



## 3 years down the road...

**1 in 4 people will experience mental health challenges within their lives.**

The people we work with experience inequalities and additional barriers in accessing mental health support and therapy. Our key focus remains the same as when we started: to improve experiences of services and outcomes for those clients.

We do this through our team of Peer Support Workers and Volunteers, who develop supportive relationships with clients, based on their own lived experience and a mutual understanding of mental health difficulties. Our team work with clients on the basis that sharing our experiences can provide strength to us all.

**Since LMWS launched, we have received 223 referrals to provide peer support for clients accessing therapy in our service.**



# Our Volunteers



Our Support Workers and Volunteers continue to demonstrate the positive impact that Peer Support can have on the recovery journey of our clients.

**34**



volunteers  
and

**4**

paid, part-time peer  
support workers

have helped a total of

**173**

clients with 1-2-  
1 support, to  
date

**1 in 5**

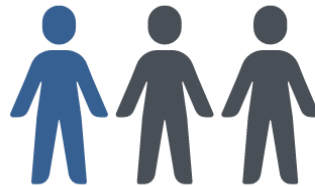
of volunteers

identify as LGBTQIA+



**1 in 3**

of volunteers are from a  
black or minority ethnic  
background



**100%**

of volunteers have  
lived experience of  
mental health  
difficulties



# Our Clients



With our expanded team (2 new Peer Support Workers joined us in July/Aug 2022), we have been able to support far more people from across the Leeds area, meeting them 'where they are', to offer person-centred support, based on the mutual sharing of experiences, ideas and strengths.

## 1 in 3



clients are from a black or minority ethnic background



## 44%

clients have a disability or long-term condition

Clients are supported by volunteers in their preferred community language, or through the use of interpreters to aid fair access.

## 39%

of clients identify as male and

## 55%

of clients identify as female



\*6% have not stated, recorded, or chose not to disclose gender



# Since our last report in Nov 2021, we have continued to help our clients in a range of different ways including...

Supporting clients to remain in the service and get the help that they need

Supporting clients with digital literacy and devices to help them be more confident accessing online support and appointments

Supporting clients while they are waiting to start therapy to manage their expectations with wait times

Buddying clients to their first peer support group outside of LMWS to meet people with shared experiences

Helping clients see the value in having therapy

Educating clients on what support they can get from LMWS to debunk myths

Supporting clients to access their first few therapy appointments

Helping clients take control of their own recovery and access support in their wider communities

Supporting clients to successfully leave therapy and build lives in their communities

Integrating peer support and lived experience into drop-ins in the wider community

Improving engagement by sharing our lived experiences of having therapy in LMWS

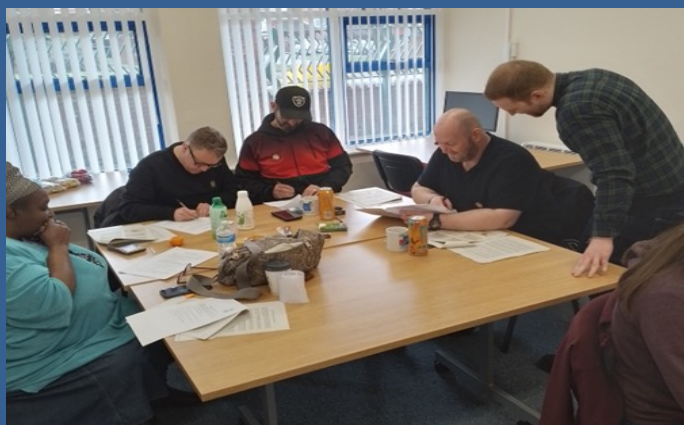
Preventing clients who face additional barriers in accessing therapy from being discharged from service

Helping clients reach 'recovery' as an improvement in their symptoms of anxiety and depression

Helping clients prepare for therapy and get the most out of it

Helping clients with social anxiety to challenge assumptions about themselves

Sharing wellbeing tips and resources with clients



Helping clients to complete therapy homework and put the skills they learn with their therapists into practice

Destigmatising accessing help for mental health issues

Supporting with flexibility of sessions: phone, in person, mix, video link, interpreter assistance.



