

May - June 2025

Recovery Cymru Newsletter

Where recovery meets real talk and a decent cuppa.

Read all about:

There's been no shortage of action lately, and plenty to shout about. Inside this edition:

- **Litter Legends: Our community litter pick is on the horizon**
- **Co-reflection returns: Next session set for July—come reflect and connect**
- **Matt's journey: From rock bottom to Peer Team Lead at CAVDAS**
- **Community Connections: How peer-led activities are shaping recovery in the Vale**
- **Volunteers' Week 2025: Stories, celebration, and six new volunteers**
- **The Storybook is here: Scan the code to read powerful peer stories**

Where We're At



By Sarah Vaile (Recovery Cymru Founder & Director)

This edition reflects the heart of Recovery Cymru right now—a community that shows up, supports each other, and keeps moving forward even when the path isn't clear.

We have seen stories of real change shared in our new Storybook, volunteers leading community action for the litter pick fundraiser, and people who offer peer support to others coming together in co-reflection sessions to explore what peer support really means and support one another. Our peer workforce is special and we want to protect and nourish it. We are delighted to welcome new volunteers, showing the power of volunteering in recovery and keeping our community peer-led and thriving.

At the same time, we face challenges. Funding for small charities is challenging and we all face pressures to find long term funding or fundraising partners. We, with our partners CAVDAS have also well outgrown our recovery centre and need to secure our next home! Despite these challenges, we keep going because we believe in the power of lived experience and in the people who make this place what it is. In all we do we are working hard to make sure we keep our values front and centre.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your presence, your voice, and your commitment mean everything.

Meanwhile, our 'What's Out There?' group lived up to its name with an epic Easter hunt. Hats were worn, clues were confused, and somehow we all crossed the finish line. It wasn't about being the best—it was about being together.

And in Barry, our Family and Friends group is going strong. We've also been catching up with people involved in the 'Families Supporting Families' initiative in Tonyrefail—sharing ideas and looking at how our own support might connect or collaborate down the line. Watch this space.

[illegible]

A woman with dark hair is smiling and holding up a blue t-shirt. The t-shirt features a graphic with the text "FAMILIES SUPPORTING FAMILIES" in a semi-circle above a stylized sunburst. The sunburst contains illustrations of palm trees, a hot air balloon, and a city skyline.

All of this is just a glimpse of what makes our groups tick—real talk, real people, and a recovery community that never stays still for long.



Cardiff and Vale
**Recovery &
Wellbeing College**



Co-reflection Sessions: Continuing the Conversation

After the brilliant response to our trial sessions, we're keeping the momentum going!

Our next in-person co-reflection session for anyone delivering peer support—whether you're in a volunteer, paid, or community-based role—is happening soon, and we'd love to see you there.

Tuesday 8th July 2025

10am – 12pm

**Safer Wales Young Adult Hub, 3rd Floor,
Market Chambers, 5–7 St Mary's Street,
Cardiff, CF10 1AT**

This informal, supportive session is a chance to:

- Share your experiences and challenges
- Celebrate what's working
- Reflect on the role of peer support in recovery
- Help shape the future of co-reflection across Cardiff and the Vale

Whether you're part of a service or the independent recovery community, you're welcome.

Let's keep building a strong, connected peer support workforce together.

Sign up via Eventbrite or drop us a message at info@recoverycymru.org.uk

Eventbrite:



What's coming up

Litter Legends: Showing Up for Change

On Saturday 28th June, we're heading out around the streets of Canton to make some noise, clear some rubbish, and raise some funds for something that matters—our volunteer programme.

Litter Legends is more than a litter pick. It's a way to show what recovery looks like in action. Our volunteers turn up week after week to support others. Now, we're turning up for them.

We're aiming to raise £2,000 to help cover the costs of volunteering—things like travel, training, food, essentials, and those little touches that say thank you. Every pound raised helps us keep peer support peer-led and people-powered.

You can get involved:

- Sign up to join the litter pick
- Fundraise or get sponsored
- Or donate to back our volunteers

We'll provide all the kit—you just bring your energy. Kids aged 8+ are welcome with an adult, and under-16s will need a signed consent form.

Sign up or donate via the QR code:

Eventbrite:



Let's show up for the people who always do.

TK and CR were nervous but teamed up to support our fundraiser. Big thanks to both for stepping up.



