



Registered Charity Number: 1190818

# Trustees' Annual Report

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Our Financial Report is for the same period.

# Peer Support Plus CIO

## Trustees' Annual Report – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Registered Charity Number: 1190818

Registered Address: 1 Elmete Close, Leeds LS8 2LD

Trustees of Peer Support Plus CIO as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022:

Lisa Bamford (Chair), Julie Metcalfe (Secretary), David Donaldson (Treasurer), Camilla Freeman, Jane Richardson and Jamie Tyson. [All six Trustees were formally elected at our first AGM on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021.]

Peer Support Plus CIO operates a Charity, Clubs and Society bank current account with Virgin Money UK PLC 2022.

### Structure, Governance and Management

Peer Support Plus CIO is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed according to its Constitution. It was first registered with the Charity Commission on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Peer Support Plus is lead and operated entirely by volunteers. Currently all but one of our Trustees has lived experience of mental distress. Four of our current six Trustees were involved in establishing the charity.

Trustees undertake training as the need arises.

Trustees hold monthly Board Meetings, with working meetings in between as necessary. Working parties for specific tasks are formed by Trustees on a flexible basis depending on skill set and time available. For example, working parties develop and review policies and procedures. Members and Peers are welcome to attend Trustee Board meetings and express their views but cannot vote.

Decisions about interpreting objects, policies and procedures are reserved to the Board of Trustees.

New Trustees are recruited by advertising on the Doing Good Leeds and Peer Support Plus websites, on the Peer Support Plus Facebook page and by word of mouth. The recruitment process is through informal discussion with the current Trustees. New Trustees will be provided with a copy of our Governing Document (Constitution) and the most recent Trustee Meeting Minutes, Action Points List, Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements. As volunteers they are covered by Peer Support Plus's Volunteer Policy and induction process.

We hope new Trustees will have the knowledge and expertise to take on some of the work/tasks currently shared by the existing Trustees to share/reduce their workload as five of our current Trustees are also volunteer facilitators. We hope that any new Trustees will have their own suggestions for improving the way Peer Support Plus is managed.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The purpose of the charity as set out in the Constitution is “to relieve sickness and preserve health of persons suffering from mental illness of any description or in need of rehabilitation and support as a result of such illness, in the Leeds Metropolitan District by the provision of:

- Peer to Peer support.
- Educational workshops and courses on managing mental health illness and rehabilitation.
- Advice and guidance on living with mental health illness.”

The main activity undertaken by Peer Support Plus to further these charitable purposes for public benefit is the provision of Peer Support groups.

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit published by The Charity Commission (PB1, PB2, PB3).

## **Executive Summary**

- Kept one open-ended support group running on Zoom throughout the pandemic. The previous host charity had closed it on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.
- Established the charity Peer Support Plus CIO on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020, by registering it with the Charity Commission. We held our first AGM on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021.
- Received NHS funding in April 2021 enabling us to double our capacity to serve beneficiaries and reach out to people who were not previously served.
- Established a public presence as a reputable provider of mental health support in Leeds.
- Opened a second support group that meets in-person and attracted sufficient new Peers to make it viable.
- Financially viable until at least March 2023 and have established a small financial reserve equal to 12 months unavoidable operating costs.

## **Activities, Achievements & Performance**

### **Peer to Peer support.**

The Trustees set up Peer Support Plus with the aim of providing on-going Peer Support groups for adults in Leeds who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health; to promote their well-being and quality of life by providing the opportunity for Peers to learn from each other by sharing their lived experience of living with and managing their mental health.

### **Educational workshops and courses on managing mental health illness and rehabilitation.**

Peer Support Plus's 5-year vision (see Appendix 2) includes providing free workshops and courses without replicating what is available elsewhere. By doing this we will be able to widen the range of tools and strategies available to help Peers with specific mental health issues and increase the number of Peers able to access peer support.

### **Advice and guidance on living with mental health illness.**

Giving advice is actively discouraged in our Peer Support Groups. Peers who take time to talk about an issue are able to take inspiration from the other Peers sharing their lived experience on ways they have dealt with similar feelings and experiences in the past. Other advice and guidance are provided through signposting to other groups, workshops, training, resources and events that might benefit Peers.

### **Why Open-ended Peer Support?**

The Trustees believe strongly that the on-going nature of open-ended peer support provides continuity and stability to help Peers tackle deep seated issues, embark on major life or behavioural changes, or maintain their present level of 'recovery'.

