



What's in the National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines and Where to Find What You're Looking For

Please Note: All the contents and summaries provided are direct quotes from the National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines, please refer to the Guidelines for more detail.

To access the National Guidelines suite of documents go to:

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/lived-experience/lived-experience-workforces/peer-experience-workforce-guidelines>

To access the main Guidelines document go to:

https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/getmedia/a33cce2a-e7fa-4f90-964d-85dbf1514b6b/NMHC_Lived-Experience-Workforce-Development-Guideline



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Summary of key information and where to find it

Foreword from the Commission (pg. 2 - 3)

Dedication and ‘Acknowledgement and commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, perspectives and priorities’ (pg. 3)

- Includes definition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ Lived Experience

Introduction (pg. 4-5)

A shared agenda for change (pg. 6 – 9)

Priority 1. Develop understanding as a foundation for workforce development

Establishes that the Lived Experience workforce is essential to the development of truly recovery-oriented care and needs to be acknowledged as central rather than an optional ‘add on’. To achieve this centrality, the support of employers and colleagues is needed. This support can be gained by increasing shared understanding of Lived Experience work and its unique contribution.

Priority 2. Support a thriving Lived Experience workforce

Acknowledges that safety, training, support and recognition underpin a thriving workforce. A key action of this priority is to ensure that people employed in Lived Experience roles thrive by creating adequate and appropriate employment conditions.

Priority 3. Planning for workforce growth

Acknowledges that Lived Experience workers are needed everywhere, at all levels in service delivery and decision-making and across diverse communities. Growing and diversifying the Lived Experience workforce will provide services users, their families and supporters with more choice and support. A key action of this priority is to pro-actively support growth in the Lived Experience workforce in terms of the breadth of employment opportunities and diversity in the workforce including leadership roles.

Priority 4. Integrate Lived Experience work in community care

Recommends the development of community-based stepped care in every region including Lived Experience-led and Lived Experience delivered services. A key action is to increase the integration of Lived Experience-led services and co-delivered peer support services into regional health care systems, ensuring that everyone has access to care that supports recovery including people in rural and remote areas and people from diverse communities.

Priority 5. Development is supported by a national Lived Experience strategy

Emphasises investment in both the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces in the form of national professional peak bodies. National peak organisations could support the development of professional leadership for both the personal/consumer and Family/carer Lived Experience workforces at national and state levels which is so critical given there are no formal industry relations or advocacy bodies currently representing these workforces, leading to ad hoc and unregulated employment conditions.

Measuring Progress (pg. 8)

The National Lived Experience Workforce Development Guidelines (pg. 9)

Principles to Guide Workforce Development (pg.10)

1. Co-production, engaging all stakeholders in equal and respectful partnership for all aspects of workforce development is essential for Lived Experience workforce development to be effective and meaningful.
2. Maintain the integrity of Lived Experience work ensuring that all work is consistent with the values, and principles of Lived Experience work and develops from its strong foundations in the consumer movement.
3. Create the conditions for a thriving workforce, developing flexible, recovery-oriented workplaces where Lived Experience workers are enabled to achieve in their professional roles with flow-on benefits for the whole workforce and for service users and their families.
4. Respond to diversity, engaging with diverse communities to ensure that all aspects of service delivery meet their needs and engaging a Lived Experience workforce that reflects the diversity of service users and their families and supporters.
5. Reduce coercive and restrictive practice, ensuring that Lived Experience workers are not placed in positions where they are expected to support coercive or restrictive practices, and working to co-produce more effective alternatives to restrictive practices.
6. Support systemic change and professionalisation of the Lived Experience workforce, identifying areas for prioritisation in funding, policy, planning and service commissioning.

Depending on the current status of an organisation or region's Lived Experience workforce, many steps may be required to fully embed a sufficient workforce to support change.

1. Clarify – develop understanding of Lived Experience work and recovery. Assess current practices for alignment with this understanding. Create opportunities to connect with consumers, carers and families, and lived experience services in your area.
2. Commit – put Lived Experience workforce development and recovery-oriented practice on the agenda as core business. Include it in all planned activities and budgets.
3. Co-develop – work with people with lived experience and their families and supporters to review existing practices and develop new approaches.
4. Continuously Learn – collect data, service user and staff feedback. Regularly co-evaluate and apply new knowledge to the next steps in development.

