

HSE, Housing Agency & Genio *Strengthening Lived Experience Programme*

17th Sept 2025



Purpose

Create a **Centre of Excellence for Lived Experience**.

1. **Representative space** for people with Lived Experience (like clinicians might have a College of Psychiatry to speak to media/government)
2. **Repository of best practice** frameworks, models and guidance for employing people with Lived Experience
3. **Repository of information** for people who are employed for their Lived Experience.
4. **Signposting to training** opportunities to build collective capacity.

Journey to date has included.....

- ☐ building a lived experience advisory group (LEAG)
- ☐ awareness and consensus building
- ☐ strategic relationship building
- ☐ inviting lived experience workers and best practice projects to share with public sector
- ☐ trialing training from around the world, making onboarding videos
- ☐ gathering best practices, guidance and frameworks

WORKING TOGETHER 2024-2026



Working Together

The **qualities** we looked for in a Lived Experience Advisory Group member;

Lived experience of X,Y,Z

Has used their lived experience in a paid role or senior voluntary capacity

Interested in creative problem-solving

Has experience of co-production

Works well in a team

Active listening is a strength

LEAG serve as **advisors** to the funders on the content of the symposia, as **contributors** to advancing lived experience literacy, and **testers** of capacity building opportunities. Also highlight **accessibility** of information/place/activity.

Advice: always include important stakeholders at concept stage!

Importance of the *Strengthening Lived Experience Programme*



Increasing **International recognition of the importance of Lived Experience** contributing to better services and systems.



Lots of Lived Experience or peer workers in Ireland (at least **437 across sectors**).



Identified a need for everyone to **learn more about the value of Lived experience expertise**.



LEAG created to keep the **voice of the people that know and use services at the centre of this work**.



Depending on the lived experience, you can feel shame, stigma, disempowered, a burden... Having your **voice heard and respected** impacts on your self-esteem and self worth



Empathy and emotional intelligence is important but there is a different level of camaraderie when you can say to someone **'I truly know how this feels'**.



People make assumptions but people with lived experiences can and do get involved in **problem solving**. 'I have an idea about how it could be better!'

Value of Working Together

- Increased skills, expertise, confidence, self-efficacy
- Stronger community networks
- Greater wellbeing
- Capacity to achieve goals, contribute and connect

Individual Benefit



- Deeper, shared understanding of social issues and experience
- Joint ownership of issues and solutions
- More lasting change and improvement in health and wellbeing

Collective Impact



- Improved involvement of priority groups in decision making
- Stronger user voice and diversity in leadership and governance
- More sustainable and efficient use of funding
- More public trust and awareness of service

Organisational Benefit



How did partnership change the project?

The project looks different to its initial draft. It's more inclusive, more meaningful. It has moved towards something living/evolving and is focused on sustainability. It is no longer a framework.



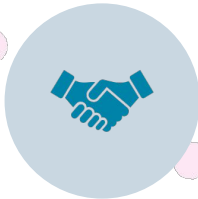
Take aways from working together!



Expect this way of working to take more time. Give it that time.



Multiple busy schedules and two sets of leaders and advisors so challenging to bring together. Co-create one group.



Make a commitment to work together in a fixed rhythm from the outset.



Pay people for their time.



Commitment to get things done (not just a talking shop) makes a big difference.

SHORT FILM: ONBOARDING PEER SUPPORT WORKERS

Induction of Peer Support
within the Health Service
Executive



THANK YOU

WWW.GENIO.IE

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with

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September 2025



Lived Experience staff in Ireland

Organisations: 78 Staff: at least 437

Sector: Disability

Organisations: 9, incl. 2 nationwide

Staff: at least 28

Sector: Homelessness

Organisations: 3

Staff: 9

Sector: Mental Health

Organisations: 24, incl. 3 nationwide

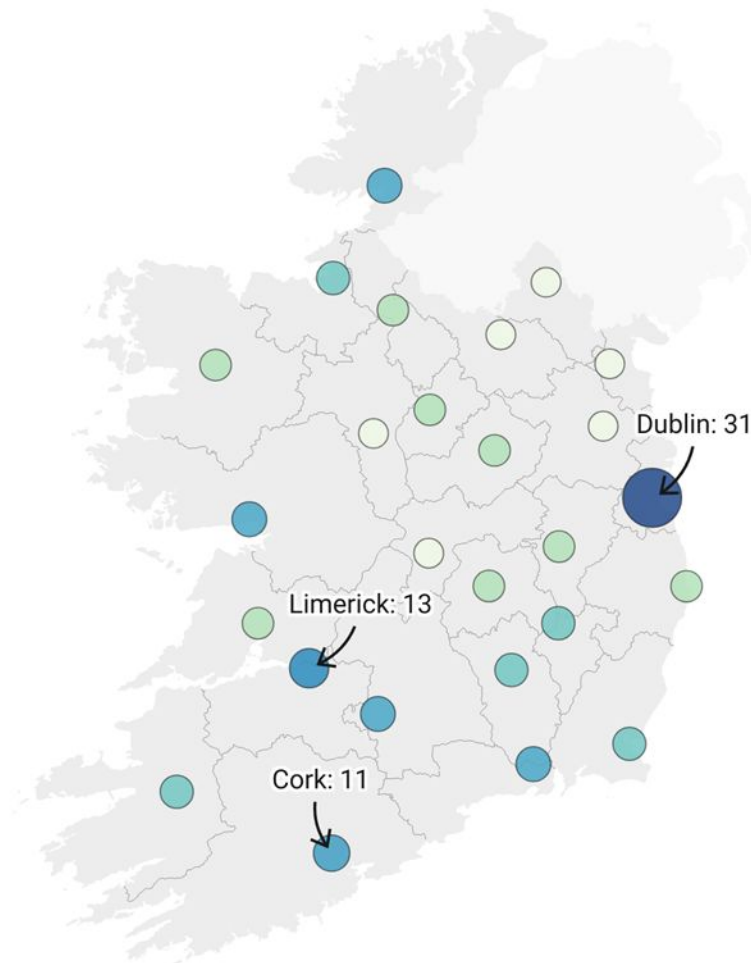
Staff: at least 207

Sector: Social Inclusion

Organisations: 43, incl. 2 nationwide

Staff: at least 193

Presence of Organisations with Paid Lived Experience Staff



Note: includes seven (7) organisations which offer in-person or virtual services to people nationwide
Map: The Housing Agency (2025) • Source: The Housing Agency, Genio (2025) • Created with Datawrapper