



Autism and ADHD Peer Support Service

Terms and Conditions of Peer Support

Eligibility Criteria

The Autism and ADHD Peer Support Service is a branch of Rotherham Parents' Forum Limited (RPFL). We receive funding from South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board – Rotherham Place to provide peer support to people registered with a Rotherham GP who are either:

- Autistic and ADHD Adults (16+) – diagnosed or on the waiting list for diagnostic assessment

or

- The Parent/Carer of an Autistic/ADHD child or young person aged 5-18 – diagnosed or on the waiting list for diagnostic assessment*

*Group Peer Support sessions can be accessed by parents/carers of people of any age with a diagnosis of autism/ADHD, or on the waiting list. The parent/ carer attending must be registered with a Rotherham GP.

The following document outlines the expectations, terms and conditions of accessing this service. Please note: **Continuing to access our service is taken as agreement to adhere to these terms and conditions.**

What you can expect?

When you engage with our Peer Support service and the Group Peer Support Sessions, you will be supported by people who have lived experience of Autism and ADHD. Our Peer Support Workers are here to listen, share insights, and offer guidance based on our own lived experience. This means the advice and support you receive comes from personal experience, not from professional clinical training.

While our Peer Support Workers are committed to helping you as much as possible, there may be times when your needs go beyond what this service can provide. In these cases, they will help by signposting you to relevant services, resources, or practitioners who can offer the support you need. Our goal is to create a safe, understanding, and welcoming environment where you can feel heard, supported, and connected, knowing that help and guidance are always available when needed.

What do we expect?

Our Peer Support service is run by and for people with lived experience of Autism and ADHD. This means that every Peer Support Worker you meet is also navigating their own neurodivergent journey. Because of this, we ask for patience and understanding – there may be moments when communication styles differ, responses take a little longer, or support looks a bit different from what you may have experienced elsewhere.

To create a safe and supportive space for everyone, we ask that all participants:

- Treat Peer Support Workers and fellow participants with kindness and respect.
- Communicate in ways that are considerate and free from harassment, discrimination, or abuse.
- Respect the boundaries of Peer Support Workers and other participants.
- Acknowledge that support is mutual, and that we are all learning together.

By joining us and accessing this service, you are agreeing to help us maintain a community based on trust, respect, and understanding, where everyone feels safe to share and be themselves.

1 to 1 Peer Support

Confidentiality

The content of 1 to 1 peer support sessions is confidential. This means that you are free to choose if, how, and with whom you share information about your peer support. RPFL ask that you do not record or take photos of sessions without discussing it with your peer supporter and gaining their consent first. Peer Support Workers will not usually share information about clients or the contents of peer support sessions outside of the Peer Support Team without your consent. The times when we would share information outside of the team are:

- If you give permission for your information to be shared
- If the peer support worker believes that a child, vulnerable adult or somebody else is at risk of harm and they need to act to reduce this risk
- If the peer support worker is legally required to share records

If the peer support worker needs to share information for safeguarding or legal reasons, we would usually let you know. Our Peer Support team attend both clinical and group supervision to ensure best working practices. No identifiable information is shared, and supervisors are also committed to contracted confidentiality.

Please read our privacy policy before you begin your peer support sessions. This can be found on our website at www.rpfl.co.uk. Alternatively, you can email peersupport@rpcf.co.uk and request a copy be emailed or posted to you.

Cancellations & Did Not Attend Policies

If you need to cancel your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can offer this time to someone else. If you cancel within 24 hours of your appointment or do not attend and do not let us know on two separate occasions, the cancellations will usually count towards your allotted sessions. If you do not attend your appointment, we will try to contact you three times by different methods. If you do not respond to the contact attempts, then your referral will be closed, and you will need to re-refer into the service.

Violence & Aggression

Our staff are entitled to carry out their work without the threat of verbal abuse or physical violence. Any displays of aggression towards our staff or other participants by a person accessing our service will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly to establish the appropriate action to take. Violence or abuse of any description will not be tolerated.

