



Recovery Pride

Stories from Haringey



Acknowledgements

All those who submitted their recovery stories, especially those featured in this book. Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

All the staff and service-users of Bringing Unity Back into Community (BUBIC); Haringey Drug Intervention Programme, part of Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI); Drugs Advisory Service Haringey (DASH) and the Dual Diagnosis Network (DDN), part of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust; EBAN and Insight Haringey, part of Blenheim CDP; HAGA; Sexual Health on Call (SHOC); and RISE, joint-run by HAGA and Westminster Drug Project (WDP). Congratulations to BUBIC and DASH for winning the logo and strapline competitions which features on the cover of this book and represents what recovery means to service users in Haringey.

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Change is a process

Joe's mother experienced racial hate crime for marrying a black African in the 1950s. Growing up as a child of mixed heritage without much money and with addiction all around him was difficult. He started experimenting with substances as a child. Five of his siblings became addicted to substances, including Class A drugs. Here's how things changed for Joe:

"Personal responsibility did not become a reality for me until late into my twenties. Six years of jail time made me realise this was not a future I was looking forward to and I drastically changed my course of direction. Accessing a north London drug service, and not being ashamed to do so, saved my life. I was able to get support and direction from professionals and to start putting together the pieces of twenty-five years of destruction.

Today I am a responsible and caring father with over twenty years of clean time, twelve of which have been spent working in various drug services in the North London area. I contribute to the community in Tottenham putting so much back. Helping those I know have suffered similar fates in life is the most rewarding aspect of my life today. Life is not a bed of roses. Testament to that is still having three very active users in my immediate family. So change is a process that takes time but I'm sure that when you shine in recovery the benefit to those around you is priceless and universally rewarding to all."

Recovery History X

Rhiannon* met and fell in love with Francesca in an Italian rehab centre. A few months after leaving rehab, Rhiannon and Francesca decided to move to London and live together there. On their second night in London, Rhiannon had a heroin overdose. The couple started methadone treatment but were still unemployed, ripping people off to get by and Rhiannon was drinking heavily. Rhiannon twice went to hospital for an alcohol detox but drank again as soon as she was discharged. The couple were still using on top and Rhiannon was experiencing a great deal of physical and psychological pain. Rehoused in two rooms of a hostel (far from the crack house), the couple were elated, hoping that things would get better but nothing changed except for the faces of the dealers, the off-licence owners and the pharmacist dispensing their methadone. Rhiannon is in and out of hospital so much by now that the ward nurses know her by name. Rhiannon feared that she would die. In early November, Rhiannon felt something change:

“With my hands and feet swollen like eggplants and drinking an unbelievable amount, I collapse on a bed of the detoxification clinic, Equinox, where I have been admitted thanks to my key-worker at DASH (Drugs Advisory Service Haringey). For me, this is the start of the umpteenth, painful, ferocious detoxification but also my last hope.

After filling in my medical chart and the customary greetings that I do not remember, I spent the first week throwing up, not eating, neither sleeping nor awake, stuffing myself with benzos ... I remember the stream of faces, like masks from the “Commedia dell’Arte,” bits of sentences: “You must eat!” “Let’s go downstairs with the guys!” “No thanks, I need benzos” “Now will come the nurse” “Close the door please” ... and I close my eyes. The second week (which seemed more like two months), I start going downstairs into the common area, eating something, taking part in some groups, surfing the web but because I speak little English and badly, I don’t bond to anybody. Having no interest in making friends, I am on the edge of the group. When I talk to Francesca on the phone, I feel so happy that more than one time I would like to cry. Every time it’s harder and more difficult, every time it’s tougher, time for recovery dilates and I fear that this time it is too late. I wander as a ghost, I can’t have peace, a prisoner of my self ... My only source of salvation is my love.

It’s the day waited for so long and Francesca is allowed to come visit me. I spend with her idyllic hours cuddling and kissing, and when at the end she has to leave, something in me breaks, something in me is about to be born. I am dancing with Death but between my teeth I have a flower that’s Life.

