



Struggle to Strength 2022

Fife's Lived Experience Team & Peer Support Network

Year 1



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Background

About This Work

Struggle to Strength supports people with lived experience of poverty, trauma mental health challenges and/or unemployment. It builds confidence and skills, transforms difficulties into strengths and, in turn, aims to improve mental health and employability service design and delivery for countless others in Fife.

The project comprises two interlinked components: the Lived Experience Team (LET) and the Fife Mental Health Peer Support Network (MHPSN). Both offer a combination of 1:1 support, training and social connection with a community of interest where all are treated as equal.

In 2022 Struggle to Strength was supported through a combination of funding from the Robertson Trust, Agnes Hunter Trust, and Fife Council No One Left Behind monies for the Lived Experience Team and Fife Health & Social Care Partnership Action 15 funding for the Peer Support Network.

Three part-time staff are central to the delivery of the project:

- the Peer Support Network Coordinator, Trish O'Brien
- the Lived Experience Team Coordinator, Anne Fearfull until March 2022, Pam Miller since April 2022
- the Struggle to Strength Project Assistant, Christina Graham, this post was newly created in January 2022.

The team are supported and line managed by Fife Voluntary Action, Employability Development Manager Pegs Bailey and the whole project is overseen by a Steering Group which meets quarterly and includes representatives from Fife Council Employability Division, Fife Health & Social Care Partnership, SAMH, Fife Employment Access Trust, Fife College, the Scottish Recovery Network and members of both the Lived Experience Team and the Peer Support Network.

Aims And Objectives

Struggle to Strength aims to help Fife design and deliver mental health and employability services which build people's resilience and skills; reduce stigma and discrimination and which improve access to appropriate advice and support when it is needed.

The Lived Experience Team (LET) provides supported opportunities (volunteer and paid) where people use their lived experience to inform and improve relevant policy, service design and staff skills in Fife. The LET aims to support approximately 20 individuals/year of which 6 will be new recruits in 2022. The Team aims to engage with around 20 different opportunities in 2022 and 2023.

The Fife Mental Health Peer Support Network (PSN) focuses on growing capacities for individuals and organisations to deliver peer support in clinical and community contexts. The PSN aims to engage with approx. 25 individuals; support 8 Peer Work Placements; and extend its membership and engagement with relevant services over two years. The team also plan to deliver training on Understanding Peer to 16 services and support 3 organisations to host Peer Work Placements.

In addition, the project is structured to create strong networks of support within the lived experience community and beyond. It aims to ensure people have access to financial support should they need it; that volunteers are appropriately remunerated for their activities; and people are able to gain and sustain work when they are ready.

Through the work of both Lived Experience Team volunteers and the Peer Support Network this collaborative project will actively work with senior partners and stakeholders to improve the design and delivery of mental health and employment services and systems for people in Fife.

Context For Delivery

Struggle to Strength is being implemented in a context where there is a growing interest in both Peer Support in mental health services in Fife and in understanding how to meaningfully bring the voice of experience into public service policy design and service delivery.

Scottish Government are placing increased expectations on public services to evidence meaningful engagement with service users through models such as the Scottish Approach to Service Design and health and social care patient voice. However approaches are mixed and there is uncertainty in some contexts on how to do this well.

The Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Plan 4 Fife, also commits to meaningful community engagement across all policy areas. From 2017 to 2021 Fife Council have supported co-production approaches within employability through Delivering Differently (focus on mental health and employability) and No One Left Behind (focus on employability service commissioning) although they were not badged as co-production at that time. These programmes of work were both led by Fife Voluntary Action and supported by the Lived Experience Team. Together they have been significant catalysts for the Struggle to Strength project as outlined here.

Struggle to Strength is being delivered at the tail end of the covid-19 pandemic, with the significant implications on stretched resources for Health & Social Care Services, and significant staffing issues combined with increased demands on mental health services.

Meanwhile employability policy and funding strands in Scotland are also going through significant change. With employability services being commissioned at local level under the banners of Scottish Government No One Left Behind policy since 2021 and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022.

This context provides many opportunities for Struggle to Strength to bring lived experience insight to this changing policy and service delivery environment, and for people to be more open to the value of different approaches such as peer support as part of mental health delivery.

However it also presents challenges. The pace of change, combined with increasing pressures on staff at the frontline, create a context which makes it difficult for staff to give time to developing new approaches or to allow time for good quality, meaningful engagement with people with lived experience.

Methodological Approach

This interim evaluation report covers the calendar year 2022.

The work shown in this report has been carried out using the Matter of Focus approach. The "Matter of Focus" approach is a theory-based approach to outcome monitoring and evaluation, learning and improvement that builds on contribution analysis. In using the approach, we have gone through a logical and structured process of:

- Developing a theory of change for our project informed by an understanding of the context in which we operate.
- Agreeing one or more outcome maps that show how we think our activities contribute to outcomes, and what needs to be in place to make this happen.
- Identifying clear change mechanisms by which our project or programme works, these are shown in our pathways.
- Developing a plan to gather data to understand whether or not we are making the progress towards outcomes we hope. This includes integrating current data and information we collect, as well as capturing data specifically for this purpose.
- Systematically reviewing this data against each of the stepping stones for each pathway in the outcome map.
- Summarising key findings against each of the stepping stones to tell our contribution story.

This report has been produced in OutNav. OutNav is a software system developed by Matter of Focus that supports organisations to take a collaborative and outcome focused approach to evaluation planning, implementation analysis and reporting.

Our pathways

1. Building the capacity of individuals to do co-production and lived experience work

2. Influencing others through co-production and lived experience

Risks and assumptions

RISKS

- ⚠️ disagreement on how to 'do co-production' or 'peer' within the respective movements
- ⚠️ partner organisations do not bring lived experience voices to partner co-production
- ⚠️ Resources and waiting lists mean that people cannot access the services that would help them
- ⚠️ Additional/outside training can be poor quality or not meet expectations
- ⚠️ Inclusion can be tokenistic and not used for real change
- ⚠️ Learning is sometimes not utilised
- ⚠️ This work can be frustrating when things don't go to plan

ASSUMPTIONS

- ⚠️ We have an 'all together' approach (not 'us' vs 'them')
- ⚠️ We are positive about learning - about how we are doing things and from what doesn't work
- ⚠️ We role model and treat ourselves and others with kindness and humility

 Lack of opportunities to put skills into practice can mean those skills are lost

 People with lived experience can be viewed as victims and treated differently

1. Building the capacity of individuals to do co-production and lived experience work - pathway progress



1. Building the capacity of individuals to do co-production and lived experience work - summary findings

What we do

In order to grow peer practice and support co-production it is important that the Lived Experience Team and Peer Support Network recruit and support new members with relevant lived experience, build a sense of community and grow skills to deliver this work in Fife.