Contact outside peer support sessions

Should your peer support worker happen to meet you outside of your peer support sessions please be aware that they will not greet you. This is to protect your privacy and maintain confidentiality. This is especially important if you are with other people. If you acknowledge them openly, they will respond appropriately and professionally. Should we find ourselves in a situation where we are part of the same group, either social or professional, considerations will be given to the potential complications of this dual role relationship. Where appropriate and possible, the peer support worker will withdraw.

Social Media

Please be advised that due to our safeguarding policies, our peer support workers are unable to accept follow/friend requests on personal social media accounts. Please do not message our staff via personal social media or online profiles. Instead, please use our organisation's communication channels to contact us.

Crisis Support

Our peer support service, whether face to face, telephone, or online, is NOT a crisis service and cannot provide an emergency service for clients. In the event of an emergency arising whilst we are engaged in a peer support session or if you were experiencing suicidal thoughts, we would discuss the most appropriate support that you could access during this period.

If you found yourself in a major crisis and were considering serious self-harm it would be vital to get immediate help. This could include contacting your GP, or your nearest Accident and Emergency Service (A&E) or Crisis Service. You could also call the Samaritans on 116 123. Other useful Crisis Services include:

- Rotherham Crisis Team – 0800 652 9571
- North Adult Locality Mental Health Team – 01709 447767
- South Adult Locality Mental Health Team – 01709 447765
- Samaritans – 116 123
- Shout Text Service – Text 'SHOUT' to 85258
- Rotherhive - [RotherHive – The wellbeing and mental health resource for Rotherham](#)

If you are or become extremely emotionally unwell (including suicidality/self-harm) during your time with us and this becomes a barrier to your ability to access peer support safely, your peer support worker will raise this with the Service Lead(s) and the safeguarding team. At this point, these parties will discuss whether continuing peer support is appropriate. If not, we may signpost you to mental health services (if not already involved) and/or ask for permission to speak to other practitioners supporting you to help us best support you. If it is necessary to pause your sessions, then you will be able re-engage with us when you have received the support you need and are in a better place to access peer support around your Autism and/or ADHD.

Group Peer Support and Social Opportunities

All Group Peer Support and Social Opportunities will be facilitated by at least one member of staff and/or trained volunteers. These groups aim to provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment enabling Autistic and ADHD Adults (16+) and the parents/carers of Autistic and ADHD people to meet their peers, share experiences and gain support from each other as well as have fun. The following agreement relates to all Group events, online, face-to-face, and any one off events.

1. Accessibility and Admission

All groups are subject to the eligibility criteria outlined at the beginning of this document. Where someone meets the eligibility criteria to access the service and has a demonstrable significant support need, our team will make all reasonable adjustments to support the individual to access the service. However, we do not have the capacity to support individuals on a 1:1 basis during group sessions. If you are usually supported at home or in social situations, you are required to bring an adult to support you, such as a friend, family member, PA, or support worker.

Sickness

Please do not attend our face-to-face Group Sessions if you are sick or unwell with any transmissible illnesses.

Personal Details

Please inform volunteers or staff if your contact details change, including any support needs, new medical diagnoses/conditions/medication/allergies, or anything else you feel we may need to be aware of to keep you and/or others safe.

2. Confidentiality

Being part of such a group requires mutual trust. Group discussions are encouraged but may involve sensitive and private disclosures. Everything said in our group sessions should remain confidential. This will only change if a member of our staff or volunteer team believes that a participant or someone else is at risk (see section 5 for safeguarding processes).

3. Discussion

We welcome open and honest discussions at all our group sessions. However, some topics may be upsetting and/or triggering for some individuals (this could include things such as abuse, violence, sexual assault, politics, religion, medication/drugs). Staff may move discussions on if a conversation appears to be distressing individuals and/or the group.

Please also be aware that at some group peer support sessions, some attendees may be school-age (16–18); therefore, we ask that you moderate your language and discussion topics appropriately.

The Service and RPFL do not support or endorse the views or opinions of any external service, group, or individual who attends our groups or shares content on our platforms. Where content or shared views contravene our terms and conditions, we will take appropriate action.

