

## Information for Independent Peer Mentors

While much of the focus of Project 100 is to deliver training to people living with HIV via existing voluntary sector HIV providers and HIV Clinics, we also recognise that there will be individuals who live in areas where community support services are lacking who therefore wish to train as Peer Mentors in order to create new support opportunities. This resource is intended as a guide to explore potential opportunities for service engagement and development at a local level.

Where there is a lack of local training opportunities, Project 100 applicants will follow the usual application and interview process, after which they will be offered a place on either the next appropriate London training, or else a relevant upcoming regional training if that is easier for the applicant to access.

Upon completion of the core peer mentor training, we would encourage the Peer Mentor to become a local 'Champion' for Peer Mentor support. Some of their initial options would be to:

1. Contact the HIV clinic where they access their care, to let them know that they have successfully completed the training and are interested in providing peer support to other patients within the service. We would suggest that wherever possible, the Peer Mentor asks either their own clinician, the lead Clinician or a Clinical Nurse Specialist if they can be put in touch with a Project 100 Coordinator, who can contact them and explain the Project.
2. In areas where they may be some HIV specific Voluntary Sector Services, but where Peer Mentor support is not currently available, the Mentor should again get in touch with the Service and, as above, explain their training and interest in providing Peer Mentor support and put the service in touch with Project 100 Coordinators.
3. 'Lone' Peer Mentors can sign up to Terrence Higgins Trust's Community Forums, where they can identify themselves within the 'In Your Area' Forum as someone who is willing and able to provide Peer Mentor support locally. This should be done by notifying the Forums Administrator that you have completed and passed the Peer Mentor Training, so that they can be sure that the Mentor has been appropriately trained. It is of course possible to volunteer as part of the Online Peer Support Team within the Forums so that skills can be used more quickly and support provided, and this process will also have the potential to link Mentors up with people who are accessing the Forums from within their locale.
4. In areas where there are no support services, but a high enough number of people diagnosed to support a referral system, speaking to local GPs has yielded good results. Social prescribing\* is an increasingly popular intervention within Primary care, and so Peer Mentor Support might be a useful addition to a local area.

If the Peer Mentor is interested in setting up some kind of local support group for PLHIV, Project 100 would be able to offer additional support in relation to Group Facilitation Skills Training, along with information and resources to support the individual in following best practice in relation to issues such as Safeguarding, Data Protection and Confidentiality.

### **Social Prescribing**

Social Prescribing can also be called Community Referral. It is a way for GPs, Nurses and other clinical practitioners to refer people to non-clinical services that patient and the practitioner identify that the patient might benefit from using.

Social Prescribing recognizes that people have social, emotional and practical needs that can affect their affect their well-being and can impact negatively on physical health if these needs are not met. It is a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. There are many different models for social prescribing and provision will vary across regions. Often there will be community navigators operating in surgeries or clinics who will signpost patients to local services and organisations that will support particular issues. These navigators may be from external providers working in the service, volunteers or an additional role assigned to specific staff members.

There is evidence that social prescribing can have positive effects on people's health and wellbeing. Peer Mentor or group support fits well into the model.

For more information on Social Prescribing, please follow the link below:

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/topics/primary-and-community-care/social-prescribing>