

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



ESSEX
RECOVERY
FOUNDATION

CONTENTS

Page 3
Page 4 – 6
Page 7
Page 8 – 10
Pages 11 – 17
Pages 18 – 24
Pages 25 – 31
Pages 32 – 36
Page 37
Page 38

Glossary of terms
Needs assessment
Foreword
Our vision and mission
Growing the recovery community
Empowering people and their ideas
Influencing life-changing services
Changing perceptions
Summary
Connect with us



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

RECOVERY

A process of change through which individuals stop using substances and fulfil their potential.

RECOVERY COMMUNITY

People in recovery or working towards recovery, their friends and family, and those who work with people in active addiction and recovery.

COMMISSIONING

The process of assessing needs, planning, prioritising, purchasing and monitoring services, to get the best outcomes.

LIVED EXPERIENCE

People who have experienced addiction and recovery in their lives.

SERVICES

Organisations delivering drug and alcohol treatment and support services.

WORKFORCE

People working within the services.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Essex Recovery Foundation partnered with TONIC to carry out a drug and alcohol needs assessment in Essex and you can read the full report [here](#). The assessment aims to inform future planning and decisions.

Here are some key findings which provide some context around how this has shaped our strategic direction. Our recovery community has been at the heart of this process, both in terms of doing the needs assessment and creating this strategic framework.

WE ASKED PEOPLE TO DESCRIBE THEIR
EXPERIENCE OF TREATMENT IN THREE WORDS:

"Inaccessible"

"Confusing"

"Inspiring"

"Hidden away"

"Life-saving"

"Non-judgemental"

WHAT THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY TOLD US:



“You can’t do meaningful work with people when you are just a sausage factory churning out paperwork all the time. Services are very under resourced.”



“The support I did receive in Harlow I felt were of little use and provided by people who had zero experience of addiction and little of life.”




“My recovery feels fragile. I spend most of my days alone. It would be nice if there was somewhere to go.”



“I’ll be honest, I’m a social worker, and I was lost in all this. If I couldn’t get him help, what about people who don’t have anybody?”

WE IDENTIFIED THESE AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:



Develop **clear and consistent pathways** to support people through treatment and promote a **visible recovery community**

Expand recovery offer and increase **community involvement**



Enhance opportunities for people in recovery to gain **employment or work experience**



Invest in **staff recruitment and retention** to improve capacity and quality



Public health campaigns on drugs and alcohol



FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

"This strategic framework marks both the end and the beginning of a long journey. The Essex Recovery Foundation endeavour itself is the brainchild of Ben Hughes, Head of Wellbeing & Health at Essex County Council, and the framework you see here is the end result of countless hours involving far too many volunteers, agencies and kindhearted folk to mention over more than 5 years. Distilled into this plan of action by the intelligence and hard work of Laurence Hickmott, Sally Mulyders and Jo Horgan.

The essence of The Essex Recovery Foundation is a simple one. Give the power to shape and commission drug and alcohol services to the people who use them and in the process build a lively recovery community that de-stigmatises addiction. Too often when 'service user' feedback is requested we tend to ask them to come into our world, talk our language and then make assumptions on too small a sample size. With all the good intentions in the world of course but it is not the most fertile ground for nurturing a community and change.

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NATHAN MARSH

CHAIR OF ESSEX RECOVERY FOUNDATION

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR



The Essex Recovery Foundation believes there is a better way that results in better outcomes for all concerned.

Addiction is a unique mental health condition that for far too long has been tainted with shame and guilt. So much so that those who suffer with it are forced to discuss their condition in the basements of churches worldwide for fear of being tainted by a stigma that would ultimately affect their life prospects and inform people's opinions of them for the worse. I should know I was that service user, I am that addict.

I was asked to write a few lines here to explain why I got involved in this thing. Such an easy request. Because it's the right thing to do.

Ultimately when all is said and done it boils down to this...having the courage to change the things we can.

NATHAN MARSH

CHAIR OF ESSEX RECOVERY FOUNDATION



ESSEX RECOVERY FOUNDATION'S VISION:

Build a visible recovery community who will use their voice to influence how services function and change perceptions of addiction and recovery.



ESSEX RECOVERY FOUNDATION'S MISSION:

The Cycle of Growth and Change has four clear, defined stages.

1. Growing the recovery community
2. Empowering people and their ideas
3. Influencing life changing services
4. Changing perceptions

THE CYCLE OF GROWTH AND CHANGE:

This is an ongoing process that will develop over the next five years.



GROWING THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY

This is the first stage of Essex Recovery Foundation's Cycle of Growth and Change.

At the centre of the cycle is the recovery community. Whether in person or online, the dedicated recovery community spaces we strive to create are safe and non-judgemental. They exist with the aim of providing opportunities for people to connect to others with shared experience.

NEXT: OUR AIMS AND OUTCOMES



GROWING THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY: OUR AIMS

1. Communicate our vision and reach more people in Essex
2. Create spaces to bring people together
3. Support people to navigate addiction and recovery services
4. Connect with partners who share our vision

AIM #1: COMMUNICATE OUR VISION AND REACH MORE PEOPLE

Through our visible recovery community, we will share our vision for a more hopeful future for people affected by drug and alcohol addiction. Our work will cover the entirety of Essex to ensure we reach those who are not in traditional recovery pathways or who are still in active addiction.

