

EAST SUSSEX RECOVERY ALLIANCE

Supporting people to live a substance-free lifestyle



Thank You for Helping Shape ESRA's Future

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our Helping Shape ESRA's Future event on 9th June. We were delighted to welcome over 36 attendees, including partners, supporters, and community organisations.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Key themes included:

- **A shared commitment to working more closely together**
- **The importance of stronger relationships and improved referral pathways**
- **Clearer understanding of how to refer to ESRA**
- **Interest in developing joint projects and events**



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As a result, follow-up meetings are already being arranged to explore next steps, plan collaborative events, and ensure services remain joined up and accessible.

Suggestions included:

- *Hosting regular events like this one*
- *Inviting organisations to attend our drop-in sessions to share what they do*
- *ESRA attending partner team meetings to build closer connections*
- *Joint funding opportunities*
- *Drug education opportunities*
- *Carers work*
- *Support with collecting data*

We're excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to continuing this journey together.



What our clients say about ESRA



- ▶ 95% scored the support they received from ESRA between 9 and 10
- ▶ 91% reported that ESRA had supported them to help maintain their recovery
- ▶ 99% reported that ESRA provided support that they couldn't get elsewhere
- ▶ 100% of the people we were able to contact who had completed our SMART course are still maintaining their recovery and 67% are in employment

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info@esrauk.org



Connection and Care in the Rural Community

On Wednesday 21st May, ESRA hosted their outreach event 'Connection and Care in the Community' at Etchingham station. The event was held in the bistro area, where we set up a small table to create a welcoming space. The informal setup allowed people to approach us at their own pace and comfort, without any pressure, whilst providing a gentle introduction of ESRA's services.

To help start conversations and offer something relaxing, A Touch of Gentleness provided free hand massages to station users. These were very well received. Jo and Stacy offered calm, friendly sessions to both passengers and bistro customers alike.

Our main goal was to introduce ourselves and begin raising awareness of ESRA's presence and the support we offer in rural communities.

We were pleased to be joined by Jackie Saull-Hunt, Community Development Worker from RVA, as well as Sarah Jacques from Sussex Outreach Support, who organised the event, and Kanna Ingison, Community Line Development Officer for the Hastings to Tonbridge Network Rail Line. Together, we spoke with several local residents about some of the difficulties faced in rural areas and encouraged open, honest conversation about their experiences.

The event proved to be a very positive first step and ESRA has future plans to build familiarity and visibility in the rural communities to provide a clear point of contact for anyone who might need their support.

Quotes from our service users:

"The personal touch – you're treated as an individual, not just a number. The staff are dedicated and supportive."

"The constant support, even when I wasn't ready to hear it."

"Being able to meet like-minded people in similar situations has been invaluable."

"Peer support is the biggest one for me. Sharing problems with others really helps."

"ESRA helped me with housing, doctors' appointments, and sorting out bills."

"It's a safe place – I've never felt judged."

"ESRA helped me maintain my recovery. Without them, I would have given in."



In May 2025, ESRA engaged clients through our drop-in group and SMART Recovery group to explore the factors that led them to seek recovery, gave them hope and motivation and what support was most helpful at the beginning of their journey. Their reflections provide valuable insight into the challenges individuals face and the kinds of support that can make a meaningful difference in the early stages of recovery.

A key theme that emerged from these discussions is that recovery begins not just with the decision to stop using substances, but with access to hope, connection, and meaningful support. The voices of ESRA's clients emphasise the importance of a holistic, person-centred approach - one rooted in compassion, community, and structure - as essential to initiating and sustaining recovery.

These insights are echoed by those shared in the Safehaven Men's group, where participants highlighted the need for wraparound support that addresses not only substance use but also the broader social and emotional challenges individuals experience. Recovery is not a one-size-fits-all journey; individuals need stability, a sense of purpose, opportunities for growth, and a supportive community. The conversations at Safehaven reflect a strong readiness for change and a desire for support that is accessible, understanding and responsive to the realities of everyday life.

Together, these insights will inform ESRA's ongoing commitment to providing responsive, empowering, and inclusive support for individuals on their recovery journey.



Scan the QR code for more information or contact us:

01424 435318
info@esrauk.org

*Alternatively visit us at our drop-in,
10.30-12pm Wednesdays, Community
Information Hub, Town Hall, Hastings*

ESRA would like to thank the following organisations for their continued funding support:

Lloyds Bank Foundation

The Chalk Cliff Trust

The Isabel Blackman Foundation

Their ongoing generosity plays a vital role in helping us continue our work and make a meaningful difference in the community.

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