New Ways of Working in mental health services: assessing and informing the emergence of Peer Worker roles in mental health service delivery

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Acknowledgements

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The views and opinions expressed therein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NIHR HS&DR programme, NIHR, NHS or the Department of Health.

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Overview

- Introduction
- Background
- Study Design
- Data Collection
- Analytical Process
- Preliminary Analysis
- Planned Outputs

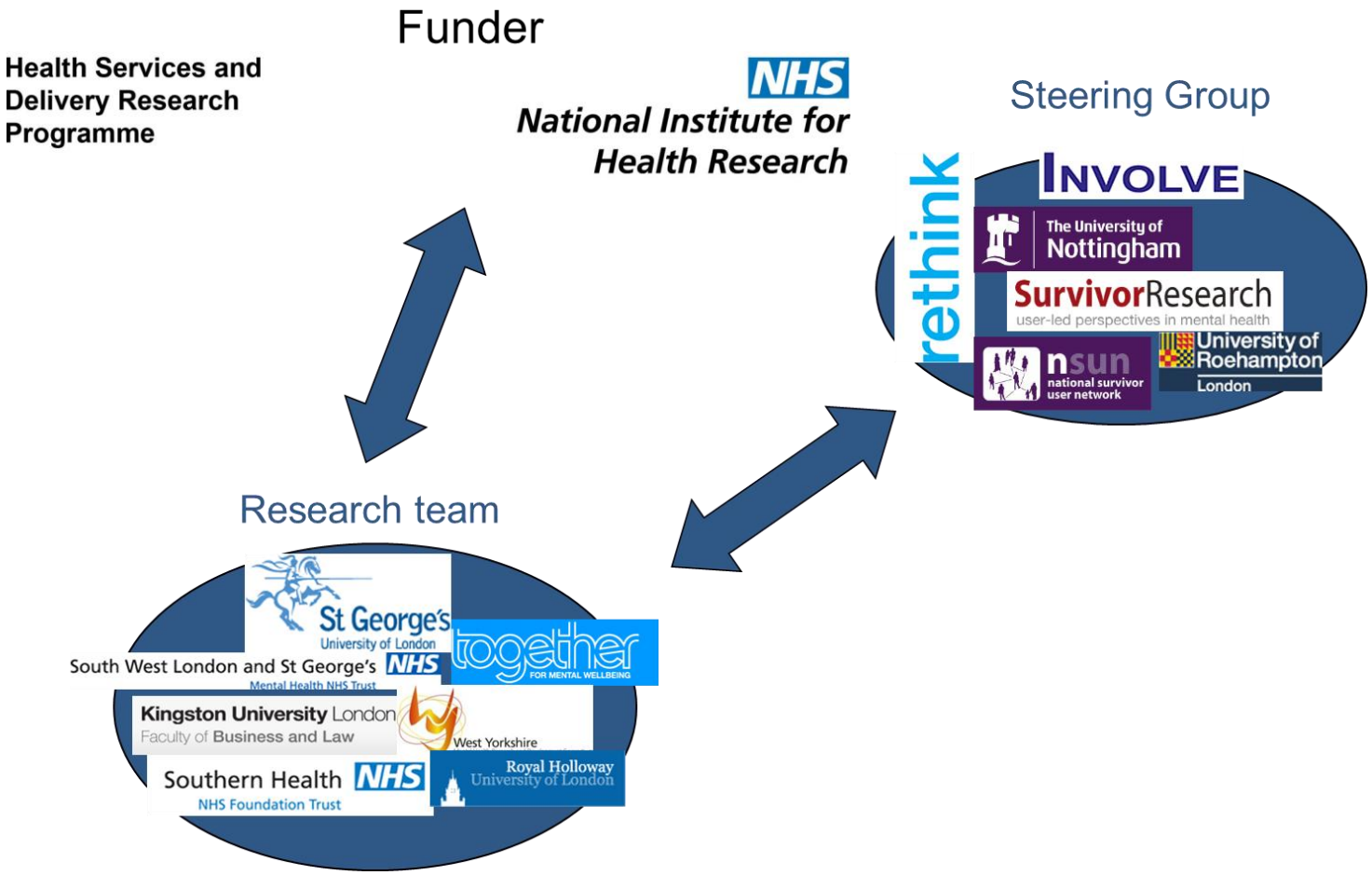
What is a Peer Worker?