Peer Support Network

Since January 2022 the Peer Support Network has expanded its membership from around 146 to 166 although we do not track if people join as members with lived experience or because their organisation is interested in growing peer practice.

The Network hosted 2 Gatherings, one in March with 22 participants and a second in December with 16 participants. The PSN also welcomed 34 people to the Annual Peer Support Network Celebration and have also created five short life working groups to focus on specific topics.

The PSN have developed and revised the Peer Skills Pathway & Framework for Growing Peer Practice and produce a regular newsletter with information on new projects all of which aim to help people understand the services available and how the systems and policy work in the context of growing peer practice.



Peer Network Support Celebration

Here, a workshop by one of our members of the Peer Network, Scottish Recovery Network, whom we have strong ties with as individuals working and as an organisation.



Emotional CPR (eCPR)

Some of our Peer Support Network members taking part in eCPR with Dan Fisher. 3 days intense work on how better to communicate and listen to how we feel.

The team also coordinated a range of training to build individuals' capacity to deliver quality Peer Practice. This includes: 1 Peer2Peer course with embedded eCPR with 15 participants, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) training (18 participants) and WRAP facilitator training (7 participants). This has significantly increased the numbers of people who feel confident and skilled to deliver peer support in the area.

Monthly co-reflection sessions for P2P graduates have been attended by an average of 4-6 peer practitioners. Creating a supportive community which help people to share learning and grow together. This group has now been adapted to meeting 6 weekly and open to all peers in Fife.

3 peer placements have been supported with 2 organisations: Families in Trauma & Recovery and Better than Well at Link Living. Peer placements help both the individuals and the organisations learn how to deliver and support peer practitioners within their services.

All of these activities, events and training are co-produced and designed. This reinforces the sense of community and shared learning which is central to a peer-approach.

Lived Experience Team

Anne Fearfull stepped down as the LET Coordinator in March 2022 and Pam Miller, a former LET volunteer, started in post in April. This caused a little delay as Pam settled into her new role. Despite this the team recruited 5 new LET members since January 2022. Many were former P2P participants or referred from the FVA Volunteer Development Team.

The LET meet (nearly) monthly via Teams (7 meetings held since January), this is an important part of creating a mutual support network. Pam has additional 1:1 and ad hoc meetings with members as needed to ensure people are feeling supported and engaged.

Training has focused on developing the staff team with Pam & Christina attending both Good Conversations and International Futures Forum Competence in Complexity training.

One volunteer has also attended Good Conversations training and members engaged in a Parliamentary Awareness session organised by the Scottish Government on 27th April 2022

Other than this training for LET members has been limited to date. Induction training for new LET members in January attended was attended by eight people. However since then it has been difficult to find a time that suits all the new members and so Pam has run one 1:1 session and will deliver more in January.

In addition the LET have been seeking to establish paid LET Facilitator opportunities. Funding from Fife H&SCP for 3 part-time LET facilitators to support co-production work on Mental Health & Wellbeing in Primary Care Settings (MHWBPC) was confirmed in November 2022. These posts will be recruited to in 2023.

Details of the many co-production activities that the team have supported can be found in Pathway 2.

Overarching

To support this work the Struggle to Strength team meet weekly. This is important when developing new work. It helps with collaboration, shared learning and creating a space for reflective practice.

The S2S Steering Group which has been created to oversee this work meets quarterly and helps to guide priority activities. Attendance dropped off significantly in September 2022 so we have reviewed the time and day of meeting and refreshed the membership to see if this will help moving forward.

Looking forward to 2023

For 2023 both the LET & PSN will continue to focus on recruitment through a targeted campaign including giving talks, sharing flyers and posters on social media.

The Peer Support Network will continue to grow support for individuals wishing to engage in peer practice through holding a bursary for peer training delivered by others, training peer champions and continuing to hold regular co-reflection groups. Through Pathway Two they will also work with organisations to create paid peer roles.

The Lived Experience Team will be focussing on establishing a training and induction programme for new members as well as recruiting and training the 3 new paid LET roles. Monthly LET meetings will be planned for the year ahead and will rotate with one informal with one formal to help build connections between members.

The PSN mailing list is up to 166 members of which around 35 are considered active.

Ever Growing

Who with

Struggle to Strength aims to ensure that both the Peer Support Network and Lived Experience Team membership is diverse and representative of relevant lived experience and key equalities groups in Fife.

Peer Support Network

The Peer Support Network do not currently identify whether people attend because of their personal lived experience or as a representative of an organisation who wishes to deliver peer practice.

Lived Experience Team

The LET currently includes 14 individuals of which five joined in 2022. Around eight are actively involved in different projects. Given the growing demand for LET involvement in co-production work it is very important the team expands its active membership.

Overarching

To better understand the membership of both the LET and PSN the team sent out an equalities survey in November 2022.

In total 20 people completed the questionnaire: seven were members of the LET and the Peer Support Network, four members of the LET only and nine members of the PSN only.

The results showed that both the LET and the PSN had a balance towards women (13 women and nine men). The majority of respondents were non-religious, white, Scottish and heterosexual. No one described themselves as transgender. 16 respondents were in the 35-65 age bracket, two were 65+. No one was under 25.

Eight respondents were in full time employment, 3 in part-time, 2 volunteered full-time, 4 volunteered part-time, one owned their own small business and 2 identified as permanently sick or disabled. 10 had caring responsibilities for either children, disabled adults or an older person.

13 respondents had a mental health condition. This was often alongside other disabilities or long-term illnesses. Five respondents did not answer this question.