How to Use the National Development Guidelines (pg.11-12)

A suite of resources (pg. 12)

Talking about Lived Experience: Language and Definitions (pg. 13)

Defining the Lived Experience workforce (pg. 13)

Multiple perspectives and language choice of the National Development Guidelines (pg. 13)

Title to describe the collective workforces (pg. 14)

Term to describe direct experience/'consumer' roles (pg. 14)

Term to describe support experience/'carer' roles (pg. 14)

Need for culturally appropriate and inclusive terminology and concepts (pg. 14)

Term to describe the 'experience' by which designated roles are informed (pg. 15)

Alternative terms to describe 'stigma' and 'anti-stigma interventions' (pg. 15)

People employed in non-designated roles (pg. 15)

Clarity: understanding Lived Experience work (pg. 16)

Chapter 1: Achieving integrated regional planning and service delivery (pg. 17 - 32)

A resource for change (pg. 17)

Benefits of the Lived Experience workforce (pg. 18)

What informs Lived Experience work? (pg. 19)

The uniqueness of Lived Experience roles (pg. 20)

Values and principles informing Lived Experience work (pg. 21-23)

- Values at the heart of Lived Experience work
- Guiding principles

Personal and family/carer roles (pg. 24)

- Similarities between personal Lived Experience and family/carer roles
- Differences between personal Lived Experience and family/carer roles
- Roles that combine both personal Lived Experience and family/carer perspectives

Specialisations (pg. 26)

Lived Experience leadership (pg. 27)

Allies/advocates of the Lived Experience workforce (pg. 28)

Co-production (pg. 30)

Co-production with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (pg. 31)

Helpful resources (pg. 32)

From Commitment to Co-production: Employing the Lived Experience Workforce (pg. 33-60)

Summary of employer actions for Lived Experience workforce development (pg. 35)

Chapter 2 Preparation: clarify and commit (pg. 36 – 43)

Leadership and culture (pg. 36 - 38)

- Introduce leaders to Lived Experience work and perspectives to develop their understanding and broader perceived value of lived experience.
- Build lived experience relationships and literacy
- Build whole-of-workforce commitment to Lived Experience
- Build awareness of diverse perspectives

Helpful resources (pg. 39)

Policies and planning (pg. 40 - 41)

- Mission statements recognise Lived Experience work as core business
- Financial commitment
- Review Human Resource policies for flexibility and workplace adjustments
- Lived Experience leadership roles

Training and development (pg. 41 – 42)

- Whole-of-workforce education about Lived Experience roles



- Education and promotion of Lived Experience roles to people accessing services and families/significant others
- Education to increase understanding of the value of diversity
- Opportunities for co-learning with other organisations

Preparation actions (pg. 43)

Chapter 3 Implementation: co-develop and embed (pg. 44 – 50)

With the preparatory groundwork laid in early stages, the implementation stage focuses on building and embedding the Lived Experience work. Embedding is different to integrating as integrating implies Lived Experience workers ‘fitting in’ to the existing workplace culture and structure. Embedding Lived Experience workers promotes sector and organisational change as a result of Lived Experience employment and ultimately leads to transformation during mature stages of development.

Leadership and culture (pg. 44)

- Allyship with the Lived Experience workforce
- Strengthen commitment to diversity and inclusion

Policies and planning (pg. 45-46)

- Create a detailed Lived Experience workforce development plan
- Develop position descriptions and recruitment processes
- Ensure appropriate supervision for Lived Experience role
- Review Human Resources and other policies

Training and development (pg. 47-49)

- Training for implementation stages
- Prioritise professional development and improving connections with Lived Experience networks
- Training and development issues for Lived Experience workers in regional, rural and remote areas
- Training for Lived Experience workers and whole-of-workplace in involuntary settings

Implementation actions (pg. 49)

Helpful resources (pg. 50)

Chapter 4 Transformation: Embedding through learning (pg. 51-55)

Leadership and culture (pg. 51)

- Challenge remaining workplace cultural barriers for Lived Experience workers
- Lived Experience roles represent diverse perspectives and cultures
- Safe sharing of lived experience is priorities and more available for the whole workforce

