

Apprenticeship scheme

Apprentice's handbook



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1. Welcome

Congratulations and welcome to St Mungo's! You have joined an award-winning Apprenticeship Scheme that has been running since 2008 and has welcomed over 200 apprentices.

Thanks to your personality traits, your skills and efforts, you are now part of St Mungo's for the next 18 months. In your role, you will be making a real difference to the lives of the people we work with and be bringing great value to the organisation as a whole.

The Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement team will be supporting you alongside your line manager and the rest of St Mungo's staff to make sure you make the most out of your apprenticeship. We've put together this handbook not only to welcome you to the organisation but also to explain more about your apprenticeship, expectations from both sides and to answer questions you may already have.

We're excited to have you on board!

**Maria Dimouli,
Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement Manager**



2. Who is the apprenticeship scheme for?



Anyone who has personal experience of homelessness, recovery or social recovery, social care or criminal justice services can apply to our apprenticeship scheme. Our Apprentices may have slept rough, lived in a refuge or supported housing or accessed drug, alcohol, recovery or mental health services. They may have regularly used day centres, hostels, outreach teams, or complex needs services or been to prison or completed probation.

We are looking for people who can use their own experiences of being a client in a positive way to be role models, to inspire and motivate our staff and clients. We particularly encourage people who have been out of work for some time to apply for a post on the scheme.

To become an Apprentice, you will also need good literacy, maths and basic IT Skills, the right to work in the UK and be over 18 years of age.

3. I am a client/ resident of St Mungo's. How can I continue with my apprenticeship without any conflicts?



We actively encourage our clients to apply to the apprenticeship scheme though there are some things you need to consider. You will be expected to set up a standing order to pay your rent on your payday. You will also be expected to move out of or leave St Mungo's services within six months of starting your contract. This is to help reduce any risk of building up rent arrears or other problems which could affect your move on options and/ or create a conflict of interest with St Mungo's. It is important to discuss any application to the scheme with your Support worker and Service Manager.

As an Apprentice, you will also be working with/in a different team or service to the one you currently live in or are a client of. This is to protect both your own confidentiality and that of other clients who are living in or accessing the service.

4. What is the recruitment process?

All applications to the apprenticeship scheme are made online. The application form can be found on our website, on the adverts of Apprenticeships posts as and when they become.

You do not need to have been employed in the past. However, if you have volunteered, completed a work placement, peer mentoring or college course or been actively involved in a service user involvement group or volunteering role within the last 12 months, you are more likely to be offered a place on the scheme.



Recruitment and assessment process

St Mungo's runs a fair and inclusive recruitment process. This process has been developed to identify people who can become inspiring role models for our clients and can demonstrate a passion and commitment to working in the homelessness sector.

Interview and assessments have been designed to identify how you will be able to positively use your own personal experience of recovery and using different services to support St Mungo's clients with their recovery. Assessment methods include a role play and a panel interview.

In addition, using St Mungo's core competencies framework you will find job descriptions and, interview questions are designed to explore your own insight into your recovery. For example, how you would respond to difficult situations, the support networks you have in place and identifying the increased resilience you have when supporting vulnerable adults with complex needs.

How do I know am I ready? What are you looking for?

Right place, right time – is a phrase we often use for our Apprentices. We want to make sure that you are at the right point in your recovery and that we can find you the right opportunity through our recruitment process. You might have applied for more than one job role on the scheme or for more than just one time.

The experience is part of a process to ensure that we are making the most of your skills and you are getting a placement where you can thrive. When we talk about the “right time” we need you to be:

- resilient
- reflective
- using positive support networks
- accountable and responsible
- able to follow processes, policies and work within structures and procedures
- able to study and work to deadlines alongside your role
- able to use your own experiences to be a positive, inspiring and motivational role model and worker
- able to communicate quickly when you need help or things aren't working well.

Your line manager, your Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement Advisor and your personal tutor will always be on hand to offer support and will communicate regularly with you to ensure you are continuing to progress and meet standards.

“Being on an apprenticeship with St Mungo’s has given me diverse experiences that I hadn’t had before specially working alongside my clients and understanding with a more in depth knowledge on how to support my team and clients. Having a good, strong team has helped with my development and growing my confidence in key working daily. Everyday I learn new things. My biggest achievement throughout the apprenticeship is that I have got more leadership skills and I am able to manage people & empower them to thrive for their goals.”

