

# Celebrating & championing peer support together

## 2024 highlights



# Happy New Peer!

We've loved collaborating with you throughout 2024. It feels like together we've created solid foundations to build on as we continue to celebrate and champion mental health peer support. We want to thank you for sharing your learning, practice and innovation. Showing what's possible when the knowledge, skills and experiences of lived experience are valued and invested in.

In 2025 we look forward to working with you to develop more mental health peer support roles and opportunities. We'll also be sharing your views on what needs to happen to grow lived experience leadership and peer support across the country. Meanwhile, here's a snapshot of what happened in 2024!

**Catriona, Christine, Eilidh, Emma, Hannah, Holly, Iona, Jane, Lesley and Louise**



For more detail on how we're making a difference check out the [Shaping Recovery in Scotland](#) Report from Habitus Collective who used a variety of methods to evaluate our work to better understand its impacts.



# The Future is Peer - national events

The enthusiasm and appetite for peer support in Scotland is HUGE! Selling out in just 24 hours, The Future is Peer, event in Glasgow, showcased the work of over 16 peer support projects / services as well as sharing the views and experiences of individuals involved in facilitating and accessing mental health peer support.



Watch

**“For peer support to grow in Scotland we need funding, and we need people to recognise the power of peer support and the difference its making to people’s lives.”**

Participant, The Future is Peer

Hosted by presenter Viv Gee, we also ran an online 'Live from the studio' version of The Future is Peer event. With special guests, films and live chat, it allowed us to continue the celebration, build on discussions and provide more opportunities to champion the power of different types of peer support.

**“Growing support is down to persistence, employers taking the power of peer seriously, recognising the quality of the connections that Peer Workers make and the difference to recovery of people”**

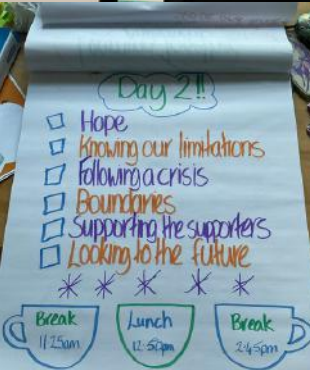
Viewer, The Future is Peer – Live on Air



**Watch**

**“Peer working is a superpower that makes a real difference in recovery.”**





# Peer Recovery Hub launches!

10, 9, 8,7...at The Future is Peer event, Maree Todd, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport pressed the big red button as we launched our new online Peer Recovery Hub! It's full of free tools, events and opportunities to inspire people to develop and champion peer support.

**“This is amazing, If you ever get the chance or time, check out what Scottish Recovery Network do on developing peer support..Their resources (all free) are fantastic..”**



**PeerRecoveryHub.Net**

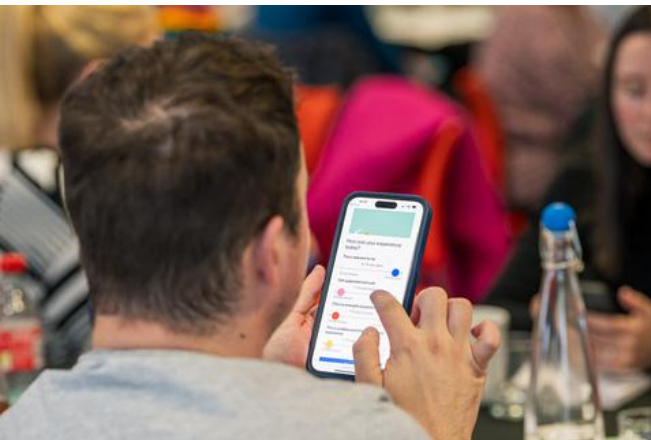


**Visit the hub!**

# The Big Scottish Peer Support Survey!

It's an exciting time as the Scottish Government and COSLA Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan includes a commitment to champion peer support.

To feed into this we launched The Big Scottish Peer Support Survey to get a fuller picture of what peer support looks like in Scotland – where it's happening, who's doing it and what's needed to help it grow



The findings will feed into future activities around growing peer support in Scotland. Watch out in our newsletter for a series of Insight Reports exploring key themes.

[Sign up for newsletter](#)



# Peer Connects - bringing people together

Across this curated programme of ten participatory events, webinars and practice development sessions, hundreds of people, came together in-person and online, to connect and share learning with others passionate about the power of peer support!