I decrease benzodiazepines and increase the methadone, then, because the time is short, I start decreasing the methadone very, very fast. I feel completely stoned, between sleeping and being awake, there is no more alcohol in my system, benzos are terminated

and the methadone is getting less and less ... I feel confused and bewildered. Meanwhile, Francesca gets so bad herself that she can barely talk on the phone. It’s the end of the third week and I fear now for my love also. I spend the fourth and last week being very nervous, having arguments with everybody, decreasing the last bit of methadone, cursing myself and finally, after more than twenty years, crying. In about twenty-five days, I came off alcohol, heroin, and crack, and in the last fifteen days, eighty-five millilitres of methadone. I feel stressed and pulled as a rope.

Francesca comes to pick me up: she looks wasted and she is very slim. I can read the concern in her eyes, reminding me of all our past defeats but she is as sweet as always. I feel a great deal of responsibility towards her, who has done so much for me and has gone through so much pain. In the following days, we clean up the rooms (which were a real mess) and I give her the strength that I found in myself in the last month to stay clean and abstinent from everything. She agrees to take only her methadone without using on top. The days go by and we stay abstinent ... we make love, and stay abstinent.

It’s been three months now, our problems are many, such as unemployment and lack of money, but our urine samples are always negative, and my attitude is now positive! I don’t drink anymore. As the time passes, we understand that to be abstinent is not enough: we feel the urgency of doing something more, other things, to feel alive and enjoy our lives. We are two valuable, clever and sensitive people happy to enjoy small things, such as a clean and tidy room, a hot shower, a good book, a walk in the park, and a song we like played on the radio. I don’t feel I am late anymore and I live today to make tomorrow possible... we make love! **In the darkness of my life, a dim light shows itself from a distance ... maybe it’s the dawn?** I forgot it is so beautiful.”

I have a future, I have options, I have a life!

Kathy's* mother had serious alcohol issues and her three brother were prolific heroin users. Kathy and her sisters were different, they went to school and work. As Kathy got older, she started drinking more and more. A promotion at work and long hours meant Kathy found herself drinking alone after work, frequently missing work and eventually losing her job. She moved back home and regularly verbally abused her family and blacked out. In the morning, she would awake full of remorse and worried that her family's patience would wear thin. One day, she met up with an old friend and they fell in love. She soon started to abuse her boyfriend and wracked with guilt tried to commit suicide. She decided to seek help with her drinking ...

"I went to my doctor who put me in touch with the local alcohol support group, HAGA. They helped me to see that I could get better, if i really wanted to. I did two home detoxes but I soon drank again on both occasions. I had to make a big decision. I agreed to go to rehab for a period of six months. It is the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. I was away from my family and my boyfriend for what seemed like forever. I cried all the time and I never intended to actually stay in rehab for the full six months. I learnt some very hard home truths. I fought, I screamed, I cried and I stropped but eventually I actually started to listen in groups. Things started to make sense and I realised that only I could change my life. I did it! I completed six months. It was hard. It was worth it. I have been dry for nine months now. I go to peer support groups at RISE, Haringey's specialist employment, training, education and aftercare service and I've made some good friends. My boyfriend and I are still very much in love and are planning to get engaged soon. We want to start a family. I recently did the Intuitive Recovery course and for me it made a lot of sense. It has opened lots of doors in my mind and has given me the tools, through a very simple message, to close many doors too. **Life is not perfect for me, I doubt it ever will be, but life is good.** I have a future, I have options, I have a life!"

Rhyme of Recovery

The Hounds of Hell were at my door and dragged me off each day,
To drink into oblivion and chase bad thoughts away,
The hounds, of course, were in my head,
Monsters of my making,
Feasting on my troubled soul, fear-battered, hurt and quaking.

I turned my back on most good things I'd built up in my life,
The trust, the love and hope for me that had been in my wife,
I sabotaged each faltering chance to step up to the mark,
But anguished desperation won and dragged me into dark.

In past, I had attempted to address my flailing heart,
But short-lived goes at taking hold fell wayside-by apart,
The episodes got longer and sobriety fell short,
And then I lost complete control and ended up in court.