A person who is intentionally employed to make use of their personal experiences of mental health issues for the benefit of another person currently experiencing mental health problems or using services.

What is the Peer Worker Research Project?

- A qualitative study set up to explore how Peer Worker roles have been introduced into a variety of mental health organisations, both statutory and voluntary, in UK.
- Funded by the Health Services and Delivery Research programme of the NIHR.
- Running for 21 months from July 2011 until March 2013.

Who is involved?



Why are we doing the study (1)?

- **1) Gaps in Research Context**
- Empirical research on Peer Worker roles that exists mainly done in other countries and focuses on outcomes (for example, Lawn, Smith and Hunter 2008; Nelson et al 2007).
- Qualitative research focuses on benefits to Peer Workers and Service Users (for example, Ochocka et al 2006, Salzer and Shear 2002).
- Some qualitative research details organisational challenges to introducing Peer Worker roles (Mead and MacNeil et al 2006; Mead, Hilton and Curtis 2001).

Why are we doing the study (2)?

- **2) Impetus from Policy Context**
- Introduction of Peer Worker roles seen as opportunity to address mental health workforce issues.
- Peer Worker roles are seen as facilitating mental health Recovery (SCIE 2008), Self Care (DH 2006) and Personalisation (DH 2008) agendas.
- Mental Health Strategy ‘No Health Without Mental Health’ (DH 2011) is supported by implementation programme which has a remit to develop and demonstrate new Peer Worker roles (ImROC).

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Project Aims

- To test the existing, provisional evidence base indicating facilitators and barriers to the introduction of Peer Worker roles in a range of UK mental health service settings in the statutory and voluntary sectors;

- To provide mental health service organisations and managers with guidance on recruiting, training and supporting Peer Workers in the delivery of mental health services.

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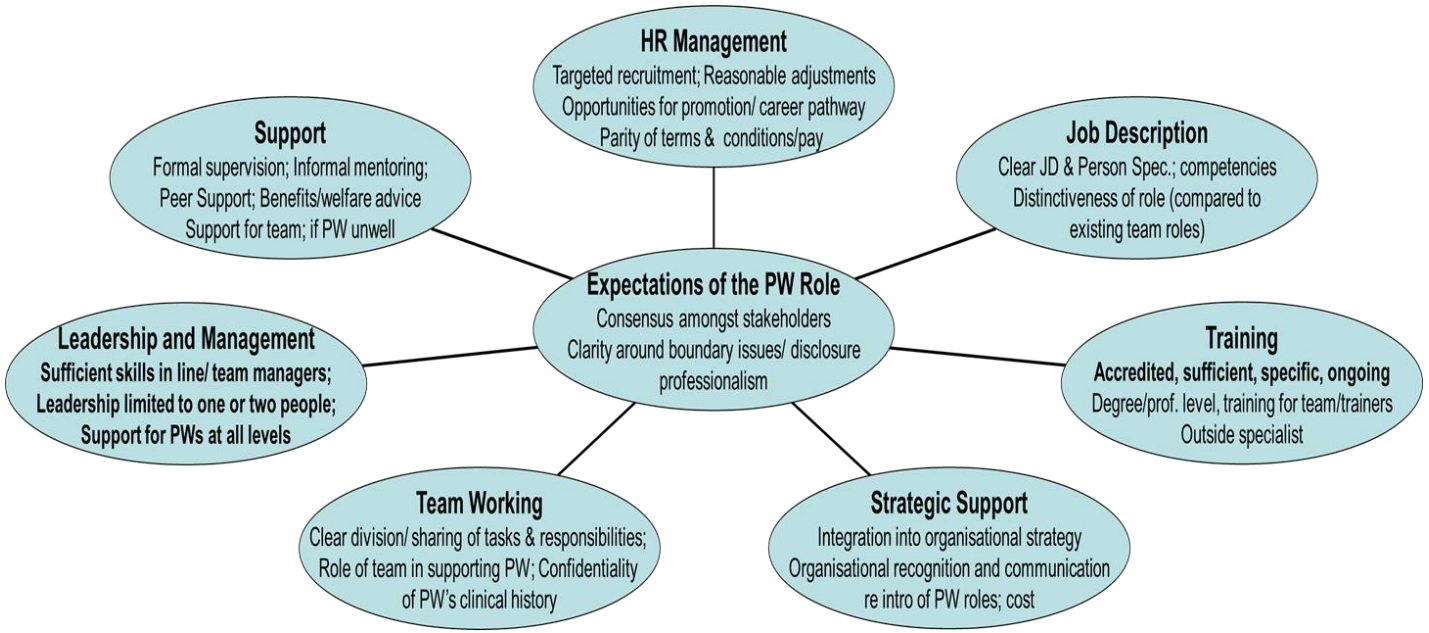
Conceptual Framework



