

"There is nothing like that magic moment of connection when someone can see you really understand what they're going through."

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Kelli Rush

Community lived experience practitioner

Employer or university

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

Salary range

£20k-£30k



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**How I got into
the role**

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collapse**

I'm a former service user of Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust and have been very fortunate in receiving the right treatment at the right time in my life. I've made an astonishing recovery as a result.

I was interested in working in mental health services so I could support others through what I know can be a long and difficult journey of recovery. I jumped at the chance to put my experience to good use when I heard about the trust's lived experience practitioner programme.

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What I do

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I work in a community rehabilitation and enablement service for adults aged 18 to 65. I attend twice weekly meetings to consider the red, amber or green risk rating for the people we work with, in addition to weekly multidisciplinary team meetings. My manager refers people to me to work with and I meet them at our team base, in their own homes or in peer support groups.

As a lived experience practitioner, I spend a lot of time listening to the people I work with and I find that there is nothing like that magic moment of connection when someone can see you really understand what they're going through. It creates an unspoken understanding that they're not alone in this world or on their long and difficult journey.

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The best bits and challenges

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The best part of my day is working with the people who use our services and their family, friends and loved ones. Because I've been there, I really understand the difficulties they're dealing with on a daily basis. I can role model my own recovery and inspire hope.

People may be guarded at first, but as soon as I share my lived experience with them, they open up, share their true thoughts and feelings, and talk about what support they think they need to move forwards.

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Life outside work

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I love reading and usually have three or four books on the go at once. My favourite author is Lionel Shriver, but I spend most of my time reading books about psychology and psychotherapy.

One of the most important things for me to stay well is to make sure I keep a regular routine and get enough sleep.

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Career plans and top tips for others

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I have received phenomenal support from the staff at Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust: my mentor, my manager and senior management too.

I have been provided with so many training opportunities including the Edward Jenner Leadership Programme [1] to continue my personal and professional development. I am hoping to become a Schwartz Round Facilitator [2] which will provide me with an opportunity to fine tune my group facilitation skills. I will also be able to support clinical and non clinical NHS staff to come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in healthcare.

I am looking forward to a long and enjoyable career with Oxleas.

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles-psychological-therapies/peer-support-worker/real-life-story-kelli-rush>

Links

[1] <https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/programmes/the-edward-jenner-programme/>

[2] <https://www.pointofcarefoundation.org.uk/our-programmes/staff-experience/about-schwartz-rounds/>