Policies and planning (pg. 52)

- Career progression
- Lived Experience roles are employed at all levels of the sector
- Person-directed and recovery-oriented service delivery and practice are increased
- Progress towards eliminating coercive and restrictive practices

Training and development (pg. 53-54)

Education to continue to grow the Lived Experience workforce

- Training and development are ongoing



- Lived Experience workers are benefiting from a range of effective supervision
- Progress Lived Experience workforce development in regional, rural and remote areas

Transformation actions (pg. 55)

Chapter 5 Development in regional, rural and remote areas (pg. 56-57)

Build awareness of the value and unique challenges in regional, rural and remote areas (pg. 56)

Develop the Lived Experience workforce for regional, rural and remote areas (pg. 56)

Provide training and development opportunities (pg. 57)

Helpful resources (pg. 57)

Chapter 6 Intensive and involuntary service settings (pg. 58-60)

Training for Lived Experience workers and whole-of-workplace in involuntary settings (pg. 58)

Additional considerations for Lived Experience workers in involuntary settings (pg. 59)

Progress towards eliminating coercive and restrictive practices (pg. 59)

Helpful resources (pg. 60)

Planning and Supporting Mental Health Reform (pg. 61-67)

Chapter 7 Partnering for workforce development (pg. 62-65)

Tasks that require Lived Experience leadership and meaningful co-production (pg. 62)

Educate

- Invest in whole-of-sector education on the uniqueness and value of the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces. Funders, policy makers and sector leaders also need education in the value and contribution of the Lived Experience workforce, in order to make informed decisions about workforce development.

Engage

- Higher education and mental health professional bodies to encourage embedding understanding of the uniqueness and value of Lived Experience work, personal recovery, and person-directed approaches in all accredited and ongoing professional development and tertiary qualifications.

Establish

- Data collection evaluation and auditing mechanisms to measure success and opportunities for ongoing development. Collect benchmark data and continue to expand the knowledge/evidence-based, with particular emphasis on diverse perspectives and those in regional, rural and remote areas.

Enable

- Networking, professional learning and development opportunities, expand career pathways and provide a wide range of education and training options while maintaining multiple pathways to employment.

Professionalisation of the Lived Experience workforce (pg. 63)

Recommendations for increasing professionalisation include establishing national professional peak bodies for the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces and expanding training and qualifications for Lived Experience workers.

Professionalisation is expected to increase consistency in the employment, pay levels, workplace strategies and supports available to Lived Experience workers, provide greater clarity, structure, and formalisation of roles and lead to more accountability for organisations.

Need to:

- Consider the “grassroots” origins of peer-to-peer work and the consumer movement and how to increase opportunities for social change
- Maintain the values of mutuality and egalitarianism of Lived Experience workers and avoid a hierarchy of Lived Experience workers based on certification/ qualifications
- Ensure mandatory qualifications do not exclude people who have had disruptions to their education, may not have an aptitude for formal education, or have literacy or language barriers that may prohibit success in formal education but do not restrict engaging effectively in peer support and other direct support or advocacy roles.

Priorities for Lived Experience leadership (pg. 64-65)

- Clarify
 - Lead and/or co-produce Lived Experience-led training on lived experience values and concepts and how to work collaboratively with the Lived Experience workforce.
 - Pro-actively support better understanding and support for the distinct needs of people in rural, regional and remote areas.
 - Ensure language and concepts are not exclusively focused on Western definitions and practices.
 - Use organisational self-assessment tools to assess the current stages of readiness/Lived Experience workforce development and plan for future development.
- Commit
 - Promote and maintain the fidelity of Lived Experience work including the values and principles described in the National Development Guidelines, and the profession’s origins in the consumer movement.
 - Promote concepts and language that are appropriate and inclusive for people from diverse experiences, identifications and backgrounds which helps create a more inclusive culture.
 - Progress development of independent Lived Experience workforce peak bodies to liaise with funding bodies/policy makers, government, organisations, training developers and researchers for ongoing identification of need and advocacy.
- Co-develop
 - Co-design and develop a fidelity measure for co-production to guide the development and implementation of meaningful co-production within organisations.
 - Develop training and education opportunities for various stages of career progression.
 - Co-design training and resources to support embedding of trauma-informed practice for all relevant professionals.
 - Develop a role fidelity measure to assist organisations in the development and supervision of Lived Experience roles.
 - Co-develop framework/Guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific lived experience.
 - Create and regulate a national register of Lived Experience supervisors.
 - Explore the development of Lived Experience-led, Lived Experience-specific qualifications within the higher education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, ensuring that there are multiple pathways to join the Lived Experience workforce.
- Learn and embed
 - Continue to build the evidence base for the value of Lived Experience roles, particularly the theoretical underpinnings of the work.
 - Engage in sector-wide auditing and evaluation processes.