Forward look for 2023

Priority recruitment activity for LET and PSN from November 2022 will build on the insight from the equalities snapshot with particular focuses on expanding contributions from men, the 18-34 age range, people from different ethnic backgrounds, different religions and the LGBTQ+ community.

We will work with the Equalities Officer role which is funded through the Mental Health & Wellbeing in Primary Care Co-production work to support this.

How they feel

In order to engage in both peer practice and lived experience work on service redesign, we think it is important that the individuals we support feel safe, accepted, valued, empowered and confident in how the project is working. This is particularly true because this kind of work can be particularly triggering when managed badly and lead to disengagement at best, or re-traumatisation at worst.

We don't capture these feelings on a regular basis but rather through snapshots at particular events or points in time.

Peer Support Network

Comments from the Peer Support Network P2P whats app chat group demonstrate how participants feel.



Following the December PSN Gathering participants were asked how they felt about their involvement in the Network using statements that matched those in our pathway. Feedback suggests that the majority of respondents feel supported, empowered and that they are making a difference.

Trish also got nominated for a SHERO award by one PSN member. This demonstrates the respect and value from at least one of the PSN membership:-)



Trish O'Brien, Peer Support Network Co-ordinator, a 2022 Shero!

Nominated by one of the members of the Peer Support Network, our co-ordinator was surprised to find this in her inbox for her work with the network.

Lived Experience Team

When leading on co-production work the LET create shared ground rules, and an environment which is design to feel safe for all, explaining issues of power and inclusion.

Sometimes the LET are not in the lead of an engagement however. And where this has not been supported in an engagement the team has worked together to reflect on what did not work and offer constructive feedback to those involved. This happened with the MH Estates Redesign process where the team felt a consultation event was not managed well. The Coordinator not only gave 1:1 support to the two members most affected, she also convened an additional debrief meeting for all involved and used this to provide constructive feedback for the Fife H&SCP team involved.

This process was important to ensure people felt supported, safe and, perhaps crucially, that there concerns were seen and heard. As a result Fife H&SCP have changed how they approach subsequent engagements with earlier involvement with the LET. In November they also confirmed funding to ensure the LET can support meaningful co-production for work on the MHWBPC.

"Being part of the team has a real sense of camaraderie and also a feeling that we are making a difference."

— Lived Experience Team Member

"It has made a huge difference to my wellbeing knowing that my experiences and views can be taken forward to improve local services."

— LET Member

Another protocol (as we have a duty of care for our team), is to ensure either the LET coordinator or S2S project assistant are present at any meetings/events members of the team attend.

It might be helpful to do more to capture LET members experience of being within the team.

Overarching

This feedback and learning demonstrates the importance of the work the team to do to help people feel safe, supported and empowered to contribute. And how this in turn can improve personal wellbeing.

It also shows the importance of having appropriate support structures in place to reduce the likelihood of difficulty in the first place, and to manage problems when they do (inevitably) arise.

Looking Forward to 2023

The Struggle to Strength team will continue to grow their approach to creating safe, supportive and empowering environments for the individuals involved in this work.

What they learn and gain

It is our hope that through doing co-production and lived experience work LET & PSN members learn and develop new skills, gain a platform to share their voices, connect with like-minded people *and* gain different perspectives.

Peer Support Network

Feedback from participants involved in PSN training and events suggests that they not only gain skills and insight into different approaches to delivering peer practice, but also a sense of connection and camaraderie which is important.

Lived Experience Team

"I feel much more confident in myself and my ability to speak out about things which are difficult to discuss/express, and feel like I am listened to and taken seriously when discussing my experiences."

— LET Member

Although the LET has not delivered as much training to members as originally intended this does not mean that members are not gaining skills and knowledge. Regular team meetings create a space for people to connect and engagement in projects helps increase confidence and resilience.

The LET induction provides a brief overview of the mental health and employability systems and services in Fife, however this needs continually refreshed and updated.

Overarching

Through our regular team meetings and also creating reflective logs and space for the team to discuss these, we are also gaining insight ourselves into what practices help or hinder our work. Over the year we too have gained confidence in how we do the work we do, we have realised we know more than we thought about peer support and co-production and used this insight to support others.

Looking Forward to 2023

In 2023 we will continue to invest in training for our staff team, as well as creating a bursary for training in peer support, and investing in both shared and individual training needs for LET and PSN members.

We could do more to capture what PSN and LET members learn and gain through being involved in the project

What they do differently

Struggle to Strength aims to ensure that people do things differently as a result of the project. We hope the individuals we work with are better able to get the support they need when they need it, they gain opportunities and move into work and they use their skills and share their learning with others.

Two staff on the Struggle to Strength project were former members of the Lived Experience Team.

Peer Support Network

Three PSN members are now either delivering Peer 2 Peer training themselves or supporting delivery by others. This demonstrates their increased confidence and ability to use their skills and share learning with others. One has moved into a paid post but unfortunately these opportunities are still frustratingly limited in Fife.

The PSN continues to work with third sector partners and statutory services to address this. See Pathway 2 for more information.

Lived Experience Team

The LET have supported a number of projects designed to help people get to the right mental health or employment support at the right time including feeding back on the Access Therapies Fife website (updates pending) and advising on the creation of a Job Seekers MH and Wellbeing toolkit.

Three LET members used the learning and experience of previous co-production projects to work with the Trauma Informed Services team to co-produce a report 'Inclusivity & Co-production: A trauma informed guide for Fife'. LET members also spoke at the webinar which launched the report, and have supported workshops on co-production delivered to community engagement staff and led a Conversation Cafe as part of Scottish Co-production week

Overarching

"Being a part of the Lived Experience Team gave me purpose, and led to a part-time job within the third-sector, and then full time. I'd never have been confident enough in myself without that time in the team."

— Christina, former Lived Experience Team member, now Project Officer for this project

Although we only have partial evidence it would appear that some of the individuals who have been most actively involved in either the PSN or the LET (or both) for some years, are feeling more confidence to lead in peer and co-production training and work.

Some of those who have been involved for shorter amounts of time, or are less confident describe feeling more confident to speak out, but are not yet taking on paid or leadership roles. This may change in 2023.