4. Health & Safety

All group sessions are risk-assessed and are compliant with health and safety regulations. All group sessions are staffed by at least one first aider. All staff carry mobile phones to contact emergency services if required.

Any activity considered to potentially cause harm or create a hazard, is risk assessed as soon as possible. Copies of risk assessments can be requested by anybody at any time whilst attending an activity.

All staff and volunteers are duty-bound to report any health and safety concerns they have, whether environmental or specific to an incident or an individual. Our staff team meet weekly to discuss any concerns, which are discussed with Safeguarding leads and appropriate action is taken and recorded.

5. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a high priority for us, and all staff are trained and experienced. Service staff and volunteers have a duty to pass on any safeguarding concerns to appropriate services in line with our Safeguarding Policies.

To safeguard you and others attending our groups, staff may discuss any concerns with our adult Safeguarding Lead; and may also keep a record of incidents for future reference and continuity of service.

Mental Health Support

The safety, comfort, and well-being of all participants, staff, and volunteers are our highest priority. We aim to support individuals experiencing mental health challenges sensitively while maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone. To ensure clarity and fairness, we have outlined the following steps for managing situations where mental health concerns significantly impact group dynamics:

First Incident:

- If an individual shows signs or behaviours indicating significant mental distress that disrupts the group, a staff member or volunteer will, where possible, privately and sensitively discuss their concerns with the individual.
- If the situation significantly impacts the group, we may ask the individual to leave the activity temporarily to allow them space and privacy to regain composure.
- With the individual's consent, information may be shared confidentially with relevant support services to ensure the individual receives appropriate help.
- Individuals may be asked to bring a support worker, trusted friend, or family member with them to support them at further groups. This person should not be another regular attendee of the group in question.
- If the above is not possible, or deemed inappropriate by staff, individuals may be asked to refrain from attending specific groups or all of our groups temporarily until they have connected with mental health support services and their mental health has improved.
- Individuals may, then, return to our group sessions following a supportive discussion with staff members. 1:1 support will be discussed and may be required before returning.

Second Incident:

- If an individual's mental health continues to impact group dynamics after support has been offered, they will be asked to temporarily pause attendance at all of our group sessions.

Review

During the pausing of attendance at group sessions, individuals are encouraged and will be supported to engage with appropriate mental health services. 1:1 support will be discussed and may be required before returning to attending group peer support sessions. If appropriate, we will continue offering access to 1:1 peer support during this break period.

After three months, a supportive review meeting will be arranged to discuss re-engagement with group sessions, ensuring a safe and welcoming return for all involved. This may take place earlier if appropriate.

Our ultimate goal is to support the mental well-being of all our participants while maintaining the positive, safe, and inclusive environment that is at the heart of all our services.

Meltdowns

Please inform staff if you pose a risk to yourself or others during a meltdown/shutdown. There is opportunity to share this information on our registration form. Please bring another adult age 18+ to support you at our groups if required.

6. Self Care

Remember to take care of yourself. If you need to, take a break. If anything at any of our sessions makes you feel uncomfortable, then please ask our team for support.

7. Appropriate Behaviour

All activities and behaviour of our attendees must be in accordance with our Policies. We ask for considerate behaviour and compassionate, inclusive language towards all group members, our staff, and our volunteer team. We want to make sure that everyone feels safe.

We do not tolerate discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or bullying, characterised as aggressive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Other forms of bullying can include:

- Name calling / verbal abuse
- Threats of extortion / extortion
- Physical violence
- Damage to belongings
- Deliberately leaving people out of social activities / discussions
- Spreading rumours

Anyone found to be bullying other group members, staff, or volunteers will be asked to leave and, depending on the severity of the situation, may not be accepted back into the service.

If anyone feels uncomfortable or unsafe at any time during any of our activities, please speak to staff or volunteers so we can respond appropriately.

Drugs & Alcohol

If a member of our team believes that you are under the influence of alcohol or un-prescribed drugs, you will be asked politely and discreetly to leave the group. You may be able to return the following week. If you require support accessing drug and alcohol services, please speak to a member of staff or one of our volunteers.

