

Peer Support Framework and Guidance

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Purpose of this framework

Synergy Mental Health Alliance sees value in a collaborative approach to transforming experiences and outcomes for people affected by mental illness and people who support them, including carers. We are committed to having voluntary peer support roles and paid Peer Support Workers supporting people with mental illness in the community. The existing good practice within the Sheffield voluntary and community sector has been brought together in this Framework and Guidance. The purpose of this document is to underpin a collaborative approach to peer support practice, roles, outcomes, training and supervision within the new Primary and Community Mental Health Service.

Who is this framework and guidance for?

These guidelines are for Synergy Sheffield Mental Health Alliance operating partners to guide how they deliver peer support.

The principles and approaches of peer support

The principles and approaches of peer support have been adapted from Synergy Sheffield Mental Health Alliance's values and incorporate the Peer Support Charter, developed by NSUN.

Compassion – Peers are able to draw on personal experience of mental health in their lives. They are uniquely placed to show empathy and understanding as they share your journey with you. As living examples of how life can change for the better, they are able to offer the encouragement and hope that are key features of peer support.

Inclusivity – By valuing individuals' qualities and experiences, a sense of belonging is created. Peers connect through sharing mental health challenges, as well as other life experiences. Diversity is crucial to peer support inclusivity and is varied by ethnicity, culture, social status, age, gender identity, disability and sexuality.

Innovation – Championing paid peer support roles and empowering individuals to embrace new approaches and creative ways of working, to help those struggling with their mental health and wellbeing.

Collaboration – Working together, we draw upon the skills of each individual and can achieve so much more than we could apart.

Accountability – Being open and honest with all who are involved in mental health care in Sheffield. Developing a trusting relationship that is less formal than other interventions whilst maintaining the same level of confidentiality.



What is Peer Support?

Peer support is an intentional practice of sharing lived experience in a non-directive, purposeful way. It involves exchanging experiences in a way which inspires hope and resilience through shared learning. It is founded on the principle of mutual respect and a joint agreement of what is helpful, bringing hope of an empowered future to others.

A Peer Support Worker is someone who is there to guide, empathise and support the person as an individual, in a journey of empowerment and freedom. They are also there to suggest tools and resources to help lead a fulfilling life. The Peer Support Worker supports the person to view their situation with clarity, purpose and self-acceptance. Through this therapeutic relationship, both can work together to exchange experiences, enabling and encouraging each other to take "baby" or incremental steps to one giant leap through mental health.

Social support increases resilience to stress, and improves longevity, health and wellness. When people feel heard and seen - a deep healing occurs.

Peer support offers a unique perspective and can be used alongside other interventions.

Peer support is:

- Listening without prejudice
- Creating a safe, supportive, appreciative and valuable service
- Delivering by someone with lived experience
- Valuing and making use of lived experiences
- Empowering/thriving
- Mentoring
- Building and sustaining a therapeutic relationship

Peer support is not:

- Assuming what people's individual needs are
- A befriending service but it should be a friendly, supportive and social environment
- Making assumptions about any past interactions or treatments
- Therapy. Rather, it is used to compliment therapy as well as other interventions



Why are we integrating peer support?

Building a strong foundation that peer support will grow from is important so that all services work together collaboratively to identify gaps and opportunities. We are celebrating newfound ways of working and joining up what is already there.

Integrating peer support is vital to deliver better mental health services. We appreciate there is already a lot of peer support in the voluntary sector. Working collaboratively can enhance/strengthen services so that they are joined up; ensure that collaboration is embedded in services and expanded over time.

Many people who have mental health conditions and unseen disabilities may have struggled their entire lives. When support or help comes to an end, they have to manage on their own or find help in the voluntary sector. Frustrations with discontinuities in care and help suddenly stopping, the processes of assessment and whether they are getting the right treatment, a referral system that can feel unfriendly and difficult to navigate alone are common issues that people experience.

How are we integrating peer support?

Following the collaborative approach of the Synergy Sheffield Mental Health Alliance, we are working to embrace the needs of peers and the partner organisations. Roles and organisational process training and line management and supervision for specific roles sits with each partner organisation.

