



WMTD Project: Peer Research Exercise

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Overview

The WMTD partnership is undertaking a large peer research exercise with a target group of 250 young people leaving care to ask what made a positive difference when they were leaving care.

As NLCBF authorities we agreed that this was an exercise we would want to complete - this is the start of that exercise.

Our main methodology will be face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted with care leavers by their peers. Participating local authorities will be asked to assist in identifying prospective peer researchers and to support the process during completion of the task.

Aims

In training young people from your local authorities as peer researchers we aim to:

- Give young people a better opportunity to have their say and provide feedback
- Engage and empower young people to develop research and interviewing technique skills
- Provide a positive opportunity for Local authorities to participate in WMTD
- Assist Local authorities to comply with the consultation requirements of Every Child Matters
- Provide recommendations for us, local authorities and local and central government about what can be done to improve leaving care systems and services

The peer research is not a naming and shaming exercise but a positive and exciting method of getting invaluable thoughts and opinions from young people which can go towards benefiting services. We are interested in what care leavers think made a difference or what could have made a difference - not what did not work. All messages from the research relating to specific individuals or specific local authorities will be discussed and agreed first prior to any publication. Each participating local authority will receive their own Confidential Feedback Report, based upon messages from the interviews in their area. No information from young people will be included in the research without prior discussion and agreement from that young person.

I am sure you will agree that the Peer Research is an exciting opportunity for everyone involved with WMTD and we look forward to working alongside you.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Sharn Bowley, SUJ Coordinator:
sharn.bowley@raineronline.org



Outline plan

Period

Stage 1: Recruiting, training and planning

- We aim to recruit 25 - 40 young care leavers, aged 16+, as peer researchers. May - July 2006
- Ideally we would like at least one researcher recruited per local authority to avoid young people having to travel outside their area.
- We expect local authorities to be as inclusive as possible when targeting those to invite to become peer researchers - we have provided a Role Description to assist you
- It might be advisable to organise more than one person per area to ensure that we are able to complete the work
- We will provide local authorities with publicity for potential recruits, outlining what they might gain from this and what will be expected of them plus the support they will receive.
- As well as receiving appropriate training Peer Researchers will be paid for the interviews they conduct. Early July 2006
- Peer researchers will be paid (by local authorities, and reimbursed by WMTD) not necessarily so - we need to explore this.
- A risk assessment of the processes involved should be conducted by local authorities. A Risk Assessment form along with main assessment issues are outlined separately. Please refer to separate sheets. You can use your own Risk Assessment forms if need be.
- All recruited peer researchers will be invited to training on all the issues involved - this will be provided by WMTD in partnership with the National Children's Bureau (NCB) Research Department
- We consider it essential that a link worker/manager e.g. Personal Adviser or Team Manager also attend this training, so that they are aware of, and prepared for, the support issues which may arise over the course of the research process
- Peer researchers/Local authorities will also have an input in framing, designing and piloting the questions to be asked. This will be conducted at the training event in early July.



Stage 2: Conducting the research, gathering data

- WMTD will provide you with ideas and leaflets to help recruit the required sample of interviewees and will be available to support you in the process via our Service User Involvement workers. August - October 2006
- It is hoped that each peer researcher can conduct 5 to 10 interviews in total - although more would be very useful.
- **Due to data protection regulations we will require PAs** to make contact with potential interviewees and provide them with information about the project and the research. Where possible we would like the Peer Researchers to be involved in the process.
- Interviewees will be rewarded for taking part in an interview. They will receive a £10 voucher which they can spend in an array of high street shops.
- We recommend that certain dates and days are allocated for interviews to minimise travel, work disruption, etc and we will support you to organise this
- All collected data, interview schedules to be returned to WMTD for inputting
- Following initial analysis/discussion with all involved, we will consider completing a second stage process if there seem to be emerging issues that would benefit from more of a focus.
- Peer researchers will require continual support and debriefing during the research process, some of this will be provided by the link person from your authority and your teams and some by WMTD
- If possible we would like the Peer Researchers to have access to office facilities to chase up interviewees and conduct the relevant admin work. We are aware that this needs careful consideration and planning. Data protection and confidentiality also needs to be considered.
- More formal debriefing sessions will be conducted by WMTD once the research has been conducted