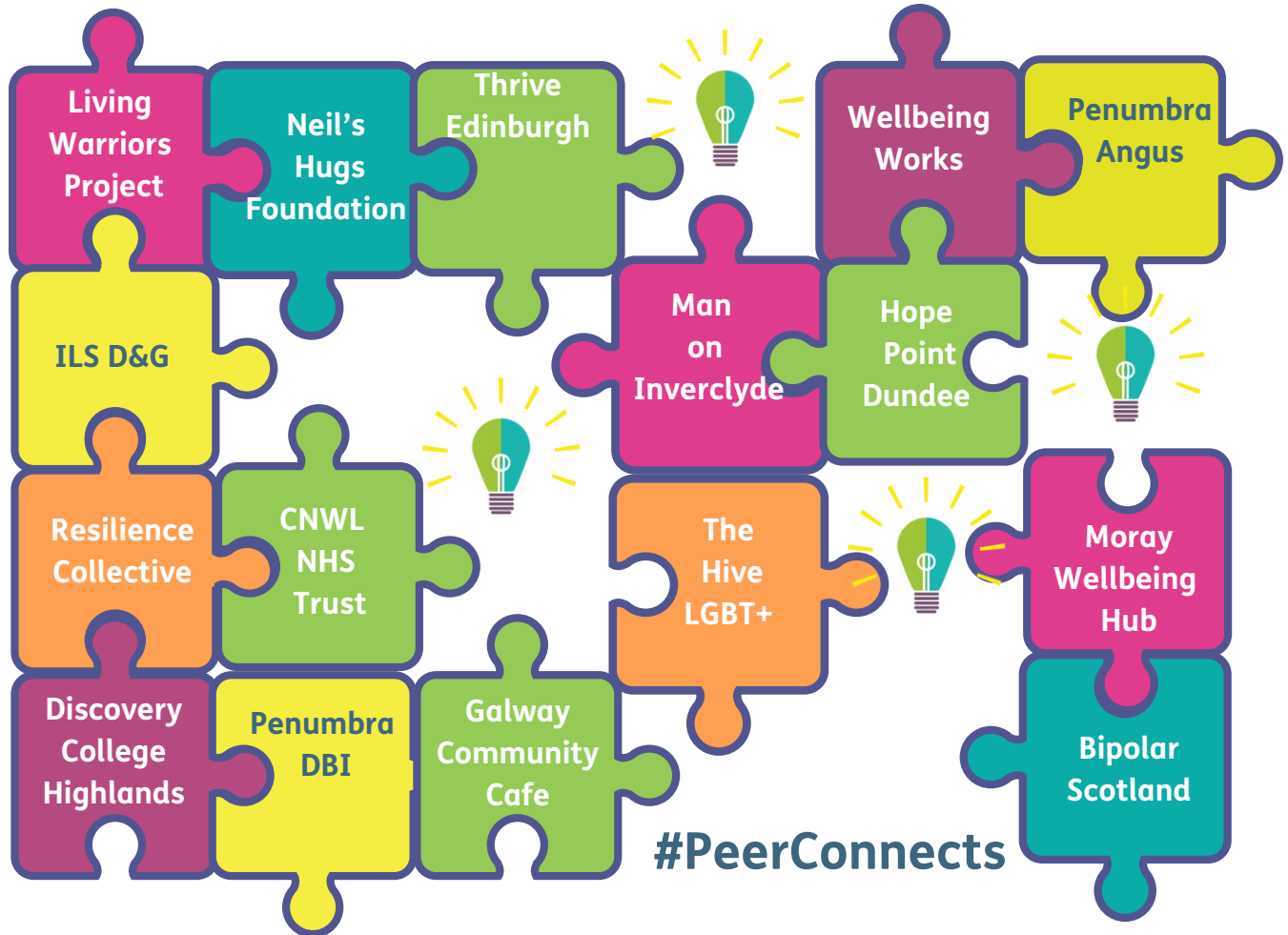
**“I am blown away coming to these events and feeling empowered by it. It has a ripple effect”**

Participant, Peer Connects



As well as sharing innovation from across Scotland, Peer Connects showcased guest contributors from national and international peer support initiatives, for example Singapore, England and Northern Ireland.

# Thanks to our fab Peer Connects guest contributors



# Lived experience roles matter

Lived experience roles are an integral part of the mental health workforce. This includes Peer Workers, Peer Managers and Lived Experience Strategic Leads.



Mel Ball is Director of Lived Experience at Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.

In this filmed presentation, from our The Future is Peer event, Mel takes a look at how England's landscape for peer support and lived experience has developed.

**“Consultation for the long term plan for mental health led to..an outstanding voice calling for peer support in increasing numbers in the future of mental health service delivery”**

Mel Ball

[Watch the film](#)

# Embedding a peer support workforce

Francesca Lepori is Trust Head of Lived Experience Workforce at Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust. In this webinar she shares key insights from embedding a +150 person strong lived experience workforce.

