

PROJECT 100

End of Project Summary Report



The background is a solid teal color. It is decorated with several plus signs of varying sizes. There are four white plus signs: one in the top left, one in the top center, one in the top right, and one in the bottom right. There is also a large orange plus sign on the left side, partially overlapping the text area.

End of Project Summary Report

‘Project 100’ was a four-year national programme, funded by the Monument Trust and managed by Positively UK, experts in providing HIV peer support since 1987. Launched in May 2015, its aim was to ensure that 100% of people living with HIV across the UK have access to high quality peer support. This summary report draws on findings from an independent evaluation, commissioned to establish the effectiveness and impact of the project.

November 2020



Acknowledgements

Positively UK would like to thank the Monument Trust for funding such a far-reaching and ambitious project, and to acknowledge the hard work of all the organisations and consultants who worked in partnership to deliver the National Standards in HIV Peer Support, the national training programme and the project evaluation. Finally, a special thank you to the hundreds of people living with HIV who took the time to seek out the training and provide their time so that others might be able to access peer support, wherever they are in the UK.

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Project Background and Description

We define peer support as a relationship in which people see each other as equal partners and where the focus is on mutual learning and growth. The 'peer' element in this context is the shared experience of living with HIV. 'Project 100' was an expansion of Positively UK's successful 2012 volunteer peer-mentoring pilot, which built upon our work providing peer support outreach within several London HIV clinics.

The British HIV Association (BHIVA) Standards of Care for People Living with HIV (2013) stated:

"HIV services should seek to optimise the involvement of skilled peer workers with HIV in service delivery, thus optimising integral peer-to-peer self-management support. These skilled peer workers should have a recruitment and training process and have access to appropriate supervision and professional development"

BHIVA

To meet these recommendations, the project developed and delivered a national recruitment, training and support package for people living with HIV to become able to provide high quality peer support in their local areas.

- + This included a standardised interview process to be completed either by Positively UK or the local partner agency, who retained ownership and management of their own volunteers.
- + Successful applicants were then able to undertake the 3-day peer-mentoring training package (delivered by people living with HIV) in groups of up to 16 people.
- + Once training was completed there was an option to complete written assignments to receive qualifications in both peer mentoring and HIV Treatment Literacy, both accredited by the Open College Network (OCN) at NVQ Level 2.

The project also provided support and resources for partner organisations who were planning to initiate or expand in-house peer mentor programmes.

- + These included draft policies, models for service delivery and partnership agreements for working across voluntary and clinical services.
- + Alongside the practical peer support training and service development, Positively UK worked in partnership with the wider HIV voluntary and clinical sectors to develop [National Standards for Peer Support in HIV](#), to ensure that high quality support could be delivered and maintained across the UK.

Project delivery outcomes

Over the course of the four years, Project 100:

- + Facilitated 80 training courses in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
- + Trained 704 people living with HIV as peer mentors

- + Provided training, resources, logistical support and leadership to over 100 partner agencies (36 HIV voluntary sector and 68 HIV specialist clinics)
- + Delivered 3 annual development day workshop events for over 300 mentors
- + Facilitated 5 'Train the Trainer' courses for 20 peer mentors to be able to deliver P100 training locally
- + Developed National Standards for Peer Support in HIV (launched 2017), in partnership with UK CAB, THT, NHIVNA, CHIVA and BHIVA (who referenced them in the updated [BHIVA Standards of Care 2018](#), which included auditable outcomes for the provision and delivery of peer support within HIV care)
- + Developed the qualification in Understanding the Importance of Treatment for HIV, accredited by the OCN at NVQ L2

The Project commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme, utilising evaluation proformas for organisations, an anonymous participant survey of 184 HIV peer mentors (more than a quarter of all those who received training), focus groups and individual telephone interviews for peer mentors and coordinators.