Following the closure of open-ended peer support groups by Leeds Mind at the end of March 2020 the first goal of Peer Support Plus was to continue meeting as an open-ended peer support group. No other organisation in Leeds was providing this model of peer support in an open-ended group that was not restricted in terms of age, race, gender or sexuality and we believe our diversity of experiences is a strength.

Further information about our history, values and model of peer support is published on our website, [www.peersupportplus.org](http://www.peersupportplus.org). Our 12-month plan for this year can be seen at Appendix 1 and a table showing our progress towards those goals can be seen at Appendix 3.

## What we have achieved.

The Trustees kept the Peer Support Group going by establishing Peer Support Plus CIO as a charity and finding a venue, Leeds City Council's Lovell Park Mental Health Hub, where the group could meet weekly in person. During the pandemic lockdown the trustees provided a weekly Wednesday afternoon Zoom based Peer Support group until July 2021 when it was moved to Tuesday evening.

In July 2021, as lock down eased, the Trustees started a new in-person group meeting on Wednesday afternoons at Lovell Park hub.

Peers have given us the following feedback:

*"I struggle to confide in my family and friends. This group is the only place I feel comfortable talking about how I really feel"*

*"I use the group to catch issues before they become too big and to avoid worrying my friends. The support group is able to contain my feelings and not over react, and I get validation by checking out things with the group."*

*"Have a rant in a safe Group where nobody is involved or likely to take it personally"*

*"I can check things out with the Group instead of burdening my friends"*

*"Giving voice to my feelings about things. I sometimes don't know what I am thinking and feeling until I hear myself try and express them to others"*

*"A place where I can speak freely without feeling judged"*

*"Talking with people I trust"*

*"Every meeting is new and you get something new out of it"*

*"Collaborative happiness" and "Sneaking up on happiness"*

*"A caring & loving environment to talk through difficulties in life. No matter just listening to others or sharing my own feelings, I feel safe & I belong."*

*"Zoom setting is convenient & cosy. The smiling faces have connected us almost the same way as face-to-face setting."*

*"I feel safe to be me, don't have to have any front to protect myself. Feels good to have a group where I feel safe and accepted. Every time we meet I have some new insight, find something helpful in relation to my issues, from others in the group."*

*"Helps me so much to have this regular space in managing my mental health. It's become an important time in my week, a reliable time where I connect with*

*myself, and especially with others, as I struggle with connecting with people in my day to day life.”*

*“I am not alone”* [Often stated after the first Support Group meeting attended.]

The Trustees have continued to ensure that Peer Support Plus is sustainable and viewed as a legitimate, trustworthy and effective organisation with opportunities to raise funds and attract volunteers. This will enable Peer Support Plus to expand and support more adults in Leeds.

We have continued to develop our online presence through our website and Facebook page.

Peer Support Plus is registered on MindWell, the mental health website to which adults in Leeds are signposted to in order to find support for mental health.

In preparation for Peer Support Plus’s official launch date, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the Trustees emailed publicity to organisations in the mental health sector in Leeds. We went on to produce and distribute posters, flyers and business cards, which we use to provide us with a presence in health and community settings.

Together with the online publicity this led to 34 enquiries about joining one of our support groups.

To increase their competency, our Trustees undertook training offered by WYCAS (Gift Aid), Voluntary Action Leeds (attracting and recruiting volunteers), Cellar Trust (Facilitation Training), Community Links (applied suicide intervention skills), Training Express (First Aid), Safeguarding (Policy and Review).

In late 2020, the Trustees had made a successful grant application to the Harrogate and West Yorkshire Health Care Partnership Targeted prevention grant funding for £5000 to expand Peer Support Plus. The funding was received in April 2021 which enabled us to continue the Zoom based support group (12 months initially but now ongoing) as well as opening the face-to-face group, train two new facilitators and purchase 4 digital tablets with 4G internet connections for loan to digitally disadvantaged Peers.

We decided to operate our Zoom Support Group permanently on Tuesday evenings to reach out to those who, for reasons such as mobility, travel, employment, conflicting caring commitments and so on, would otherwise be unable to attend a Peer Support Group.