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Study Design

- Qualitative, comparative case study design
- 10 contrasting case studies (NHS MH Trusts, voluntary sector organisations, partnership sites, and BME sites)
- 8-10 interviews (Peer Workers, service users, staff, managers and commissioners) in each case
- Structured questions based on existing evidence enables patterns to be identified in the analysis of case study data
- Specific open questions to develop learning materials (study outputs)
- Documentation (strategic plans; service specifications; job descriptions)

Developing the Interview Schedules:

Part 1:

Participant ID: _____

Part 1 – testing the existing evidence about Peer Workers

Please read the statements below. There are two questions to answer about each statement. Please tick one question A box and one question B box for each statement.

	A. Is this happening here?					B. How important do you think this is?					
	Yes	Partly	No	Don't know	Not relevant	Extremely important	Quite important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know	Not relevant
Section 1 – Recruitment, job description and career pathway											
1.1 Peer Workers are recruited through a formal recruitment process											
1.2 Peer Workers have lived experience of using the same or similar services as those they are working in											
1.3 Personal experience of mental health issues is sufficient to qualify someone to work as a Peer Worker											
1.4 Peer Workers have a job description that defines tasks and responsibilities that are specific to the Peer Worker role											
1.5 Terms and conditions for Peer Workers include 'reasonable adjustments' such as flexible working arrangements											
1.6 Peer Workers are paid the same as other workers in the organisation doing similar work											
1.7 Peer Workers have the same access to trade union representation as other workers in the organisation											
1.8 There are opportunities for promotion for Peer Workers in the organisation											
Section 2 – Expectations of the role											
2.1 There is a shared understanding of the role of Peer Workers in the organisation											
2.2 The Peer Worker role is clearly different to other roles in the organisation											
2.3 Peer Workers are expected to be as professional as any other worker in the organisation											

Part 2:

Peer Worker Research Project

Interviewing New Ways of Working in Mental Health

PEER WORKER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1) Human Resources Management

a) Can you tell me about how you became a Peer Worker?

- What **motivated** you to become a Peer Worker?
- What was the **process** of getting the job? What **helped**? What **hindered**?

b) What does it mean to you to be called a 'Peer Worker' in your organisation?

c) In Part 1 we had a few questions about Peer Workers and issues about Diversity. What does this mean to you?

2) Role

Can you tell me about your role as a Peer Worker?

a) What **do you do** as a Peer Worker? (tasks)
How is this different to what other workers do?
How do you use your **personal experience** of mental health issues when working with Service Users?
How is the way you work **different** to the way other staff (non-peers) in the team work?

b) How would you describe the **relationship** between you and the Service Users? (What works well in this relationship?/ What are the challenges of this relationship?)
How is this **different** to the relationship between Service Users and other staff/team members?

c) What are the **benefits** of the role for you?
What are the **challenges** of the role for you?

3) Training

Can you tell me about any training you have had in your role as a Peer Worker?

- What was **useful** about this training/ how has training supported you in carrying out the Peer Worker role?
- What could have been **improved**?
- What **other training** would support you in your role?

