

The
Peer
Partnership



Lived experience improving lives

PEER SUPPORT

Training, Consultancy, and Service Delivery



About Us

The Peer Partnership's aim is to promote the welfare and wellbeing of people living with long-term physical or mental health conditions and protected characteristics. Through its parent organisation, Brigstowe, The Peer Partnership has a long history of service user involvement and has developed a wide range of peer support services including peer mentoring, recently diagnosed groups, social events and skills workshops.

The Peer Partnership has been set up to support the development, adoption, and spread of peer support programmes in all their forms. Using our experience of designing and implementing both one-to-one mentoring and group peer support models, we can support you and your organisation to create programmes that take the lived experience of people who have gone through difficult circumstances and help them to become effective agents of change to support people struggling to live in similar situations.

Contents

Training for Peer Workers	4
Training for Professionals	6
Consultancy	8
Service Delivery	9
Testimonials	10

Contact Us

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Our Vision

We believe that one of the best ways for people to overcome difficulties in their lives is to speak to those who have experienced similar situations. Our vision is a world where people with lived experience empower others to improve their own wellbeing, and have opportunities to thrive when living with long-term physical and mental health conditions and protected characteristics. We work toward this vision by providing and spreading peer support solutions, where people take their experiences in overcoming obstacles and barriers to living the life they want to lead and share them with others facing similar circumstances.



Our Services

In order to work towards our vision, we provide a variety of services that can support the adoption and spread of peer support at every level, including:

Training

We develop and provide all the training for volunteers to have the knowledge and confidence to fulfil the role of a peer worker.

We also provide training workshops to professionals on how to develop peer support services, ensuring they understand the models, benefits, and complexities of providing effective peer support programmes.

Consultancy

We provide consultancy for the development of new peer support programmes through being commissioned by service partners.

We also seek opportunities to expand our existing peer support programmes by partnering with external organisations to implement new service offerings, thereby helping even more people living with long-term physical or mental health conditions and protected characteristics.

Service Delivery

We design and implement peer support programmes as the foundation of our work, in order to evidence the effectiveness of peer support and continually improve our expertise.

Training for Peer Workers

Our training sessions for peer workers are designed to provide those with lived experience the skills and confidence to provide effective and safe support to people in a similar situation.



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One-to-One Peer Support Training

This 3-day course is designed for peer workers who will be working one-to-one with others in similar circumstances. The 6 modules are designed to support understanding of what peer support is for, what it is not for, and key communication and goal-setting skills that will support peer workers to work effectively, safely, and confidently with service users.

Module 1 – What is Peer Support

Module 2 – Boundaries, Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Module 3 – Motivational Interviewing and Active Listening Skills

Module 4 – Goal Setting and Action Planning

Module 5 – Overcoming Obstacles and Barriers

Module 6 – Case Studies

Group Peer Support Training

This 3-day course is designed for peer workers who will be facilitating group sessions with others in similar circumstances. The 6 modules are designed to support understanding of what peer support is for, what it is not for, and how to organise and manage a group effectively and confidently to ensure a safe environment for all.

Module 1 – What is Peer Support

Module 2 – Boundaries, Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Module 3 – Motivational Interviewing and Active Listening Skills

Module 4 – Group Dynamics and Facilitation

Module 5 – Recognising and Managing Challenging Behaviour

Module 6 – Designing and Presenting Activities for Groups

How to Book

All of our modules can be provided as individual half-day sessions, and we are happy to organise a package that best suits the training needs of your peer support programme. The training can be provided in person or online.

Each module is half-day, and suitable for up to 15 participants.

We can organise training sessions that are split over a longer period, especially if your peer workers would find it hard to manage long training days. Our sessions can be split into 2-hour sessions and provided online to ensure your peer workers can find an appropriate training schedule for their needs.

To discuss your training needs, please contact us at info@peerpartnership.org or call us on 0117 955 5038.

Feedback

“Fabulous support and excellent training from the trainers; two wonderfully talented, professional and kind, inclusive souls.”

“I’m very, very happy I volunteered for this, it’s been a very positive experience, even when I found it a bit worrying or difficult. The trainer was great and very understanding in working round my condition.”

“Overall, excellent experience. Things are so well organised and it makes it very easy to jump in even with little time to prepare.”

“This is a service that is greatly appreciated and very much needed. So many do not get the opportunity that we are providing. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this.”

“The group were very supportive of each other and shared lots of ideas to help manage symptoms.”

“Just doing the peer support has made me more confident over time. What also helps are the supervision sessions where we talk things over and share how to approach things.”

Training for Professionals

Our training has been designed to help organisations and staff who work in a support setting to explore and understand how to design and develop peer support programmes. This includes practical workshops on service design and delivery, and skills workshops to support the writing of proposals and the recruitment and management of peer workers.