Once we had new members waiting to join our evening group we asked, and received permission, from existing Wednesday group members to merge the groups on Tuesday evenings until lockdown ended and the Wednesday group could meet face-to-face again. The first joint Zoom session meeting was on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Lovell Park Hub donated a meeting space for the group on Wednesday afternoons. Preparations were made to return to meeting face-to-face from Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2021 and we did so. However low attendance, due to Covid transmission fears, meant that it didn't resume regular weekly meetings until 24 November 2021 but we have met continuously since then.

Potential Peers wishing to join a Peer Support Group first need to attend an Introduction to Group Work (IGW) workshop to familiarise themselves with how our Peer Support Groups work and help them decide if they wish to join. The Trustees wrote a new workshop plan for our IGW and the first was run on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Further IGWs were held on 14 July, 27 October, 3 November, 10 November, 15 December, 2 March 2022 and 23 March. In all 21 potential Peers attended these IGWs. Of these, 13 went on to join one of our Support Groups.

Peer Support Plus has no paid staff. It is operated entirely by volunteers. Five of our Trustees are also the facilitators of Peer Support groups. They have between them over thirty years' experience as Peer Support Group facilitators. Some other Peers have provided expertise and assistance when able.

Private individuals and organisations have also donated assistance, for example, access to a Zoom account suitable for our needs continued to be donated by one of our volunteers.

Our Five-Year Vision is to remain predominantly Peer led and delivered. We hope to recruit and train more volunteer facilitators from both our Peers and the wider community to help keep Peer Support Plus fresh and viable, and to support expansion.

## Financial Review

This report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

<b>Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period</b>	At 31 March 2022 Peer Support Plus's only tangible asset was £4179.89 at Bank.
<b>Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held</b>	At 31 March 2022 we set aside sufficient reserves to fund unavoidable expenditure for twelve months, in case of a short run funding gap.
<b>Amount of reserves held</b>	£1,600 at 31 March 2022.
<b>Reasons for holding reserves</b>	Peer Support Plus was Registered as a CIO on 12 August 2020 at the height of the Global Pandemic when there was scant opportunity for fundraising. We relied mainly on donations and small grants which do not arrive as a predictable income stream.
<b>Details of fund materially in deficit</b>	Not in deficit.

<b>Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern</b>	None. Peer Support Plus made a strong beginning with a start-up Grant and very low outgoings. In April 2021 it received sufficient Grant funding to operate two Support Groups until March 2023.
<b>The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)</b>	Until 31 March 2022 Peer Support Plus has relied on small Grants and Donations. The Trustees will begin to supplement these sources with public fundraising activity during 2022/23
<b>Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted</b>	None necessary. At the present scale of operations, all of our available funds and reserves are held in Peer Support Plus's Bank Current Account at Virgin Money which pays trivial interest on balances.
<b>A description of the principal risks facing the charity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Potential for failure to attract sufficient Volunteers to continue operating services.</li> <li>2. Potential for failure to raise sufficient funds to continue offering services after 31 March 2023.</li> </ol>
<b>Other</b>	Peer Support Plus is currently operated entirely by unpaid Volunteers. It has no assets and is administered almost entirely online.

## Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature

*Lisa M Bamford*

Full name

Lisa Michelle Bamford

Position

Chair

Date

*29th April 2022*



## Appendix 1

### 12 Month Plan 2022-23 for Peer Support Plus – by 31 March 2023

- Continue to simplify and add lightness.
- Continue to develop smooth day to day operation – not requiring urgent intervention or major systems development to continue running effectively.
- Find and train more Accredited Volunteer Facilitators.
- Well established open-ended Peer Support Group meeting weekly in person at Leeds City Council's Lovell Park Mental Health Hub – with membership increased so that typically 10 Peers are in the room and four sharings are achieved. (This venue satisfies Peers' emotional needs to feel a sense of being 'rooted' in or having a physical 'home' at Leeds).
- Well-established open-ended Peer Support Group meeting weekly by Zoom typically having 10 Peers in the room and four sharing's achieved.
- Delivery Team and programme of activities established, including appointment of individual Mentors and periodic Group Supervision for all volunteers organised by the Delivery Team Lead.
- All necessary Policies and Processes established and published on website (Transparency).
- Charity Membership administration system established.
- Online Peer records and Delivery Team activity administration system established.
- Performance measurement system (WEMWBS) with automatic reporting established.
- A 'presence' in Leeds established e.g.
  - Networking with other organisations supporting mental health in Leeds.
  - Other organisations starting to signpost potential Peers to us.
- Just Giving (or similar) fund raising activity support system live.
- Grants or expected flow of Donations / Fund Raising Events in place by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 sufficient to fund our 12 Month Plan for 2023/24.