Interview Schedule: Part 1

Participant ID: _____

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Interview Schedule: Part 2

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- What could have been **improved**?
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Choosing Case Study Sites:

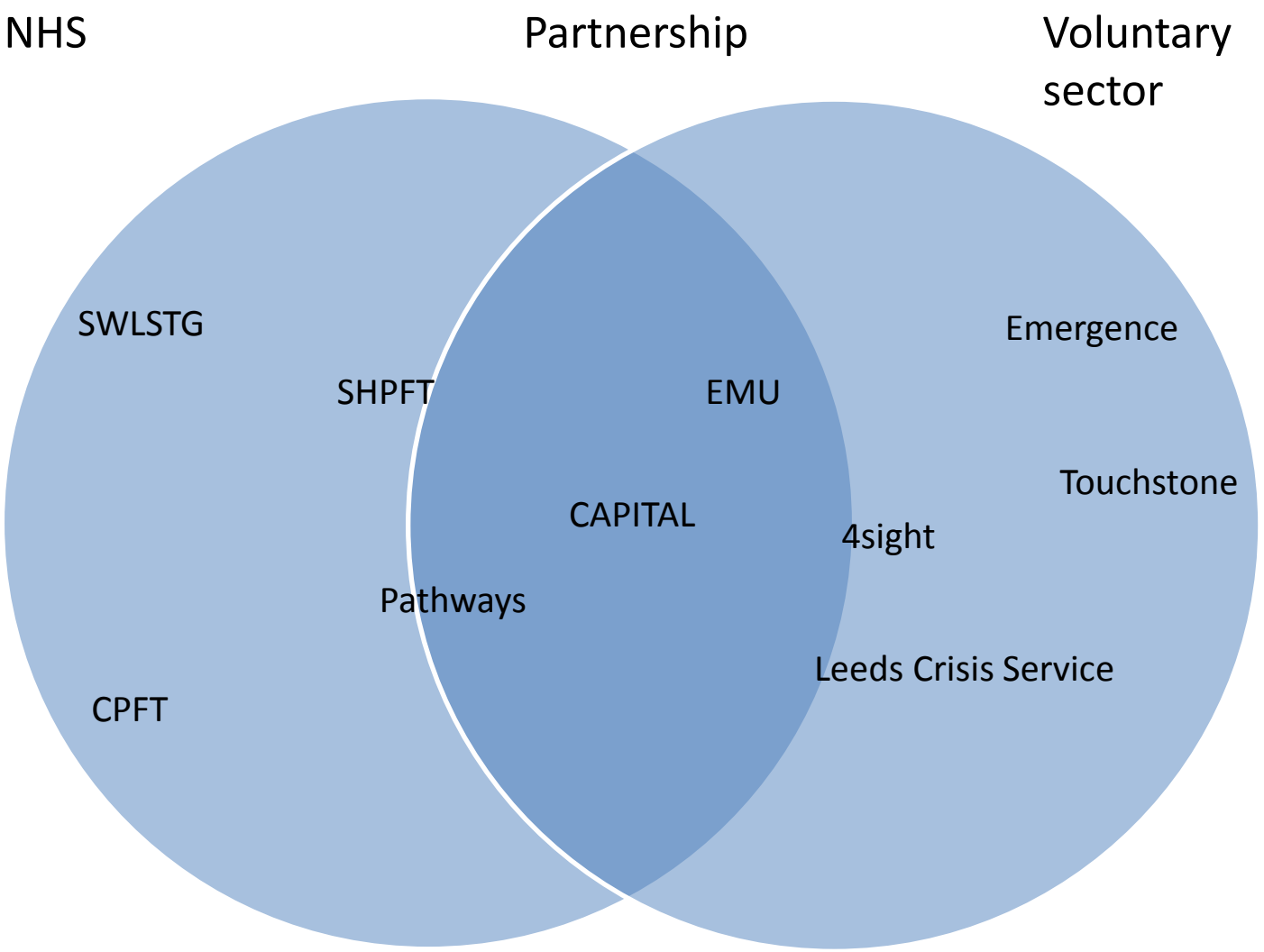
Criteria for Selection:

- Type of organisation
- Geography
- History
- Employment
- Role
- Setting

Mental Health NHS Trusts	Third Sector
1.	7.
2.	8.
3.	9.
4.	10.
5.	11.
6.	12.