FIND OUT MORE



Designing Peer Support Services

How to Design a Peer Support Service

Explore the different forms of peer support, including one-to-one mentoring, support groups, and peer-led workshops, and consider the practical considerations around designing, developing, and launching a peer support programme in your services.

“Everything about the breakdown of every aspect of how the service works, what a peer mentor does, time and resources was clear and concise. Really liked the way the activities were put together, very clear and easy to use.”

“A well-structured workshop, delivered by a knowledgeable course leader who ensured the session was engaging and interactive with plenty of opportunity to ask questions and to speak with other course attendees.”

“This training has provided a lot of really useful things to consider in terms of growth and support for the service users.”

“It’s invaluable to learn from a professional that has lived experience of setting up a peer support model.”

How to Recruit, Supervise, and Retain Peer Volunteers

Increase your confidence in the recruitment, training, supervising, and retaining of peer volunteers, who may have additional needs due to their lived experience. Effective recruitment processes can ensure the safety and sustainability of your peer support programme.

How to Engage and Maintain Lived-Experience Voices

There is nobody better to support your work than those who are representatives of the intended beneficiary group. Explore how to engage with those with the lived experience of your target audience to ensure effective development of services, as well as support for your programmes.

How to Write a Proposal for a Peer Support Service

Writing an effective proposal and service specification for peers will help you to make the case for funding and implementation. This session will support participants to consider all the aspects of writing a proposal, from service users’ needs to evaluation.

Skills and Best Practice Workshops

Boundaries in the Workplace

What are boundaries and how do we implement them? This session will support you to explore, understand, and implement both personal and professional boundaries in the workplace to ensure a safe space for all.

“It was the most useful training I’ve ever had in this role.”

Recognising and Responding to Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviour from service users can be a significant barrier to achieving goals within a supportive relationship. Learn how to recognise the signs and expressions of these behaviours, and techniques for managing situations when they arise.

“It should be mandatory for everyone who is working with vulnerable people.”

Group Dynamics and Facilitation

Learn about the stages of group development, the roles of people within the group environment and how you can keep participants engaged and focused. Learning facilitation skills can ensure that your groups achieve their intended outcomes.

How to Run a Focus Group

Ensuring that you engage and learn from the community you are trying to support is an essential part of the process of developing services for your service users. This session will look at how to run a successful focus group to effectively gather the thoughts and opinions of your target audience.

Goal Setting and Action Planning

This workshop explores goal setting and action planning skills to support workers to help service users explore options for overcoming barriers, identifying goals, and working out a plan for how to achieve them.

Boundaries in the Workplace Training, Eastside Community Trust, Bristol



In response to acquiring welcome hub status and experiencing an increase in visitors with complex issues, we provided training to support Eastside Community Trust’s staff to explore professional and personal boundaries. We explored what can make it difficult to maintain boundaries to ensure staff feel confident to manage the needs and expectations of those coming to their community centre.

“The training was excellent– the perfect mix of relaxed and informal, accessible, and personable, with the confidence of experience, skills, and knowledge. Our team really responded to the training style, and everyone learnt a lot and are thinking about things differently as a result. The content was tailored to our circumstances and experiences which made it relatable and relevant and helped us translate learning into new policies and procedures for our organisation.”

Stacy Yelland, CEO, Eastside Community Trust

Consultancy



Service Delivery

Designing peer support can be a daunting task. With no formal definitions or standards of practice, it can be hard to know where to start the design process, let alone how to develop the concept, recruit, train, and manage staff and volunteers, and ensure the service is safe and effective for service users.

We have over a decade of experience in directly delivering services for conditions such as diabetes, long COVID and HIV, and we have supported the implementation of services for these conditions and others with external partners, including health services, charities, and universities. We can provide advice and support at any stage of your programme, whether that's supporting the initial idea into an active programme or supporting the development or improvement of existing programmes.

We can support with:

- Design of the service
- Service user consultation
- Service mapping
- Terms of service documents
- Policy development
- Promotion of the service
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Setting up referral routes
- Training of staff
- Training of volunteers
- Supervision of volunteer templates
- Data gathering tools
- Evaluation



[FIND OUT MORE](#) 

Our consultancy is focused on ensuring that our partners are able to manage their peer support programme needs by themselves in future, making the work we do with them transferrable within the organisation without needing further consultancy later.

If you need support in an area that isn't listed here, contact us and we will be happy to discuss whether we're the right organisation to support your peer support development.

Timelines

Using our consultancy model, we can support you to progress the initial idea to live service provision in as little as 3 months.

Costings

As all services differ, we will quote on a project-by-project basis. Contact us for additional information and a quotation.

If you are looking to add peer support to your services in Bristol, North Somerset, or South Gloucestershire but do not have the time, capacity, or experience to design, develop, and maintain the service, [The Peer Partnership](#) can do this on your behalf.