- Financial surplus in 2022/23 enabling first steps toward satisfying our Financial Reserve policy.
- Second AGM arranged for early May 2022.

## Appendix 2

### 5 Year Vision for Peer Support Plus as at 31 March 2027

- Nurture our Peer Support model and satisfy our Constitution.
- Accredited Facilitator Training sourced externally with practical training established in-house to put our slant on it by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Face to face open-ended Peer Support Groups established at all three mental Health Hubs in Leeds – Lovell Park, Stocks Hill and Vale Circles (or similar venues) with the aim of achieving accessible coverage across Leeds Metropolitan Area.
- Two free on-line Peer Support Groups, to aid accessibility (overcoming timing / location / mobility constraints) in Leeds.
- Some free Peer Support Groups facilitated in Partnership with other organisations, to extend our demographic reach.
- In addition to our IGW, some focussed mental health Workshops and Courses offered free (not replicating what is available elsewhere in Leeds).
- Low cost – i.e., where possible avoiding venue costs, asset purchases, employing people and entering long-term financial commitments, so we are not ‘caught out’ by financial crises.
- Light on our feet – i.e., ready to respond to changes in levels of demand with ‘Plan B’ in place ready to change venues or funding sources if necessary.
- Continuing financial and volunteer capacity to afford to do things effectively without cutting corners e.g., ‘good quality coffee’ at mid-session refreshments.
- Predominantly Volunteer led and delivered, but not ruling out the possibility of obtaining funding for a paid Administrator and some paid Facilitators.

- Peer Support Groups tailored to those who for cultural reasons, or because they share a particular Peer experience, would find it hard to discuss particular issues in a general mixed Peer Support Group.
- Selling Online Peer Support Groups, Workshops and Courses to adults outside Leeds Metropolitan Area to help us offer such activities free at Leeds.
- Selling to organisations anywhere, at commercial market rates, to fund our free activities in the Leeds Metropolitan Area e.g.
  - Peer Support Groups, Workshops and Courses – to other organisations on a commercial basis.
  - Our ‘franchise’ – sharing our knowledge and expertise, and licencing for a modest fee the limited rights to use our methods, including our intellectual property such as internal policies, processes and administrative systems.
  - Copies of the copyright and public domain Course and Workshop materials we create, develop consolidate or maintain – to be sold through a shop on our website. (We will offer public domain materials using the same ‘well presented, convenient, accessible source’ business model as those who sell public domain and out-of-copyright sheet-music or books.)

**Peer Support Plus CIO** Registered Charity Number 1190818

**Receipts and Payments Account 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2022**

	<b><u>£ Total</u></b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Donations	394.58	
Fundraising		
Grant	5,000.00	
Interest	2.06	
Gift Aid		
Cashback	17.34	
	<u><b>5413.98</b></u>	
<b>Payments</b>		
Recruitment & Remuneration		No employees
Safeguarding & DBS Checks		Invoice for £15 awaited
Training	180.00	
Volunteer Expenses		2 Claims paid in April 2022
Insurance		Renewal due 1 April 2022
Bank Charges	-0.01	
Zoom Pro		Donated until 7 June 2022
Venues	10.00	
Group Refreshments		
Admin Hardware and Software		None required
Web Hosting and Cloud Services	214.74	
Digital Tablets for Peers	549.13	4x Samsung Tab 8 LTE
Data & Telephone	153.92	
Stationery & Consumables		Donated
Postage	32.47	
Brand & Public Relations	30.55	
Advertising & Publicity	224.65	
Membership of other organisations		None
Grant Application Costs		None applied for
	<u><b>1395.45</b></u>	
<b>Receipts minus Payments</b>	<b>4018.53</b>	
Transfer	0.00	
Balance Brought Forward	161.36	
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	<u><b>4,179.89</b></u>	
<b>Balance Carried Forward comprises</b>		
Reserve	1,600.00	Annual budgeted unavoidable costs
Restricted	2085.90	NHS W Y Health Care Partnership
Unrestricted	493.99	
	<u><b>4179.89</b></u>	

**End**