

Introduction of the Peer Support Model into the Emergency Department Setting: Preliminary Report on Team Experiences of a Pilot Model of Care

James Dove, Lorna Fortune, Pat Kenny, Cheyane King'da, Maria Lochotzke, Lindsey Phillips, Sharif Mussa, Justin Shute, Sue Somers, Barnet Enfield & Haringey NHS Trust Liaison Mental Health Service at North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust

Employing peer support workers in an ED setting is feasible and holds significant potential benefits for patients, workers, and clinicians. The positive impact in our experience has been wide reaching; not only on improved quality of patient care but also in embedding a recovery model and reducing stigma across the wider hospital system.

"The peer support training, that really changed how I viewed the whole journey of my recovery 'cause I hadn't really thought about recovery, focusing on recovery and looking at it as a self-development journey" (PSW)

Aims: To improve the quality of patient care and responsiveness of the mental health liaison service at the North Middlesex University Hospital (NMUH) by embedding the mental health recovery model through integration of mental health peer support workers within the emergency department (ED).

Methods:

- An NHSE funded pilot project to embed peer support workers within the North Middlesex University Hospital Mental Health Liaison Team commenced in Spring 2018 as a 1 year trial which ended in April 2019
- The experiences of the peer support workers, existing liaison team and the wider hospital have been informally sought throughout the pilot period and our experiences and learning are presented
- Formal evaluation with service outcomes has been commissioned from Middlesex University and will be published later in 2019

Challenges:

- In keeping with the literature (Vandewalle 2016) on the topic, the challenge of defining the role of the PSW's once in post in a new setting is not easy and requires ongoing work across the team
- The impact on the whole team dynamic requires constant work to reassure particularly with concerns around risk and responsibility
- Communicating the role of PSW's across multiple members of multiple teams is a challenge for the team and the PSW's themselves particularly

Conclusions and impact:

- Employing peer support workers in an ED setting is feasible and holds significant potential benefits for patients, workers, and clinicians.
- The positive impact in our experience has been wide reaching, not only on improved quality of patient care but also having positive impacts on liaison team members including embedding a recovery model and reducing stigma across the wider hospital system.
- Formal evaluation of the project is eagerly anticipated.

"I can say things that the doctors and nurses can't" (PSW)

Background:

- The peer support model is now well established across health services in the UK and abroad (Kings Fund 2010) and has had particular success in mental health services (Nesta 2015).
- It encompasses the principals of coproduction in mental health services and exemplifies the recovery model of care (Warner 2010).
- Barnet Enfield & Haringey (BEH) Mental Health Trust has been employing peer support workers for a number of years in recovery roles across the Trust but this project represents the first time that the peer support model has been consistently employed in an ED setting.

Results:

- 7 PSW's initially appointed Spring 2018 at band 3 and received 8 days training via the Institute of Mental Health (University of Nottingham)
- 1 dropped out at an early stage
- 6 PSWs retained in post as of April 2019 – 4 x FT 2 x 0.5
- Working shifts covering 7a.m. to 21:30 7 days a week
- At the end of the 1 year pilot 6 of 7 PSW's remain working in the team

"The point is, when somebody has come with a label like, the peer support lived experience, how much can we be putting them under pressure in terms of coming to an acute setting here? So obviously in the back of my mind, much as I'm very welcoming and I'm kind of embracing it, I had that thought" (Clinician)

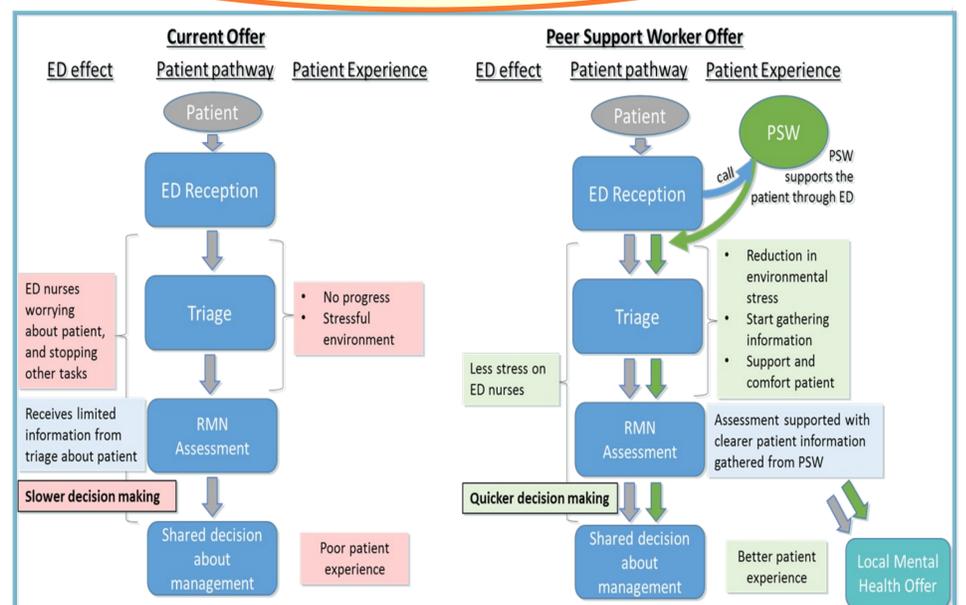


Fig 1: Initial plan of PSW and patient pathway in ED as submitted with funding bid to NHSE 2017