Where we are now?

In 2010, CPFT embarked on an ambitious programme to incorporate peer workers into the workforce. Since then we have delivered nine cohorts of training with more than 70 people gaining employment as peer workers and some going on being promoted to higher posts within the Trust. In 2017, we developed a new programme for peer employment. The new programme called ‘Peer Education Programme’ (PEP) has been designed to ensure peer workers are prepared for employment with CPFT. The new PEP will start in 2017 with training being delivered in Recovery College East. The training was first accredited in the USA with Recovery Innovations, but is now accredited in the UK with Open College Network (OCN). CPFT was awarded “demonstration” site status with the Implementing Recovery through Organisational challenges (ImROC) programme and has assisted many other organisations in their own peer worker developments. (For more information go to ImROC.org)

Useful CPFT website link pages

CPFT website has pages on recovery topics and peer employment information. (For more information go to cpft.nhs.uk/patients/peer-support)

If you have any concerns about any of CPFT’s services or would like more information, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on freephone 0800 376 0775 or e-mail pals@cpft.nhs.uk

Out-of-hours service for CPFT mental health service users
Contact Lifeline on 0808 808 2121, 7pm-11pm, 365 days a year

How do I book a place on the PEP?

To book a place on the Essential Information Session or for further information on the training programme, please contact Cheril Barks.

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Leaflet review date: March 2018
How does the Peer Education Programme work?

The recovery movement has seen the introduction of a new role, that of a peer worker. New to mental health, but not new to other health fields, the role of the peer is to increase hope and engagement by the power of “having been there”. Hope is the central belief required for people who face significant mental health challenges and forms an important part in supporting people’s transition into recovery. People with lived experience who want to become peer workers must first go through a training programme before they can apply for a post within the organisation.

What is recovery?

Recovery means different things to different people, but in mental health the term “recovery” is about building a meaningful and satisfying life in the presence or absence of symptoms or challenges. Recovery is a movement away from diagnosis, illness and symptoms, to health, strengths and wellness. These simple concepts are a radical challenge to existing mental health service provision and to the wider society in general.

The notion of recovery holds within it complex concepts. People do not recover in isolation, but are connected through social inclusion - ie (employment, housing, community connections and involvement), empowerment and self-awareness. These ideas can be challenging to service providers, carers, families, friends and the wider society.

What is a peer worker?

Peer workers are recruited because of their lived experience and their passion to support other individuals in their recovery journey.

They attend a challenging educational training programme and have to successfully complete all aspects of this prior to graduating. They are then interviewed for posts within CPFT, as and when they become available. Jobs are not guaranteed and peer workers must go through the same CPFT application and interview process as any other applicant. Peer workers use a recovery and coaching approach when working with others.

Who can apply for the training?

To be eligible for the PEP training, people need to have had significant mental health challenges, usually via accessing secondary mental health services and have a good understanding of their own recovery journey. They must be comfortable sharing their lived experience with others.

The PEP training

The training comprises of modules taught one day a week over 12 weeks. The training includes role plays, work experience days, homework, a reflective diary, assignments. It ends with a graduation celebration.

Topics covered include what is peer support, recovery language, self-esteem, assertiveness, communication, telling personal stories, managing boundaries, conflict resolution, spirituality and diversity and dealing with trauma.

Applicants must:

- Be dedicated to promoting recovery opportunities in the lives of peers
- Be able to utilise their own lived experience of recovery to inspire recovery in the lives of others
- Have a good level of secondary education to GCSE/Diploma level or evidence of equivalent
- Complete a wellness tool - ie, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) or (Whole Life Plan) and training application form
- Attend an Essential Information Session
- Be committed to actively participating in the training
- Want to work as a peer worker within CPFT after the training

"The training took us on a massive journey of self discovery and gave us an appreciation for our strengths".

[Image of a group of people holding certificates]