

# THE NEXT CHAPTER

Shared learning from Scotland's Recovery Summit 2013



“

We will open the book.  
Its pages are blank. We  
are going to put words  
on them ourselves.

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Edith Pierce

# THE NEXT CHAPTER

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Five years have passed since the launch of Scotland's national drugs strategy, The Road to Recovery, which brought a new approach to tackling drug and alcohol addiction in Scotland. The Scottish Recovery Consortium (SRC) wanted to learn more about the recovery journey that the country has undertaken since 2008 and what possibilities the next five years could hold for recovery from addiction in Scotland.

We asked people to reflect on their experience of recovery in Scotland over the past five years and 135 people responded. Their collective thoughts are held in The Story So Far, a report that was created specifically to inform discussion at Scotland's second national recovery summit which was held in October 2013.

The SRC hosted this gathering where over 300 people drawn from all aspects of the recovery community came together to acknowledge the achievements of the past 5 years and share dreams and expectations for the future.

This report has been created to collate the insight that we have gained from all those who came together at the Recovery Summit to contribute to our shared vision of the future of recovery from addiction in Scotland. It is intended as a companion piece to The Story so Far and to be read as a summary of all those involved in the recovery community's shared vision of the future.



The Recovery Summit 2013

# 1. THE RECOVERY SUMMIT

The Recovery Summit took place at the Arches in Glasgow on Friday 18 October 2013. A total of 404 people registered their interest in the event and 306 attended from 30 ADP areas in Scotland. The programme for the day featured a range of speakers, conversation café style dialogue tables, a healing room where people were able to access a range of free holistic therapies and a studio room that hosted a programme of fellowship and mutual aid meetings. The event was staffed by a team of volunteers in Team Consortium t-shirts, all of whom have either graduated from an SRC Recovery College or attended café host training with the organisation.



Kuladharini closes the Recovery Summit 2013



Conversation Café table

**A breakdown of those in attendance at the Recovery Summit is as below:**

- 38%** people in recovery
- 38%** ADP/Treatment providers
- 15%** Neither of the above
- 9%** Did not answer the question

We note that those who identify as 'people in recovery' and those who identify as 'ADP/ Treatment provider' both held 38% of the Recovery Summit's total audience (306 people). The SRC is encouraged to see equal representation of the recovery community and ADP/ Treatment providers at the second national recovery summit in Scotland. We believe that this suggests willingness to work together to progress recovery from addiction in Scotland which can only be viewed as positive.

The SRC would like to thank everyone that generously gave their time to support and contribute to the Recovery Summit.

## 2. THE RECOVERY SUMMIT MAIN ARENA: CONNECT, SHARE, LEARN AND INSPIRE

The conversation café style main arena focussed on dialogue tables where each person had the opportunity to share, learn and connect with a different perspective. The main stage presentations acted as seeds to nurture conversations and stimulate new thinking. This process was initiated through dialogue questions that were raised over the course of the day. Two of the questions were:

What are you contributing right now to recovery?

What are we noticing and learning about building recovery?

**A small selection of themes that arose from the dialogue tables are:**



### **SRC comments**

Questions posed in conversation café do not have a correct answer, but themes often emerge. One of the themes that emerged at the Recovery Summit was that recovery in Scotland has become a nationwide movement. The SRC believes this to be true and that the movement has in one sense only just begun, and in another it has always been present. This movement has been built largely by people in recovery with a culture of respect for the lived experience of recovery at its heart.

# 3. RECOVERY COMMITMENTS

This year the SRC has closed every event by asking those present to make a recovery commitment, which is an action pledged by an individual on behalf of recovery in Scotland.

**We received 187 commitments at the Recovery Summit and a selection of these is recorded below.**

“To keep talking about recovery.”

“Put a bit back in my community.”

“Continue to develop recovery potential with treatment providers and ensure recovery view is heard within those services.”

“Help to inform parliament that while NHS, local and national governments do have a role and responsibility, recovery cannot grow without understanding that it is people in recovery who are the experts.”

“To support the establishment of a recovery café in my area. To keep providing opportunities to help folks get connected.”

“To positively encourage people to get involved in the recovery movement.”

“I am going to challenge structures that block the possibility of recovery with respect and openness.”

“To continue to have belief in people’s ability to recover.”

## SRC comments

Social network theory suggests that the most important conversations that make change happen are the ones you have with your friends. We know that when people are stimulated, engaged and uplifted by an event they go home and share their experience. They talk to colleagues, family and friends; start whole new conversations about recovery. This is the conversation ‘walking’. We believe that the recovery commitments are a key part of that process and an important part of every SRC event.