Noel, previous Apprentice at Endsleigh Gardens

5. How will I be supported?

As an Apprentice, you will have access to the same support as other staff members, including e-learning, face to face training sessions and 'support and supervision' sessions with your line manager.

You will also receive pastoral support from your Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement Advisor. You will be meeting them on a monthly basis for one-to-one progress reviews to make sure you are getting time to study and the support you need to develop your skills.

The Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement Advisor and your line manager will be checking with you that you are enjoying your placement, making progress with your learning and on the job skills, and getting the support you need to develop. At these meetings, you can raise any concerns you'd like to highlight or questions you may have about your role, the organisation or your apprenticeship.

Your personal tutor is someone who works for our training provider, Paragon and they will also support you throughout the apprenticeship with remote training and learning and to help you prepare for your End Point Assessment

6. How will my line manager support me?

Your line manager is responsible for your Project based induction, Support and Supervision and Competence assessment against core competencies. You will be supervised according to the Staff Supervision Policy and Procedure.

They will also support you to complete St Mungo's mandatory trainings and be aware of our Policies and Procedures.



7. What support will the Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement (VAI) Advisor provide?

As briefly explained above, you will receive pastoral support from the Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement team. This extra support will hopefully enable you to complete your Apprenticeship, ask questions, share concerns and resolve any problems and conflicts arising throughout your apprenticeship with us.

The VAI Advisor will organize one-to-one meetings with you to review your progression on a monthly basis. They will provide you with notes of your meetings so you can refer to them.

The Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement team also organizes the Apprentices Peer Sessions which are a great opportunity to meet other Apprentices and get peer support.

Shadow shifts and placements

You will also have the opportunity to shadow a number of St Mungo's services which will help you get an idea about the different types of support we provide and the various job roles. No service is the same and every team works in a different way. Make sure you work with your line manager to organise some shadow shifts when you first start.

After completing your probation, you will undertake a 10 day placement at a different service at St Mungo's or, you can break this into two one week placements (five days/one week) at two different services.

How you choose to spend these days is up to you. Your line manager will help you arrange these days/weeks so they can best align with your job role and the Rotas in both services.

You can also seek advice and suggestions from your line manager and VAI Advisor if you are uncertain as to where you would like to shadow shift. They will have a good working knowledge of many of the services within your region and can support with approaching services to ask for the opportunity for you

8. Working with our training provider, Paragon and what to expect

Paragon is the training provider for the St Mungo's Apprenticeship Scheme. You will be assigned a personal tutor to support you throughout your apprenticeship, with you 'off the job' learning and preparing you for gaining your L3 Peer Support with Paragon and SFJ Standard.

Remember that although you will be working with Paragon to complete your standard, you will also still need to complete St Mungo's mandatory trainings.

Peer Support worker Level 3



Apprenticeship components

This program provides a tailored learning experience to the setting and your own needs and aims to support you to meet the standards, policies and protocols, to build skills through modelling, signposting, and self-managed care and gain your L3 Peer Support with Paragon and SFJ standard which is nationally recognised.

Your personal tutor will be available throughout the course to teach, monitor progress and prepare you for your end-point assessment (EPA) and observational practice (OP) through 1-2-1 (remote) sessions, email, phone and learning videos.

Your tutor will support you to form a better understanding of reflective practice, managing your own time and work priorities and working in line with safeguarding policies whilst still working towards the individuals self-defined goals and aims.

Functional Skills

Everyone who completes the Standard will need math's and English GCSE. If you do not have this, you will need to complete Paragons 'functional skills' Paragon will provide these functional skills in group teaching sessions over the course of the Standard.

End-Point Assessment

All end-point assessments are formal assessments that conclude the apprenticeship program. They assess your knowledge and skills through Observation of Practice and Professional Discussion – these will be explained by Paragon in detail.

Specialist Learning Portal (Bud)

When uploading your work and accessing learning, you will use Paragons specialist online learning portal called Bud. Bud is designed for enrolling, submitting coursework and preparing for your end point assessments as simple as possible.

The role of your line manager in your learning

Much of the 'learning' that takes place within an apprenticeship is through 'doing'. This means that you will be paid when you are learning 'on the job'. However, when you are training with Paragon by completing activities to meet the standards of the qualification, you are working 'off the job'.