- Guide the development and ongoing facilitation of a formal sector-wide network and/or learning collaborative to assist organisations with mentoring, knowledge sharing opportunities, and progress Lived Experience workforce development.
- Develop industrial relations awards and conditions for the Lived Experience workforce.
- Contribute to eliminating coercive and restrictive practice and providing alternatives.
- Build-in targeted strategies to ensure inclusion of people with diverse experiences, identifications and backgrounds within the Lived Experience workforce and leadership groups.
- Build greater understanding of culturally appropriate language and concepts within the Lived Experience and broader mental health workforce.
- Co-produce and lead initiatives to further challenge discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes in the workplace and contribute to a culture of safe sharing for non-designated workers with Lived Experience.
- Co-produce education on the uniqueness and value of the Lived Experience workforce as part of ongoing and accredited professional development and tertiary qualifications for other mental health disciplines.

Chapter 8 Priorities for funding and service commissioning (pg. 66-67)

Ensure that funding decisions are based on a clear understanding of Lived Experience work (pg. 66)

- Develop understanding of Lived Experience work. Leaders and staff participate in Lived Experience-led training.
- Acknowledge diversity and cultural differences in relation to concepts of mental health and the implications for policy, service design and service standards.
- Create leadership roles for Lived Experience within funding bodies, including government bodies and service commissioning bodies to increase the priority of Lived Experience work in funding and policy guidelines.
- Ensure that funding and commissioning guidelines are informed by best practice as discussed in the National Development Guidelines and prioritise Lived Experience workforce development.
- Assess tenders, submissions and policy initiatives in co-production with Lived Experience workers.
- Review periodically the outcomes and impacts of Lived Experience workforce initiatives across funded programs and services. Engage Lived Experience leaders and workers in any review process.

Priorities for funding reflect the National Development Guidelines (pg. 66-67)

- Co-designed and co-produced services
 - Co-design and co-production.
 - Development of the Lived Experience workforce.
 - Long-term sustainable projects.
 - Sustainable funding for existing and new Lived Experience-run or Lived Experience-led organisations.
- Sustained commitment to professionalisation
 - Funding the development and adequate resourcing of national and state peak bodies for the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces is a priority for workforce development.
 - Adequate funding and time is required to ensure all movement towards professionalisation of the Lived Experience workforce, including development and delivery of education and training, is Lived Experience-led, evidence-based and informed by the collective.
- Workforce development
 - Awareness and understanding: Lived Experience-led training for the whole sector to build understanding and perceived value of Lived Experience work and principles and support the growth of the Lived Experience workforce.
 - Employment opportunities: Sustainable and secure funding to develop and grow the Lived Experience workforce.
 - Professional development: upskilling the Lived Experience workforce across the career span from entry to leadership
- Knowledge generation: Lived Experience research
 - Collection of data on the Lived Experience workforce. There is currently a lack of data on this workforce and collection is essential as a foundation for monitoring workforce development.



- Lived Experience produced and co-produced research/evaluations regarding Lived Experience concepts and work to develop the evidence base and inform evidence-based practice.
- Outcome measures that align with recovery, person-directed and trauma-informed approaches.
- Research with significant engagement of the collective Lived Experience workforce to define the theoretical underpinnings of the Lived Experience workforce and inform future development of training, education and qualifications.
- Lived experience specific research fellowships across the career span.
- Research to explore cultural and language barriers to engagement with mental health services and Lived Experience work.
- Research to better understand family/carer roles, including similarities and differences between family/carer roles and personal Lived Experience roles.
- Research to gain evidence on alternatives to coercive and restrictive practice.

Appendices (pg. 68-74)

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