

## **Information for those applying for the role of Zone West Link Worker with North East Wellbeing.**

First of all, thank you for your interest in taking forward your application to this point. We are interested in you and hope to get your application soon. Zone West is currently a team of six people working on creating a truly child-centred social prescribing service. In the summer of 2024, we lost the part of our service that was commissioned by Newcastle Local Authority and since September we have been working with North East Wellbeing to continue working in the West End of Newcastle. These Link Worker appointments are the first signs of green shoots for us as we build our offer to vulnerable children.

I say all that because there are two temporary conditions for the role that have been necessary for us but will be sorted out in 2025: we can only offer a 12-month contract and it has to be delivered as an associate practitioner, not as an employee. All of us in Zone West and in North East Wellbeing are Associates, it is straightforward to manage, and actually gives you more money in your pocket, but it is a temporary measure. In the New Year 2025 we will be beginning the process of becoming employers, accredited to Real Living Wage standards, and we aim to resolve the 12-month short-termism too.

This makes us unusual, but I can assure you that the Team will bend over backwards with advice and support for you if you need to get used to being an Associate. We are in transition, and we all hope you will continue to be interested in Zone West and this amazing team of heart-led workers. Here is what Claire and Sarah say:

**“This exciting new role within Zone West is initially funded as a one-year pilot. Five years ago, I saw the original Zone West link worker roles advertised and thought ‘That is a description of my ideal job.’ But I was nervous about it not being a permanent role. Head versus heart, and I’m so glad I let my heart win. Since then I have worked in primary schools, with health referrals from GPs and the successful pilot of the model within secondary school provision. All being true to Zone West’s aim of placing the child at the heart of provision.” (Claire Crow, Project Manager)**

**" The thought of self-employment terrified me at first, but the more people I spoke to about it the more I realised what I've been missing out on for years! The freedom and flexibility it provides far outweigh any worries I had in the beginning, which were mainly my fear of maths and spreadsheets and the tax man. As it turns out these are the tasks I love doing, the sense of satisfaction of being in control of your schedule, your earnings and your work life balance are totally worth the 5 minutes it took to register with HMRC, create a spreadsheet and send an invoice each month. My only regret is not becoming self-employed sooner!" (Sarah Spoor, Link Worker)**