

Lived experience as part of the mental health workforce -
have your say!

Development of a Peer Workforce Strategy for Tasmania

What is the 'peer workforce'?

In recent years more and more organisations within our mental health system have started to employ people specifically for the expertise they've developed through their personal experience of mental ill-health and recovery, as a consumer or carer. These jobs are referred to as 'peer worker' roles and this growing part of our workforce is referred to as the 'peer workforce'.

Why do we need a strategy?

The peer workforce is spread across public mental health services and community service organisations. Given the growth and spread of the peer workforce, it would be helpful to have a strategy to support and strengthen its development. The Tasmanian Government has funded the Mental Health Council of Tasmania to develop a Peer Workforce Strategy.

Will it be helpful for me to provide feedback?

Yes, please! We are keen to hear your thoughts. We want to make sure the peer workforce is developed to make a real difference to your experience of our mental health system. We're interested to know what an ideal peer workforce looks like for you as mental health family, friends and carers. We want to hear your ideas on what's needed to deliver this.

1. Your contact details:

(required if you wish to enter competition draw to win a \$100 gift card)

Name

Email Address

Phone Number

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What does an ideal peer workforce look like?

The proposed vision for a peer workforce is:

'To grow a professional, dedicated peer workforce in Tasmania that supports better outcomes, promotes recovery within organisations and delivers benefits to the mental health system'.

Think about what we should aim for in developing our peer workforce.

'Professional', 'dedicated', 'promote recovery', 'deliver benefits to the mental health system'.

2. Does this vision fully capture the outcomes you'd like to see?

3. If not, what would you change or add to reflect what you think we should aim for in developing our peer workforce?

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How are we going to get there?

We'll need to focus on some specific areas to develop the peer workforce and achieve our aims. These might include things like increasing awareness and understanding of the peer workforce, training for the peer and non-peer workforce, qualifications and accreditation, career pathways, consistent roles, policies and procedures, and other priorities.

4. What areas do you think we should focus on to achieve our aim of developing the peer workforce?

5. What actions should we undertake in these areas to achieve our aim?

6. What should the priorities be?

7. What are the challenges?

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Your experience of the peer workforce

We're keen to hear about your experience of the peer workforce to date.

8. Have you performed or are you performing a role as a carer peer worker?

9. If yes, what was/is good about your experience and what could be improved?

10. Have you experienced the support of a carer peer worker in a service you've used?

11. If yes, what was good about your experience and what could have been better?

12. What duties do you think should be included in a carer peer worker job description?

13. What qualifications and training do you think carer peer workers should obtain?

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How should we talk about the peer workforce?

It's helpful if we're all using the same language to talk about the peer workforce, across services and within policy.

We're interested to hear whether you think the following terms and definitions accurately describe roles and elements within our peer workforce.

Carer – family and friends with a personal lived experience of providing support to a consumer.

Consumer – a person who has a personal lived experience of mental ill-health and recovery and who has used mental health services.

Lived Experience – the personal experience of a person's own mental ill-health and recovery or supporting someone with mental ill-health.

Peer support – formal, voluntary or paid support of people with mental ill-health by those with a lived experience as a consumer or carer.

Peer work – the professional application of a lived experience perspective to consumers, carers and the mental health system, programs and services.

Peer worker – a person specifically employed based on their expertise developed from their own personal lived experience of mental ill-health and recovery, as either a consumer or carer.

Peer workforce – the paid employment of peer workers within a professional work environment to specifically provide their expertise and perspective developed from their lived experience.

Recovery-oriented practice – support for people to recognise and determine their own recovery and well-being by setting their own goals, practices and aspirations.

14. Do these terms and definitions accurately describe roles and elements within our peer workforce?

15. Do you have any suggested changes to these terms or definitions?

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Any other information you'd like to share?

16. Do you have any other ideas or feedback you would like to provide on the development of the peer workforce?

Please tell us your thoughts here

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Thank you for your feedback!

Your responses will be de-identified and remain strictly confidential, unless you request otherwise.

Your feedback will be summarised in a report to be provided to the Mental Health Council of Tasmania. This report will help inform the Mental Health Council of Tasmania in developing the Peer Workforce Strategy.

We will share this report with you.

The Peer Workforce Strategy will be completed by the end of this year and is a key action under the Rethink Mental Health Plan.

Where can I get more information?

For more information or to discuss your response further, please contact Bec Thomas, Project Officer – Mental Health Carers Tasmania.

Email: Project.Officer@mentalhealthcarerstas.org.au

Phone: (03) 6228 7448