

SharED Peer Support

Peer-to-peer support for young people provided over email by volunteer befrienders.

Six months of support from a Beat befriender aged between 18–35 years old who has recovered from their own eating disorder, moderated by a Beat Helpline Advisor.

Who is it for?

Young people aged 14–25 with an eating disorder.

Intended outcome

Reduced isolation, improved quality of life and a belief in recovery.

Duration and intensity

Emails one to three times a week, for up to six months.

Details

Young people referred to the SharED service are matched with a “buddy” – a volunteer aged 18–35 who has recovered from their own eating disorder. The buddy will provide a befriending service in the form of up to three emails per week.

The pairs are mediated by Beat and the content of all emails is moderated to ensure safety for everyone involved.

The befrienders offer a listening ear, provide encouragement and signpost to other services that might be helpful during the service user’s journey. They are trained by Beat and supervised throughout their service by the Beat Peer Support Coordinator. Training consists of boundaries in communication, active listening skills based on motivational interviewing principles and safeguarding policies and practices.

“I can’t express how supported I have felt from speaking and connecting with you. I truly have looked forward to every email because I know on the other end will be someone who understands me and is rooting for me. So thank you so much.”

This service was created in partnership with NHS Lothian.

More information

For more information about this service or a partnership with Beat, please contact our Public Sector Commissioning team via publicsectorcommissioning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk.

This is one of a series of services Beat provides in support of clinical eating disorder services. A full list is available at beateatingdisorders.org.uk/commission-us

Other services for people with eating disorders:

- Motivate: weekly support to help people waiting for treatment to stay motivated
- Bolster: one-to-one telephone coaching for adults with emerging eating disorders
- Momentum guided self-help: NICE-recommended treatment for binge eating disorder

Beat and the public sector working in partnership

Beat works with public sector partners across the United Kingdom to support people and their loved ones in their recovery journeys. We can provide non-clinical support quickly, effectively, and as early as possible, to complement the work of health professionals.

We can provide some of our services free of charge. For other services we have to pass on our costs to you, but we never take a profit from our work with public sector partners.

We provide services in the following areas:

- Direct support to people with an eating disorder
- Training and support for family members and others caring for a loved one with an eating disorder
- Support and training for clinicians
- Strategic support to health care providers

We develop all our services in consultation with clinical and academic partners. We co-produce our services with our beneficiaries, with guidance from our multidisciplinary Clinical Advisory Group of senior clinicians, who provide guidance across all our areas of work.

Our services are delivered by trained Beat personnel – both staff and volunteers. These include experienced eating disorder clinicians, trained Beat staff and volunteers with ongoing access to supervision by an experienced clinician.