# Quotes from our Clients



"We need more [peer supporters] for more people. It's great you've got someone there to talk to.

I think men need to be encouraged to talk to people more, too.

It gave me a sense of wellbeing. Feeling better in myself. She was so helpful, and we got on like a house on fire. Felt like I'd known her for years."

**"If someone was being referred for peer support, I would tell them how much of a good service it is because the peer supporter has experienced similar things - it makes it easier to connect with them."**

**"It was really good and I always looked forward to it. It was like having an older sister or friend that you could just talk to and they understood where you were coming from and the struggles you faced.."**

"Peer support was very helpful. It helped me feel supported and less lonely. I felt like I was relying on my grandson too much, so it was helpful to speak to someone else and have a different prospective. My time with peer support went very fast!"

**"Peer support helped me to feel less alone about how I was feeling and the problems I was facing. The thing I found really helpful was talking about ADHD and the struggles I was finding having only recently realizing I may have it. That was really powerful, as the struggles felt really unique but talking about them with her helped me feel more normal and less alone about it all**

**"I would prefer Peer Support all day long... [I] felt she could really resonate. My friends all say the same, they just want someone to talk to who gets it"**

**"It's nice to talk to people who've been through the same thing. It can be hard to explain to people who can't relate, and it's sometimes frustrating when they don't understand. It's just such a nice feeling to know I'm not alone"**

**"They supported me with accessing occupational health at work as [work] wanted me to work in a small space, which was making me anxious about COVID... Occupational health has since supported me, and I don't work in that space now. They [peer supporter] also sent me a lot of links to different groups, like Andy's Man Club, for me to access. I've since created a cycling group for anyone who's feeling a bit down and would like a bike ride around the canals."**

**"That [my peer support worker] would talk to me about her problems, that she'd been through it and managed to cope... gives me some hope that it's [anxiety] going to pass. She gave full support to me when I was low and the chats were a big help to get things out of my head. I would like to thank you for your help and support."**



# Quotes from our Volunteers



**"My best memory of Peer Support was when a client told me I had changed her life and that I had managed to help her in ways no one else had. Our shared struggles made it easier to connect and help each other."**

**"The training I received was amazing, I felt fully ready for any situation I have faced while volunteering, I've made friendships that will last the rest of my life and I've never felt as happy and confident as I do now!"**

**"Peer Support has been the hardest and best thing I have ever done. It has challenged me in ways I never expected, and it has made me feel so much more confident because I have been able to overcome those challenges and help people."**

**"I have absolutely adored my time here volunteering, I can't see myself ever leaving after feeling like I have made a difference and can give something back!"**

**"I've always wanted to help people and stop them from ever feeling as alone as I once did, so Peer Support has been amazing, I'm able to share things that worked for me with other people and when you see it click with them that I'm not just someone who has never been through something similar and they take that advice on board it makes me feel like all that struggle I went through has helped me get someone else to a better place too. Thank you so much for making me feel like I was helpful again."**

**"Being someone of a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background... it is not often you feel like you have mentors or opportunities to get free help with mental health, let alone help people with mental health... For me, the fact that I am a BAME psychology student, I thought there was no chance I was going to find the experience or develop the skillset I needed to help myself to get opportunities to help... It has turned out to be so much more than something to put on my CV. It's added some much-needed meaning to my life."**

**"I became a volunteer because I wanted to share my experiences with clients accessing the Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service (LMWS) who have had similar experiences to me. I know how soul-destroying mental health and substance misuse can be and I'll be happy if I can help just one person not go through what I went through. I have had training by LMWS and I am now supporting clients to access therapy as a volunteer. It's fantastic!"**

**If you would like to hear more about the range of impacts volunteering has had on the lives of our volunteers, here are some videos from two of our volunteers:**

**Ken: <https://youtu.be/oL0L7xE3VwM>**

**Tracey: <https://youtu.be/WHEUuJqVCgg>**

# Quotes from LMWS Colleagues



"The volunteer was amazing today. He did such a great job... and the client has got a huge amount of learning from it."