Our experience is that by making a commitment, people for whom this action is also significant will step forward to help make that commitment a reality.

The commitments logged at the Recovery Summit were both small and sweeping in range. The SRC believes that everyone has a contribution that they can make to building recovery in Scotland no matter where they are in any system or organisation across the country.

The SRC can offer help and support to make the commitments pledged at the Recovery Summit become a reality. We can work with the organisations both locally and nationally to help embed recovery in their systems and practice. We can co-create places and events at which the recovery movement can express itself and feel its growing strength. We can make tools for treatment providers and give seed funding to recovery activists to make their own. We can help make it safer for recovery to become even more visible and vocal in Scotland. This is our commitment to recovery from addiction in Scotland.

## 4. REFLECTIONS ON THE RECOVERY SUMMIT

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The SRC invited all those who attended the Recovery Summit to contribute to a SurveyMonkey evaluation of the event. A total of 102 responses were received which equates to roughly one third of those who attended overall.

**Extracts of the feedback that we received are detailed below.**

“The experience felt life affirming, where I placed my recovery in a community of like minded others in a setting suitable for recognising that we are all people who love our lives. We want to spread the benefits of our recovery to communities and individuals all over Scotland and further afield.”

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“The message from all was fairly consistent and positive and I managed to learn more about future plans that I was able to feedback to my colleagues, both social and health care alike.”

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“I attended the presentations in the studio which for me was really valuable as I am studying different theories and models of recovery.”

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“The venue was top class and the speakers were fabulous. There was a good mix of evidence based information, what the policy makers are focused on, what’s going on in communities and an opportunity for the two to marry.”

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### **SRC comments**

The SRC believes that recovery events are culturally and attitudinally transformative when they offer a physical experience of a recovery orientated environment. We also believe that this experience should be felt personally rather than learned second hand. To truly contribute to Scotland’s recovery journey it is important to experience the differences between cultures, practices and behaviours that suppress recovery and those that cause it to flourish. Participant evaluation of the Recovery Summit would largely suggest that our theory is correct.

“Enlightening and uplifting to feel the energy and enthusiasm for recovery in Scotland that I did not know existed. Well worth the 900 mile round trip.”

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“The event was run really well and it was incredibly interesting to meet people from all over the drug and alcohol field from those in recovery to those who are passionate about recovery. I really enjoyed the atmosphere, location and of course the speakers were invigorating too.”

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“I was blown away by the energy, dynamics, solidarity and the warm, welcoming atmosphere. There was acceptance and willingness to communicate, sharing of ideas and generous open offers of help and support.”

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“Refreshing to hear senior professionals and leads of services were using the language to support long term recovery.”

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The SRC asked if people had made connections at the event that were useful in their local work.

**94.1%** of respondents said that they had made connections with people or ideas that could help in their local recovery work.

**5.9%** said no.

We also asked if the SRC should host another Recovery Walk Scotland in 2014.

**87.9%** of respondents said yes.

**5.1%** said no.

**7.1%** said that they were unsure.

### SRC comments

We also asked what the SRC can do to help support recovery work in Scotland. A total of 99 responses were received to this question and a selection are included below and overleaf:

“Keep whispering in ear shot of the Scottish Government and attempt to keep the recovery agenda in the political landscape.”

“Continue to do what you do. Connect and engage and bring everyone together with one voice.”

“I have only used one recovery model and I am only now broadening my knowledge, so bringing all models of recovery together and allowing me to learn of other people would benefit.”

“More events. Another recovery walk. Continue to show the talents, courage & energy of people in recovery. Promote recovery “skills” amongst the workforce.”

“The events hosted by the SRC have made a big difference to our organisation as they provide the perfect opportunity for the right kind of networking.”

“I will be engaging with SRC to get further support in recovery cafe training.”

**“You are already helping us with our first Conversation Cafe, the relationship will hopefully blossom from there!”**

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“I find that the emphasis is on people in further stages of recovery. This is possibly at risk of becoming exclusive. There needs to be a real drive to get people in the early stages of recovery into SRC events to see the possibilities.”

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**“Continue to engage community activity in local areas and to ensure a legacy is left.”**

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**“Help us to extend the recovery work into the farthest corners of our remote communities so that they might benefit, pick up the baton and get busy doing it for themselves.”**

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### **SRC comments**

The SRC undertook an organisational recovery journey in 2012 which resulted in a new approach to building recovery in Scotland. We are pleased and grateful to receive the feedback listed above which suggests that we are on the correct path and our contribution to recovery in Scotland is appropriate at this time.