Looking Forward to 2023

It would be helpful to ask LET & PSN members to reflect on what (if anything) they do differently as a result of being involved in the project and to capture this as part of the learning of the project

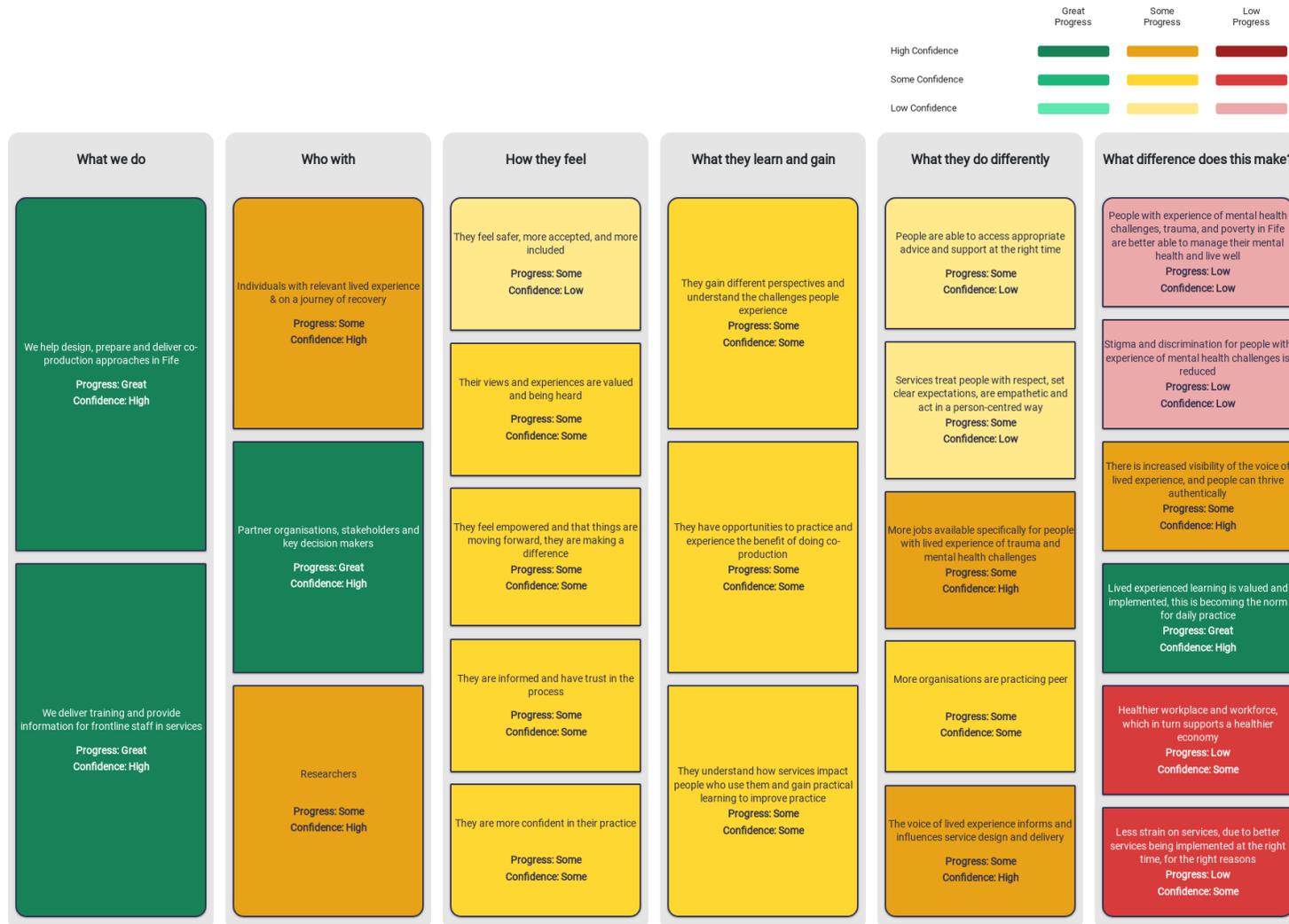
What difference does this make?

It is our hope that through Struggle to Strength people in Fife are better able to manage their mental health, stigma and discrimination is reduced, the voice of lived experience is valued and people can live and work well. These are long term goals which are hard to measure and which we cannot directly attribute to the work of the LET & PSN.

We DO however have significant evidence that the voice of lived experience is increasingly valued and that interest in both co-production processes and peer practice on the frontline is growing. More evidence on this can be found in Pathway 2.

We can also confidently say that at least 3 individuals supported by the project have moved into work since January 2022, and the LET Facilitator posts will recruit three more paid posts in 2023.

2. Influencing others through co-production and lived experience - pathway progress



2. Influencing others through co-production and lived experience - summary findings

What we do

Struggle to Strength aims to help organisations, decision makers and key stakeholders improve mental health and employability services in Fife through bringing the voice of experience to service design and delivery.

Peer Support Network

Key stakeholders for the Peer Support Network include third sector, community based mental health support services and Fife H&SCP mental health services in both emergency, primary and secondary care contexts. Work with each community has progressed in different ways.

The PSN Coordinator and Employability Development Manager worked with Fife H&SCP colleagues to support allocation of funding for peer roles in clinical settings since 2020. Action 15 funding for 8 peer practitioners was set aside in 2021/22 however due to change in staffing at leadership level, and the impact of the pandemic and staff sickness progress stalled for several months.

Since November 2022, following regular outreach emails and discussions at different meetings this has now started moving forward, with champions in leadership roles in Fife H&SCP who have an experience of working with Peer Delivery in other local authorities helping move this agenda forward. The Struggle to Strength team are supporting this with research and guidance on different approaches in other areas, as well as offering training and workshops to the clinical teams with whom these roles will eventually be based.

This is a priority focus for Year 2.

For third sector the PSN Coordinator has provided varying levels of support to around 15 organisations. This has ranged from 1:1 support with three organisations, to training in Understanding Peer: one workshop delivered to one organisation (12 participants) and an open lunchtime learning session with 12 different organisations.