Key elements:

- A consistent approach to recruitment, training, delivery, evaluation, learning, and sharing. This will ensure that all Peer Support Workers and all Peer Supporters share good practice and ensure consistency of delivery.
- It is vital that Peer Supporters and Peer Support Workers understand the matrix approach and what they can source from where and whom; e.g., that the line-managing/operational organisation pays their expenses/salary and offers safeguarding training, supervision and clearly stated processes, etc.
- Peer Supporter roles which are voluntary must have an appropriate level of training, supervision, and accountability.
- Partner organisations are responsible for the peer support training and practice development within, and pastoral support for Peer Supporters, Peer Support Workers, and Peer Support Worker supervisors.



- Each Synergy Sheffield Mental Health Alliance partner organisation is responsible for:
 - recruiting and line managing Peer Supporters/Workers; providing organisational training to do with their operational role, and providing supervision.
 - Peer Supporters/Workers self-development in their role so they can then be the most effective support to others.
 - Delivery of peer support interventions with clients or peer support activity.
- There are peer support standards in the form of workplace competencies that Peer Support Workers are expected to demonstrate in line with Health Education England (HEE) requirements of training, responsibility and accountability. Some Peer Supporters can also be given the opportunity to develop their own skills to meet the criteria and undertake competencies for PSW roles – and partner organisations need to provide people with these development opportunities.
- Operating partners take an Asset Based Community Development approach which means thinking innovatively about how people with lived experience can get involved – offering different types of opportunities.
- The 'Principles and Approaches of Peer Support' is recognised, respected, evaluated, and shared. It is evaluated for impact on clients' recovery and how this is valuable to other roles.
- Peer Supporters and Peer Support Workers need to be at a certain point in their own recovery where they can be safe in the role. The partner organisations providing the positions for Peer Supporters/workers need to provide ongoing support with personal risk management. Peer Supporters/Workers will not be expected to take on responsibilities that include risk management for clients. They should participate in supervision sessions and have separate, individual line management, training, and personal development goal setting and coaching.
- People being considered for all peer support roles must have directly received the support of at least one of the mental health services in Sheffield (voluntary or statutory). This vital element of direct, lived experience brings a fundamental understanding of situations and approaches adopted by people seeking support from partner services.



- Peer Supporters/Workers must be confident in managing their own mental health and have their own support systems in place. They may be asked to hold the distress of others and so they need to feel able to do this.
- Peer Supporters/Workers must be willing and able to share their personal experience on an equal level that supports, empowers, and brings hope to the people they work with.
- Peer Supporters can go on to be Peer Support Workers.

Peer Support Groups

Peer support groups are an important, yet distinctive, part of peer support.

Peer support groups are very versatile and support many different conditions. Some groups are quite widely known; for example, those for anxiety, depression, personality disorders and obsessive compulsive disorder, hoarding disorders and eating disorders. In addition, there are groups with a focus on a particular life experience, rather than a particular mental illness; such as bereavement, substance misuse or gambling addiction.

Whether formal or informal, most groups across Sheffield are run by organisations in the voluntary sector. More rarely, there are some that are run in association with, or as a spin-off from, statutory services.

Whilst there is a recognition of the many peer support groups available in Sheffield, there are still gaps which the framework can look to address.

To be effective, a Peer Support Group should consider the environment in which the group is held.

Many peer support groups are face-to-face. However, they can also be run on-line or as a blended approach (having a range of options) which is particularly important to those not able to attend face-to-face for reasons that may include a physical disability or a mental health condition; e.g. social anxiety, panic attacks or agoraphobia.

What are the peer roles?

All roles must have 'peer support' in them. Voluntary Peer Supporters assist the operating partners to support the Primary and Community Mental Health Service. Peer Support Workers undertake a formal role in support of others in their recovery.

There are two types of peer support roles: Peer Supporter and Peer Support Worker.



Peer Supporter (voluntary) assists Peer Support Workers with individuals who feel they would benefit from talking to a peer about a specific need(s) or work within groups/activities.

