

Peer Carer Support Survey

A report by **healthwatch**
York for the
Northern Quarter Partnership

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Introduction

The Northern Quarter Project in York is working to change how we approach mental health in our city. This project is influenced by the community-based approach set up in Trieste, Italy. This approach connects people with already existing opportunities that can improve mental health and wellbeing.

The work in York is based in eight council wards in the north of the city which already have a wealth of community assets.

Peer support has come up in previous consultations around mental health in the city. The NQ Project has received funding to set up peer support and peer carer support. Information about these opportunities was shared with the voluntary and community sectors across York in late March.

In early March we put together two short surveys so people could give feedback to help shape initial proposals. This report summarises the results of the Peer Carer Support survey.

What is Peer Support?

Peer support is when people use their own experiences to help each other. There are different types of peer support, but they all aim to:

- bring together people with shared experiences to support each other;
- provide a space where you feel accepted and understood;
- treat everyone's experiences as being equally important;
- involve both giving and receiving support.

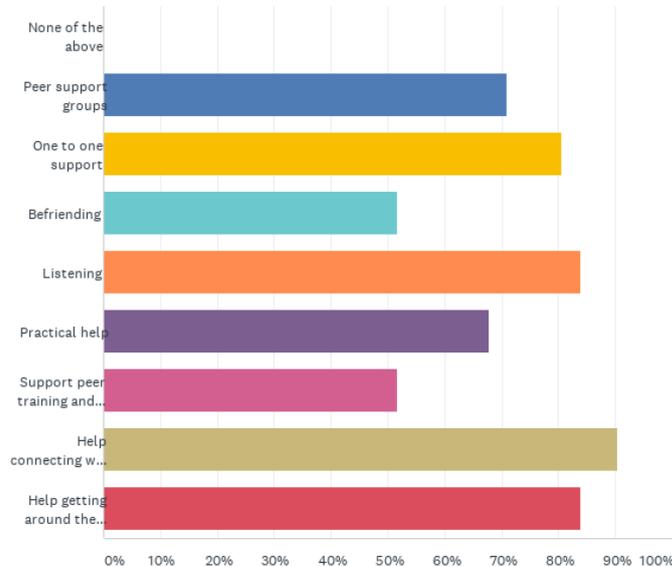
This might include groups, one to one support, befriending, listening, practical help, support challenge, help to navigate the mental health system, and peer education.

Peer Carer Support Survey Results

31 people responded to the survey

1 What kinds of support would you like a peer carer supporter to offer?

Q1 What kinds of support would you like a peer carer supporter to offer? Tick all that apply



(Full labels for final 3 columns: Support peer training and education; help connecting with other services and support; help getting around the mental health system.)

2 What difference do you think having a peer carer supporter can make to carers at the point the person they care for leaves hospital? Is there anything you hope that this project would achieve?

31 people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses to this question are:

Feeling less alone

A number of people wrote about carers feeling alone and isolated at this time and that having a peer carer supporter would help. It would help to have someone who understands the experience of a carer in this situation.

“Carers would feel less alone and more supported during difficult times”.

“I think having 1:1 peer support once leaving hospital will be a huge support as it will help carers to feel less alone and hopefully make the process less daunting for them”

“It could be life-changing! I have been in this position and it is so lonely and exhausting and so not about you as a carer or even as a person. Nobody understands what you are experiencing and nobody knows how to help.”

“A person who understands, who knows the system, who has time to talk”

Emotional support

There were a lot of comments about how a peer carer supporter could provide emotional support at a difficult time for carers.

“a peer is more likely to have some lived experience and be able to offer real empathy”

“Supporting with unhelpful thoughts and feelings especially around guilt.”

“At a very frightening and worrying time it would be great to have someone there to talk over concerns and what to expect”

Connecting to other services and support

A number of people made comments about how peer support could help a carer establish good communication with professionals and services.

“Carers would feel less alone and more supported during difficult times. I would hope that this would enable improved communication with professionals and be recognised as a respected and valuable service that all organisations know about and buy into to include in their referral pathways.”

“It would be good for carers in this situation to be put in touch with someone who is available to them and reliable and who communicates well with Mental Health Services.”

“I would hope that the peer supporter would be also able to help flag any issues from the carers' point of view with statutory services and be respected and listened to by them.”

Information – knowledge about the system

There were a number of comments about peer support enabling the sharing of knowledge and experience.

“Sharing knowledge of the system and what might be helpful for them and the person they care for”

“Ideally there would be information about how to get help when you/the person you care for needs it, how to avoid relapse, and somewhere to offload concerns and worries.”

“a peer is more likely to have some lived experience and be able to offer real empathy”

3 What support and training do you think a peer carer supporter would need?

Support

Among the 28 comments received, there were some about the type of support needed by a peer carer supporter. Some people said that supervision was needed. A few people felt that an organisation that is experienced in supporting carers would be good at offering this support.

“Support from an organisation who could offer supervision and training in carer needs and the services to help carers etc”

“all the usual mandatory training, but also some supervision style support so that will allow the peer to develop personally and not take too much home”

“Guidance and Supervision from professionals.”

“Support from a service geared up to supporting carers where they could refer carers to for welfare benefits; counselling etc. Also supervision, management and access to IT systems for monitoring etc”

Training needs

Most people who commented identified a number of training needs, with a few stating there were a lot of training needs. However, one respondent disagreed stating:

“None. Why would training be necessary to validate lived experience?”

A wide range of training needs were identified, including:

- Mental health first aid
- Suicide awareness
- First aid
- Safeguarding
- Communication skills – including listening skills
- Counselling
- Confidentiality and boundaries
- Carers rights
- Data protection
- Stress management
- Mental health conditions
- Insight into service models and roles
- Information about local networks and sources of support

4 Do you have thoughts on who should employ them?

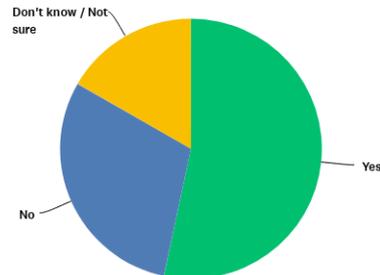
The 28 people who answered this question expressed a range of views with 18% answering ‘no’ to this question.

21% named a carer specialist organisation (York Carers Centre) as the best organisation to employ peer carer support workers, whilst 29% named a range of other specific organisations in both the voluntary and statutory sectors who could take on the role. Statutory mental health organisations were mentioned by 7% with half favouring them as providers and half saying they should not provide the service.

A further 18% commented that all local organisations could take the role of employers with an additional 7% stating that the ‘third sector’ should be the employers.

5 Is who employs them important to you?

Q5 Is who employs them important to you?



Of the 30 responses to this question:

- 53% said yes
- 30% said no
- 17% said don't know/not sure.

6 Would you be interested in knowing more or continuing to be involved? If yes, please leave you preferred contact details.

Of the 16 people who gave a response 2 said no, 2 left the section blank and 12 said yes.

Partners in the Northern Quarter



Information posted on the CCG's website: www.valeofyorkccg.nhs.uk



Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