"I have found the volunteers that have assisted so far to be warm and personable, and clients have commented on their appreciation of this."

**"As a result of the volunteer's feedback, the client has increased her flexibility in thinking, started to identify skills she would have previously never acknowledged as strengths and given her the confidence to put further brave changes into practise."**

"Just want to say thank you so much for today... you were great!... [Your work has] really helped the patient in managing his social anxiety. Really appreciate what you guys did. Thanks once again"

**"The Volunteer was very friendly, approachable and encouraging with the client. They were able to have a good conversation that put the client at ease."**

"She [a Peer Support Volunteer] has acted as an efficient, supportive and constructive volunteer. She helped ease the client into the experiment, allowed her space to push herself and get the most out of the opportunity. She created a warm and friendly atmosphere during the challenge, giving the client further confidence"

"I want to say a massive thank you to the Peer Support team who have achieved such a lot in a very short space of time."

"What you offer is fantastic- it's brilliant that we have access to this as therapists."



# Next Steps



We are currently recruiting and preparing for our next two training cohorts to equip volunteers with the skills to be effective in Peer Supporter roles.

We aim to become more involved in our communities by taking part in more Community Drop-ins and creating our own to help each local area.

We continue to expand our peer-led recovery offer even further!

Our team continue to work hard to reach more isolated and underrepresented groups.

We are also looking forward to holding more events that celebrate the “Power of the Peer”!

Ultimately, our team continue to increase the awareness of our service and the help we can offer to clients, volunteers and staff.





# LMWS Peer Support

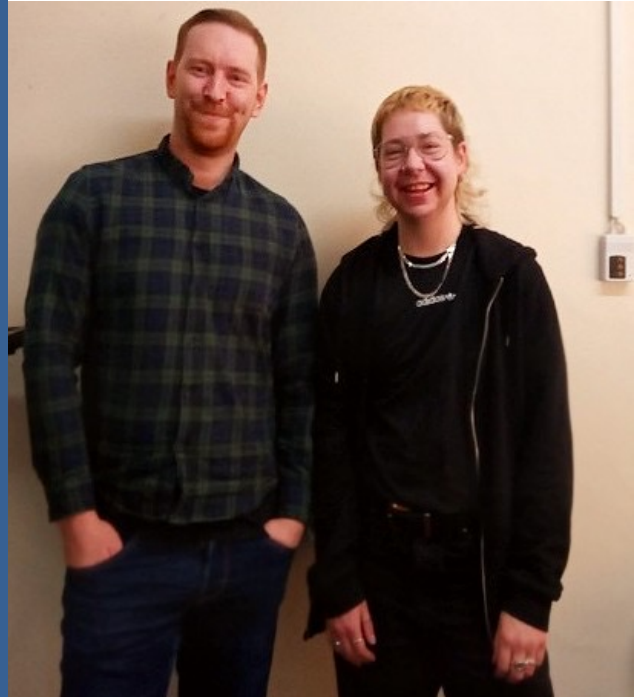


We couldn't do the vital work that we do without the support from our volunteers, colleagues, the service and the wider community.

If you would like to get involved you can receive our newsletter to stay up to date with upcoming opportunities.

You can sign up for our newsletter by contacting us by email:

[LmwsPeerSupport@TouchstoneSupport.org.uk](mailto:LmwsPeerSupport@TouchstoneSupport.org.uk)



## **Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service is a partnership between:**

Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Leeds GP Confederation, Northpoint Wellbeing, Community Links, Touchstone, Women's Counselling and Therapy Service, Homestart Leeds, Ieso Digital Health, SilverCloud Health, SignHealth