Peer Support Worker (paid with VCSE partners) works with individuals, groups of 2/3, and larger peer groups. Often the Peer Support Worker role has an added responsibility or specialism; e.g., Crisis.

Managing Risk

All partner organisations will need to ensure that they have clear processes for managing and assessing risk (including personal), and this will need to form part of training and supervision for the peer workers. The organisations responsible for line management will need to train and support on activity specific risk assessment and management.

There will need to be a process for assessing referrals, to ensure the referrals for the Peer Support Workers are appropriate and to ensure any identified risks are managed effectively.

A collaborative method of recording complaints would need to be in effect between the partner organisations, to share learning and ensure feedback that is received is actionable.

Supervision

A clear line of operational supervision and accountability must be provided by the partner organisation, along with peer support activity risk assessments. The partner organisations will ensure that 1:1 supervision is held with the Peer Support Workers every 4-6 weeks and as part of this supervision, could include the following:

- Managing mental health and wellbeing
- Caseload management
- Personal development planning (training/career progression)
- Health and safety



Referrals

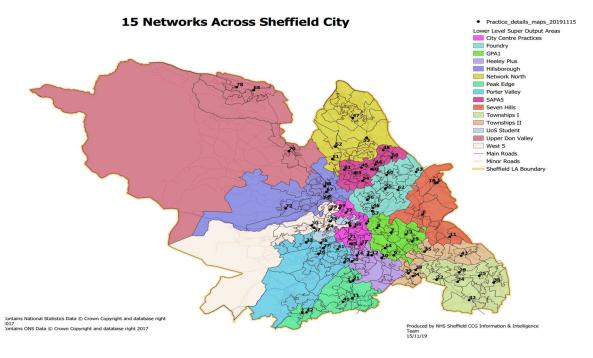
Peer Support Workers will be embedded into a Primary Care Network and will receive referrals from the appropriate Multi-Disciplinary Team for each of the Primary Care Networks.

The Joy App will be utilised by all partner organisations and all staff working within the Peer Support Framework, to record client contact. The Joy App is interoperable with System One and EMIS and allows referrals to voluntary and community organisations in just a few clicks. It will enable tracking of referrals and the exchange of information between the NHS and VCSE (with informed patient consent). The Joy App will ensure VCSE's commissioned using mental health funding, are supported to be able to flow data to the nationally mandated Mental Health Services Dataset.

The Peer Support Model

There are 15 Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in Sheffield and all PCNs will have access to peer support, subject to the needs of that particular community. The service will be evaluated routinely to ensure that it can be flexible to meet demands of specific communities.

The Peer Support Coordinators will sit across all 15 PCNs – **please see map below** - bringing the Peer Support Workers and the Peer Supporters together and working alongside all of the partner organisations.





What training is available?

All Peer Support Workers will be required to complete the following training, in addition to any organisation specific training:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Safeguarding Adults
- Safeguarding Children
- GDPR
- Mental Health Awareness

In addition to this, Peer Support Workers will be enrolled on the Health Education England training, subject to availability.

Appendices

Appendix A – Working Group Members

Experts by Experience Tammy Raines, Louise Todd, Pascale Cartron,

Paul Roper, Lauren McCormick, Kate Steele

Space to Breathe Andy Freeman

Manor and Castle Development Trust Debbie Mathews

Chilypep Laura Abbot

African Voices Platform Enoch Karimba

Hoarding Disorders UK Jo Cavalot

Rethink Mental Illness Sarah Batty

Additional contributions from:

Voluntary Action, Sheffield Lewis Bowman and Paul Harding

SODIT Stephanie De La Haye



Appendix B – Peer Support Worker Role Description

Hours per week: 21 hours (option of working 3 days per week or other flexible working pattern available)

Annual salary (pro-rata): £23,939 (£14,369 part time)

Job Summary

As a Peer Support Worker in the voluntary sector, you will be working with individuals or small groups who require support from someone who understands. This connection may be made over the phone, by remote meeting or face-to-face. Bringing your lived experience, you will have the desire to support and encourage others on their individual recovery journeys.

