



FEANTSA

# **PEER SUPPORT IN THE HOMELESSNESS SECTOR**

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# INTRODUCTION

- Definition
- Key principles
- Benefits
- Challenges
- Kinds of peer support
- Peer support in practice

# DEFINITION

- “A supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common”
- Peer workers: people with lived experience of homelessness who have an employee or employee-type relationship with the organisation
- Shared experience is the connecting point

# KEY PRINCIPLES

- Uniqueness: a peer is in a unique position to offer support by virtue of relevant experience.
- Participation: a way of working that empowers people to participate in decisions and action that affect their lives

# BENEFITS

- To peers: empowerment
- To beneficiaries: engage with peers in a non-judgemental and less threatening way.
- To services: added value and reduce the strain on staff
- Good value for money

# CHALLENGES

- Support for peer workers
- Confidentiality
- How to move on
- Costs

# TYPES OF PEER SUPPORT – PEER RESEARCH

- Collecting information through peers
- How to do it:
  - Involvement of peers at every stage
  - Training
  - Role of staff as facilitators
  - Involvement of services users in dissemination

# EXAMPLES OF PEER RESEARCH

## Groundswell

- The Escape Plan: peer research study to help identify the critical success factors that have enabled people to move on from homelessness
- Insight & Action: to discovering and sharing insight into the health inequalities faced by people experiencing homelessness
- The Homeless People's Commission: a group of 14 former rough sleepers produced The Homeless People's Commission Policy Report after spending a year hearing evidence from policymakers, service providers and researchers.



# TYPES OF PEER SUPPORT – PEER MENTORING

- A 1:1 non-judgmental relationship between a mentor and a participant
- How to do it:
  - Programme and adequate funding
  - Coordinator's role of support
  - Discovery of other organisations' work
  - Recruitment of mentors
  - Training for mentors

# TYPES OF PEER SUPPORT – PEER ADVOCACY

- Peer Advocacy works so that the individuals can speak out for themselves
- How to do it:
  - Recruitment policy for advocates
  - Establish clear policies and procedures
  - Training
  - Clear objectives
  - Work with other organisations

# EXAMPLES OF PEER ADVOCACY

- Navigate: citizen advocacy project in which over 40 volunteers advocate for people who have a problem or worry with their housing or benefits
- SAND: service users' run organisation

# PEER SUPPORT AND HOUSING FIRST

- Project H3
- Turning Point Scotland
- Totem Service
- Barcelona City Council
- No Fixed Abode

# THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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