The PSN have also funded training in WRAP and Peer 2 Peer which have been attended by staff in existing organisations to help build their skills in delivering Peer. And arranged a series of workshops at the PSN Annual Celebration event and Gatherings, all of which provide opportunities for members to build skills and knowledge in different aspects of Peer work.

The PSN bi-monthly newsletter is a key route to promoting information about Peer activity across Fife. It has a circulation of 166. Whilst the co-produced and regularly refined Growing Peer Support Framework and Peer Skills Pathway have been cited as useful tools which support others to grow and deliver peer.

The co-produced approach to developing all aspects of the PSN activities is crucial to embodying peer, creating a sense of co-ownership and ensuring that activities and outcomes are relevant to all those involved.

It is our hope that the additional support and training for organisations supported by the PSN means that they are more confident to create good quality peer roles in their organisation, and therefore good quality peer support to the people who use their services. And that this in turn will facilitate recovery.

Lived Experience Team

The Team support members and stakeholders to create and deliver engagement activity within mental health and employability contexts across Fife. Some engagement activity can be described as co-production or co-design, whilst others are more traditional consultations and one off opportunities.

In the employability sector the team have supported:

- Significant and ongoing work with the No One left Behind employability services. This included contributing to the assessments of applications for funding in January 2022, sitting on the oversight group for successful projects and from August 2022 redesigning NOLB registration forms to make them more person-centred, and less intrusive.
- The team have also supported work to explore using a co-production approach to guiding Best Start Bright Futures spend on employment support for families and parents. This funding was put on pause until 2023/24. Luckily in October 2022 an associated

funding stream was discussed at a senior strategic meeting (Opportunities Fife Partnership) and so the team have pivoted this work to support that: Tay Cities Targeted Pockets of Need support for Whole Families

- Contributing to training for staff working in employability organisations through Good Conversations, Mental Health & Work Indicator training and hosting workshops on co-production and lived experience at Employability Forums. There has been less frontline training than had been hoped, we look forward to progressing this more in 2023
- Providing feedback on making Skills Development Scotland new office in Kirkcaldy more welcoming

For Fife Health & Social Care Partnership the team have been involved in multiple programmes:

- Co-designing the Fife (and now Scotland's) Suicide Awareness campaign for 2022
- Co-designing a Jobseekers Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit with Fife Health Promotions team
- Consultation on Fife Mental Health Estates redesign. The LET were brought in at the final stages of this engagement and it was a difficult experience. Constructive feedback from the team regarding the venue and accessibility issues, the option appraisal and structure of the day, and also leadership behaviour from the people leading the event was a critical stepping stone in helping shape future engagements with Fife H&SCP
- Providing feedback on Psychiatry recruitment boards; a MH services directory

Other projects which have been on pause

- Improving Fife's Personality Disorder and Complex Trauma Pathway (paused due to lack of volunteers)
- Improving pathways to 'Unscheduled Care' (paused due to new work activity outlined below and lead staff member leaving post in Fife H&SCP)
- Training for frontline staff in MH services and in Fife College (due to lack of volunteers ready to delivery this kind of work/time to develop opportunities)

Perhaps the two most significant programmes of work for Fife H&SCP have been:

1. Work with Fife Trauma Informed Services lead to co-produce 'something', started in September 2021. This led to the creation of a guide to doing co-production: 'Inclusivity and Co-production: A trauma informed approach for Fife'. The launch webinar in September 2022 was attended by circa 79 participants from a range of backgrounds and has led to the creation and delivery of short workshops on understanding co-production (3 delivered in Nov/Dec 2022) and in December 2022 the creation of a monthly co-production drop-in, co-hosted by the LET, Fife H&SCP and Families in Trauma & Recovery.
2. Work for Fife H&SCP has been developing a 5 year plan to co-produce a review and redesign mental health and wellbeing services in Primary Care settings. This has led to full time funding for both the LET Coordinator, Project Assistant, 3 part-time LET facilitators and an Equalities Officer based at Fife Centre for Equalities to support this work. This has taken several months of meetings since November 2021 to put in place.

The LET Coordinator and the Employability Development Manager have also turned down several requests for engagement (see Pathway 1) *and* provided advice and guidance to senior stakeholders wishing to develop co-production activities with the following stakeholders: Fife H&SCP Reimagining Care lead, H&SCP High Risk Pain Management lead, Fife's Alcohol & Drugs Partnership lead, and Children's Services.

Overarching

Both the LET & PSN have also supported research programmes and one off national consultations. More details in the next section.

As a result of all this work the Struggle to Strength team are now being seen as a 'go to' resources for advice on how to 'do' co-production and how to develop and embed quality peer practice approaches.

There is the sense of a growing movement in Fife for both valuing and funding peer support on the frontline AND for embedding good quality engagement (co-production) approaches not just within employability and mental health settings but in other contexts too.

The practical experience of the team, grown over the last 5 years, is central to this.

Looking forward to 2023

For 2023 the S2S team will focus on sharing what they have learned through the new Fife co-production drop in and developing their short training workshop(s) based on the Inclusivity & Co-production Guide. This will include building the capacity of LET & PSN members to support training for others, as currently this is limited to 3 or 4 individuals.

The PSN will be focussing energy on co-developing embedding peer practice in secondary care MH services in Fife, whilst the LET will be prioritising the co-produced review of MH & Wellbeing services in Primary Care (MHWBPC).

Work on employability will continue through training, workshops and supporting the NOLB Oversight work.

Who with

In order to help influence others through the voice of experience in both service design and delivery it is important that we engage with the right people.

Peer Support Network

The Peer Support Network has 35 organisations listed in its membership and has worked with around 15 to a greater or lesser degree. Of these around 12 are considered to be active in developing peer practice in Fife. They have particularly worked with Better Than Well team at Link Living, Families in Trauma & Recovery, FEAT and Support in Mind.

Fife H&SCP partners have changed since departure of the Peer Support lead in April 2022, however with new staff and champions in place this is moving forward at pace since November 2022.

Lived Experience Team

Key stakeholders for the LET include members of the Fife H&SCP mental health services team: from MH estates, through to psychology, third sector recommissioning, health promotions and more. A lot of time is spent in supporting and maintaining these open and constructive relationships.