By drawing upon your own experiences of mental health challenges and services, and sharing them when appropriate, you will inspire, role model, and inform others in similar situations and support them in finding their own path to recovery.

The Peer Support Framework is a partnership between voluntary sector services in Sheffield, with the purpose and drive to deliver and embed peer support in the communities across Sheffield. Building a strong foundation from which peer support will grow, is important, so that all services work together collaboratively to identify gaps and opportunities. We are celebrating newfound ways of working and joining up what is already there. Integrating peer support is vital to deliver better mental health services for the people of Sheffield.

What I do and achieve

- listen, share, and value the people you work with
- role model and provide positive examples of hope and possibility
- provide practical information and signposting
- show understanding, acceptance and empathy based on shared experience
- help to access community facilities and resources
- support individuals to develop ideas for coping strategies and problem-solving skills
- help individuals identify their own hopes, dreams, and aspirations and to explore opportunities and ways to realise them
- plan and deliver group support
- provide guidance to, and work alongside, the Peer Supporters
- be mindful of the role carers/families play in supporting their loved one, ensuring they are signposted for support if needed
- follow safeguarding and risk assessment procedures



Who I am

I have the essentials covered:

- personal experience of recovery from mental health challenge
- the desire and ability to share personal experiences of mental health and recovery to support, empower and bring hope to others
- the confidence to work with small groups
- an awareness of self-management resources and coping strategies
- an ability to empathise with others and form trusting relationships
- a non-judgemental approach and an ability to maintain appropriate boundaries
- good listening and communication skills
- reliability and good time keeping
- an ability to take responsibility for your own self-care
- self-awareness
- willingness to utilise the support and supervision provided by the Peer Support Mentor/Coordinator

I may also have:

- experience of working for a voluntary sector organisation
- experience in a health or social care setting
- Qualifications in Health and/or Social Care

Appendix C – Peer Supporter Role Description

Peer Supporter (Volunteer)

Location: Sheffield

Service/Department: Sheffield Peer Support Framework

(volunteer role done on a monthly hours basis)

Hours per month: Hours are on a flexible basis, with a suggested 1-1.5 days day week. Benefits As a volunteer there is no pay, but there will be access to training and supported supervision. Travel and other expenses will follow a finalised and agreed policy.

Agreement: Voluntary

As a volunteer with the Peer Supporter role, you will be assisting in supporting individuals who require support, but from the perspective of someone who understands. This connection may be made over the phone, by remote meeting or face-to-face. We're flexible on this, you may choose to work on one or all of these ways.



Bringing your lived experience, you will have the desire to support and encourage others on their individual recovery journeys. You will be able to clearly draw upon and share, your own experiences of mental health challenge and services in order to inspire, model, and inform others in similar situations and support them in finding their own path to recovery.

The Peer Support Framework is a collaboration of organisations delivering and embedding peer support in the communities across Sheffield. Building a strong foundation that peer support will grow from, is important, so that all services work together collaboratively to identify gaps and opportunities. We are celebrating newfound ways of working and joining up what is already there. Integrating peer support is vital to deliver better mental health services for the people of Sheffield.

What I do

- actively listen, share, and value the people you work with
- role model and provide positive examples of hope and possibility
- assist in providing practical information with help of Peer Support Workers
- show understanding, acceptance and empathy based on shared experience
- help to access community facilities and resources where appropriate with help of Peer Support Workers/other staff
- support individuals to develop ideas for coping strategies and problem-solving skills
- help individuals identify their own hopes, dreams, and aspirations and to explore opportunities and ways to realise them
- follow safeguarding and risk assessment procedures with the guidance of Peer Support Workers/other staff

Who I am:

- personal experience of recovery from mental health challenge
- feel able to volunteer but may still be still be on a journey/recovery
- want to volunteer (this could be for a variety of different reasons; e.g. not quite feel ready for work, retired, studying, caring, feel it important to volunteer alongside work/other things)
- the desire and ability to share personal experiences of mental health and recovery to support, empower and bring hope to others
- have some capacity to manage my own mental health needs
- an ability to empathise with others and form trusting relationships
- a non-judgemental approach and an ability to maintain appropriate boundaries
- good listening and communication skills, reliability and good time keeping.
- an ability to take responsibility for my own self-care and willingness to utilise the support and supervision provided by the Peer Support Mentor/Coordinator



Other things we want you to know/And most importantly/Things you may also have:

We welcome applications from all backgrounds, to reflect the diversity of our city and mental health conditions. This includes LGBTQA+, Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugees, carers, and those with a variety of conditions including psychosis, eating disorders and personality disorders. All of our experiences of life can be brought in the role.