We can provide full peer support service delivery for your service users. We will consult with you on the design and intended outcomes of the programme and fully manage the service for you.

We can support with:

- A formal proposal and service agreement
- Implementation of the project
- Recruitment and management of a dedicated service coordinator
- Training, recruitment, and management of volunteers
- Processing referrals
- Assessing service users and inducting them into the service
- Collection of data and feedback
- Update on progress through regular steering group meetings
- Annual evaluation of the service
- Ongoing consultation and development of the programme

We have successfully delivered full service delivery in HIV, type 2 diabetes and long COVID in Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire.

If you are looking to commission external management of peer support outside of Bristol, North Somerset, or South Gloucestershire, we can work with health, voluntary, community, or social enterprise partners in your area to deliver the service on your behalf. Please see our consultancy page (8) for details on how we can support such organisations to work with you and to expand and diversify their own service offering to include peer support.



[FIND OUT MORE](#) 

Testimonials

Long COVID, NHS Homerton COVID Rehabilitation Service



In 2023, we supported the implementation of our long COVID group peer support model into NHS Homerton Healthcare's COVID rehabilitation services. These groups supported participants to engage with their symptoms and their impacts, explore management and coping strategies, advocate for their needs with friends, family, employers and healthcare professionals, and consider planning for the future within their capacity.

"Clinical service and patient needs meant we wanted to provide a long COVID peer support offer in the community. There did not appear to be another organisation that offered the same level of knowledge, comprehensive training, and flexible support as The Peer Partnership. They have held our hand through the whole process and been an excellent source of guidance and steering, especially problem-solving when faced with obstacles. With their sheer knowledge and experience around peer support, the flexibility of the services they offer, their willingness to work around our needs, and most of all their passion for peer support, The Peer Partnership offer a unique and essential service like no other – to set up structured peer support, a vital offer to support people in their lives."

Amina Adeen, Long COVID Engagement Lead,
Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Type 2 Diabetes, Sirona care & health and Bristol Community Health



From 2018-2023, we partnered with Bristol Community Health and Sirona care & health to provide peer support for people living with type 2 diabetes in Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. This one-to-one support service allowed service users to explore the obstacles and barriers they faced in achieving lifestyle changes to support long-term healthier living.

"This model has delivered some exceptional results for mentors and mentees that, when expanded at scale, are an intrinsic and essential part of the future of community healthcare."

Matthew Areskog, People and Communities Service Manager, Bristol Community Health

"This project has changed lives and enabled people who thought they wouldn't be able to, to develop the confidence and strategies to self-care and manage their type 2 diabetes effectively, and in doing so, has saved the NHS huge amounts of money now and in the future."

Helene Gibson, Social and Wellbeing Service Lead, Bristol Community Health

Female Ex-Offenders, Step Together Volunteering



In 2021, we worked with Step Together Volunteering to develop their peer support service for female ex-offenders in Manchester and train their first peer volunteers. Step Together's Women's Peer Mentoring Programme aims to connect women and girls whose lives are affected by the criminal justice system with peer mentors - women with lived experiences who have achieved positive changes.

"The enthusiasm, expertise, and experience enriched our working relationship with The Peer Partnership. They understood our needs and what we were trying to achieve and their track record in setting up, running and developing peer mentoring programmes was extremely beneficial to us. It was an absolute delight working with The Peer Partnership and I hope very much that we will work together again as part of our future development plans."

Deborah Saw, Operations Manager, Step Together Volunteering

Stroke Survivors, Bristol After Stroke



In 2023, we worked with Bristol After Stroke to develop and implement one-to-one peer support for people who have survived a stroke. This programme matches people who have lived experience with people who are newly diagnosed or struggling to manage the impacts that a stroke can have on all aspects of their personal and professional lives.

"We have just launched our peer mentor service, which we could not have done without the expertise and knowledge of The Peer Partnership. They supported us through every step of the journey, sharing their learning and resources from other projects, which has benefitted our entire organisation. I cannot recommend this service highly enough."

Gemma Holden, Operations Manager, Bristol After Stroke

Students who identify as Trans and Non-Binary, University of Bristol



In 2022, we worked with the University of Bristol to implement peer support for students who identify as trans and non-binary. This programme matches trans and non-binary students with mentors to navigate their experiences of coming to the university environment as a trans or non-binary student, ensuring they know how and where to access support.

"The model put forward by The Peer Partnership gave us a way of providing better support to a vulnerable student group and improving their student experience. We were impressed with the expertise that The Peer Partnership brought, demonstrated through their other mentoring schemes. This work completed some wider work to improve the trans student experience, including offering training on trans awareness for staff and developing a set of guidance for students and staff."

Alex O'Driscoll, Student Inclusion Manager, University of Bristol

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