Key partners in employability include Fife Council's Employability division and the team involved in overseeing the commissioning and delivery of No One Left Behind funded services. The LET are also supporting third sector organisations interested in delivering co-produced employability services, albeit mainly through workshop approaches.

Due to the increased interest and expectation of community engagement and even co-production the team have also been approached to support work with other stakeholders such as the Fuel Poverty team or a review of the wider Fife H&SP Strategy, either because they did not fit the LET members interests or because the approach was not one we felt was supportive of good quality engagement.

In addition the team have been approached for, and provided, advice on growing the voice of lived experience and/or co-production from Fife Alcohol & Drugs Partnership, Children's Services and NHS Fife's High Risk Pain Management Team.

In terms of Research the team have supported

- The SIPHER research programme on health inequalities and unemployment now led by Stirling University
- The Robertson Trust A Life and Debt Situation: Designing Financial Security, October 2022;
- Be part of the Change: Mental Health Foundation research on ending mental health stigma
- Future of Scotland's Mental Health Services consultation
- research involving Scottish Recovery Network on co-production, led by McMaster University, Canada, and Aston University, Birmingham;

On behalf of the LET and the PSN Pegs engages regularly with the Head of Complex Critical Care Services in Fife H&SCP and the Head of Economic Development in Fife Council and attends relevant strategic partnership meetings.

Overarching

As a result of this work the core S2S team have now got well established, and trusted relationships with key organisations and stakeholders relevant to our priority areas of interest in both Fife H&SCP, Employability division and wider third sector partners.

This reputation also means that the team are being approached to support wider activities and there is a risk that this will divert energy and attention from our core purpose.

Looking Forward to 2023

The work for 2023 will focus on building established trusting relationships so that they can ripple out to wider PSN and LET members, and wider staff within these organisations.

The team will also focus on developing skills to support others to do co-production work in their different policy contexts, to avoid diverting capacity from our priority policy areas of interest.

How they feel

Struggle to Strength aims to ensure that staff who are involved in developing peer practice and lived experience engagement also feel accepted, included, are more confident in their practice and that they are making a difference.

Fife Peer Support Network

Feedback from members of the PSN involved in the Gatherings and Annual Celebration suggest that staff involved leave feeling inspired, empowered and more confident in what peer is and how to grow peer practice both as individuals and organisations:

One PSN Celebration participant described the event as *'informative and hopeful;reassuring that there are others out there also fighting our fight.'*

"...last weeks event-what a great sense of collaboration in the room!"

— Peer Support Network Member, on the Peer Network Celebration Event, Sep 2022

The Wordle below captures people's feelings about growing Peer following the PSN Celebration event:



(note: this includes responses from people responding as potential peer workers and organisations growing peer practice).

Lived Experience Team

Just as for individuals with lived experience, time spent creating shared ground rules for how we work together are critical to ensuring staff feel able to contribute safely. Introducing simple measures like starting with some information about our whole selves rather than job titles helps break down the 'them and us' barriers, but this can also be quite challenging for staff involved. Humour is crucial, we introduce laughter, self awareness so that people understand that it is okay if it is difficult.

"The session felt positive and hopeful and genuinely co-produced, this is difficult territory for many people for complex reasons and this session made me feel that this work is possible."

— Co-production Webinar Participant

This approach has been used in both the MHWB Co-production steering group and the BSBF/Tay Cities co-production steering group.

We also try and bring the same sense of openness to learning and self reflection in the workshops the LET have delivered.

Other comments from the co-production workshops held include:

What I enjoyed?...Learning more about co production and feeling energised afterwards! Was very motivating; and

Following the difficult experience with the MH Estates Redesign consultation it was important that the feedback was offered in a way which emphasised this as an opportunity for learning rather than a criticism and withdrawal from engagement.

Overarching

The team captures feedback on all training and events to ensure that we can continue to reflect on and improve people's experiences.

All meetings end with actions to help people feel and see that the work they are involved in is progressing and has outcomes.

We have learned to adjust the pace at which we develop this work so that people do not feel exposed before they are ready. If staff feel threatened or move into 'defence mode' this is not helpful to creating opportunities for meaningful change. However if they feel positive, safe and empowered on this journey then it is our hope that they will become enablers, and even champions for bringing the voice of experience into service design and delivery so that this way of working becomes the norm, rather than the exception.

What they learn and gain

A big part of the purpose of Struggle to Strength is to ensure that organisations that we work with gain different perspectives and they gain insight that will help them improve practice.

Peer Support Network

Through the diverse backgrounds of our P2P, WRAP, and co-reflection group participants we have found that there is a melting pot of representatives of various organisations such as Police Scotland, Fife Gingerbread; Change in Mind and others, This creates ongoing opportunities to share learning of the different dynamics and backgrounds in different organisations..

This means that all involved learn not only skills that help them do peer practice but their organisation gains skills and insight into different ways of 'doing peer'.

Because all PSN activity is embedded in a co-production approach any member of the Network will automatically gain experience in 'doing co-production'. This was feedback as a positive during the December gathering where one PSN Member cited this as a real benefit for how the Network has evolved.

Feedback from the Lunchtime learning on Understanding Peer suggest participants felt better informed about what peer is as a result. However we could do more to evaluate learning from these sessions.

Fife H&SCP colleagues have also benefited from a short piece of research led by Trish which reviewed different models for embedding peer practitioners within Community Mental Health teams across Scotland, including lesson's learned and reflection on the pros and cons of the work. This review and learning will be used to help shape the approach to embedding peer in Fife.

Lived Experience Team

We hope that those the LET have engaged with have learned and gained a lot, whether it be through attending training, engaging in meetings with us or through actual co-production work.

"I liked the balance between the voices of experts by experience and experts by profession, I liked the tone of the session, I liked the specific examples given by the health promotion, I liked that I feel more confident in embarking on co-production as a result of what I heard."