2 partnership projects

2 BME specific projects


NHS
Partnership
Voluntary sector
SWLSTG
SHPFT
EMU
Emergence
Touchstone
CAPITAL
4sight
Pathways
Leeds Crisis Service
CPFT

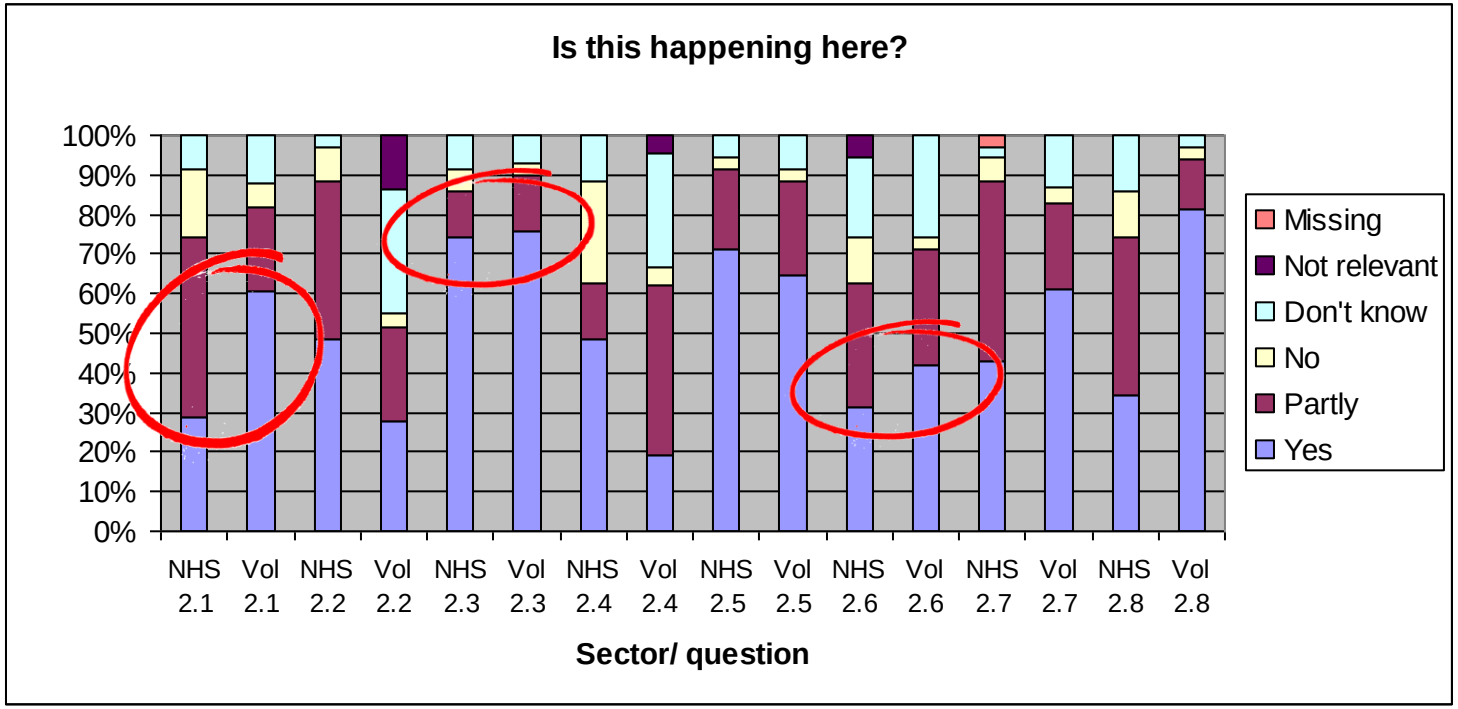
The Data Collection Process

- Engagement with case study sites
  - Local PIs, Research passports, Hon contracts
  - Key informant and site set up interview
    - Language, culture of organisation, definitions,
    - Boundaries of case, resisting imposing our framework
- Carrying out interviews
  - Flexibility in focus; in format; timings
  - Support for interviewees, taking care of ourselves