This could have been a chance for me, a kind of wake-up call,
But hounds and monsters spoke so loud and further did I fall,
And so the months went by and by with nothing well addressed,
The lies, deceit and debt went on and nothing was confessed.

I felt just like the picture in the tale of Dorian Gray,
Where evil acts went on unseen, the portrait did decay.
In final weeks, I fell so far and fast into the rotten,
And then I realised I'd reached a point I call rock-bottom.

Out of home and on my own, I started a new course,
The course of my recovery, a new and guiding force.
I've learned to count my blessings now, met some who share my shame,
And slowly as a group we talk, without a sense of blame.

I've learned that childhood trauma and my hiding from emotion,
Have been the reason that I chose to drink in such commotion,
We look at reasons why we act in ways that cause us harm,
For me, anxiety is bad, no sense of peace or calm.

The journey that I'm taking now feels positive, but tough,
Depression, feelings left untouched, can leave you feeling rough.
I'm only just beginning here to find new ways to be,
Through lots of talking as a group and loads of CBT.

If I can only get through this, come out the other end,
The rest of life can be so much with greener fields to tend.
No one knows the future here or pretends that this they know,
But if I change behaviour now, then fresh seeds I can sow.

It was no fun to be a mess, and all the stress that brings,
But when I walk, I'll walk from here with a whole new set of strings,
I've gone from feeling that in life I really just can't cope,
To knowing that **above all things, in life there's always hope.**

My Journey to Recovery

Terence* started using crack cocaine experimentally as a teenager a couple of times a year. Growing up in an African country tormented by civil war and with on-going strikes, there wasn't much else to do. His experimentation with hash, cannabis and LSD increased at university to such an extent that he couldn't pay his rent and was forced to sell his things to pay for it. A year working as an artist saw his crack use decrease but a new job on an oil rig working on rotation saw it increase again. When on shore living with his parents, Terence spent all his salary on drugs and his use had soon tripled. Thinking that having more responsibilities would help, Terence moved in with his girlfriend but the relationship broke down and Terence lost his job. He sold everything in the house and was soon sleeping in an empty flat on the floor. He had no other option but to move back to his parents' house. He stole money from his mother's wallet and got stabbed in the leg by a dealer. Having moved to Portugal a few years later, a close scrape with death led Terence to make a change ...

"I was still using, as I was now a web designer working as a freelancer and so always had the bucks, and also had a few rich friends that would always pay for drugs or lend me money. My use increased to 2 to 3 grams per day. I remember one day a friend of mine locked the door, so that I wouldn't go out and buy crack. I was so desperate that I climbed one floor down on the outer part of the balcony outside of the window up on the sixth floor. It would have been a deadly fall. Luckily I made it and went running down the stairs to get my fix. It was then that I knew that I would never get off the hook unless I made a great decision. I knew that I was imprisoned in someone else's desires because I wasn't enjoying it at all and was full of regrets. So I decided to come to England and give it a try by starting from nothing.

When I arrived here, I knew that that was it. I had already given up the old life inside my head. I engaged with DASH (Drugs Advisory Service Haringey) for approximately six months during which time I also attended the Intuitive Recovery course. I was profoundly affected by what I learnt as I had now regained control of my life and all my decisions. It's good to be back and being trustworthy again is a great treasure worth fighting for. I signed up with a gym and started training on a daily basis and that helped me a lot too.

I was invited to engage with Kinesis (now RISE, Haringey's specialist employment, training, education and aftercare service) as I was showing signs of stability. Then I started working as a volunteer graphic designer and events organiser at Tottenham Chances Club. During this time, I was studying Web Programming via the Internet, which led to sponsorship to do a Web Programming course at London College. I completed the course with success and have since been doing some other voluntary works related to web development and a few paid jobs as a freelancer. I'm rebuilding my life and it's quite an easy journey when the drugs are out of the way. I haven't had any relapses or lapses and have been abstinent for two years now. I have not gone for this long without using since 1996 when I first started. It feels so good to have full control of myself and my actions again, to establish aims and to reach them by taking full responsibility and commitment in whatever I do, and, **most important of all, knowing that this is the life that I've chosen."**

My recovery starts like this...