Real Stories from the Peer Workforce

Over the last few months, we've been working on something powerful: capturing what peer support really looks like through the eyes of the people delivering it.

Led by Recovery Cymru and funded by the Cardiff and Vale Area Planning Board, the Most Significant Change project set out to hear directly from the peer workforce across Cardiff and the Vale. We asked: What's the most significant change you've experienced through peer support?



22 people answered that call, sharing real, personal stories from across services, roles, and recovery journeys. From those, 10 stories were chosen to shape a published Storybook. These were shared at an in-depth peer story panel, facilitated by Nick Andrews of Swansea University, alongside people with lived experience, commissioners, service leads, and researchers. The reflections were honest, emotional and most of all, useful.

The Most Significant Change Project:

We didn't stop there. We also trialled co-reflection sessions, giving people delivering peer support a dedicated space to connect, reflect, and share what it really means to do this work.

Everything came together at our April event, The Significance of the Peer Workforce. It was a celebration and conversation space that brought peer workers, professionals, and partners into one room to listen, learn, and shift the conversation forward.

Want to read the stories?

You can now download digital copies of both the 22 stories and our full Storybook.

Scan the QR code to access them online.



A huge thank you to every single person who shared their story, attended a session, sat on the panel, or helped bring this to life. And to the Cardiff and Vale Area Planning Board, thank you for believing in this work and making it happen.

You've helped shine a light on something too often overlooked. And that matters.

Funded by

A Message from Sarah: To Our Volunteers, With Thanks



Dear volunteers,

Recovery Cymru began with one peer-led support group. Today, we're a whole community, and volunteers remain at the heart of everything we do.

You support members, each other, and the day-to-day running of our Recovery Centre. You do outreach, raise awareness, and offer something powerful: connection, hope, identity, meaning, and empowerment.

Our trustees are volunteers too—helping to guide and shape Recovery Cymru with care and integrity. And for many of you, volunteering has also been part of your own recovery. That's what makes it so special.

Volunteering isn't for everyone, but for many, it's life-changing. If you're curious, unsure, or want to know more, talk to us.

To every volunteer, past and present—thank you.

To Jude, our incredible Volunteer Coordinator, thank you.

To the staff and funders who make it all possible, thank you.

With gratitude,
Sarah 😊

Volunteers' Week 2025: A Community Built on Showing Up

This Volunteers' Week, we celebrated the people who make Recovery Cymru what it is.

We shared stories from across our community, hearing how volunteering has helped people grow, connect, and rediscover their strengths. For many, it's become a vital part of their own recovery journey.

We also gathered in Victoria Park for a brilliant celebration—great weather, great turnout, and a well-earned moment to say thank you.

We're growing, too. Six new volunteers have just finished training and started shadowing. Our first Family & Friends volunteer training, led by Owen and Jude, is officially underway.

Interested in joining us? Head to www.recoverycymru.org.uk to explore volunteering opportunities and find out what's involved.



Building Belonging and Purpose: Community Connections in Action

Ella and Olivia, Community Connections Coordinators for CAVDAS, work within a peer-led model to help people in recovery build social networks and take part in meaningful activities that support emotional wellbeing and long-term change. One of the main ways they do this is through the Community Rehabilitation Programme (CRP). This structured course is designed to help people make positive, lasting changes in their lives and strengthen their recovery.

The most recent CRP group has just wrapped up, and planning is already underway for the next programme, which will run in the Vale of Glamorgan from late July.

Community Connections activities are a key part of the CRP. From the start, participants take part in co-production sessions to decide what's important to them and where they want to focus their energy. Chosen together, the activities take place twice a week and offer space to try new things, build confidence, and connect with others in a way that supports recovery beyond the group itself.

Graduation Week brings it all together—offering a chance to reflect on the journey, celebrate what's been achieved, and look ahead to what's next.

Want to learn more?

Speak to a member of staff or visit www.cavdas.com to find out how to connect with Ella or Olivia and get involved.

A Journey to Something Beautiful



Three and a half years ago, Matt was in crisis. Alcohol had taken over his life, and he couldn't see a way forward. "Rock bottom was above me," he says.

Today, he's thriving as a Peer Team Lead at CAVDAS, using his lived experience to support others and help shape a more connected, compassionate approach to recovery.