'Off the job training' must represent 20% of your contracted hours with your employer. Some of this will be time spent working on Paragon requirements, and some of the time your employer will provide other learning opportunities e.g. shadow shifts or St Mungo's face to face training and E-Learning.

Your line manager and the VAI Advisor will guide you through much of what is required by your employer but also provide encouragement and support to enable you to meet the requirements of your Level 3 Standard.

Your line manager will be invited to attend your progress reviews with your Paragon trainer approximately four weeks after enrolment. Afterwards, you will all meet to review at 8 to 12 weeks intervals. Extra reviews can be done if needed.

9. What shall I expect at the end of my apprenticeship?



In the last three months of your apprenticeship, we will be supporting you to start thinking about your future steps. This means taking advantage of the support systems around you: your line manager and apprentice Advisor as well as taking the next steps to finding and applying for permanent employment.

If you are considering applying for permanent roles within the homelessness, housing and social care sector (whether it be with St Mungo's or elsewhere in the sector), we can support you too.

If you gain permanent employment within St Mungo's you are offered access to continuing support from your VAI Advisor whilst you make the change roles from an Apprentice with reduced caseload and protected time to a staff member with a full caseload and Rota responsibilities

In addition to the apprenticeship specific support, we encourage you to join some (or all) of the diversity networks and diversity allies group. These networks not only provide support, information and other resources in relation to their specialties, they also provide opportunities to network with staff at all levels of the organisation thus allowing for opportunities to build communication skills and knowledge in relation to St Mungo's overall.

10. Top tips from a current apprentice

What would you say to someone starting their apprenticeship now?

Bring a notebook, ask questions, and seize every opportunity. Apprenticeships go by quickly.

What's the most valuable lesson I earned during your apprenticeship?

A valuable lesson learned during my apprenticeship is the importance of strong, effective communication with clients and staff, which has helped me on my journey so far.

How did you find balancing the academic qualifications with work?

I have dyslexia. At first, I struggled, but my line manager and St Mungo's apprenticeship lead made sure to obtain extra support and study days.

Why did you apply to join St Mungo's as an apprentice in the first place?

I struggled to get a job in support work. I also heard good stories about St Mungo's, and I felt that St Mungo's is a great place to learn.

What are your plans after your apprenticeship finishes?

Apply full post at St Mungo's as a project worker.



11. If things don't go to plan...

We recognise that things don't always go smoothly and sometimes things don't go to plan. There will always be support available through your line manager and the Volunteering, Apprenticeships and Involvement Advisor.

It's really important that you access support when you feel like an issue may arise or has arisen. Honesty and being upfront is always the best policy. We are here to listen to you so we can support you through your apprenticeship.

There are other workplace tools you can use to help with your apprenticeship journey as well as your line manager and Advisor.

- **EAP:** If you are struggling then you can access free support on a range of issues, both work and personal, through our EAP provider. Life and Progress is our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider.

EAP is on hand to offer our staff confidential care and support for advice on personal, family and work issues, including debt counselling, elderly/disability care, bereavement and loss etc.

- The contact number is **0800 083 3375** and website: www.lap-access.co.uk
- Username: **stmungos**
- Password: **employee**

- **Workplace Supporter Scheme:** the Workplace supporter scheme is an additional way for all staff to access practical and emotional support. Staff may contact Workplace Supporters for a range of reasons including work related stress, problems outside of work or if they witness or experience bullying and harassment.
 - Workplace Supporters offer confidential support and information to colleagues. They can provide emotional support in times of stress and can provide an objective, confidential listening service. Importantly they can advise on how to address instances of bullying and harassment or bring it to the attention of management in a constructive and effective way.
 - Workplace Supporters will not raise issues on behalf of an employee who contacts them; if an employee wishes to discuss the situation with their manager, HR or the unions then they will need to do this themselves. Workplace Supporters can however advise on constructive ways to do this effectively.
 - Similarly, if a formal grievance is raised regarding bullying and harassment, the Workplace Supporter would not attend any formal meetings or tribunals. If any employee is suspended, the

list of Workplace Supporters will be provided as a way to offer support to the employee during this time if they wish to use it.

- The support is available to all staff from their first day of employment, it does not matter where they are based, how many hours they work or how senior they are. It is accessible to all regardless of race and ethnicity; gender; disability; sexuality; gender reassignment/identity; age; religion & belief; pregnancy and maternity; and marriage and civil partnership status.

