



Culture of Care Peer Support Implementation Space: Meeting Chat Overview

Thursday 19 February 2026, 14:00 – 16:00 | MS Teams

The meeting focused on the evaluation of peer support roles, as well as connection, collective problem solving and sharing successes.

A central focus of the session was how to evaluate peer support in the following ways:

- Go beyond clinical outcome measures (e.g. avoiding reliance solely on symptom-based tools).
- Capture relational and values-based aspects of peer support.
- Demonstrate impact to senior leadership.
- Balance meaningful depth with accessibility and practicality.

Participants discussed:

- The challenge of designing evaluation processes that are rigorous yet not overly burdensome.
- The need to minimise disengagement when collecting feedback.
- Ensuring evaluation aligns with peer support values and principles.
- Whether peer support workers (PSWs) should be explicitly identified in service evaluations, particularly in sensitive contexts such as forensic services.

There was also reflection on commonly used system metrics (e.g. “reduction in bed days”), with suggestions that framing should shift toward more person-centred outcomes such as ensuring “the right amount of bed days.”

A research paper on the [APPEAR framework](#) (a realist-informed qualitative meta-synthesis of how peer support works) was shared as a useful evidence-informed approach to guiding evaluation.

The wording used in feedback and evaluation tools was also discussed. For example:

- The term “sympathy” was questioned, with suggestions that “empathy” may better reflect peer support values.
- There was recognition that small language shifts can significantly impact how lived experience roles are perceived.

This reflected a broader emphasis on maintaining authenticity and alignment with peer support principles.

Lastly, there was reflection on whether current evaluation challenges reflect the “growing pains” of a relatively new and developing profession. Participants recognised tensions between:

- Formal system requirements.
- The relational and values-based nature of peer support.
- The need to evidence impact without diluting core principles.