



Culture of Care Peer Support Implementation Space: Meeting Chat Overview

Thursday 8 January 2026, 14:00 – 16:00 | MS Teams

The meeting focused on peer support and lived experience (LE) roles within mental health services, with particular attention to workforce development, leadership, and infrastructure.

Participants reflected on a presentation that explored the value of lived experience leadership and peer support roles, noting how inspiring and insightful it was. There was strong interest in sharing materials such as slides, job descriptions, job plans, induction documents, and role-matching frameworks to support consistency and learning across organisations.

A key theme was the importance of infrastructure to support peer support workers (PSWs), including clear leadership, supervision, and defined roles. Several contributors discussed challenges experienced in their own trusts, such as role drift, peer workers feeling lost within teams, and a lack of consistent supervision. Concern was expressed about data suggesting a significant proportion of PSWs do not receive peer-led supervision, highlighting this as an area needing improvement.

The conversation explored the ongoing frustration around the need to repeatedly evidence the value of peer support and lived experience roles, despite a growing body of research showing their positive impact.

Participants noted that other professions are often not evaluated in the same way, and that the challenge lies less in the absence of evidence and more in getting that evidence recognised and acted upon at a strategic level—particularly in the context of financial pressures and organisational culture.

There was discussion about the distinction between “lived experience workforce” as a broad umbrella and the specific, skilled nature of the PSW role. Participants emphasised that peer support is a distinct profession with clear principles and competencies, and that not everyone with lived



experience is suited to or wishes to work as a PSW. The importance of “intentional” peer support roles, rather than informal or poorly defined use of lived experience, was highlighted.

The variability of support available for roles emerged as another key issue. Participants expressed frustration that the support and career progression available for peer support workers looks very different across trusts and questioned whether a more consistent, shared approach could be developed nationally.

Finally, there was reflection on the emotional and identity challenges faced by peer support workers, including concerns about how their lived experience is valued over time as they move further away from their own experiences.

Overall, the discussion highlighted strong commitment to peer support and lived experience roles, alongside shared challenges around consistency, recognition, supervision, and strategic investment.