- **Formal processes**

Some problems may trigger a formal process. They will talk you through their role and what you can expect from the various policies and procedures relating to your employment.

It is important you familiarise yourself with the following procedures:

- Probationary Policy
- Sickness and absence procedure
- Code of conduct
- Dignity at work

11. Managing your resilience

What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to cope under pressure – it protects against stress. Developing resilience is one of the keys ways that people are successful in their working role. Resilience is an essential skill for all who work in adult social care.

We all find at times that we feel less resilient – it could be an argument before you left the house, a bad journey to work, money worries or an incident at work that could trigger certain feelings. What's important is that you think about your resilience and what can you put in place to manage and adapt during those more difficult times.

“Resilience is not simply a person’s ability to ‘bounce back’, but their capacity to adapt in the face of challenging circumstances, whilst maintaining a stable mental wellbeing.”



You have responsibility for your own resilience. You can access support and put techniques in place to develop your resilience. This will help you to:

- Manage your own thoughts and feelings
- Assess problems before you try to resolve it
- Think accurately about things.

While you:

- Are sensitive to other people's emotions
- Are confident in your own ability to solve problems
- Are willing to embrace the new in order to grow
- Are realistic and optimistic.

The **WRAP (Wellbeing Recovery and Aftercare Plan)** you develop at the start of the Apprenticeship will help you understand what your triggers are and to think about how you access support to overcome these.

In addition, all apprentices will undergo an **Occupational Health Assessment** to see if we need to put in place any additional support to manage any existing health conditions or disabilities. This does involve going through quite a lot of questions to get a full history and so we can focus on the main issues that may be affecting your health and work. You will get full guidance on the process. It is important that you engage with this process as it allows us to provide you with the right support during your time with St Mungo's.

12. Apprentices' FAQs

a) How can I be a good key worker?

Building a good professional relationship with clients and colleagues, developing good communication and listening skills and attending relevant training will help you to become a good key worker.

b) What happens if I'm off sick?

You must contact the Absence Team and your line manager as soon as you are too unwell to come into work. The Absence Team will be able to advise and support you on returning to work, providing the appropriate documentation such as a sick note from your GP. They are also able to advise and support your manager in making any reasonable adjustments that may be needed to make your return to work easier. When you are on probation you will have 37.5 hours of full pay when sick.

c) When can I join the rota with my team? (24-hour accommodation services)

As an Apprentice you are on a 9-5 contract, this means that Rota shifts won't be a regular part of your role but is to make sure you are able to learn as much as possible about all aspects of the way the service works.

d) What is the Apprentice Peer Sessions?

These are regular meetings which all apprentices are expected to attend. You can support each other, talk about difficult situations and share knowledge and advice. There are guest speakers and career coaching is included so you can learn more about St Mungo's and begin planning for your future career.



e) Can I lone work?

In short: yes, you can lone work if your DBS check has come through.

This is because apprentices in keyworker (and those working directly with clients) will need to have received their DBS documents before working one on one with clients.

You will need to have completed your lone working training and received your alertcom device.

Your induction will have also given you opportunities to shadow other support staff taking clients to appointments and community meetings.

f) When can I start taking on a caseload?

Initially, our apprentices shadow experienced workers to learn key working and support skills. Once the line manager deems it appropriate, apprentices are then given the opportunity to co-keywork one or two clients to be able to learn about putting these skills into practice. As the apprentice develops in their job role and the Line Manager has assessed skills against core competencies that they are competent, you will be allocated one or two clients to keywork directly, with the support of the team.

g) Can I do the job without the qualification?

We sometimes get asked whether Apprentices can continue in their role if they stop the qualification or not. The apprenticeship role you are in is directly linked to the qualification and is also a requirement of the Service to have an Apprentice in post. Simply put, without the qualification you are unable to continue in the role. This is why it's so important to ensure that you dedicate time to completing the academic part of the qualification.

h) Why do I need allocated study days?

Working in a service means that you will be busy supporting clients and colleagues and dealing with emergencies. These, on top of team meetings, meetings with VAI Advisor and the Apprentices Peer Sessions can mean you're left with little or no time to record your off-the-job learning and do your actual coursework. At the start of your Apprenticeship, you must chat to your Line manager and agree on a day to set aside as 'study day' every week to focus on your academic work.



St Mungo's