— Participant in Inclusivity & Co-production Webinar

Whether it be from an engagement consultation such as the psychiatry, with one team member (of the six involved) stating *'it looks like an advert for a check your credit score website.'*

Colleagues who engaged in the MH Estates consultation hopefully learned a bit more about how to create engagement events which are supportive and meaningful. Whilst we have not had direct feedback from the team involved, H&SCP colleagues have taken a very different approach to engagement work coming forward on Mental Health & Wellbeing in Primary Care settings.

Feedback from those who attended the launch of the Inclusivity and Co-production report and subsequent workshops suggest participants feel more confident about what co-production is and is not. Although some also said they would like more practical advice on 'what to do', perhaps not appreciating that co-production is as much about attitude as it is about what we 'do'. We will review our Introducing Co-production workshop based on learning from a course we are attending and refine it for 2023.

Overarching

All of this matters so that people feel more confident in their practice of co-production and their delivery of peer practice. It is also important that we ALL remain open to different viewpoints and perspectives. This is work that the Struggle to Strength team tries to embody on a daily basis through how we work with each other as well as how we work with stakeholders.

Whilst we can see the evidence of the learning in people doing things differently such as exploring different models for embedding peer in Fife community mental health teams, or investing in the LET to support co-production of Mental Health & Wellbeing in Primary Care we do not have significant evidence of what staff and organisations have learned or gained through engaging with us. This is something we should consider for evaluation in 2023.

Looking Forward to 2023

We will review and refine our workshops on Understanding Peer and Understanding Co-production, possibly adding additional modules. The team will also focus on capturing the impact of engagement with us, perhaps with support from the Outnav team.

"...taking away increased knowledge of co-production and a 'fire lit' to think of ways to bring it into my own practice."

— Co-production Workshop Participant

What they do differently

It is our hope that as a result of this project mental health and employability services in Fife are more likely to treat people with respect and in a person-centred way, more jobs are available for those with relevant lived experience, more organisations practice peer and the voice of lived experience informs and influences service design and delivery.

Peer Support Network

There is a clear increase in organisations practicing peer since the Peer Support Network first started in 2020, and several new organisations joining since 2022.

Understanding Peer Sessions and the Peer2Peer course explicitly describe how empathic and person-centred relationships are fundamental to peer practice and coproduction. The Framework for Growing Peer Support also outlines these expectations. Participants from these courses will cascade their learning through their organisation - some are becoming Peer led - Families in Trauma & Recover & Change in Mind. Police Scotland has several 'Peer Leads' within the Fife Team who have gone through P2P; WRAP and eCPR training to develop this way of working within the Police service. Fife Carers are developing peer led groups and FEAT continue to strive to embed peer with a Peer Champion who also sits on the S2S Steering Group.

Due to funding limitations, there have been few paid Peer posts created, other than those within SAMH, Sam's Cafe. FEAT employed a part time Peer Support Worker for 6 months until June 2022 and Families in Trauma & Recovery is currently applying for funding for posts. The Action 15 funds for 8 FTE peer practioner posts within community mental health teams will dramatically expand the paid roles available in Fife.

Lived Experience Team

Whilst we have seen a significant increase in demand for the voice of experience to inform and shape service design and delivery we are still a long way from seeing this actually impact on services on the ground.

Funding from Fife H&SCP for the work on Mental Health & Wellbeing in Primary Care Settings (MHWBPCS) means both the LET Coordinator and the S2S Project assistant can now go full time. Plus we are able to fund paid roles for 3 LET facilitators to support this work. The Trauma Informed Services Steering Group are also wishing to create paid roles for lived experience members, but do not yet have the systems in place to support this.

It feels like people we engage with are also listening differently, coming more as their human selves to meetings and engaging with the uncertainty and complexity of co-production.

As evidenced through the rest of this report significant progress has been made in valuing and brining the voice of lived experience into policy development, strategy and service design and delivery. And whilst it is not always done brilliantly, the journey is well started.

Looking Forward to 2023

Changing behaviours is a slow and steady journey. The work achieved in the last 12 months builds on years of demonstrating what can be done, evidencing impact and building trust with our partners and stakeholders.

We have learned a great deal ourselves, and now we are bringing that learning to others.

What difference does this make?

The ultimate goals of Struggle to Strength are to both improve the lives of the people *we* engage with, so they see their struggles as strengths AND to improve service delivery and experiences for others in Fife. So what difference has this made to the organisations and stakeholders we work with?

So far we have no evidence that:

- people, *beyond those we support directly*, with experience of mental health, trauma and or poverty are better able to manage their mental health and live well
- stigma and discrimination for people with mental health challenges is reduced

- there is a healthier workplace and workforce and healthier economy
- reduced strain on services

We do however have good evidence that there is:

- increased visibility of the voice of lived experience and
- lived experience learning is valued and become more the norm.

To the point where the Lived Experience Team have turned offers of engagement down and are now providing training and guidance to others who wish to take a co-production approach to their policy or service area. Whilst the interest in Peer Support continues to grow.

Looking Forward to 2023

Priorities for Struggle to Strength Year 2 to achieve some of these longer terms goals will include focussing on embedding peer in Community Mental Health Teams in Fife H&SCP and supporting the co-production work on Mental Health & Wellbeing in Primary Care Settings.

In addition rolling out training on co-production, understanding peer and stigma and discrimination in mental health settings will be a priority.

Conclusions

Overall Struggle to Strength and its two constituent projects the Fife Mental Health Peer Support Network and the Lived Experience Team have been on a significant journey over these past 12 months. Building on the foundations of work that started in 2017 through Delivering Differently, and further support from See Me and the Alliance, we are now at a point in Fife where expertise in both peer practice and co-production are being increasingly sought out by strategic partners and delivery organisations.

2023 in summary:

In terms of our initial project objectives and impact the Lived Experience Team (LET) have supported fewer members (14 as opposed to 20) and recruited fewer new members (five as opposed to six) than originally expected. Two former LET members moved into paid posts in the team, and it has taken them a little time to settle into their new roles. That said, the team have been involved in seven long-term projects with Fife H&SCP and Fife Council Employability division as well as nine shorter engagements and two research projects. It is our belief that each engagement has in some way improved, or will improve, service design and delivery in the area. Key stakeholders involved have valued the contribution of the LET.

