

EAST SUSSEX RECOVERY ALLIANCE

Supporting people to live a substance-free lifestyle



September was...

A time to pause, reflect, and celebrate the strength of people who are working on their recovery. It's also a chance to reach out to anyone who might be struggling and let them know they're not alone.

Recovery looks different for everyone. For some, it's the first brave step of asking for help. For others, it's learning how to live a full life without drugs or alcohol. Whatever stage you're at, we believe recovery is possible. We know it's not always easy, but we also know the difference it makes to have people beside you who understand.

"When I first came to ESRA, I felt like I had nothing left. Meeting people who'd been through it too made me realise I wasn't on my own."



ESRA joined forces with Change Grow Live and Adfam at Priory Meadow in Hastings as part of National Recovery Month. Together, we promoted our services to the local community, raising awareness of the support available for individuals and families affected by substance misuse. The event provided an opportunity to share information, connect with residents, and celebrate the importance of recovery and community support.



Your Journey, Your Recovery, **Our Support**

ESRA's New 3-Step Recovery Programme

At ESRA we are always listening to the people we support, as well as our dedicated staff and volunteers.

From this feedback, we've developed a brand-new 3-Step Recovery Programme designed to provide structured, ongoing support for people at every stage of their recovery journey.

Our aim is to make recovery feel less daunting, more supported, and full of opportunities to connect with others who understand.

Step 1: Step Into Recovery

Starting something new can feel overwhelming. Step Into Recovery is a monthly group designed especially for those taking their first steps. This group provides a gentle introduction, helping to build trust and connections with staff and peers.

Step 2: SMART Recovery 10-Week Course

Once ready, clients can join our SMART Recovery Course, a structured 10-week programme that focuses on giving people the practical tools and confidence they need to take control of their recovery.

Step 3: Moving Forward in Recovery

Recovery doesn't stop after the course ends – and neither does our support. Moving Forward in Recovery is a weekly drop-in group for those who have completed the 10-week SMART programme. It offers a space to continue building on progress and keep focused on goals with the encouragement of staff and peers.

Wellbeing Wednesday – Monthly Drop-In

Alongside the Three-Step Programme, we're also introducing Wellbeing Wednesday, a monthly drop-in session dedicated to wellbeing support. Each session will offer something new – from workshops and guest speakers to creative activities and mindfulness – all designed to help clients strengthen their recovery and overall wellbeing.



We're really excited to launch these new groups, shaped directly by the feedback of our clients. Whether you are just taking your first step or looking to strengthen your long-term recovery, ESRA's new programme offers a pathway full of encouragement, support, and hope.

PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

At ESRA, we know how important it is to work together with others to give the best support possible. Here are some of the ways we've been teaming up recently:

- **Recovery Month with CGL** – We joined forces with CGL, the local treatment service, for a special event in Priory Meadow to celebrate Recovery Month. It was a great chance to raise awareness, challenge stigma, and show that recovery is possible.
- **Young People's Support** – Thanks to funding from Southern Water, we've started working with Xtrax, a young people's service. Our Senior Support Worker now visits every other week to offer guidance and support.
- **Seaview Partnership** – We're continuing to work closely with Seaview to make sure people can move smoothly from their support into ESRA's services.
- **Family and Friends** – Together with ADFAM we've launched a new monthly drop-in group to support family members and friends of those in recovery.
- **Veteran Support** – We've had a strong partnership with the East Sussex Veterans Hub for eight years. Recently, we've been running some of our group sessions in their space, giving more opportunities for veterans to connect with ESRA.
- **Hospital Link** – We are looking to develop a new partnership with the hospital, helping us reach people after they've had a detox, offering support to take their next steps in recovery.
- **Community Connections** – We're also working with HVA and RVA to strengthen local networks, and with Sussex Outreach Support (SOS), joining them at community events in Etchingam and Battle.

Hastings in Stitches – Celebrating Local Voluntary Organisations

We were delighted to be part of Hastings in Stitches, a community art project creating a large wall tapestry to celebrate the fantastic voluntary organisations in Hastings.

ESRA's contribution to the tapestry was brought to life by one of our clients, working alongside textile artist Claire Buckley. Together, they produced a beautiful piece that represents our work supporting people in recovery and their families. It was a creative and rewarding process, and a wonderful example of how art can bring people together.

The finished tapestry was unveiled at Hastings Museum in a special ceremony attended by the Deputy Lieutenant of Sussex and the Mayor of Hastings. The event shone a spotlight on the dedication and hard work of local voluntary organisations, and we were proud to stand alongside so many others who make a positive difference in our community.

You can now see the Hastings in Stitches tapestry on display at Hastings Museum – it's well worth a visit to admire the creativity and stories woven into each panel.



ESRA's New Family and Friends Drop-In at the Community Information Hub

Every second Wednesday,
1-2.30pm at the
Hastings Community
Information Hub,
Hastings Town Hall,
Queens Road, TN34 1QR

8th October 1.00-2.30pm
12th November 1.00-2.30pm
10th December 1.00-2.30pm



This month, East Sussex Recovery Alliance held its first pilot Family and Friends drop-in session at the Community Information Hub. The session was aimed at those who support a loved one living with substance misuse, offering a safe space to talk, share experiences, and explore what support might be most helpful in the future.

We were joined by family and friends members who spoke openly about the challenges of caring for someone they love, as well as the impact it can have on their own wellbeing. Together, we discussed practical coping strategies, the importance of self-care, and how peer support can help people feel less alone in their journey.

One idea that came out of the session was to set up a regular monthly peer support group, where people could continue these conversations, share advice, and offer encouragement to each other. Another possibility is developing a more structured Family and Friends course, based on the SMART approach, to give participants tools and techniques to help navigate the challenges they face while maintaining their own wellbeing.

Following on from this positive first session, ESRA will be running a monthly Family and Friends drop-in group, offering a safe and open space where everyone can speak freely, feel listened to, and connect with others who are going through similar challenges.

Building Connections in the Rural Communities

Recently, ESRA joined community events at Etchingham Train Station and Battle Abbey Green to raise awareness of our services and to invite people to our Friends and Family support event.

Both events brought together a range of local organisations, including Rother Voluntary Action, One You and Sussex Outreach Support, with special thanks to Sarah Jacques from Sussex Outreach Support for organising them. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet people face to face, share what we do, and learn more about what's happening locally.

Being visible in the heart of the community helps us build trust and strengthen our local connections, so we can reach more people who might benefit from our services.

We look forward to continuing to work alongside our community partners and to building on our friends and family support event.



NATIONAL LOTTERY AWARDS FOR ALL



A Heartfelt Thank you

ESRA would like to share their gratitude to the organisations whose generosity is helping us continue our work in the community.

We are especially thankful for recent funding from Southern Water, Awards for All, and Lloyds Foundation, whose support will help us maintain and develop our services for people on their recovery journey.

We would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support of our other funders whose continued commitment enables us to offer a welcoming, safe space where people can connect, build confidence and motivation and find the help they need.

Together, we are making a real impact in the lives of many across East Sussex. **From all of us at ESRA – thank you.**