



PEER RESEARCHER INFORMATION PACK

A LITTLE BIT OF
SUNSHINE 

About the project

Thank you for your interest in becoming a peer and community researcher at A Little Bit of Sunshine. Our Peer Research Project is a youth-led research project that is designed to better understand why many young working-class men struggle to access mental health support, and what needs to change to better support their needs.

Nottinghamshire Public Health is funding this project, and it forms part of a wider effort to improve mental well-being and prevent crisis situations, including self-harm and suicide, by focusing on early intervention and listening directly to young people. Rather than having professionals make assumptions about what young people need, this project puts young people in the lead and is ultimately yours to shape.

Research shows that young men, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, are significantly less likely to seek help for their mental health, despite being at risk of poor outcomes with their health. This includes higher rates of suicide, lower rates of diagnosis, and greater levels of disengagement from services.

Peer research is an opportunity to share your views and experiences to guide and inform how research is designed, carried out, shared and put into practice. Research is done “with” or “by” members of the public, rather than “to” them.

The project was created to consider how to answer an important question:

What makes it easier or harder for young men to talk about their mental health and get the support they need?

The opportunity

This is a unique opportunity to join a project led by 12 Peer Researchers, working together to explore mental health experiences across Nottinghamshire.

We are recruiting young men aged 16–22 who live, work, or study in Ashfield, Mansfield, Bassetlaw, or Newark and Sherwood.

As a Peer Researcher, you will play a leading role in the project, supported by trained staff at A Little Bit of Sunshine. You will use your own lived experience, alongside the voices of other young people, to understand what is really happening on the ground.

Many young people feel that services are designed for them, but not with them. This project aims to change that by giving you a direct role in shaping the conversation and influencing future support.

What you will do

As a Peer Researcher, you will:

- Take part in interactive training to build your confidence and research skills
- Work with another researcher to explore a specific area of mental health (e.g. schools, services, or community spaces)
- Speak to other young people and gather their views in ways that feel natural and comfortable
- Use different approaches such as conversations, surveys, or creative methods (like posters or zines)
- Help identify key themes, challenges, and ideas for change
- Contribute to findings that will help improve local support systems

Support throughout the project

You will be supported throughout the project, including:

- Full training before you begin
- Regular check-ins with the project team
- Access to safeguarding and wellbeing support if any concerns arise
- A peer support network within your research group

Why this opportunity matters

By taking part, you will help to:

- Break down stigma around mental health
- Create spaces where young people feel heard and understood
- Influence how services engage with young people in the future
- Build a more honest and relatable picture of mental health in your community

You will also gain valuable experience, build confidence and practical research skills, all whilst being part of something that has the potential to create real change.

Payment and Expenses

Peer Researchers will receive a **£100 stipend at the end of the project**, paid either by bank transfer or vouchers.

We will also make sure that cost is not a barrier to taking part; all transport will be arranged for any in-person sessions where needed, and reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

How the project will work

The project will run in three phases, giving you the chance to learn new skills, carry out your own research, and help create real change.

Training and Preparation

You will receive structured training covering research skills, safeguarding, mental health awareness, and how to have safe and meaningful conversations.

Phase Two

Over several weeks, you will work in pairs to carry out research in your community using methods like interviews, surveys, group discussions, and creative activities.

Phase Three

The findings will be used to influence services, shape new ideas, and create practical tools to improve how mental health support is designed and delivered.

We will explore:

- What a safe space really means from your perspective
- When and how young people feel able to talk about their mental health
- Whether young people can recognise the signs of poor mental health in themselves and others
- Where young people currently go for support, and what makes them avoid services
- Where gaps are in current support services, safe spaces and supportive relationships

More about this opportunity

As a group, you will:

- Identify key themes and patterns from the conversations you've had
- Highlight the most important challenges and barriers young people face
- Share ideas for what needs to change

These insights will be used to:

- Inform local services and organisations
- Shape new ideas for how support should be delivered
- Contribute to practical tools or resources that can be used by schools, youth services, and communities

There may also be opportunities to:

- Take part in a final event or showcase
- Share your findings with professionals and decision-makers
- Be part of ongoing work beyond the project

How to apply

Step 1: Apply

Fill in our short [Application Form](#) and tell us a bit about yourself and why you're interested. **Applications are open until Sunday 05 July at 11:59 pm** There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to hear your thoughts.

Step 2: Quick Chat

If we think you're a good fit, we'll invite you to a short, informal chat. This isn't an interview, it's just a chance to get to know you and answer any questions.

Step 3: Get started

If you're selected, we'll invite you to join the project and take part in the training sessions.

Who can apply

You can apply if

- You are a young man
- Are aged 16–22
- Live, work, or study in Ashfield, Mansfield, Bassetlaw, or Newark and Sherwood
- Are interested in mental health and making a difference

If you need help completing the application or have any questions, please get in touch with our team at projects@albos.org.uk.