

**“Collective Voices for Positive Change”**

## **Lived Experience Advisory Forum Update – September 2024**

### **LEAF coordinator brief**

LEAF have had a busy few months working through the summer but we have all certainly deserved our two-week summer shutdown to relax and refresh. The consultancy service has been running for a few months now and has been developed to generate income for an increase in staff capacity to manage the LEAF Consultancy Service. Additional staff capacity will help current staff to manage capacity and workload, as well as having one person solely focusing on the consultancy service work.

### **LEAF members wellbeing**

There has been a real emphasis on supporting members wellbeing over the last quarter and this has included:

1. Building the consultancy service to ensure the members have paid staff that can support them fully through their work streams. At the moment it is difficult to take on more members due to lack of paid staff capacity and some members feel they have not had the support they need in their roles. This was evident when the LEAF Coordinator had to take unsuspected leave.
2. Ensuring we have regular lead catch ups online and face to face.
3. Building consultancy partners and LEAF member expectation guidelines - this ensures that services and LEAF members are aware of limitations and they are not pressured by services to do more work than expected and ensures that respect and equality is withheld by both parties during any co-production work.
4. By providing essential training for LEAF members to complete their work efficiently but most importantly to enjoy the work they are participating in and not feel pressured by timeframes. I cannot emphasise enough that timeframes will always be guidelines in any consultancy work LEAF do. This is due to LEAF gaining the most elusive and hidden voices of people that usually are not heard and at times is not the easiest even though we try and break down every barrier to achieve this.

### **LEAF member outcomes April 2024 – August 2024**

1-1 supervisions have had to stop due to staff capacity and we now hold LEAF lead meetings.

1 forum member has completed the Investing in your Future: Peer Support Worker Programme, provided by With-you Consultancy Ltd

1 forum member is participating in the Marie Curie Dying in Debt - Financial Insecurities at end of Life ECHO Network.

1 forum member attended a men's health training workshop - funded by LEAF.

9 people attended Naloxone training - the 9 people were made up of LEAF members and Gatehouse staff.

2 members attended Confidentiality and Managing Conflict training, kindly provided by the Gatehouse.

6 LEAF members attended 3 full days of registered Restorative Practice Practitioner skills training and are now able to facilitate restorative conversations.

LEAF have funded 1 member to attend a First Aid at Work course to try to enhance their opportunities in their paid work role.

## LEAF current work streams update August 24

1. Community Champions – The LEAF Community Health Champions Project is currently still underway - 1 member attends their monthly meetings and helps out with tasks such as handing out leaflets which LEAF supported making from their findings.
2. The Alliance – LEAF are still working with the Alliance on how LEAF can be involved in a meaningful way. A member will soon be introduced to start attending this co-production work stream.
3. King's College London Advisory Panel - An advisory group for the college is being set up with different groups of lived experience from across the country and LEAF is one of those groups.
4. Aspire/Community Research Networks (CRN's) –The CRNs were completed and a report was written to support a 4-year funding bid which LEAF will be involved with. LEAF will find out the funding outcome around October 24.
5. OHM - LEAF are supporting OHM with qualitative research around Women who are Hidden Homelessness and Rough Sleeping. 11 interviews have been completed. Their stories will be told as a story and then a full report will be written up.
6. The Gatehouse - Evaluating the Gatehouse Community Centre by way of Storytelling. The stories have been told and are awaiting to be finalised.
7. The Mint House/Alliance/OCC – Preventing evictions in the homeless pathways pilot. 6 members of LEAF have now completed the restorative practice training. The next steps are for LEAF to start outreach sessions at Matilda House.
8. Katherine and Sobell House Hospices - one forum member is now a volunteer for Sobell House. They have helped facilitate sessions and online groups around end-of-life care and will be supporting them with facilitating training across the homeless pathways.
9. Peer support training - A LEAF member has now completed the course and gained their certificate.

## Challenges and aims for LEAF

One of the challenges LEAF is still undergoing is that if the Coordinator is off then LEAF pretty much stops all falls to the CEO of the Gatehouse due to the LEAF member development worker only has 1 day a week in her role.

Another challenge LEAF has faced recently is looking at who is eligible to be a member. We pride ourselves on breaking down barriers for individuals who would not be welcomed elsewhere due to their current or past lived experience, but are there limits to protect the vulnerable people we may work with? We always buddy up on outreach, make risk assessments where necessary and have a safeguarding procedure in place but is this enough? The Coordinator will be speaking to other lived experience groups to see if they have any thoughts or experiences of this and what if anything they have put in place.

**Lucy Stokes – Lived Experience Advisory Coordinator**

**Monica Gregory – Member Development Coordinator**