Stage 3: Analysis and dissemination

Data will be collated by Local authorities. We will provide Peer Researchers with stamped addressed envelopes for the questionnaires. PR's can seal them in front of an YP to ensure confidentiality is not breached. We will ask yp if we can feedback their comments to the LA. If not then that will be respected. All data will then be sent to and inputted by WMTD after discussion/agreement with the peer researcher and local authority link person/manager

November
2006 -
January 2007

Peer researchers' views will be invited after an initial analysis of the raw data

Groups of peer researchers (& other care leavers) will be convened to identify the key messages arising from the data

Findings will be produced in a format that is accessible to both Local authorities and young people (one for all) and events will be organised in conjunction with all those involved

Local authorities and individual young people (with their agreement) will be fully acknowledged in all publications



Managing Risk

Planning

The peer research is a major piece of work within WMTD requiring the support and cooperation of local authorities, WMTD, Personal Advisors and the peer researchers. We are positive that the research will be successful but we are conscious that careful preparation and planning will be required. The safety of the Peer Researchers, Personal Advisors and the young people participating in the interviews is of paramount concern which is why we are requesting the Local Authorities conduct Risk Assessments in advance of any interviews being conducted.

We have produced a guide and risk assessment for you to use but if, however, you have your own Risk Assessment format then you are welcome to use your own.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what in the service or externally, could cause harm to peer researchers or interviewees and how much harm may be caused (**the risk**). We would like you to conduct these assessments so that you are confident that you have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent injury or accidents (**possible control measure**).

When organising peer research questionnaire sections, the risk assessment needs to be formalised and recorded. This is to ensure that the peer researcher, interviewee and the local authority are protected. Should an accident or other problem occur, you may need to prove that you have carried out a risk assessment.

We feel that there are two basic elements to a risk assessment:

- 1 - The Risks - how much harm may be caused?
- 2 - The possible control Measures- what you can do about it/the precautions you can take.

There are also 3 grades of risk:

- Low
- Medium
- High

Risks

Peer researchers will be conducting 1:1 interviews with young people. We feel it is important to identify and address any risks that might occur as a result of an interview taking place; particular attention should be paid to high risks. All possible safety measures should be considered and implemented to ensure that, as far as reasonably possible, risk factors do not happen, and if they do happen, an appropriate method of dealing with them is in place.



Things we feel need to be considered are:

- has the young person a history of violence?
- Is there a medical condition the peer researcher needs to be aware of?
- Is the room where interviews are being conducted safe and appropriate?

Bear in mind also that the consequences of a problem may be different depending on the situation.

For example, if an interview is carried out within the local authority premises and accident occurs, then this may be far less of a problem than it would be should it happen on an external visit. Where the site location presents particular difficulties, then extra precautions should be taken to ensure that any emergency can be adequately dealt with.

Possible control measures

These are the actions that you need to implement to avoid the problem happening. They might include warning the peer researchers of potential hazards, insisting on appropriate behaviour, training the researchers in the safe use of tools, equipment which may cause harm if misused, ensuring that the researcher has all the appropriate contact details of Lead PA and/or Manager, and that the researcher contact the office when arriving/leaving the external visit location.

Safety measures should include the option of cancelling external visits if the risks are too great or ensuring that there is sufficient members of staff present during and after the questionnaire section.

Recording form example

An example of the sort of risk assessment that might be completed for an internal and external peer research meeting is given on page 8.

Peer Research Risk Assessment Form

Local Authority _____ Date _____

Circle Type: Department Assessment/ Visiting Assessment

Risk	Degree of Risk	Possible Control Measures

Name of assessor: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
(continue if required)

Risk	Degree of Risk	Possible Control Measures



Peer Researcher: Role Description

Be involved in the biggest ever research project involving care leavers in the country!!!