Appendix D - Peer Support Coordinator Role Description

Location: Sheffield

Service/Department, Sheffield Peer Support Framework

Hours per week: 35 Hours

Annual salary: £33,706

Job Summary

As a Peer Support Coordinator in the voluntary sector, you will be managing and supporting a team of Peer Support Workers and Peer Supporters. Along with your fellow Peer Support Coordinator, you will ensure that all members of the team are supported in their roles, both individually and as a team.

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What I do and achieve

- listen, share, and value the people you work with
- plan and deliver group supervision to the team, based on their collective needs
- assist Peer Support Workers and Peer Supporters to plan and deliver group support
- build relationships with a range of organisations and groups
- ensure that appropriate staff resource is in place to meet demand
- role model behaviours and values, as a lead practitioner, providing expertise and guidance on practice issues to the team



- support and develop your team through on the job coaching, individual supervision and group supervision
- support the recruitment and induction of staff and volunteers within the service
- ensure effective communications are in place and the team is informed of organisational and service developments
- work with the team in identifying, developing and maintaining quality improvements
- seeking opportunities for positive and progressive change and innovation in the delivery of services.
- work closely with the voluntary sector organisations to monitor and evaluate the service delivery and management
- follow safeguarding and risk assessment procedures

Who I am

I have the essentials covered:

- personal experience of recovery from mental health challenge
- the desire and ability to share personal experiences of mental health and recovery to support, empower and bring hope to others
- experience of managing a team
- the capacity to manage own mental health needs
- good listening and communication skills, reliability and good time keeping

I may also have:

- an understanding of the diverse communities in Sheffield
- knowledge and/or experience of the voluntary sector services in Sheffield
- experience in a health or social care setting
- qualifications in Health and/or Social Care

Appendix E - Peer Support Workers, A Managers Guide

Preparing for the Arrival of PSWs

This document is for Managers to support with the planning of introducing PSWs into services and outlines some key considerations on how to approach this.

Why is preparing for PSW roles important?

Peer support worker roles are unique as they are unlike most other paid staff positions because workers use their lived experience of mental health difficulties as a tool to give and receive support. If not managed appropriately, it can lead to feelings of resentment from both peers and other colleagues and peer supporters being treated as "extra pair of hands" or asked to undertake duties inappropriate to



their role. It can also lead to increased staff turnover, poor morale and mixed messages being given to clients.

When introducing peer support roles to established services, there can sometimes be concerns from staff such as:

- Expectations that busy staff will be required to take on additional responsibilities for supporting PSWs and the 'knock on' effect it will have on staff workloads
- Concerns that PSWs have lived experience of mental health difficulties and are too vulnerable or at risk of becoming unwell to be working in services
- They do not understand what peer support is and / or have inaccurate preconceptions

Like any other HR activity, staff will need to be able to ask questions and discuss in a safe space. It is good practice to allow as much time as possible prior to a PSW joining the team so that conversations have taken place before they start their employment.

Preparation:

Preparation is essential in making sure PSW roles are embedded alongside existing team members and it can helpful to think about the following in your planning:

Staff Meetings / Away Day: Provide opportunities to discuss how PSWs will 'fit' alongside existing services either as part of Team Meetings or an Away Day. It can be useful to include as many perspectives as possible such as staff, Expert by Experience (EbE/ExE) and volunteers in these conversations. It may be helpful to include:

- An overview on Peer Support: include information on what we mean by peer support; what are the planned duties of PSW? Explain how Peer Support is provided; how often will supervision happen; how many days per week will they be working in the service, etc
- Listening: allow in enough time to allow everyone to be heard and share their thoughts, concerns and hopes. Planning a team 'follow up' session can be helpful
- Hearing from others: It may be useful to invite other staff from services or projects who already employ PSWs to share their experiences. Sometimes hearing from others who have embedded peer support into their operations can reassure and provide 'tried and tested' ways of working from you can learn



 1:1 / Group Conversations: Some challenges are best handled individually or in small groups so key to ensure these are in place if required

Supervision:

Supervision: PSWs require a named staff supervisor who is responsible for supporting and assessing them in their role.

