



VOLUNTEERS WEEK

Welcome to June. We love this time of year- the lighter evenings, beach walks and the promise of better weather until the Autumn. We have been busy at ESRA and many of our clients have been participating in the courses and activities on offer over the last few months, some of these are provided by ESRA and some in partnership with East Sussex College.



Volunteers' Week 2024 is a special annual event that celebrates the incredible contributions made by volunteers across the United Kingdom. This year, it marks the 40th anniversary of Volunteers' Week, and it will take place from Monday, June 3rd to Sunday, June 9th, 2024. During this week, thousands of charities and voluntary organisations come together to recognise and thank the selfless individuals who dedicate their time and effort to help others. Whether it's supporting local communities, working with charities, or contributing to good causes, volunteers play a vital role in making a positive impact on society. So, let's join in celebrating these unsung heroes and inspire more people to get involved. ESRA will be recognising our volunteers and in this newsletter, you can find a story from one of our volunteers and how they support us in delivering the service to all our clients.

If you are interested in volunteering for ESRA, please speak to Alison for more information.

During their recovery journey, it's not just our clients who need help and support, their family and friends can be impacted too.

Here at ESRA we try offer help and advice to anyone supporting a loved one in recovery.

"As the parents of a son battling a 15 year drugs addiction we have struggled dealing and coping with him.

In January 2024, at our wits end, we discussed with P whether he would agree to rehab which we would pay for ourselves, he accepted, he needed this to try and change his life.

P undertook a month of rehab and was due to leave in February 2024. We decided in order to give him the best chance of success to visit STAR prior to him coming home to gather as much information about groups and support as possible. STAR suggested ESRA, an organisation we had not heard of before.

We went straight from STAR to ESRA, and was surprised that having turned up unannounced, we could speak to someone straight away. We spoke with Ali who explained what ESRA could offer and we discussed our concerns with regards to P.

Ali contacted P whilst he was still in rehab to introduce herself and explain what ESRA could offer him. Ali then made contact again with P and he had a meeting with her within days of returning home. The service provided was excellent.

As parents, we struggle to find help and support dealing with a son with drugs addictions. However, ESRA has been supportive to both P and ourselves.

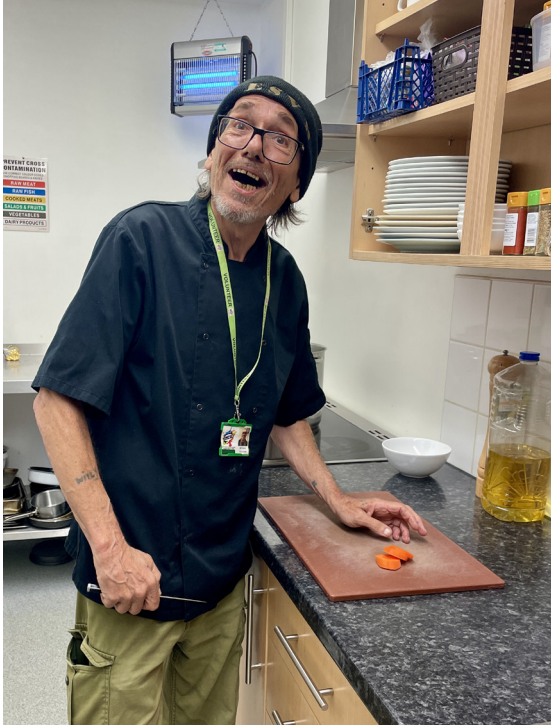
On our visits the staff have been welcoming and supportive. When times have got tough and difficult for us, they have listened and offered advice.

P is now part way through his SMART Programme and is seeing a counsellor weekly. When P has struggled himself, they have arranged face to face meetings straight away to discuss the problems and help him work through them.

With the crisis in communities with mental health, drug and alcohol addictions, it is imperative that organisations such as ESRA continue to receive funding to provide this much needed service." KH



Key Achievements at ESRA 2023/24



Over the last year we have supported 264 clients with 4,304 contacts, consisting of 3,030 contacts to 159 Hastings clients, 655 contacts to 81 Eastbourne clients and 621 clients to 21 clients in local, rural areas.

In a recent survey we asked clients to name the top 3 activities that support their recovery.

We had 60 responses.

- 58% reported they needed a safe space to come to.
- 45% reported that the café supported their recovery.
- 41% reported that SMART group was important to their recovery.



ESRA has developed its SMART programme over the last year which is proving to be a great success. It helps support clients managing their own recovery by using the tools they have learned within the group. Clients are also supported by telephone contacts, online groups and groups activities. The café remains the heart to the ESRA Hub in Hastings and is well used; we offer a hot meal, cake, tea or coffee and the café also offers opportunities for clients volunteering.

The staff continue to offer amazing support, giving time and listening to the clients needs.

Recovery Event

On the 25th of September we will be opening the hub to celebrate Recovery month. The event will be for clients and for partners where you will be able to promote your service to others and have exciting opportunities for networking. To book your place, please use the link below.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/esra-annual-recovery-event-tickets-907570867897>



www.esrauk.org

Client Story

My drinking started in the army, I wanted to feel part of something and belong but I never really fitted in with army life. I was bullied quite badly which added to my isolation and being posted to Belfast played its part, I was drinking really heavily from the age of 17. I continued to drink after I was discharged from the army for my behaviour. A few years later my daughter was born with severe disabilities and to cope with all the stress I hit in the bottle.

We had another child a few years later also born with severe disabilities. When my son was older he was just going into care and his keyworker signposted me to ESVA (East Sussex Veterans Association, who in turn signposted me to ESRA which was just downstairs. I just walked into their office one day and asked if I could attend the SMART meetings to help support my recovery. Once I was assessed I was able to join other people and hear their stories, I could relate to others going through the same situation and people were inspirational to me.

Now I volunteer for ESRA, cleaning and helping out on reception occasionally. I participate in events with the veterans' group and I like to challenge myself so I'm hoping to do more courses in the future to build on new found skills and support others on their recovery journey.



ESRA has helped me a lot. I get so much benefit from sharing other people's stories in recovery. It reminds me of how far I've come and not to be complacent. I've done activities and courses that I would never have attempted without the support of ESRA. I've met a lot of people who are going through similar situations that I can totally relate to. It's so supportive here.

I'm learning not to dwell on the negative thoughts and stop living in the past by looking for the positives in every day and using more positive self-talk. I am more mindful of the ups and downs in life, there are things I can't control but it's how I react to them -positively not negatively – no more "poor me" or "why me", now it's "what can I do to sort this" and looking at things in a different way.

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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