions would be helpful.

5. What is the guidance on how often I should follow up with my clients?

There is no strict guidance on this and when and how often to follow up should be agreed by coach and client in the final session.

Coaches could also emphasise that they have an “open door” so that a client feels able to get in touch with them sooner than the agreed follow up time.

Health and wellbeing coaches may also wish to consider setting up facilitated support groups or encourage the set up of peer led support groups for people who have completed coaching or self management courses but would benefit from some light touch support to stay on track.

6. What training and certification is offered to health and wellbeing coaches?

Detailed information on health coaching and types of training can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/health-coaching-implementation-and-quality-summary-guide.pdf>

You should attend a minimum of four days' training prior to taking referrals. Training is accessed through accredited or assured training providers. These are listed at: <https://www.personalisedcareinstitute.org.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=32>

On completion learners will be registered with the PCI institute and receive a completion certificate

These training providers also offer two day coaching courses suitable for link workers.

In addition, the core curriculum for personalised care is available below and may be a useful reference point for health and wellbeing coaches:

https://www.personalisedcareinstitute.org.uk/pluginfile.php/133/mod_page/content/28/PCI-Curriculum.pdf

7. If I have prior learning or a qualification in on health coaching / motivational interviewing, am I still required to do the PCI four days health coaching training programme before seeing patients?

If you can provide evidence that you have met all the competencies covered by the four-day training, then you may not need to do the four-day training programme before seeing patients. However, you would be expected to have a supervisor identified and to have discussed this with them before starting work directly with patients. Any gaps would be identified through supervision.

8. Would any of the public health qualifications around behaviour change and health improvement be relevant to the health coach role?

These qualifications are likely to be very relevant and useful in informing your work as a health coach. However, you would still need to undertake an accredited four day health coach training course to ensure you are equipped to work as a health coach within primary care. It may also be useful to discuss this with the training provider as it may be that following an assessment of your prior learning that you would not need to attend all four days of the course

9. I am a qualified Life Coach – do I still have to take the full training?

The Life coach qualification you have is likely to be relevant and helpful for this work. However, you would still need to undertake a four day health coaching course to ensure that you are equipped to work in a health context with people with health needs.

It may also be useful to discuss this with the training provider as it may be that following an assessment of your prior learning that you would not need to attend all four days of the course

10. Whose requirement is it to ensure that Health and Wellbeing Coaches receive appropriate training?

Section B4 of the [Network Contract DES Specification 2021-22](#) states:

B4.1. Where a PCN employs or engages a Health and Wellbeing Coach under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme, the PCN must ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Coach:

- a) is enrolled in, undertaking or qualified from appropriate health coaching training covering topics outlined in the NHS England and NHS Improvement Implementation and Quality Summary Guide, with the training delivered by delivered by a training organisation listed by the Personalised Care Institute.*

11. Is there funding available for PCNs towards the costs of Health and Wellbeing Coach training?

PCN Development funding may be available to support recruitment, embedding and retention of new staff, please check funding priorities with local commissioners.

Depending on agreed training priorities for personalised care within your region, there may be funding available for Health and Wellbeing Coach training. However, regardless of whether or not such funding is available, it is the responsibility of the PCN to ensure that any Health and Wellbeing Coaches it employs or engages are enrolled in, undertaking or qualified from appropriate health coaching training.

12. What can I do if I am working as an unqualified Health and Wellbeing Coach within a practice or PCN and I am informed that either I cannot be released to go on health coaching training or that the practice or PCN will not fund my training?

In the first instance, we would always advise that you try to resolve this informally where possible by talking to your line manager. If it is not possible to resolve this through discussion with your line manager, you could ask to speak to the person who is responsible for HR within your practice or to the PCN Clinical Director and talk to them about your concerns. You could also contact your practice Freedom to

Speak Up Guardian. They may be able to support you to raise your concerns within your practice or PCN.

Contractually under the DES, in order to recruit Health and Wellbeing Coaches, Section B4 of the Network Contract DES Specification 2021-22 states:

B4.1. Where a PCN employs or engages a Health and Wellbeing Coach under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme, the PCN must ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Coach:

- a) is enrolled in, undertaking or qualified from appropriate health coaching training covering topics outlined in the NHS England and NHS Improvement Implementation and Quality Summary Guide, with the training delivered by delivered by a training organisation listed by the Personalised Care Institute.*

Therefore, as set out above, the Health and Wellbeing Coach must have the required training for the PCN to be reimbursed under the Additional Role Reimbursement Scheme. PCN must declare that any claims they submit on the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme adhere to the rules set out in the Network Contract DES Specification 2021-22.

13. How often should health and wellbeing coaches have supervision?

Health and wellbeing coaches must have regular supervision from a qualified health coaching supervisor and ongoing support in addition to the initial four day health coaching training. Monthly supervision is recommended for coaches in full time roles or near full time roles and not less than every two months for people in part time roles.

14. How many years experience do I need before becoming a PCI accredited health coaching supervisor?

You should have worked for a minimum of five years as a health coach before becoming a supervisor. You should also ensure that you have access to regular supervision, as outlined in the minimum standards for health coaching supervisors.

15. Is a qualification in Clinical Supervision enough to be a supervisor?

No. There are minimum standards required to enable someone to work as a PCI accredited health coaching supervisor. For further details please see: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/supporting-health-and-care-staff-to-deliver-personalised-care/personalised-care-institute>

16. Do PCNs have to employ supervisors as well as coaches?

No, PCNs do not have to employ supervisors.

When commissioning training from a PCI accredited health coaching training provider, PCNs should ensure that supervision as well as ongoing peer support and space for continual reflective learning is included as this is likely to be most cost effective.

In the longer term PCNs may wish to work together to consider how they can develop supervision capacity across a locality.

14. How do PCNs access training for their staff?

PCNs and other teams and services interested in accessing personalised care training including health coaching training should visit the PCI website to learn more, access the core curriculum and find accredited providers.

Contact should also be made with local personalised care leads and/or NHS England PCG regional heads to understand what personalised care training is available locally and explore any local funding opportunities.

Whenever training is undertaken provision must be made to ensure that learners have access to local support to embed their new skills - in particular supervision, peer support, and space for reflective learning.