Want to be a Peer Researcher? Want to receive training? Are you interested in being paid to take part in one of the largest peer research exercises ever conducted in this country with young people leaving care? Then read on.

What Makes the Difference? (WMTD) Is funded by the European Social Fund and aims to improve employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers by influencing the education, training and employment support they receive.

We want to interview 250 care leavers from around the country. We will be asking them:

What made the difference for you whilst being looked after by your local authority?

AND:

What could have made the difference whilst being looked after by your local authority?

That's where YOU come in. We want to train care leavers to become peer researchers with help from WMTD and the National Children's Bureau (NCB). Once trained, we want you to interview up to ten care leavers in your local authority to find out "What made a difference?"

There will also be the opportunity for YOU to help with the development of the project as well as the evaluation and dissemination of the research findings. The research findings will be used to improve the services all care leavers receive around the country and also to make changes within your local authority.

To become a Peer Researcher we need you to be able to:

- Attend two training days in July to learn about your role as a peer researcher.
- Provide young people within your local authority with information on peer research and how to become an interviewee.
- Keep one or two day(s) free a week to carry out interview, and in conjunction with your Personal Advisor, identify two or three weeks in which you are free to carry out interviews.
- Use an allocated space within your local authority to maintain contact with interviewees/young people to ensure attendance at interviews.
- Undertake telephone interviews if required.
- Ensure completed questionnaires are sent back to the WMTD office.
- Ensure your time sheets are completed and given to your PA to ensure that you are paid.
- Be able to liaise with Personal Advisors and SUJ workers
- Have the flexibility to possibly travel to conduct interviews



Attributes for successful Peer Researchers:

1. Good understanding of the English language, both written and verbal:
 - Good literacy skills
 - Able to make accurate notes (where necessary)

2. Able to communicate well:
 - Good oral skills: ability to relay information, in person and over the telephone
 - Confident speaker
 - Possess a friendly, outgoing manner

3. Organised:
 - Ability to plan time usage well
 - Ability arrange to keep appointments

4. Contactable: by telephone (preferably by mobile)



Job Description

Role: Supporting Peer Researcher PA

Location: Within Local Authority; To Interviews, Training Days

What Makes the Difference? (WMTD) is part funded by the European Social Fund and aims to improve sustainable employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers by influencing the education, training and employment support they receive. One of the main tasks of WMTD is to undertake a peer research exercise, asking 250 care leavers around the country about the services they receive. WMTD, in collaboration with the National Children's Bureau (NCB), will train selected care leavers to interview care leavers within their local authority. The main questions behind the research will be:

What made the difference for you while being looked after by your local authority?

What could have made the difference while being looked after by your local authority?

Care leavers will be central to the implementation and evaluation of the peer research.

The results of the peer research will be

We see the Personal Adviser as having an important role in ensuring young people are successful with the research.

We would like the Personal Adviser to:

- Provide emotional and practical support to young person when needed (as a result of a young person working as a peer researcher).
- Be available to accompany peer researchers when interviewing, especially when going out to conduct interviews.
- In conjunction with the team manager identify a young person willing to participate in the peer research
- Provide young people within the local authority with information on how to take part (become an interviewee)
- Accompany the young person to training days and interviews which do not take place at their local authority.
- Keep one or two day(s) free week to conduct interviews and:
- Identify with Team manager a two or three week window in which interviews take place
- If local authority space cannot be used to conduct interviews with young people, assist in locating a base near to the local authority.
- Undertake risk assessment with team manager of potential interviewees
- Provide a list of local services for young people in case issues/concerns arise from undertaking the peer research.
- Keep relevant receipts to claim back expenses.
- Work closely with the WMTD Service User Involvement Co-ordinator and Workers
- Liaise with Manager of leaving care service to keep them updated on the peer research process.
- Facilitate use of office facilities for the Peer Researcher

