



## Bronze Award for ESRA

ESRA has been successful in gaining the Bronze award for **Wellbeing in the Workplace**. This is the 2nd award that ESRA has undertaken in the last year having achieved our commitment ward in 2023. The East Sussex Wellbeing at Work programme provides a free framework to local workplaces to improve employee health and wellbeing. The programme was launched in 2021 and Jacqui Skilton CEO said *“we wanted to participate in this process to ensure that we were able to support our staff team, volunteers and have been working hard to improve health and wellbeing at ESRA. She also said that “as an organisation we recognised that our staff all who have lived experience are often supporting very vulnerable people”, we wanted to ensure that are team are mentally strong so we looked at the way we worked and aimed to create a healthy and happy environment. So that staff and volunteers can be themselves whilst getting the care and support they need.*





East Sussex Recovery Alliance welcomed Member of Parliament for Hastings and Rye, Sally-Ann Hart to the Recovery Hub in Hastings on the 3rd of April 2024 to talk with the staff and clients who attend the hub for their recovery support.

Sally-Ann enjoyed a delicious roast dinner cooked in our recovery café whilst discussing issues that are current for our clients.

*“Health disparities and addiction are known to be more pronounced in coastal communities which is why getting children and families right, early intervention and prevention, education and skills, and access to job opportunities and good healthcare services, including mental health, are priorities for me as the MP for Hastings and Rye.”*

*This is why an organisation such as East Sussex Recovery Alliance ( ESRA ) is so important to our local community. It provides an abstinence-based programme of help and support to people across East Sussex who are in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. I met and chatted to some really amazing people, whose strength and determination coupled with the support from ESRA, proves that recovery is possible, and lives can be rebuilt - and lived.*

*ESRA provides a warm, welcoming and comfortable environment where those in recovery can come to relax or take part in the various activities on offer including yoga, mindfulness, baking, art, creative writing and more. Counselling and therapy is also available.*

*The hub is run by fantastic staff and volunteers who have a real empathy and understanding of the issues those in recovery face. It is a wonderful local charity that I am delighted to support.”*



# SMART@ESRA

We offer all our clients who are ready, the opportunity to participate in a 10 week SMART course. In this group we look at the tools which can help clients to self- manage their recovery.

SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) is a programme that provides training and tools for people who want to change their problematic behaviour, including addiction to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gambling, food, shopping, Internet and others.

Guided by trained facilitators, participants come to help themselves and help each other using a variety of motivational tools and techniques.

*At the end of each 10 week course we ask clients to feedback on what they have learned or gained from attending the group.*

*100% of those who attended reported that these groups helped maintain their recovery, whilst 88% reported that the peer support was really important in these groups.*

*“The group helped us to learn about our triggers, where they stem from, how to avoid them and how to overcome them. Our shared experiences were invaluable in this process”*

*“By talking about various difficulties at various stages of recovery both giving and gaining advice and hope with others more and less experienced”*

*“The support is unreal, these guys really do know my full story and have helped me every single step of the new journey I am on. I never take it for granted”*

*“The experiences of others creates a bond and a vital knowledge that we are not alone in our addiction”*

*“Because its a very lonely and uncertain journey which needs support and encouragement. Sometimes you need to hear that you're not the only one to have felt this and there is hope, it is achievable”*

# Updates @ESRA

## New Courses coming in April:

### Seasonal Sketchbook

Explore the different seasons through creativity in your own sketchbook. Taking inspiration from the colours and nature within each season, you will learn simple sketching techniques and develop skills in using mixed media. This course is suitable for all abilities, no previous experience required and is taught in a small friendly group.

Wednesday 17th, 24th April and 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd May, 1.00pm to 3.00pm

### Creative writing with Sue

Starting Monday 22nd April and running until 8th July 1.00pm-3pm. For more information contact [jo@esrauk.org](mailto:jo@esrauk.org)

### Office Closure

ESRA will be closed on Wednesday 24th April due to a Staff Training day. We will be open as normal on Friday 26th April.

### New Photo ID for Voting in the UK

Are you aware that you will need to show photo ID at polling stations before you can vote in any future elections. You will need to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate if you do not have an accepted form of ID.

It's free to apply. You'll just need:

- a recent, digital photo of yourself
- your National Insurance number

You can still apply if you do not have a National Insurance number. You'll just need to provide other documents to prove your identity, for example a birth certificate, bank statement and utility bill. Use the link below or if you would like some help to complete the form, Dani will be happy to help you.

Apply for photo ID to vote (called a 'Voter Authority Certificate') - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

# Client Story

I lost my dad 5 year ago, previous to that I'd lost my brother and my best friend. I think this was the starting point for me. It really hit hard as we'd had an argument so I didn't get to say goodbye to him. It put me in the worst place possible. I'd used drugs occasionally before but now it was out of control.

***"The wake-up moment was when I was in hospital with tubes and wires everywhere and I thought I was dying. My kids said that I loved drugs more than I loved them, that's when I knew I wanted to stop, not just needed to. I'd been trying to stop for everyone else but realised I wanted to stop for me".***

Initially I approached STAR and did the 16-week counselling course. They then referred me to ESRA to continue my recovery as I needed the support from others who were going through the same as me. I'd bottled everything up for years and had never been able to talk about things and just exploded.

It's been an amazing experience and the staff are great and so approachable. I'm staying clean and enjoying my life again and this year I'm planning to start my own business.

***"Everything in my life is moving forward and I'm seeing clearly for the first time in a long time. We're planning things as a family and that never used to happen. I still get urges now and again but I don't act on them. I feel less stressed and better able to cope with the pressures of work and life... I feel like once I got better, everyone around me got better too".***



***"I was using every day, I'd disappear for 3 weeks at a time leaving my family wondering where the hell I was, this went on for 3 years. I was also really stressed with work and working too many hours which was overwhelming me, looking back now I realise I was using as a way of coping with everything".***

***"ESRA has given me a sense of security and stability. I don't feel judged at ESRA. It's been great to be able to talk and be listened to. I can now talk openly and honestly in groups which I never thought I'd be able to do. SMART has given me the tools as well as the confidence to continue my recovery and stay focused".***

## Easy Fundraising

Help increase our chances of winning £250! Sign up to support East Sussex Recovery Alliance on #easyfundraising today! Each new person who joins counts as an entry. It's completely free, and winning would really make a big difference to us! Plus, you get to support us for free all year round as you do all your online shopping! Get started:

<https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/esussexra/FSZ668/c2s/FZ9Up2Ac/CE809/facebook/>

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