Sam* had a brilliant childhood until one day when she was eighteen, she heard through the grapevine that her Dad was not her biological father. Shortly after, Sam fell pregnant and had a little boy. A few years later, she suffered from a nervous breakdown and her family took over the care for her son. Sam came to London where she met a man and began smoking heroin with him. One day, her boyfriend was arrested and Sam, alone in his flat, experienced withdrawal for the first time and realised that she was now addicted. Her habit led her into twenty years of sex work—during which time she was raped three times in one week—and six years living on the streets. Then one day ...

“I was begging outside a train station and an Outreach Worker approached me, introduced himself and told me all about what he does. Well, he kept coming back and seeing me every week for a whole year until I learnt to trust him. One afternoon, I saw him and he asked me if I was ready to stop living the life I was living and I just turned around and said “Yes!”

He took me to a bed and breakfast and paid for me to stay there for the weekend. He came back the next day and took me to DASH (Drugs Advisory Service Haringey) and that's where my life began. I walked out of there drinking 50 mls of methadone, went back to the B&B and threw away all my drug paraphernalia and dealers' numbers. I carried on going back to DASH until I went up to 93 mls, which is the amount that finally held me. I couldn't believe it. I hadn't had heroin for a whole week and I was finally starting to lead a normal life. I had a really good drugs worker. She helped me with my problems, big or small. She was there all the time. I was in the B&B for about two months before I moved into a hostel. After four months, I was moved into a women's hostel where I stayed for about a year and didn't have one relapse. Then my drugs worker asked me if I would go to SHOC (Sexual Health on Call) which was a centre for women only, and I went along and really enjoyed myself. I moved into my own room in a shared house and as I looked back, I realised that I was NORMAL. I've been off heroin for two years. I'm still on methadone but I'm reducing. I'm on 70 mls and am going down 5 mls every month. I still go to SHOC twice a week and see my drugs worker once a fortnight but **I'm living a happy DRUG-FREE LIFE."**

Keep it real

Theo* shares how faith, walking and diet have supported his recovery:

To tell you the truth, my recovery has, and is, a spiritual belief. The only way I get through my days is by my belief that God can give me strength and is guiding me along to help me overcome my obstacles and cravings that become so severe at times. I go for four mile walks most mornings to clear my mind and to help my mental health. I find myself praying a lot along my journey and the fear of God keeps me.

My freedom means so much to me and **I've learned to be kind to and respect myself and others around me** by always correcting where I sometimes go wrong. Self-discipline is the key to what I struggle with sometimes. I've been clean for four years and the things I have found vital are a good amount of sleep, exercise, eating mainly vegetarian food and making your surroundings tidy and clean. Also when I feel the four walls are getting too much and I find myself getting claustrophobic and I need to talk, it's good to have a good counsellor like my former key-worker and, if that's not enough, you can be like me and lean on God to help you through that period in time that you feel so difficult. And, when that period passes, you can honestly say to yourself I'm trying to do what is right for me and for those around me.

The rest will fall into place

Marcus* had a father who ruled with an iron fist (literally). This left Marcus “not knowing who I was or what I was, I felt that I was just this blank piece of paper that everyone wrote on and I became what was written about me. He took all my identity and left me naked.” Anger directed at his father became anger directed against the world. Marcus began to drink his father’s alcohol at the age of five or six. His father would tease him for not being able to handle his drink and Marcus started drinking more to prove he could. Marcus discovered cannabis when he was twelve and loved the buzz, the new friends and the new way of life. He started shoplifting, fighting and burgling houses: “anything to get attention and to vent [his] anger.” Marcus started experimenting with other drugs and aged seventeen tried heroin. He loved the euphoric feeling of being “Superman” and felt invincible. He still held a job down as a fabric-cutter and aged eighteen, he got married and had a daughter. When the marriage broke down, Marcus’s drug use escalated. Another relationship gave Marcus a second child, this time a son, but this relationship ended after seven years. Having lost his job, Marcus started shoplifting again and got deeper into the drugs world. One day, something changed:

“I woke up and sensed that there was something missing. I felt empty and cold, lost and confused, I felt alone. I was bouncing off brick walls in a dilemma, lost in a world of confusion and turmoil. I needed help and didn’t know where to get it, and, in my days, there really wasn’t any. Even the police couldn’t help, they used to say that it was a family dispute. But I kept on searching, looking for that salvation. I tried to stop using but this always ended in failure. I battled with my demons for fifteen years, losing every single fight. I started to think that I was the drugs and they needed me to survive. Me and the drugs were one and the same, I thought I would never stop, that it would be the end of me.