Aoibheann Walsh, Thrive Edinburgh NE Welcome Team Coordinator, shares why Peer Supporter roles are making a difference to those who have not got the help they need from statutory services.

## Peer support in services Conversation Starter Kit

This resource is handy way for services and organisations to introduce key peer support themes before going on to use our Let's Develop Peer Roles toolkit.



[Watch webinar](#)



[Download](#)





# Learning from international perspectives

## In conversation with Resilience Collective, Singapore

Justin Loo is Head of Programmes at Resilience Collective, a mental health charity in Singapore, powered by peers, for peers. Here he talks about their Circles of Resilience peer support groups which use the CHIME framework to guide session topics. Justin also talks about their 4Rs approach (Ready, Receive, Relying and Rally) to how the peer support group is facilitated.



**“My highlight was hearing about different approaches from an international perspective and feeling part of the wider community”**

Peer connects, online event participant

# Sharing on the international stage

## Making Recovery Real in Dundee

The Making Recovery Real in Dundee project was part of a four-year international research study. Led by McMaster University in Canada, this study explores how co-production initiatives can be adopted and embedded in different communities.



**The first paper sharing findings is now available**

**Read the paper**

# Creating Hope with Peer Support

Through learning and networking events and a proactive input to national events and other initiatives such as Time Space Compassion, we're facilitating connections between those working in suicide prevention and peer support groups and services.

Sharing learning and experiences the Creating Hope with Peer Support practical workshops are co-delivered and based on a new resource co-designed to help you to build confidence, knowledge and skills to develop supportive peer relationships with people affected by suicide.

**“Taking back to clinical colleagues and rethink how we can collaborate with peer support and statutory services.”**

Learning and Networking event participant



**“This is a compassionate, gentle approach. It humanises suicide in that it doesn’t feel clinical”**

**Pilot participant,  
Creating Hope with Peer Support resource**

# Creating Hope resource

Over 300 copies of the Creating Hope with Peer Support resource have been distributed in just nine months! Shout out to the many organisations involved in the co-design and piloting of this resource so far. As with all our work we'll continue to review and update in line with learning from practice on the ground.



[Order your free copy](#)

**Andy's Man Club, Bipolar Edinburgh, Discovery College (Centred), DVVA, Kick Mental Health, Living Warriors Project, Men Matter Scotland, Man on Inverclyde, Mindspace, Neil's Hugs Foundation, Penumbra, Sam's Café (SAMH), Self-harm Network Scotland, Stepping Stones, The Neuk and Women's Wellbeing Club.**



# Doing things differently

A key part of our work is to share learning and showcase different examples of Peer Support in Action! This often includes challenging misconceptions around what it involves, its impact, and role in our wider mental health system.

This short film was developed in collaboration with The Neuk Mental Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention Centre. It explores why peer support works in crisis situations, what this looks like in practice and why cross sector collaboration benefits all.

**“And 97% of the people that come through the door... don’t need escalated to a medical intervention. And we can hold that person here and work with them”**



**Watch**

Wendy Given,  
Chief Operating Officer, The Neuk

# Making sure you're heard

We brought together Peer Supporters from mental health organisations to talk with Maree Todd Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport.

The visit was a chance to advocate for the different types of peer support. To highlight the innovation of community groups and services in developing peer support approaches and roles that are crucial to suicide prevention in Scotland.



**“Peer support saves lives”**



# Challenging misconceptions

Writing for The Scotsman, our Projects Coordinator Catriona McDougall, challenges misconceptions and explains why peer support has such a crucial role to play in suicide prevention.



[Read the article](#)

**“.. peer support is often misrepresented as inferior to clinical approaches. What could be seen as part of the answer to a struggling mental health system is at times wrongly dismissed as too risky or not evidence based.**

**These misconceptions can be dangerous at both an individual and systems level”**

# Making Peer Practical

People from nine different organisations participated in this action based practical development programme. Through group sessions, shared learning & mentoring Making Peer Practical supports participants to:

- Crystalize their peer support ideas
- Develop their what, why and how
- Support them to put their plans into action



Our fantastic participants from:

**Change Mental Health (Suicide Bereavement Service), Circle Recovery Hub, Strathclyde University Student Wellbeing Support, Art in Healthcare, Greater Glasgow Mental Health Network, Clackmannanshire and Stirling HSCP, SRS Care, NHS Lothians Bereavement Service and Wheatley Care.**









## Get in touch

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Sign up to our  
newsletter



## #TheFutureIsPeer

If you need this information in a different format please get in touch.



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Network