Preliminary analysis – part 1 data

	Voluntary sector	NHS	Total
Peer Workers	9	7	**16**
Non-peer staff	6	8	**14**
Line managers	4	7	**11**
Senior/ strategic managers/ commissioners	6	8	**14**
Service Users	8	5	**13**
Total	**33**	**35**	**68**

2. Expectations of the role



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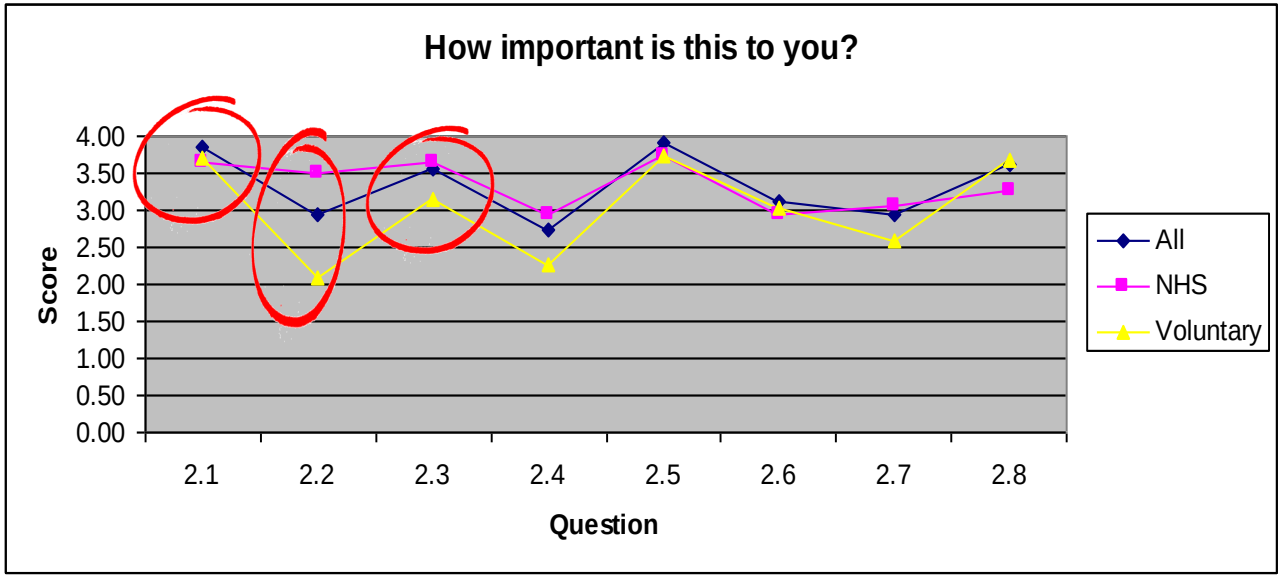
2.2 The Peer Worker role is clearly different to other roles in the organisation
2.3 Peer Workers are expected to be as professional as any other worker in the organisation
2.4 Peer Workers are expected to disclose their personal mental health history as part of their work

2.5 Boundaries between Peer Workers and service users are clearly managed (e.g. confidentiality, contact, availability)
2.6 The Peer Worker role is defined by a specific set of Peer Worker skills and 'competencies'
2.7 Service users' relationships with peer workers are different to their relationships with other workers/ staff in the organisation
2.8 Peer Workers have the necessary skills to provide support for service users who are experiencing a mental health crisis

2. Expectations of the role



4 - Extremely important	**3 - Quite important**	**2 - Not very important**	**1 - Not at all important**