On the 14th November 2007, I lost my brother Robert* at 47. He died from an alcohol-related epileptic fit. He lay in a vegetative state for the last twenty-two months. It hit me hard and I lost control. I was staying with my son’s mum as I was homeless at the time when I got the bad news. I left the flat in a state of shock and anger. Where I went and what I did, I don’t remember. I came back with an oz. of heroin and ½ oz. of crack. I locked myself in my son’s room, where I was sleeping, and didn’t come out for days. I didn’t eat or drink.

When I finally appeared, I was a mess. I looked like a zombie, thin and gaunt. I was in a delirious state of mind and I just wanted the world to stop, so that I could get off. I was so numb and brain dead that I couldn’t cry. The only thing I felt was the pain inside tearing at my chest wanting to break out, just like in the film Aliens.

My brother’s death was a wake-up call, the kick up the arse. I had to do something about my problem. I was with DASH (Drugs Advisory Service Haringey) for about eighteen months by this time and they were scripting me for methadone. Five months after my brother’s death, I decided to ask for help. When my key-worker asked me to choose between a

set of keys or a ticket, I chose the ticket and I was soon on my way.

I was sent to rehab for three months for the second time and found that it was not for me and I was gone after six weeks. Coming out of rehab, I was put in a ‘safe house’ with four other people where we had staff monitoring us. It was luxury, well decorated and comfortable. I found peace of mind and it gave me the chance to think about where I was going from here.

My life changed. From here on, I started going to N.A (Narcotics Anonymous), Aftercare, Kinesis (now RISE, Haringey’s employment, training, education and aftercare service) and BUBIC (Bringing Unity Back into Community), and did anything to keep away from the lifestyle I had before. **It hasn’t been an easy road but no one promised me a rose garden and I didn’t expect one.** I have faced many hurdles since and came through them. There were times when I thought that my life would always be the same, problematic, but somehow there was this feeling that there still was hope for me yet.

After a year, I stopped going to N.A, Aftercare and Kinesis. My time was up. I stayed on at BUBIC, who have played a major role in my life. They have given me the ability to understand myself and what I want from life and what I want to do with it. I have now come to accept the lifestyle I led and put that behind me. I still have a long way to go and still have many issues to deal with but now I feel stronger and able to face what life can throw at me. I have calmed down and am not so angry and I don’t fly into a rage any more. At least I have lost the urge to use those substances that made my life unmanageable and the rest will fall into place in time.”

Logo

Haringey's drug and alcohol services and commissioners wanted to work with local service-users to create a logo and strapline which represents the experiences of local people in recovery and could be used to support service-user involvement. We hoped that this would promote the possibility of recovery to people affected by drug and alcohol issues and breakdown the stigma at large in the local community.

We went out to service-user forums, drop-ins and groups, and consulted with thirty-two service-users from all eight drug and alcohol services. The sessions were lively, funny and moving with service-users sharing their personal experiences and coming up with lots of creative and inspiring ideas.

The winning logo and strapline were chosen by Barnet Service-User Group (BSUG) and the Haringey Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT). The service-users at Bringing Unity Back into Community (BUBIC) spoke about how using drugs was like putting on a mask and how coming off drugs felt like "unmasking yourself." This idea caught the imagination of judges as a great way of capturing the experience of rediscovering yourself and your values once substance use is controlled or ends. Drugs Advisory Service Haringey (DASH) service-users devised the winning strapline—Be the change you want to see—as a motivational statement for people at any stage of treatment or recovery. BUBIC and DASH won £350 each for their winning ideas.



