

ANDREW'S JOURNEY: FROM TRUSTEE TO FATHER - A STORY OF GROWTH AND COMMUNITY

When Andrew joined Recovery Cymru, he sought to make a meaningful contribution to the local community, leveraging his arts fundraising skills to support others. What he found was a remarkable community of courage, support, and personal growth.

Joining Recovery Cymru: A Leap into the Unknown

When I joined Recovery Cymru, I wanted to make more of a contribution to the local community and, if I'm honest, I didn't know what to expect. I had worked in the arts as a fundraiser for some time when I started and, while I believe the arts has a unique role in society, I wanted to use the skills I had developed through my career to do more to help people.

The Special Community of RC

Being a part of the RC community is a very special thing. Soon after I started, I experienced the journey members had into recovery and the courage and determination

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they had shown to begin new lives. The chance for people to tell their stories is an important part of the recovery journey, but it was also a truly inspiring, and humbling, experience to sit and listen to them. If I have a regret, it's that I didn't thank them more for this. These stories and the extraordinary way people with shared experiences come together to support each other in this community means that the times I have spent with them have left me with a new, positive energy and outlook on the world. There are not many organisations where an AGM leaves you feeling this way.

Lessons Learned as a Trustee

I've also learnt a lot about being a Trustee and the challenges that come with the leadership and governance of an organisation.



Overcoming Challenges Together

The effectiveness of the way the board and leadership worked together allowed us to overcome several challenges during my time as a Trustee. For a number of years, the re-tender to deliver CAVDAS services, and its outcome required a complex approach to strategy.

We also had to navigate our way through COVID-19, ensuring people still had access to the lifeline of RC support and connections to the community when they were isolated. The pandemic, in particular, showed me the incredible dedication that RC staff and volunteers bring to their work.

As Trustees, we can do all we can to guide the organisation and try to make considered and informed decisions about its operation. Still, without talented and committed staff and volunteers we would not be able to achieve anything. They make RC such a special place and are the key to its success.

It's a board that taught me the importance of diligence and making considered decisions through being informed and working together. A level of respect and connection among the Trustees allows them to challenge each other and find solutions rather than simply agreeing to everything or arguing.

A big factor in this board culture is the time, energy and honesty Sarah, Rachel and Laura have brought to ensuring Trustees are engaged and informed. There is a mutual sense of trust between the board and leadership that, for me, is the most important aspect of governance in any organisation.

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Personal and Professional Growth

As with so many people who volunteer at RC, I have definitely changed for the better through my experience. Professionally, it has given me insight into the complexities and challenges of leadership and the effective ways a board and leadership team can work together to support each other to make good decisions.

Personally, it has made me question what I want to achieve through what I do and the things that are most important to me in my life. This led to a change in job, to work for a community development organisation, and then, when my daughter arrived, the decision to go part-time, to be around for her as she grows up.

Memorable Moments

There are lots of moments during my time at RC that I will remember but the one that comes to mind is the pride I felt in seeing our work with people in Cardiff town centre first-hand. When I look after my daughter, I am often in the centre of Cardiff during the day and there are a lot of people

who are clearly leading chaotic lives and struggling with alcohol use. It feels like they have become increasingly overlooked and their situation accepted as part of the environment in the city centre.

Tim and Callum are the only people I have seen making a connection to people in this situation by being a friend and a positive point of support. I don't think I'll ever forget seeing Callum walking over to a guy who looked completely broken and was slumped in a doorway, helping him to his feet and putting an arm around his shoulder. It epitomised everything about our peer team.

The unwavering dedication of our staff and volunteers, coupled with the collaborative spirit of our board, has shown me the true essence of community. My time here has shaped my career and life, bringing growth and gratitude. As I move on, I hold these memories close and remain forever thankful for this incredible experience.

Become our next trustee:



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