Staff / Group Supervision: Keeping peer support as a regular item on individual staff or group supervision as it allows for ongoing conversations around peer support-related issues.

Inductions: Plan in adequate time for PSWs to spend time / shadow key staff and services to build their understanding of the organisation and work. It can also help to build and / or strengthen relationships.

Managing Expectations:

It is likely the service is introducing PSW roles for the first time and certainly ones that will be operating to HEE national competencies. However, this can take time to get right and there may be 'teething problems' along the way. Be open, allow the team to be honest with challenges and successes, and plan for future conversations to review progress.

Appendix F – Health Education England (HEE) Principles of Peer Support

- Building safe and trusting relationships based on sharing lived experience of mental health difficulties and services and using this to develop connections.
- Ensuring that relationships are built on the values of mutuality and reciprocity.
- Respecting the diversity of each person's experience, and their particular background or cultural context.
- Recognising and placing values on peers' personal experiential knowledge which can complement, or provide alternatives to, present models of mental health (e.g. medical or psychological models).
- Enabling people who are supported to exercise choice about the way in which peer support is given and received, both directly and at an organisational level (influencing the ways in which peer support is integrated with and offered through teams).



- Enabling people who are supported to make use of their own strengths, skills and strategies.
- Working progressively to help people learn from their experiences and better equip themselves for living well.
- Understanding and recognising the communities from which people come;
 the communities they choose to be part of, and the ways in which these have and will shape their experiences.
- Working inclusively and equitably by helping people to become (re)integrated into their communities or to overcome the challenges they may face around this, by building and strengthening connections with their families, friends, support networks and wider communities.

Appendix G – Health Education England Competencies for Mental Health Peer Support Workers

Understanding the values of peer support and the principles that underpin its implementation:

- Values of peer support workers
- Principles of peer support

Knowledge for peer support workers:

- Knowledge of mental health and associated difficulties
- Knowledge of trauma-informed care
- Knowledge of local services and sources of mental health care
- Knowledge of professional, legal and ethical frameworks
- Knowledge of, and ability to work with, issues of confidentiality, consent and information sharing
- Knowledge of safeguarding procedures
- Knowledge of self-harm and suicide prevention, and procedures for maintaining safety

Core relational skills:

- Understanding of recovery-focused and person-centred approaches
- Able to draw on and share lived experience
- Able to develop and maintain a mutual and reciprocal peer relationship



- Able to engage and support families and carers
- Able to use active listening and communication skills in a peer relationship
- Able to work with difference

Supporting people as a peer support worker:

- Able to support people in their personal recovery
- Able to help people engage in activities that are meaningful to them 27
- Able to help people develop coping and problem-solving skills
- Able to collaboratively discuss care and support options
- Able to contribute to co-production of individual care and recovery plans
- Able to facilitate access to care and sources of support
- Able to support transitions in care

Working with teams and promoting people's rights:

- Able to work as part of a team
- · Able to work with other organisations and services
- Able to offer a personalised recovery perspective
- Able to promote the rights of people being supported
- Self-care and support

Ability for PSWs to reflect on their work:

Able to make effective use of supervision

Meta-competences for peer support workers

Optional skills: Using psychological approaches to support personal recovery:

- Able to help people to make use of psychological approaches to support their recovery
- Able to work with people in groups
- Able to support people's use of digital interventions

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Competences for organisations supporting the peer support worker role:

- Ability to assure appropriate recruitment and support of peer support workers
- Ability to organise work-based supervision of peer support workers



Appendix H – NSUN Peer Support Charter

