• Personal recovery is something worked towards and experienced by the individual. It is not something that can be done to a person.
• Peer workers provide visible role models of recovery and this offers people hope. Supporting personal recovery is the goal of peer workers. They are able to do this by looking at the whole person, ‘focussing on what is strong, not what is wrong’.
• Peer workers are able to share their personal experience of recovery and inspire hope. They show people that they have the power to recover through their capacity for creativity, care, compassion, realism and resilience.

Quote from a peer worker in post

“I was very fortunate to be given a post with the Cameo north team, who are an early intervention service for people with a first episode of psychosis. My role is to support the person, their family, and just to be there for them and listen to what they have to say. I also work closely with their care co-ordinators, supporting people on a practical level”.

“One lady who I have been working closely with finds it very difficult to trust people and finds it hard to get out and about. So far, I see her every week around the same time to take her to collect her medication. The relationship is now developing nicely and she is slowly starting to trust me. She is asking to go out more and with my help over time her goal is to get out for regular walks and go into town. “She said “without your help I wouldn’t be able to do all the other stuff that my CPN doesn’t have time to do”. “My role is to be there for people, in what ever way is needed”.

To find out more about how you can access and work with a peer worker, please speak to your care co-ordinator.

CPTF website has pages on recovery topics and issues.

To access more information on peer workers and recovery topics, please go to cpft.nhs.uk/patients/peer-support.

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

CPFT Out-of-hours’ service
Contact Lifeline on 0808 808 2121
7pm-11pm
365 days a year

Leaflet review date: March 2018

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**Corporate services**

What is a peer worker?

March 2017
What is a peer worker?

Someone who has been there themselves and can help a person to focus on their own recovery. A peer worker will have experience of having significant mental health challenges usually by accessing secondary mental health services themselves and can use this personal experience to help others on their recovery journey.

Where are peer workers employed?

We now have peer workers in many of the adult in-patient areas in Peterborough and Cambridge, as well as most of the adult locality teams, including Cameo and the Personality Disorder team. We also have a smaller number of peer workers based within children’s services. Our vision is to have peer workers working in every team!

How do I get a peer worker?

You can speak to your care co-ordinator about working with a peer worker, they will then see if someone is available to meet with you.

What can I expect from my peer worker?

You can expect to have a mutual understanding and a relationship built on strengths and hope. Peer workers can support you to attend appointments, engage with activities in the community and share some of their own experiences and recovery journey.

"Working with my peer worker was so helpful, it made me realise that I too can recover; things will get better".

What does a peer worker bring to the service?

TEAM MANAGER

"Peer workers provide a natural communication link and can act as mediators, overcoming clinical barriers to understanding your needs. They can challenge existing beliefs about expectations and attitudes towards people facing significant health challenges by modelling what is possible and offer help and support as an equal, showing that you can have the power to ‘recovery’. They can also help you by understanding the complex health and social care system and support you throughout your treatment towards ‘recovery’, as well as sharing experiences of ‘having been there’. "Having a peer worker has been so valuable. They are a vision of recovery and their positive recovery language offers a role model to the team".

What can a peer worker do?

• Hold the hope for a person receiving services and believe in their potential and strengths
• Value every peer as a unique human being
• Accept peers where they are at
• Listen non-judgementally to experiences of peers
• Encourage people to make their own choices
• Trust the authenticity of a peer’s personal experiences
• Express a genuine concern for a peer’s well-being

A peer worker can help you:

• Identify your hopes, dreams and aspirations
• Access voluntary / support groups
• Explore access to community activities
• Help you prepare for and accompany you to appointments
• Explore educational, leisure, employment and voluntary opportunities

What are the benefits having a peer worker work in your team?

What the peer worker can offer is ‘hope’. They are the experts by experience and their journeys are something tangible to share with individuals who struggle to take positives from their situations and the journeys they themselves might feel ‘stuck’ in. The peer worker’s experience allows them to pay attention to the whole journey of an individual from the minute they come into the service, with all the anxieties this also represents.

Peer worker: "I too have been on a ward and I know how scary this can be"