GROWING THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY



Actions

- Launch an interactive website that showcases visible recovery and makes it easier for people to find support
- Create online and offline content and campaigns to communicate our strategy
- Host diverse and non-typical events which will bring the recovery community together
- Engage partners inside and outside of addiction services who can help us to reach more people who will benefit from being part of our community.



Outcomes

- A community of people who believe in our mission
- The potential to reach more people who need to access addiction services

AIM #2: CREATE SPACES TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

People tell us that connecting with others is a crucial element of long-term recovery. To help us achieve our mission, we will create a variety of spaces to encourage the recovery community to connect with people who have shared experiences in safe environments which harness hope, creativity and joy.

GROWING THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY



Actions

- Open a range of permanent and pop-up recovery spaces across Essex
- Create online spaces e.g. social media and WhatsApp
- Develop principles for working with the community
- Remove common barriers that people experience to accessing online and in-person spaces.



Outcomes

- People feel connected to their community

AIM #3: SUPPORT PEOPLE TO NAVIGATE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY SERVICES

We will help people to access life-changing services in Essex, at whatever stage they are in their recovery.

GROWING THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY



Actions

- Launch a rebranded website and act as a first-point of contact for people seeking support
- Curate and communicate information about local addiction services and the processes involved
- By year 3, develop the Pathfinder Project to provide guidance for people needing support in their recovery journey



Outcomes

- A clearer first-point of contact to set people off on the best foot
- Confidence to access and complete treatment services

AIM #4: CONNECT WITH PARTNERS WHO SHARE OUR VISION

We believe that the recovery workforce should actively be part of the recovery community. We will work with any people, organisations, groups or services who share our goal of improving the experience of recovery in Essex.

GROWING THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY



Actions

- Host regular networking events for the service-provider workforce, encouraging a relationship-first, long-term approach to recovery.
- Work with non-commissioned partners with shared goals e.g. NHS, social workers, education
- Connect with other lived experience organisations nationally



Outcomes

- Nurture the connection between services and the recovery community
- A culture which values the importance of life-long recovery

GROWING THE COMMUNITY

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Join the community. [Register here.](#)
- Connect with us on [social media](#) and share our content
- Attend one of our events
- Visit our recovery space
- Volunteer for us

NEXT: EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS



EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS

This is the second stage of Essex Recovery Foundation's Cycle of Growth and Change.

A crucial part of our work is to develop a model which focuses on listening to the recovery community and providing a platform for people to share their experiences, opinions and ideas to help us influence positive change within drug and alcohol addiction services in Essex.

NEXT: OUR AIMS AND OUTCOMES



EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS: OUR AIMS

1. Provide a variety of ways for people to share their opinions
2. Develop a volunteering, training and employment programme
3. Equip people with the skills to speak publicly about their experiences
4. Nurture grassroots projects

AIM #1: PROVIDE A VARIETY OF WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE THEIR OPINIONS

By recognising that people have differing capacity to engage with us, we will ensure equality of opportunity to contribute to Essex Recovery Foundation's work within the community.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE & THEIR IDEAS



Actions

- Create short and long-term ways to be involved with Essex Recovery Foundation – from informal conversations at a supermarket stall, all the way to commissioning groups
- Demonstrate how people's voices have influenced decisions in a range of formats



Outcomes

- Wider outreach and more voices heard
- Seeing the change will make everybody feel valued, regardless of their level of engagement

AIM #2: DEVELOP A VOLUNTEERING, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

We will provide meaningful opportunities to help people achieve their personal aspirations, whether as a volunteer or employee.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE & THEIR IDEAS



Actions

- Communicate clear roles and responsibilities for volunteers and create an induction package to share our vision, values and mission
- Support volunteers in their roles and deliver relevant training
- Develop pathways to employment



Outcomes

- People feel a sense of purpose and an opportunity to give back to their community
- People gain transferable skills which can lead to employment
- People with lived experience being employed within recovery work

AIM #3: EQUIP PEOPLE WITH THE SKILLS TO SPEAK PUBLICLY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES

As an organisation with lived experience at its core, we will amplify the voices of the recovery community and ensure they are heard

EMPOWERING PEOPLE & THEIR IDEAS



Actions

- Host speaker bootcamps and other relevant training opportunities covering tips and advice for public speaking
- Provide varied opportunities for people to educate, raise awareness and challenge perceptions of addiction



Outcomes

- Recovery is made visible
- People feel confident to talk openly about their experiences
- People gain transferrable skills which can lead to employment
- Wider understanding of addiction

AIM #4: NURTURE GRASSROOTS PROJECTS

We want recovery spaces to be led and created by the community. We will develop a clear process for people to contribute to our mission with their own ideas, projects and initiatives.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE & THEIR IDEAS



Actions

- Provide a space for conversations to happen and encourage ideas to flourish
- Connect people's ideas with those who can help to make them happen
- Explore funding opportunities for grassroots ideas
- Support start-up organisations which serve the community



Outcomes

- People gain transferable skills which can lead to employment
- People feel confident that their ideas will be supported

EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Go to our website to find out how to share your experiences with us
- Take part in surveys and research
- Submit your ideas for grassroots projects
- Attend speaker bootcamps and other training opportunities
- Attend forums as a member of Essex Recovery Foundation
- Volunteer your time to help us gather feedback

NEXT: INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES



INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES

This is the third stage of Essex Recovery Foundation's Cycle of Growth and Change.