Matt's journey into peer support began with Recovery Cymru. He started as a member, became a volunteer, and eventually stepped into leadership. Along the way, he earned a degree in Psychology and Counselling, built confidence through peer work, and found real joy in helping others grow.

Now, he leads work in hospital settings, mentors peers, and continues to champion the belief that recovery isn't just possible. It can be beautiful.

He also shared that he's been very proud to be included in our brand new Storybook, which highlights powerful stories from across the peer support community.

"For most of my life, I was role-playing. Dad, son, worker. But at 54, I've finally just become myself."

You can read Matt's full story in our Storybook at www.recoverycymru.org.uk/stories

INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR STORY?

UNDERSTAND YOUR JOURNEY BETTER -
STORYTELLING CAN BE A RECOVERY TOOL!

- HELP OTHERS IN RECOVERY
- REDUCE STIGMA
- INSPIRE OTHERS

Do you have lived experience, either your own or as a family member? Do you feel ready and able to tell your story? Recovery Cymru wants to hear from you!

We can support you to tell your story - this can be written, using photos or images, a video or audio - you decide. All stories will be treated with respect and care. You can choose to remain anonymous if you prefer.

By sharing your story, you can help break the stigma surrounding substance use and show others that recovery is possible. You'll also be giving hope to those who may be struggling and feeling alone in their journey.

Together, we can create a community of support and hope for people in and seeking recovery.

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH AND WE CAN
GIVE YOU MORE INFORMATION

07960 430096

rebeccacashman@recoverycymru.org.uk

www.recoverycymru.org.uk

#SwipeOutStigma
#PeerPowerCymru



CAVDAS PEER & RECOVERY PROGRAMMES

WHAT'S ON OFFER...

1:1 THERAPEUTIC PEER SUPPORT

- Aftercare
- Alongside treatment
- Maintaining Recovery and exiting treatment
- Face to face
- Phone/text support
- Email
- Weekly, fortnightly or monthly (as needed)



AFTERCARE & RECOVERY SUPPORT

COMMUNITY REHAB PROGRAMME

- 6-week intensive aftercare programme including groupwork, 1:1 support, therapeutic interventions and social engagement
- Preparation & Graduate programmes
- Twilight - evening course

STRUCTURED AND LESS STRUCTURED GROUPWORK

- Peer Moving on in My Recovery
- Relapse Prevention
- Peer Support Groups
- Weekend Reflection
- Others - please see website

INTRODUCTION TO RECOVERY - 'MAKING CHANGES'

- Chat and a cuppa
- Group work and socials
- 1:1 support

- Community Connections
- Volunteering
- Social activities & recovery community engagement

HOW TO REFER / JOIN US: CHOOSE THE ONE THAT'S EASIEST FOR YOU!

- Self/direct - emma.greenhill@cavdas.com / 07944851050
- Via CAVDAS Paris referral - Make a note 'For Peer Team'
- Attend CAVDAS buildings and ask for peer team
- Joint Allocation Meeting



CAVDAS Tel: 0300 300 7000

2-10 Holton Rd, Barry CF63 4HS
218 Cowbridge Rd E, Cardiff CF5 1GX
7 St. Andrews Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BE

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

INFO.VOLUNTEERS@VOL.CAVDAS.COM

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT GEMMA BROWNHILL, VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR

07483428377

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Family and Friends Peer Support Programme VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Recovery Cymru's Family and Friends programme provides a safe, confidential space for anyone affected by someone else's substance use or recovery, fostering connection and offering peer support without judgement.

Do you have lived experience of supporting someone with their alcohol and other drug use?

Do you have lived experience of recovery?

Are you interested in supporting others?

TRAINING AND SUPPORT ARE
OFFERED AT ALL STAGES

HELP US TO:

- Make others feel less alone
- Give hope, support and a safe space
- Equip people with new insights and skills

We are looking
for Volunteers
to help us
co-facilitate
groups and
advertise the
programme!

READY TO HELP OUT? GET IN TOUCH!

familyandfriends@recoverycymru.org.uk

02920 227 019 - 07944 851 050

www.recoverycymru.org.uk

Recovery Centre, 218 Cowbridge, Road East, CF5 1GX



Gwirfoddoli Cymru
Volunteering Wales

Thank you to our Funders!