

Team Lead, Peer Mentor Development

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Peer Mentor Integrated Service. Mental Health and Learning Disabilities



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The Peer Mentor Integrated Service is a multi-disciplinary service. It is comprised of peer mentors and an award-winning Peer Mentor Development Team, working in partnership with a purpose to enable people to live their lives, guided by a strength and experience-based approach. Peer mentoring is a valuable form of care that specifically utilises the expertise of people with lived experience to provide practical, emotional, and social support to service users. Peer support can take many forms and is characterised by the sharing of lived experience to inform, inspire, model, and encourage maintaining wellness/recovery.

Within my role as Team Lead for the Peer Mentor Development Team, I provide overall operational support and leadership through a lived experience lens (having used mental health services myself). I implement a strategic approach in the running of the peer mentoring team, creating opportunities where possible and expanding these in line with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's (ABUHB) vision, in partnership with internal and external partners. A large part of the role is development and creating opportunities for those in lived experience roles whilst developing the peer service within ABUHB. Lived experience is still new to Wales and the role I uphold is currently the first management role with lived experience in Aneurin Bevan. I find this to be quite a special achievement.

“Peer support happens when people who have similar experiences of something difficult come together to support each other.”

The development team provides innovative and safe governance processes for peer mentor roles across the health board. They offer all peer mentors and employing teams support, consultation, and training throughout each phase of recruitment, employment, development, and evaluation of the role. The team also offers consultation to teams divisionally and nationally who may be considering developing the role within their service.

I enjoy being able to provide person-centred support having accessed NHS services myself, to enable individuals accessing services to live full and meaningful lives. I like improving the understanding of peer support across ABUHB. I enjoy collaborating with key



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stakeholders to identify benefits of peer support. As well as analysing any potential risks that allow opportunity to develop and implement informed, co-produced training packages, to overcome any challenges that could arise.

I enjoy creating an environment for those I work with to be their selves, supporting and walking along side those in their peer development. I champion lived experience as an important and valuable aspect to informing and improving, health care services and quality of life. I enjoy being able to provide supportive leadership to those I work with and ensuring that everyone feels valued, heard and validated. I like advocating for peer support and peer development at senior/exec level meetings to improve services.

In this job role I feel I am able to be my true authentic self, surrounded by like-minded people - it is often a feeling that is quite hard to describe or measure. Being in a role I am passionate about that meets and fulfils my core values is lifechanging. I really enjoy being part of changing mental health services for the better, ensuring as a team and health board we are being proactive in what we provide to people coming into services and to those delivering these services. I mostly appreciate being part of a service that is ensuring equitable employment opportunities for all living with a mental health illness and/ or learning disability and supporting individuals to sustain a full and meaningful life. I am grateful to work in this role.