We will continue to focus upon building the momentum of recovery in Scotland within new landscapes and in larger numbers. To those ends we can commit to hosting a Recovery Walk Scotland 2014. We will support the launch of more networks, to offering support for recovery conversation café events, to offering workforce development interventions where they are needed and to working with stakeholders to help ensure that recovery from addiction in Scotland remains on the political agenda.

# THE SCOTTISH RECOVERY CONSORTIUM: EMERGING THEMES FOR FUTURE ACTION

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The SRC's 'next chapter' will be influenced by several key themes that have emerged from our work over the past 18 months.

## **The workforce**

We know that ADP areas have seen the following results from recovery orientated work:

- The rise of people abstinent and those exiting treatment in sustained recovery working alongside paid staff to build recovery inside treatment systems.
- Independent recovery groups funded by ADPs to run their own contributions to ongoing recovery in the community outwith treatment hours.
- Recovery programmes that support choice in recovery model for both abstinent and methadone maintained recovery.
- Strong and positive relationships with mutual aid fellowships, SMART recovery and other forms of recovery support.

The SRC will continue to offer workforce development workshops to treatment providers across Scotland. We will also continue to hold local and national events to provide the opportunity for members of the workforce to connect with each other and with the recovery community at large.

## **Methadone**

The SRC believes that methadone can be a useful tool as part of a recovery journey. We also believe that we must learn from established prescribers, clinicians and people in recovery to build effective and sustainable exits from this treatment while remaining mindful that some people may wish to remain on methadone maintenance.

In 2014 the SRC will host a national shared learning event where those already building successful exits from a methadone programme and those leading alternatives will be invited to share their learning. We will also invite people who have used methadone as part of their recovery journey to share their experience.

## **Drug and alcohol deaths**

The SRC has held the 'Roses in the Clyde' ceremony shortly after the annual Drugs Deaths Statistics are released for the past two years. We know that services of remembrance have long been held by organisations that focus on supporting family members who have lost a loved one to addiction. Recovery groups and communities now also hold their own ceremonies.

We believe that mourning ceremonies give voice and a place to the painful feelings of loss. We feel every human life matters and it is important that a family does not stand alone in feeling grief. In remembering the cost of addiction, we are renewed in our energy to build recovery for those who are still alive. We will continue to mark the annual drug deaths statistics until every local community marks the loss for itself, or until drug deaths in Scotland no longer occur.

### **Visibility of recovery**

Over the past 18 months the SRC has co-created new approaches, relationships and tools that embody the conditions of mutuality, openness and willingness which are key to individual recovery journeys and agency recovery transformations alike. Connecting with the range of lived experience of recovery, from those initiating recovery in treatment to mature recovery in the community, has been another condition for recovery growth.

Scotland has vibrant and growing networks of mutual aid fellowships which have over 60 years of tradition, expertise and wisdom to build on. These traditional fellowships have been joined by newly emerging recovery community groups; people in recovery creating social, therapeutic and enterprise initiatives that contribute to re-building communities. In doing so, recovery becomes increasingly visible in local communities. The more visible examples of lived experience of recovery from addiction that can be seen, the more individuals still suffering can be inspired to get into recovery themselves. When older recovery outside of treatment connects with early recovery in treatment, both are inspired to stay in recovery and seek out their next recovery stage.

### **SRC comments**

Recognition of the difference between approaches that focus on the problems of addiction and those that build recovery solutions was a recurring theme over the past 18 months. As we continue on Scotland's road to recovery from drug and alcohol addiction, the SRC is dedicated to remaining within the solution rather than focusing upon the problem.

Our work will continue to build Scotland's recovery assets (individuals with a lived experience of personal recovery or making recovery transformations in systems). Specific details of our contributions within this area are already noted throughout this report.

We are also committed to whole population culture change and have strong belief in the power of meaningful contact between individuals and organisations with the lived experience of recovery from addiction and public life. Our public information interventions focus on the benefits that recovery brings to individuals, families, communities and the country as a whole.

This report has been created to collate and share learning from the Recovery Summit and outline the SRC's contribution to the future of Scotland's recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. We hope that the information within these pages will be useful and support people across the country to decide what their contribution might be.

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Scotland is a small country, well known for addiction issues, it's the perfect place to recover. We have so many established recovery activists, we are big enough to be diverse, we are small enough to connect; it's magic, just watch it grow.

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The Story So Far



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