Essex Recovery Foundation is in a unique position to influence where funding for drug and alcohol services is spent in Essex. We believe that lived experience of addiction needs to be at the heart of the commissioning process and we will ensure that the recovery community's opinions are central to the decision-making process.

NEXT: OUR AIMS AND OUTCOMES



INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES: OUR AIMS

1. Put people the recovery community at the heart of influencing life-changing services
2. Take a brave and radical approach to commissioning
3. Gather evidence for informed decision making
4. Help make Essex the best place to work in recovery

AIM #1: PUT THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES

We will use the voices and experiences of the recovery community to contribute to the ongoing improvement of drug and alcohol addiction services in Essex.

INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES



Actions

- Ensure lived experience is at the centre of any system which measures the success of drug and alcohol services
- Reward outstanding services, but also flag and address any concerns



Outcomes

- Improved services influenced by people with direct experience
- A system which is continuously listening and evolving

AIM #2: TAKE A BRAVE AND RADICAL APPROACH TO COMMISSIONING

We aim to transform the commissioning process and ensure that the recovery community influence key decisions around commissioning services, with support from Essex County Council.

INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES



Actions

- Create a new commissioning process led by the recovery community
- Be transparent about the commissioning process for addiction services
- Award contracts based on evidence and community support
- Ensure that all involved feel confident and empowered to participate in the commissioning processes



Outcomes

- Clear and transparent processes
- Revolutionised commissioning of services
- Influence national government decisions surrounding drug and alcohol addiction
- Essex to be recognised for innovation

AIM #3: GATHER EVIDENCE FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

In order to assess the effectiveness of services, we will create a system where we can record feedback from people with lived experience and use it as evidence to influence change.

INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES



Actions

- Engage an external company as a neutral agency to gather, store and interpret data safely
- Train and support a team of Recovery Champions who help to gather feedback
- Set up a recovery community forum and listen to the voices of people affected by addiction
- Share relevant information in an effective way to positively influence decisions surrounding services and funding



Outcomes

- The community's voices will have a direct impact on services

AIM #4: HELP MAKE ESSEX THE BEST PLACE TO WORK IN RECOVERY

Essex Recovery Foundation will work with our partners to create a workforce that are proud to work within addiction and recovery in Essex.

INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES



Actions

- Identify expertise and celebrate best practice within the recovery workforce
- Review areas for development and address them by coordinating training opportunities
- Support people in recovery to join the workforce
- Provide opportunities for the workforce to be part of the recovery community



Outcomes

- Happy staff who are proud to be part of the recovery community in Essex
- Consistently high standards across services

INFLUENCING LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Go to our website to find out how to share your experiences with us
- Take part in surveys and research
- Become a Recovery Champion
- Join the Recovery Advisory Committee

NEXT: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS



CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

This is the fourth stage of Essex Recovery Foundation's Cycle of Growth and Change.

In order to achieve true societal change, we will challenge and change people's perceptions of addiction and make recovery everybody's responsibility. Through our work at Essex Recovery Foundation, we will create a movement where people in Essex are proud to understand addiction and support recovery.

NEXT: OUR AIMS AND OUTCOMES



CHANGING PERCEPTIONS: OUR AIMS

1. Educate the wider community about recovery
2. Be visible and celebrated within our community

AIM #1: EDUCATE THE WIDER COMMUNITY ABOUT RECOVERY

We will promote compassion towards addiction and improve society's awareness and understanding of recovery.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS



Actions

- Create an educational toolkit to help others support people affected by addiction
- Deliver awareness workshops across the county and train people with lived experience to lead them



Outcomes

- People have practical tools to champion information/awareness
- More people will be able to recognise signs of addiction and feel confident when signposting
- Myths and misconceptions are challenged, further reducing stigma

AIM #2: BE VISIBLE AND CELEBRATED WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

Through our recovery spaces and beyond, we will make recovery visible and an integral part of the Essex community.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS



Actions

- Launch our website as a one-stop shop for support in recovery
- Develop a powerful campaign that shares lived experience and promotes visible recovery to new audiences
- Welcome people in to recovery spaces across Essex with positive activities for all to engage in
- Host stands at supermarkets, festivals and events



Outcomes

- Recovery is visible and human
- A sense of pride about recovery
- Awareness about services
- People with lived-experience at the centre of communications

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Talk about Essex Recovery Foundation
- Learn about addiction
- Attend one of our training courses
- Visit our spaces
- Get involved in our marketing campaigns



SUMMARY

Content to follow



ESSEX
RECOVERY
FOUNDATION

CONNECT WITH US

WEBSITE:

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