

# Becoming a CRN Peer Researcher



## What is a CRN\* Peer Researcher?

Peer Researchers actively participate in all stages of the research process, using their lived experiences.

- **Active Involvement:** Participate in every aspect of research, using personal experience to inform questions, data collection, and analysis.
- **Collaboration:** Work alongside community members and professional researchers to create meaningful change.
- **Empowerment:** Share experiences to influence services and gain new skills, boosting confidence and self-esteem.

## Why Become a CRN Peer Researcher?

- **Your Voice Will Be Heard:** Influence research priorities and ensure community perspectives are central.
- **Skills Development:** Gain valuable skills in research methods, interviewing, and analysis.
- **Make a Difference:** Contribute to projects that aim to improve community support, connecting deeply with others.

## What Does It Involve?

- **Training:** Receive training in research principles and methods.
- **Engagement:** Connect with community members, gather and analyse information.
- **Reflection:** Share insights and contribute to understanding mental wealth in Moray.
- **Flexibility:** Commitment levels vary based on project needs and your availability.

## What Support is Available?

- **Guidance and Resources:** Access to training, resources, and support from the network and professional researchers.
- **Funding and Expertise:** Supported by network funds with access to freelance specialists as needed.
- **Collaboration Opportunities:** Engage with Steering Committee members through Working Groups.

## I'm keen to sign up! What do I do next?

Submit an expression of interest by the **7<sup>th</sup> of April 2025**. If you miss this date, please get in touch as we aim to open recruitment periodically throughout 2025 and beyond.

- By email: to [hello@mentalwealthmoray.org.uk](mailto:hello@mentalwealthmoray.org.uk) - Title your email 'Peer Researcher Expression of Interest'.
- By phone or text: Speak to Aimee on 07979877385.

Include in your expression of interest.

1. Your name, contact details, including nearest town or village, and year of birth if under 25.
2. The lived/living experiences you can bring, either directly or as a supporter - for example, life challenges, diversity aspects, Moray locality or a specific community.
3. Areas you believe the CRN should explore and why.
4. Any support needs to help you contribute equitably.

Current Network Members will review applications and initiate further discussions, aiming to announce the first Peer Researcher training meetings by the end of April.

\* CRN = Community Research Network

# Discover the Power of Peer Research

Are you passionate about making a difference in your community? Do you have lived experience that could help shape better support and services for mental health in Moray? If so, you might be interested in becoming a Peer Researcher.

## What is Peer Research?

Peer research is a way of doing research where members of the community with direct, personal experience of an issue are actively involved in the entire research process. Instead of just being studied, people with lived experience become researchers themselves. This means that the questions asked, the way information is gathered, and the understanding of the results are all shaped by those who truly know what it's like.

Think of it this way: while professional researchers have important skills in conducting research, the real experts on issues within our community are often the people who experience them. Community research brings these two kinds of expertise together to create stronger and more useful research that can lead to meaningful change. **Our aim is to empower community members to be equal partners in finding out what works well in creating mental health for Moray.**

The first opportunity to get involved is to contribute to Peer Research in a project funded by the Ideas Fund. In this project, we will explore how digital tools might be used to help make peer support more widely available in Moray.

## Why Get Involved in Peer Research? What are the Benefits?

Benefits for Peer Researchers:

- Your voice will be heard: Peer researchers are listened to, which is especially important for groups who might not usually be asked for their opinions.
- Empowerment: By actively sharing your experiences and helping to shape services, you can feel more empowered.
- Learn new skills: You'll develop valuable transferable skills such as active listening, critical thinking, and analysis. You might also gain skills in interviewing, running discussions, and analysing information.
- Increased confidence: Research suggests that being a peer researcher can lead to greater self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Connect with others: You'll be part of a group of fellow community members, working together in a positive and supportive environment.
- Make a real difference: You'll contribute to research that aims to improve support and services for people in your community. Your work can help to inform policy, practice, and public understanding.

### Benefits for the Research Project and Community:

- Better questions: Peer researchers help to raise the right questions, based on what is truly important to those with lived experience.
- Deeper understanding: Because peer researchers have lived experience, they bring a deeper understanding to the answers and the meaning of the information gathered.
- Improved information: People often have better conversations with others they can relate to, leading to richer and more honest information.
- More relevant outcomes: Research informed by peer researchers leads to findings and recommendations that are directly relevant to the people they aim to help. This can lead to more effective interventions and support.
- Increased capacity for peer research: By getting involved, you'll help to build the ability of our community to conduct its own research focused on mental wealth.
- Strengthened knowledge: Your participation will contribute to stronger data and knowledge creation for mental wealth in Moray.

## What's Involved in Becoming a Peer Researcher?

If you're interested in contributing, here's what you might expect:

- Training: You will receive training in various aspects of research, such as research principles and methods.
- Connecting with others: A key part of the role involves chatting with other people in the community about their experiences and perspectives.
- Sharing insights: You'll have the opportunity to share what you learn and reflect with others on what this might mean for improving mental wealth in Moray.
- Data gathering: You might be involved in gathering information using various tools, with support provided.
- Analysis: You may be involved in understanding and making meaning from the information that is gathered.
- Collaboration: You'll work alongside other community members and professional researchers. We aim to foster a culture of collaboration.
- Commitment: The level of commitment can vary depending on the project and your availability.
- Support: You will receive support from the network to help you in your role. This might include guidance, resources, and connections with other researchers.
- Guiding Principles: Our network operates with guiding principles focused on connecting, being hopeful, ensuring inclusivity (identity), being meaningful, and empowering (CHIME).

We are looking for people who:

- ✓ Have a passion to understand and improve mental wealth in Moray.
- ✓ Are interested in chatting with others and listening to their experiences.
- ✓ Are keen to contribute to making a difference in the community.
- ✓ Desire to be part of a collaborative and evolving network.