

Title of project/initiative	HOSmates – Housing Options Scotland’s peer support project
Contact for project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name, email, telephone Website of project, if available 	Fraser Gilmore, Engagement and Development Manager Tel: 07740265181 Email: Fraser@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk Web: http://www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk/projects-programmes/peer-support/
Which organisations are involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning/monitoring/delivery Partners Sponsors Funders – how funded? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Options Scotland’s staff and board are responsible for the planning/ delivery and monitoring of this project. Co-produced with the peer support volunteers themselves. Housing Options Scotland is a national multi tenure pan disability housing advice, information and support charity. The project was given start up and development funding from the Big Lottery awards for all in 2012. Since then it has been funded as part of Housing Options Scotland core work through Scottish Government funding through the Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme.
Brief description of project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationale Aims and objectives Key activities Target population Geographical area Start (± finish) dates 	<p>Rationale: In organisations focusing on disability, the value of peer-to-peer support has long been seen. These organisations around the world have insisted that disabled people (and those who support them) are experts in the barriers which face them and how to tackle such barriers.</p> <p>As an organization, Housing Options Scotland helps tackle these barriers by adopting the social model of disability, in this model, disability is understood as an unequal relationship within a society in which the needs of people with impairments are often given little or no consideration. People with impairments are disabled by the fact that they are excluded from participation within the mainstream of society as a result of physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers. These barriers prevent them from gaining equal access to information, education, employment, public transport, housing and social/recreational opportunities.</p> <p>By the implementation of this peer support programme, we were enabling individuals to break down the barriers that they face, helping them to exert control over their own lives.</p> <p>Aims, Objectives and Key Activities: During the initial inception period of this project, Housing Options Scotland had a dedicated team of volunteers, who were all ex clients and who have wanted to give back to us, the organisation that helped change their lives so much. The feedback that was raised by various volunteers over this period was that although they felt well supported by the organisation through the housing process, they felt that they may have</p>

	<p>benefited further by speaking to someone who had been through the process themselves.</p> <p>From researching work carried out by various organisations, Housing Options Scotland concluded that Peer Support was being undertaken by a variety organisations, both nationally and internationally for different purposes with great success and benefit to their client bases.</p> <p>This initial research did conclude though that there were no Scotland wide organisations that were offering Peer Support for housing advice.</p> <p>Our peer support project for disabled people across Scotland was unique in that it offered disabled people across Scotland the opportunity to engage with trained volunteers, who were themselves, disabled or cared for someone who is disabled, and had already been through the maze of the disability housing world. This model of enabling other disabled people, to have the opportunity to engage with someone who has the knowledge, understanding and personal experience, and can assist that person in exerting control over their own lives.</p> <p>Moreover, as volunteers and ex-clients, our trained peer supporters are able to feed their knowledge and experience in to the work of Housing Options Scotland. By taking part in training, focus groups and events across the country, these peer supporters have not only helped other disabled people through what can be a difficult time, they have also help shape the future work of the organisation.</p> <p>In the four years since the project was developed, peer supporters have given one to one support to other disabled people, attended conferences and events where they shared their personal experiences of housing, helped in organization development as personal professionals and helped guide the project through monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Target Population and Geographic Area: The HOSmates project is Scotland wide and currently has 8 volunteers based all over the country, who can be deployed based on the needs of Housing Options Scotland.</p> <p>The target population is all disabled people, older people, disable veterans, their carers and supporters.</p> <p>Start and finish dates: The project has been ongoing since 2012.</p>
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Time • Financial 	<p>Staffing/ Time/ Financial: The levels of staffing has changed throughout the project based on the stage of development. On the whole this project was developed by an individual member of staff, with admin and senior management support.</p>

	<p>The staff costs were covered through the organisations core grant, so the main costs were the development of the project. This entailed 2 days per week for the first year and 1.5 days a week until the present day for the main member of staff. The management and admin support was worked out at around 0.25 days per month.</p> <p>In the development stages, the other main costs were for focus groups, recruitment and training. For the on going development of the project the main costs are continued recruitment, training, focus groups and volunteer expenses, amounting to around £10,000 per year (these do not include staff costs).</p>
<p>Evaluation and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach • Impact 	<p>Reach:</p> <p>Since its inception, HOSmate Peer Supporters have travelled widely throughout Scotland for face to face meetings, events and conferences. Reaching thousands of disabled people and those who support them.</p> <p>The reach increased through using new media such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and the organisations website.</p> <p>Impact:</p> <p>The project has enabled all clients and prospective clients of the organisation to not only engage with a professional, but a personal professional who has experience of what they are going through.</p>
<p>Reflections on project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was successful? • What was challenging? • What would be done differently in future? 	<p>What was successful?</p> <p>Through evaluating our processes and speaking to clients who have received this service, Housing Options Scotland has found that this project has been very well received by clients, those who support them and professionals.</p> <p>Our volunteer base has grown and the success of the project can be mapped by the thousands of people who have directly been impacted by its implementation and continuation.</p> <p>The organisation was also happy last year to receive the 'Volunteer friendly' award in recognition of the HOSmates Project's success.</p> <p>What was challenging?</p> <p>As this was the first disability housing specific peer support project in Scotland, the biggest challenge was showing a need for the project to potential funders. Also as this was the first of its kind, the initial development entailed a lot of research and consultation to make sure that the project was fit for purpose and that it would work.</p> <p>What would you do differently in the future?</p> <p>As part of the evaluation of the project, we recognised that our peer support volunteers needed to be partners in the process</p>

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	of development and evaluation so they could have ownership over the process and we could have a truly coproduced project. In hindsight, we would have enabled this process from the very start if we were to do it all again.
Next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the future of this initiative? 	What is the future of this initiative? The project has now been running for four years and is now part of our core work. We plan to further develop this project and grow it as the organisation grows. It is important to us to listen to the needs and wants of those we serve and our HOSmates peer support project enables us to do just that.
Wider application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this project scalable? Is it transferable to other areas/contexts? 	Is this project scalable? Currently, Housing Options Scotland has reached an equilibrium with the amount of Peer Supporters it currently has. But with future projects, we recognise that we will need more in the future. The project has to be relative to the size of the organisation, but it can be scaled up quickly, as all the training packs, support policies and understanding of staff needs already exist. Is it Transferable to other areas/ contexts? Peer support is a model that is being used successfully in a lot of different contexts. What they all share is valuing the lived experience of people. As such, anyone looking to start up a new peer support project in any area could learn a lot from Housing Options Scotland's HOSmates Project.
Any further information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports or publications Other reflections 	*handbooks, training packs, articles and videos available on request.
Person completing pro-forma	Fraser Gilmore
Date of completion	21/9/16

Pro-forma for gathering information on case studies