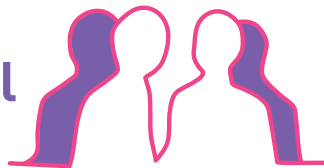


Edinburgh Carers Council
support for unpaid carers



Eating Disorder Peer Support Services



Eating Disorder Peer Support Services

Edinburgh Carers Council now offers a peer support service for any adult carers looking after an adult with an eating disorder. Similar to our general peer support service, only unpaid carers are eligible to use the service.

There will be one local peer service group based in Edinburgh (covering areas of East, West and Midlothian as well) and one based at the Regional Eating Disorders Unit at St. Johns Hospital for carers of inpatients and recently discharged patients for up to one year.

Peer support would often happen naturally between individuals during collective advocacy and social groups. By creating a peer support service, it allows the support to continue outside of these events in a safe and supervised way. Our peer support volunteers are all carers or former carers themselves and have completed training to build their peer work skills.

What is Peer Support?

Peer support is the sharing of experiences between two or more people in a safe environment. Peer support volunteers will not lecture or judge you. It is a mutual relationship where they are there to listen to you and draw from their own experiences to help provide emotional and practical support.

Peer support can help you to:

- Talk about your experiences and work through what you are feeling.
- Learn coping strategies from someone who has been through similar difficult circumstances.
- Understand your cared for person's diagnosis.
- Learn about what other services are available to support you.
- Increase self-esteem and confidence.
- Feel reassured you are not alone.

Does Peer Support Work?

Peer Support is a thoroughly researched and evidence-based practice that has been endorsed by the NHS. Taken from a Meta-analysis done by the Mental Health Foundation, researchers found after surveying the results of over a thousand studies that peer support has shown to provide numerous benefits to both physical and mental health to participants (2015). There is a vast research base backing this practice and if you would like more information about how and why peer support works, please check out the following link:

National Voices:

https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/sites/default/files/public/publications/peer_support_-_what_is_it_and_does_it_work.pdf

Why Eating Disorders specifically?

According to a report done by the Scottish Parliament, around one in 50 individuals in Scotland live with an eating disorder. This number has increased rapidly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with a reported 86% increase of referrals from 2019-2020 (Harper, 2022).

In response, through Scottish funding, the NHS has set out a national plan to ensure people with eating disorders and their carers get the support they need. Through funding from NHS Lothian, this has allowed the Edinburgh Carers Council to develop a peer support network specifically

for carers looking after those with eating disorders in addition to our pre-existing carers peer support group.

Source: Meeting of the Parliament (Hybrid): Eating Disorders Awareness Week (Harper, 2022).

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-01-03-2022?meeting=13606&iob=123506#:~:text=Around%201.25%20million%20people%20a%20cross,during%20the%20Covid%2D19%20pandemic>

1:1 Peer Support

One-to-one peer support can be in-person, over the telephone, or through an online video call. Meetings can last anywhere from 15 minutes to 1 hour, depending on what works best for you.

You will be matched with a peer support volunteer who is a carer themselves. You can meet with them on a regular basis for a period of up to 6 months' maximum. The peer volunteer will talk with you, listen to your story, and share their own experiences. They can help give you resources to manage your own mental health and well-being and may be able to help provide information about other relevant services.

How to make a referral to the 1:1 peer support service?

You can self-refer or ask someone to do so on your behalf. The first meeting or telephone call with the peer support volunteer will be arranged by Edinburgh Carers Council.

We will ask you which days and times would suit you best and where you would be most comfortable to meet with the volunteer. Meetings are usually held in a café or another public space; they can also be arranged in a meeting room at Edinburgh Carers Council offices.

In addition to the peer support, you will also have the opportunity to use Edinburgh Carers Council Individual Advocacy Service if there is a specific issue that you need help resolving in regard to your caring situation. You would also be welcome to attend any of our carer collective advocacy groups, such as the bi-monthly Carers Forum.

To refer yourself or someone else for one-to-one carer peer support, please email **info@edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk** or call us on **0131 322 8480**.

General Carers Peer Support Group

Edinburgh Carers Council facilitates a monthly peer support group for unpaid carers (family, friends) of people experiencing a mental health difficulty. It is a safe space to share your experiences, hear from others, and get information and support.

Carers supporting someone with dementia, learning disability, autism, or acquired brain injury are also welcome to attend the group.

For more details, please email **info@edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk** or call us on **0131 322 8480**.

This general carers group is an *additional* resource for carers and that it is possible to be a part of both groups if they would like.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

GDPR replaced the Data Protection Act (1998) and came into force in May 2018. In order to help you we need to maintain a record of your personal information, such as name, address and contact details. Peer volunteers are expected to abide by all principles and policies of Edinburgh Carers Council at all times.