Smoking and Vaping (including Medically Prescribed Cannabis)

The Service operates a no-smoking policy. Smoking or vaping is not permitted anywhere in buildings or on the premises – this applies to staff, volunteers, students, visitors and peers. People may leave a group session and/or the venue to smoke elsewhere, then return to the group afterwards. Vaping is not permitted inside any buildings or enclosed spaces where our group sessions are held. Participants who wish to vape must do so in designated outdoor areas, ensuring they are away from entrances and windows. Please be considerate of others when vaping and avoid doing so near other group members.

Participants who use medically prescribed cannabis must inform a member of staff or one of our volunteers in advance, providing documentation of their prescription. The use of medically prescribed cannabis is only permitted in designated areas, and participants must follow all relevant laws and regulations regarding its use. Vaping of cannabis is not allowed inside any buildings or enclosed spaces where our group sessions are held. Participants may use alternative methods of consumption, such as edibles or vapes, in designated outdoor areas. Please be mindful of the comfort and safety of other group members when using medically prescribed cannabis.

Lost Property

This Policy has been prepared to guide staff on the procedures for managing and controlling lost property in an open, fair and documented way, thereby protecting the interests of employees, volunteers, peers/service users and others.

The service has a responsibility to provide safe custody of money and other personal property handed in by staff, visitors or the public found on the premises or grounds. Any such items or objects found on our premises or within the grounds of our premises, regardless of value, are considered lost property and should be dealt with as detailed below.

Lost property' also relates to an item which has been reported lost in one of our venues but has not been found by or handed in to staff there. Apart from our own premises, we may use a variety of venues across Rotherham at various times.

For the purposes of this policy lost property is separated into three classifications:

- (a) Perishable items.
- (b) Low value, non-perishable items.
- (c) Valuable items.

Process

Lost property will be safely brought back to our office and logged and stored in our 'lost property area', and an appropriate member of staff will be informed. A full description of the item(s) should be obtained, details of where and when the item was lost, approximate time and date and any distinguishing marks to support proof of ownership. This description should be matched to details given on "Lost Property – Item Found" forms. Identification of the visitor should also be sought.

Retention Periods for Lost Property

Perishable items (foodstuffs, liquids) are to be kept until the venue's closing time on the day in which they were found (or less as deemed appropriate per individual case). After this time, any unclaimed items should be disposed of safely. In instances where a lunchbox or cooler bag (or similar) has been left at a venue with perishable items inside, the perishables should be disposed of and the boxes and bags kept as per the recommendations for items of their type.

Non-perishable items (such as bags, clothing or toys) are to be kept for three calendar months to allow rightful owners time to claim their property.

Valuable items (cameras, mobile phones, wallets, handbags) are to be kept for 3 calendar months to allow their rightful owners to claim them.

Unclaimed Lost Property

At the start of each month, a staff member will review the items that have been held from three calendar months previously.

Non-valuable items which remain unclaimed are to be disposed of either by donation to a charity or destroyed. The forms for the donated or destroyed items should be updated to reflect this change.

Valuable items should be transferred to the Police, who will then hold and dispose of them under their own lost property policy. Forms relating to these items should be updated to reflect this transfer.

Any unclaimed cash should be donated to Rotherham Parents Forum Limited, a registered charity. The forms for the relevant items will then be updated to reflect this change.

8. Complaints and Comments

We welcome feedback and provide comments slips for people to complete after attending group sessions. We have a complaints process, in the event of a concern or a complaint being raised, the following process should be followed – <http://rpfl.co.uk/rpfl-comments-and-complaints-policy>.

9. Right of Admission Reserved

Please note that we have the right to refuse entry, ask people to leave, or remove people from the session if they do not follow the group agreement and are causing upset to other group members or our staff/volunteer team. We will discuss this privately with the individual concerned.

September 2025.

Adult Autism and ADHD Peer Support Service

Review date: March 2026 (six months after publication date), unless needed earlier.