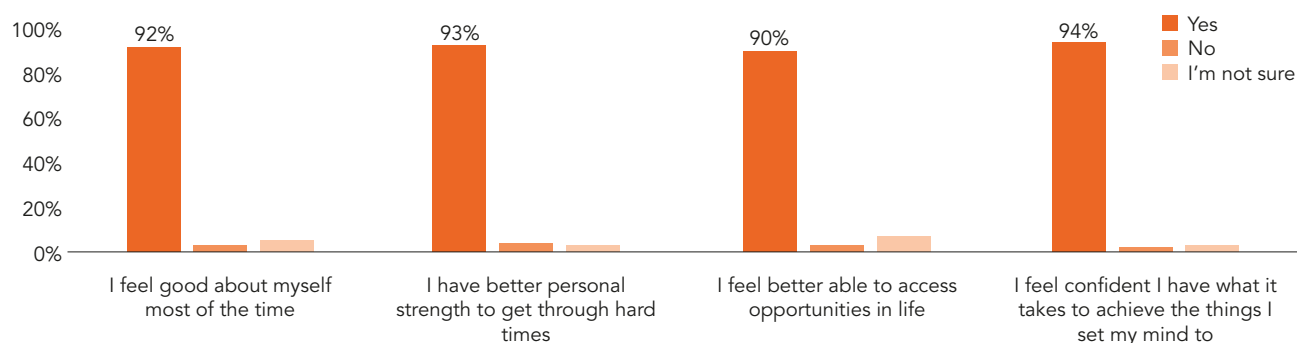
Participant outcomes

Feedback from those trained as peer mentors was extremely positive in relation to the training programme itself. The three-day, peer-delivered training, with its participative and practical approach, was described as:

"helpful", "life-changing", "informative", "inspirational" and "well-tailored and allowed people to shine".

Peer Mentors

While the benefits of receiving peer support are well documented, there has been less research on the benefits for those who provide support. Within this project, the results for the people living with HIV who undertook the training were exceptional.



- + Over ninety per cent of respondents stated feeling good about themselves since becoming a peer mentor, having better personal strength to get through hard times, being better able to access opportunities in life and having the confidence to achieve the things they set their mind to.
- + In addition, eighty-seven per cent of participants reported being better informed and better able to manage their HIV, health and well-being.

- + More than seventy per cent felt more comfortable and happier being themselves around most people, and more able to reach out to family or friends when they needed to.
- + Lastly, seventy-seven per cent of survey participants recognized feeling more open to talk about their HIV status since becoming a peer mentor.

“This [peer-mentoring] helped me disclose to my son and not because of shame. HIV is more normalised in my life and mummy is still mummy”

This experience was echoed during interviews and group discussions, where there was a recurrent theme about the need to educate others on HIV.

HIV Clinic and Voluntary Sector Partner Outcomes

One of the greatest achievements of Project 100 was the transformative impact it had on the provision and integration of HIV peer support services at national level.

This success was due to a combination of factors:

- + Project 100 was the largest collaborative partnership working project we have seen in the UK HIV sector, bringing together a shared desire for the best support possible at a time of unprecedented financial hardship.
- + Its structure was unique in maintaining ownership of the ‘end product’ – the trained peer mentors – at a local level, whilst being delivered nationally.
- + The ethos of peer-led support and education at the core of the training, being delivered by people with HIV for people with HIV.

Having local partners interview and get to know their own volunteers without concerns about travel and training costs was a great incentive for organisations who had previously not utilised peer support in any great way within their services. Several charities which had some existing peer support provision were able to make new bids from funders such as the National Lottery to expand and consolidate their peer support offer. There were also several charities who for the first time started to employ people living with HIV to deliver their peer support programmes.