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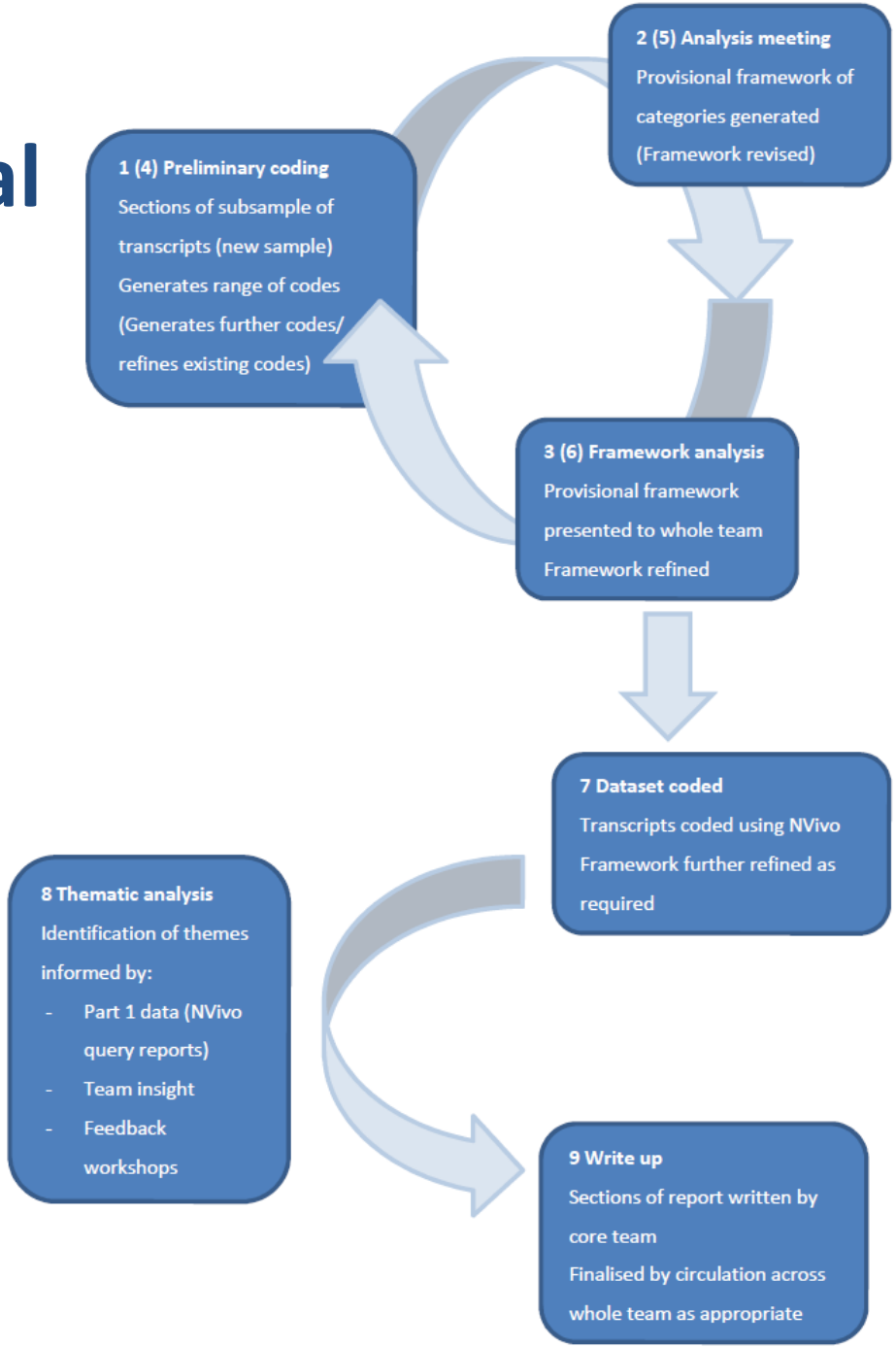
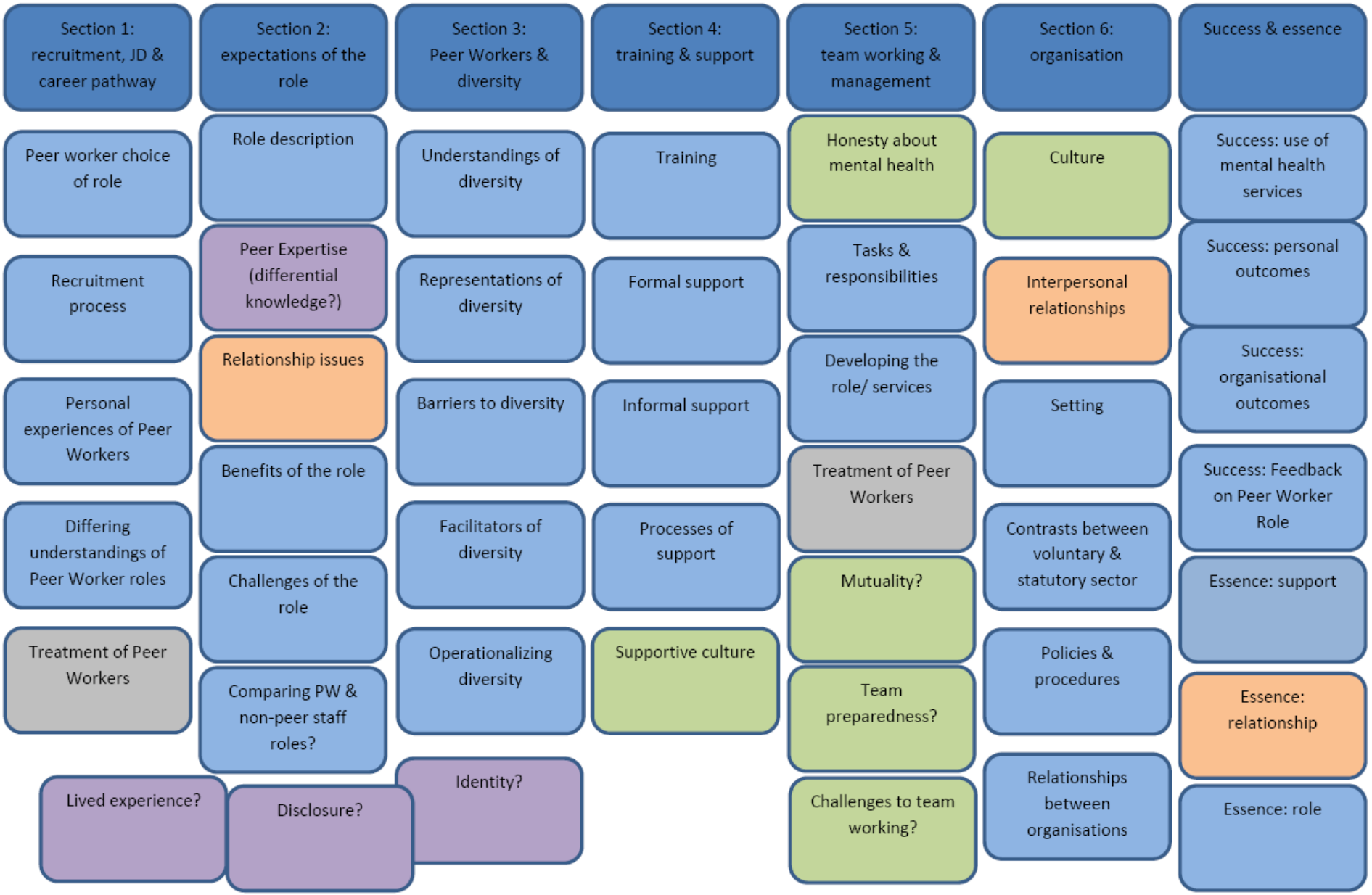
The Analytical Process



Provisional framework



Study outputs

- Feedback workshops with participating sites
- Knowledge mobilisation project
- ‘New Ways of Researching’ project
- End of project conference – May 2013
- Organisational learning tools
- Proposal for a national trial of Peer Support Workers

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Peer Worker Research Project
Informing New Ways of Working in Mental Health

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