You can view our full **Data Protection Policy** on our website, by visiting this link:

**[www.edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk
/data-protection-policy](http://www.edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk/data-protection-policy)**

Confidentiality

Edinburgh Carers Council recognises the importance of confidentiality to staff, volunteers and carers using the service and is committed to providing a safe and confidential environment to the users of this service and its staff. We maintain professional relationships with our clients. Personal information between you and the peer volunteer will remain confidential within Edinburgh Carers Council, unless in exceptional circumstances where there is a serious threat to life and safety of you or others.

You can view our full **Confidentiality Policy** on our website, by visiting this link:

**[www.edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk
/content/confidentiality-policy](http://www.edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk/content/confidentiality-policy)**

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is a part of the wider role of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific vulnerable adults who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults and promote their welfare.

Edinburgh Carers Council is committed to supporting and protecting the welfare of carers who use its services. We therefore have a responsibility to ensure carers who may be at risk are protected.

You can view our full **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy** on our website, by visiting this link:

<https://edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk/content/safeguarding-vulnerable-adults-policy>

Becoming a Peer Volunteer for ECC

Are you a carer or former carer who would like to utilise your lived experiences to help others? If so, we would love to have you on our team.

Peer Work Course

ECC peer support volunteers are trained by Health in Mind through the Peer Community's Peer Work Course. The training consists of a 1-day per week, 5-week course. It is suitable for people who would like to learn more about using their own experience in an intentional way to accompany other people through their caring journeys.

Session 1 - Recovery

Session 2 - Peer Work, values, boundaries

Session 3 - Trauma

Session 4 - Power and sharing your story

Session 5 - Strengths, listening, attachment and endings

To find out when the next course is and to book your place, you can visit the **iThrive** website:

<https://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/peer-collaborative/courses-workshops/>

Disclosure Checks

All ECC peer volunteers are disclosure checked and will need to receive their PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme) from Disclosure Scotland. Edinburgh Carers Council will help volunteers to apply for the PVG and will cover the costs.

Support & Supervision

Volunteers will receive individual and group Support & Supervision from Edinburgh Carers Council to help support them in their roles. Volunteers are encouraged to contact their volunteer coordinator at any time for help, advice, and support.

Expenses

All volunteer expenses are paid for by Edinburgh Carers Council. This includes travel costs, and any other expenses that are associated with peer support volunteering (such as expenses for teas, coffees, and lunch while meeting with carers).

How to get in touch

If you are interested in peer volunteering with **Edinburgh Carers Council**, please get in touch with us by emailing **info@edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk** or calling us on **0131 322 8480**.

The Peer Community

Edinburgh Carers Council is a member of the Peer Community, a network of support for peer workers and volunteers in Edinburgh. The Peer Community organises learning and development events and opportunities, and keeps people up-to-date with current peer services throughout Edinburgh. They also create awareness around peer support.

The Peer Community is a part of Thrive Edinburgh and organised by The Peer Partnership - a partnership between Health in Mind and CAPS Independent Advocacy. They support and enable people with lived experiences to accompany others through their recovery and their aim is to strengthen peer practice in Edinburgh.

ECC peer support volunteers are encouraged to participate in the Peer Community, through the monthly Peer Forum (collective advocacy group for peer workers and volunteers) and Peer Community Steering Group.

To find out more about the Peer Community and to subscribe to their monthly newsletter, you can visit their webpage on the **iThrive** website:

<https://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/peer-collaborative/>

You can also follow the **Peer Community** on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

BEAT

BEAT is the largest eating disorder charity in the UK with the aim to end the pain and suffering caused by eating disorders. BEAT has a wealth of resources both for individuals with eating disorders and carers. Through the BEAT website, you can access POD (peer support and online development) which acts as BEAT's hub for carers.

For more information, check out the following links:

BEAT About us:

www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/about-beat/

BEAT POD:

<https://elearn.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Thrive Edinburgh

Thrive Edinburgh is the new public health approach to mental health in Edinburgh. Aligning with the priorities of the Community Plan, Edinburgh Poverty Commission, and the aspirations of the Regional Deal and City Vision 2050, Thrive offers an opportunity for Edinburgh to reduce the toll of mental illness, promote and protect citizens' mental health, resilience, self-esteem, and family strength.

You can download the **Thrive Adult Health and Social Care Commissioning Plan** and the **Thrive Edinburgh Strategy Roadmap** on the **iThrive** website: **www.edinburghthrive.com/about-us**

Every effort has been made to ensure information was accurate at time of print. We welcome any feedback or comment regarding its content.

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**Appointments can also be arranged at the
Royal Edinburgh Hospital.**

(Phone for directions & appointments)
t: 0131 322 8480

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