All coordinators who participated in the evaluation agreed that ‘Project 100’ training brought more structure and consistency to the delivery of peer-support nationally:

“Project 100 training as a ready-made package is well-structured which made it quite simple and easy to deliver. And a really good in-depth training, bringing peer mentors together, giving them the skills necessary to start”

Local partners found the ongoing support provided throughout the duration of the project invaluable. Sharing Positively UK’s experience and expertise working with HIV clinics in London was extremely valuable to coordinators (in both voluntary sector and clinical services) and peer mentors who struggled to access local clinical settings due to NHS policies and governance. In its goal of increasing peer support provision within HIV clinics, Project 100 was able to facilitate this in more

than twenty clinical services across the UK. There has been a significant spike in interest since the updated 2018 BHIVA Standards of Care referenced the Peer Support Standards and made a number of peer support recommendations, so numbers continue to rise. Moreover, Positively UK was instrumental in engaging ninety-three coordinators in network meetings that allowed participants to share learning and support each other both across the UK and within local 'hubs'.

Challenges

There were three main difficulties in achieving successful and sustainable project outcomes, expressed by both peer mentors and service coordinators:

- + Obtaining regular referrals from clinical services, so that peer mentors had people to support.
- + Difficulties in implementing a straight-forward volunteering pathway within clinical services was also an ongoing challenge, despite NHS England's 2017 document '[Recruiting and Managing Volunteers in NHS Providers](#)'.
- + Ensuring that hospital Trusts are making use of their in-house volunteer services rather than expecting mentors to go through a full HR recruitment process was also a key learning in supporting better collaborative working.

The other significant challenge was the harsh financial climate of austerity, which resulted in several charities losing their funding and closing. However, the interest from local HIV clinics to maintain peer support and bring it in-house was a welcome development in some areas where voluntary sector services were lost.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback from our partners and trained mentors, our main recommendation is to strengthen links between HIV clinical and voluntary sector services to ensure easy and timely access to peer support within the clinic, as recommended by the BHIVA Standards.

NHS England's [5-Year Forward View](#) and [10-Year Plan](#) highlight the need for clinical and voluntary sectors to move away from siloed working and make better use of volunteers. The updated BHIVA Standards of Care have laid the groundwork for better partnership working, so we should strive to build on our successes and share good practice moving forward. Ensuring that peer support is integrated within the patient pathway is key, since health and wellbeing needs are two sides of the same coin and should be addressed together.

Clearly, the financial environment has not improved, and the COVID pandemic has created further challenges to delivering joined up, personalised services. People with HIV are experiencing increased isolation and difficulty in accessing face to face care from HIV clinics, making peer support even more crucial to maintaining health and wellbeing. Positively UK has seen a large increase in demand for our online and telephone support services during this period, and the use of innovative technology has increased accessibility for many who live in rural areas.

Our second recommendation, therefore, is that those commissioning support services continue to recognise and fund the vital role the voluntary sector plays in supporting the NHS in delivering holistic, whole person care and meeting the non-clinical needs of the population.

Conclusions and next steps

Positively UK are incredibly proud to have been able to work in partnership with so many UK HIV services and will continue to share training resources with Project 100 partners. Additional funding has been sourced to continue our Train the Trainer programme, so that local partners will have their own peer mentor trainers available to continue the work. International interest in the Project has been high, thanks to abstracts and workshops at national and international conferences, and we have shared resources to inform good practice in other countries, from Australia to Norway.

Positively UK and several Project 100 partners have already started delivering local peer mentor training to other organisations dealing with other health conditions, and we are committed to maintaining and supporting a peer-led learning environment across other long-term conditions and social challenges, as well as HIV.

In the face of the COVID pandemic, Positively UK are also adapting all of our training for online delivery, which will enable us to continue to support local, regional and national training delivery.

While we are proud of the work we have done in delivering excellence in peer support and expanding access across the UK, Public Health England's 2017 '[Positive Voices](#)' survey found that forty-three per cent of people living with HIV who expressed a need for peer-support did not receive such service. Today, the demand for peer support remains high, urging all those concerned in commissioning and making decisions about service provision to ensure that whole-person care is prioritised, both in clinics and in the community.



HIV peer support network

CONNECTING FOR SUPPORT



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