Due to the increased profile of both the Lived Experience Team and interest in co-production approaches to service design, the team have found themselves turning down invitations to engage; either because the topic was not relevant to the members interests or the approach was not going to allow for meaningful contribution. Crucially the team have also provided feedback on unsuccessful experiences of engagement which then led to a change in approach from one key stakeholder.

Building on the learning of the last 5 years three members of the team worked with Fife H&SCP to co-produce a report 'Inclusivity and Co-production: a trauma informed approach for Fife'. The report launch was highly popular with 79 participants, and seemed to further whet the appetite of people for more learning. The high demand for the webinar in turn led the team to create a short workshop on Understanding Co-production. This has already been delivered to over 34 individuals, again growing insight, confidence and enthusiasm for this approach.

The LET have now worked with the Fife Trauma team and Families in Trauma & Recovery to create a monthly Fife Co-production Drop-in, which was launched in December 2022. Both the individuals and organisations we have engaged with are already changing what they do and how they do it.

In November 2022 the LET received funding from Fife H&SCP for a fulltime coordinator and project officer for 2 years as well as an Equalities Officer based at Fife Centre for Equalities *and* 3 part-time LET facilitators. This demonstrates the respect with which the team is considered, and the benefit of the work done so far. The funding and staff resource will be directed to support a long-term co-produced review of Mental Health & Wellbeing Services in Primary Care in Fife, with additional staff recruited to continue to support the wider work on employability.

Meanwhile the Fife Mental Health Peer Support Network (PSN) have recruited around 20 new members since January 2022. This is already a long way towards the 25 we had anticipated over 2 years. The team supported 3 Peer Placements with 2 third sector organisations. The two main focuses of activity in 2022 have been building the capacity and confidence of individuals to deliver peer support through Peer 2 Peer and WRAP training, *and* helping organisations also grow their confidence to host peer practitioners. The team therefore designed and delivered training on Understanding Peer to 13 organisations (1 bespoke session for 12 staff, the other an open session for 12 different organisations). They also created a regular Fife Peer Co-reflection Group which is now open to all Peer Practitioners in Fife. The regular e-bulletins, working groups, PSN Gatherings and Annual Celebration created spaces for people to hear about different approaches to Peer Practice and build a learning community. This means more organisations and more individuals are ready and interested to deliver peer support in the area, with at least 2 organisations in Fife now describing themselves as peer-led.

Overall this approach seems to be working very effectively with both individuals and organisations offering positive feedback.

The PSN Coordinator and Employability Development Manager have also been maintaining links with Fife H&SCP to support their intention to create 8 paid peer support posts embedded within Community Mental Health Teams. Despite many stops and starts this work is now in progress, supported by the PSN Coordinator.

What have we learned?

Time is everything: it has been important to allow time for both Pam & Christina to settle into their new roles. We also learned that it takes a long time to support someone from initial interest to actually fully fledged LET member. Even trying to find times and dates for engagement

activities or training which suit the range of employed and unemployed LET members is significantly time consuming. This has meant training and recruitment for the LET has progressed less quickly and also that some engagements have had less attendance than we had hoped. Changing policy contexts means some things happen at high speed (such as decisions on mental health estates) whilst others take months, such as the work on mental health and wellbeing in primary care which stalled due to changes in Scottish Government spending priorities.

Co-production: the co-produced and co-reflective approach to developing the Peer Support Network has meant that individual members feel very much part of a movement, supported and empowered to make change. This is evidenced through member feedback. The Lived Experience Team have experienced a range of different engagement approaches and all agree that where it is properly co-produced with good ground rules for engagement and everyone treated as equals it is a much better experience all round.

Connection and trust: where LET or PSN members have had difficult experiences they have supported one another, but also offered constructive feedback to help those involved learn and improve. The Struggle to Strength staff team work hard to embody this openness with one another as well. This has meant that organisations are approaching engagement more openly and constructively and the team have been able to maintain relationships with individuals or organisations even when things have been difficult.

Diversity: is an issue for both the LET and the PSN. Improving representation from the under 25s, people from different ethnic backgrounds, different religions, sexuality and gender identity will be a focus for recruitment activity in 2023.

Working together: the delivery of Peer 2 Peer training has led to, and supported, recruitment to the LET, whilst LET members have been interested in becoming peer practitioners. This link is something the team will build on in 2023.

Overall the project appears to be achieving its goals of helping people feel empowered, supported and that their voice is being heard: *'Feel very valued as a peer and lived experience team member. Its empowering to use the negative experiences to influence better practice for everyone'*.

Some progress has been made towards longer terms goals around improving access to services and reducing stigma and discrimination through supporting the development of information sharing tools such as the JobSeekers Mental Wellbeing Toolkit and the Fife Pathway to Mental Health & Wellbeing, and increasing the delivery of peer in Fife. Hopefully by the end of year 2 we will see more change and impact in these domains.

Looking forward to 2023

Key priorities for 2023 will be:

- The Lived Experience Team and Peer Support Network will undertake a targeted recruitment and training drive to try and ensure they are more representative of different perspectives. They will work with Fife Centre for Equalities to achieve this.
- The LET will also recruit 3 paid LET facilitators to support co-production for the Fife MH & Wellbeing in Primary Care Co-production Strategy; build internal confidence to support co-production work; develop training for strategic partners in other areas of public service delivery to build capacity to do co-production work across a wider range of disciplines; and co-host and grow the Fife 'co-production drop in'.
- The priority focus for the PSN will be working with Fife H&SCP to establish a model for recruiting and retaining peer practitioners embedded in Community Mental Health Teams across Fife; as well as continuing to grow and build capacity and confidence of individuals and organisations to embed and deliver peer roles across Fife.

A great deal has been achieved in just 12 months, with real momentum and demand for co-production and embedding peer practice growing. Almost at pace that is hard for the Team to keep up with. For year 2 it will be important to stay focussed and do a few things well, rather than many things badly. This will be a challenge for all of us and a tightrope we will need to navigate with caution.

In terms of evaluation we will refine and simplify our logic model for the project for year two. Gaining a better understanding of how stakeholders feel about their engagement with the LET and the PSN will also be an evaluation focus for 2023.

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