



# Mental Health Reform

Promoting Improved Mental Health Services

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## PEER RESEARCH ASSISTANT SERVICES ROLE DESCRIPTION

Mental Health Reform (MHR) is the national coalition driving reform of Ireland's mental health services and social inclusion of people with mental health difficulties. Our vision is of an Ireland where people with mental health difficulties can recover their wellbeing and live a full life in the community. With more than 50 member organisations and 10,000 individual supporters, MHR provides a coordinated voice to Government, its agencies, the Oireachtas and the general public on mental health issues.

### DESCRIPTION OF ROLE

MHR is seeking to contract two Peer Research Assistants (PRAs) to assist with our National Consultation '*My Voice Matters*' on the experiences of people who use public mental health services and their family members and carers. The *My Voice Matters* consultation will gather feedback through two national surveys (one for service users and one for family members and carers) in addition to targeted focus groups.

By taking part in the consultation, service users and their family members and carers will have the opportunity to share their views on a range of issues, including the challenges they face accessing mental health services and supports in their local area, and suggestions for improvements. The information gathered will also enable MHR to highlight areas of unmet need within the mental health services, and in turn campaign for better services.

The key role of the PRAs is to assist with gathering surveys from Kilkenny or Carlow outpatient mental health services. The timeframe for survey collection is planned for September to October 2017. PRAs will approach and recruit people accessing the mental health services to 1) participate in the survey and 2) support people in completing the survey.

Peer Research Assistants must have self-experience of mental health difficulties and of accessing mental health services. PRA's must also have completed some form of peer facilitation training and have experience in, for example, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), peer support group or other peer facilitation.

Selected PRAs will receive basic training in peer research skills relevant to the role. PRAs will be supervised and provided support by Mental Health Reform's Research Assistant and Senior Policy & Research Officer. PRAs will also be expected to work in close collaboration with members of the Kilkenny or Carlow outpatient community mental health team.

Individuals residing in the Kilkenny, Carlow and surrounding areas are encouraged to apply for the position of Peer Research Assistant. It is important, however, that applicants will not have used the mental health services in these areas within the last 5 years. This criteria is for the purposes of enhancing the privacy of participants to the survey.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

- Participate in Mental Health Reform's 1 day training programme on peer research skills
- Attend planning meetings with Mental Health Reform staff
- Attend an introductory meeting with Kilkenny or Carlow outpatient community mental health team
- Agree a work schedule with Mental Health Reform
- Recruit people accessing the services to complete MHR's '*My Voice Matters*' consultation survey
- Provide assistance to individuals, when required, to complete the survey
- Provide information about the national consultation to individuals accessing the services
- Establish good working relationships with the Kilkenny or Carlow outpatient community mental health team
- Collect surveys, collate and return to Mental Health Reform
- Upload completed surveys onto an electronic template, e.g. Survey Monkey
- Engage in regular contact with relevant MHR staff to provide progress updates
- Work within the framework of the overall objectives and the policies and procedures of MHR
- Contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity, anti-discriminatory practice, diversity, individual rights and choice in all aspects of the work

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Essential qualifications, skills, experience and attitude**

- Self-experience of mental health difficulties and of the mental health services
- Trained and experienced in peer facilitation, for example Wellness Recovery Action Plan, peer group or equivalent
- Fluent speaker and writer of English
- An ability to work within professional boundaries
- An ability to work alone using own initiative
- An ability to adapt easily to new surroundings, and changing circumstances
- Friendly, approachable, calm, and patient attitude

- An ability to interact with staff, service users, and family members and carers seamlessly, and tailor one's approach to address people's individual needs
- A commitment to the vision, mission and values of Mental Health Reform

### **Desirable skills**

- Full drivers licence
- Previous data collection experience (not a requirement, but an advantage)
- Attention to detail

### **TERMS**

Peer Research Assistants will work on a self-employed basis through a contract for services. The expected time commitment is 3 days per week, 3 hours each day or as agreed with the community mental health team, for a period of 6 weeks, with the potential to extend the time period by a number of weeks in order to complete the survey collection.

### **Travel**

Some local travel will be required with the role. Public transport and/or mileage costs will be reimbursed at Mental Health Reform's standard rate. No accommodation costs will be reimbursed.

### **Training provided**

The participants will undergo a research skills training day in relation to their role.

### **Location**

Kilkenny or Carlow outpatient mental health services, Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area 5. Individuals residing in the Kilkenny or Carlow and surrounding areas are encouraged to apply for the post of Peer Research Assistant.

**Closing date for receipt of applications is Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2017.**

**To apply, please send CV and a cover letter outlining your suitability for the role to Oscar James at [ojames@mentalhealthreform.ie](mailto:ojames@mentalhealthreform.ie).**

**It is expected that interviews for the role will be held the first week of September 2017.**

Mental Health Reform is an equal opportunities employer.