Recovery Pride Charter

Haringey drug and alcohol services have pledged their on-going commitment to supporting service-users in their recovery by working within the Recovery Charter:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We will acknowledge recovery and make it visible by:

- Helping service-users see their own strengths, assets and talents
- Encouraging service-users to be bold and loud about the changes they have achieved
- Holding regular celebratory recovery events for service-users, staff, family and friends
- Inviting those at every stage of recovery to speak at events or training
- Communicating stories of success in recovery in a range of ways

VOICE

We will ensure that service-users' voices and views are heard by:

- Recognising that service-users are experts by experience
- Offering opportunities for service-users to become part of our teams through peer mentoring or volunteering
- Ensuring service-users are inputting into service development and delivery and that they see results
- Working together with other local and national service-user groups to spread the word about recovery and to reduce stigma

CREATIVITY

We will foster and support creative and constructive ideas for promoting recovery and reducing stigma by:

- Acknowledging that all ideas are seeds for an opportunity
- Making time to talk
- Offering lots of different ways for service-users to communicate ideas or feedback
- Making sure service-user's recovery-focused ideas or changes happen

PARTNERSHIP

We recognise that building recovery is not something we can do alone and will work in partnership with other agencies to deliver it by:

- Treating service-users as partners in recovery
- Being proactive in getting other professionals involved
- Fighting for our service-users' right to equality and dignity
- Working collaboratively on recovery-focused projects with other agencies
- Ensuring that there are opportunities for service-users to work collaboratively across agencies
- Ensuring that service-users can access mainstream services and opportunities in employment, training and education

Useful Links

Haringey Drug and Alcohol Services

Haringey has a range of free and confidential services designed to support those affected by drug and alcohol use. For information about local drug and alcohol services, visit the Haringey Drug and Alcohol Action Team's (DAAT) pages of the Haringey Council website and download the service directory:

www.haringey.gov.uk/crime_reduction/drugs-alcohol#services

Intuitive Recovery

Intuitive Recovery is SELF RECOVERY delivered within the UK drug and alcohol system specifically designed to teach the key skills of self-recovery: making the decision to stop and staying stopped. Register with their website to access their online forum:

www.intuitiverecovery.com

SMART Recovery (Self Management and Recovery Training)

is open to anyone wishing to understand, change and overcome their addictive urges and behaviours. SMART Recovery groups aim to help individuals seeking abstinence from addictive behaviours to gain independence, achieve recovery and lead meaningful and satisfying lives. Local SMART Recovery groups are available across London.

www.smartrecovery.org.uk

Speak to your key-worker about how to access SMART Recovery and Intuitive Recovery groups locally.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

provide groups for alcohol users wishing to stay abstinent with regular meetings held in Haringey. Call 0845 769 7555 between 10am and 10pm any day of the week to find out where your local group is held, email help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk or visit their website:

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)

provide groups for cocaine users wishing to stay abstinent with regular meetings across London. Call 0800 612 022 between 10am and 10pm any day of the week, email help@cauk.org.uk or access an online forum via their website:

www.cauk.org.uk

Families Anonymous (FA)

provide groups for family members and friends affected by someone else's drug and/or alcohol use with regular meetings across London. Call 0845 1200 660 between 1pm to 4pm and 6pm to 10pm and at weekends from 2pm to 10pm, or access an online forum via their website:

www.famanon.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

provide groups for drug users wishing to stay abstinent with regular meetings across London. Call 0300 999 1212 at any time 24 hours a day to find out where your nearest group is held or access an online forum via their website:

www.ukna.org

Wheels of Recovery

is a service-user led group of people in recovery who meet to enjoy getting fit for life through cycling, gym workouts and other fitness-based activities. Wheels is part of the service-user led activity at HAGA, 590 Seven Sisters Road, London, N15 6HR and is open to service-users from any drug service in the borough. Call 020 8800 6999 to find out more.

www.haga.co.uk/Wheels_of_Recovery.htm

Wired In To Recovery

provides information and tools that help people better understand and use the options they have to overcome the problems caused by their own, or a loved one's, substance use. The website includes online forums, articles, and people's recovery stories.

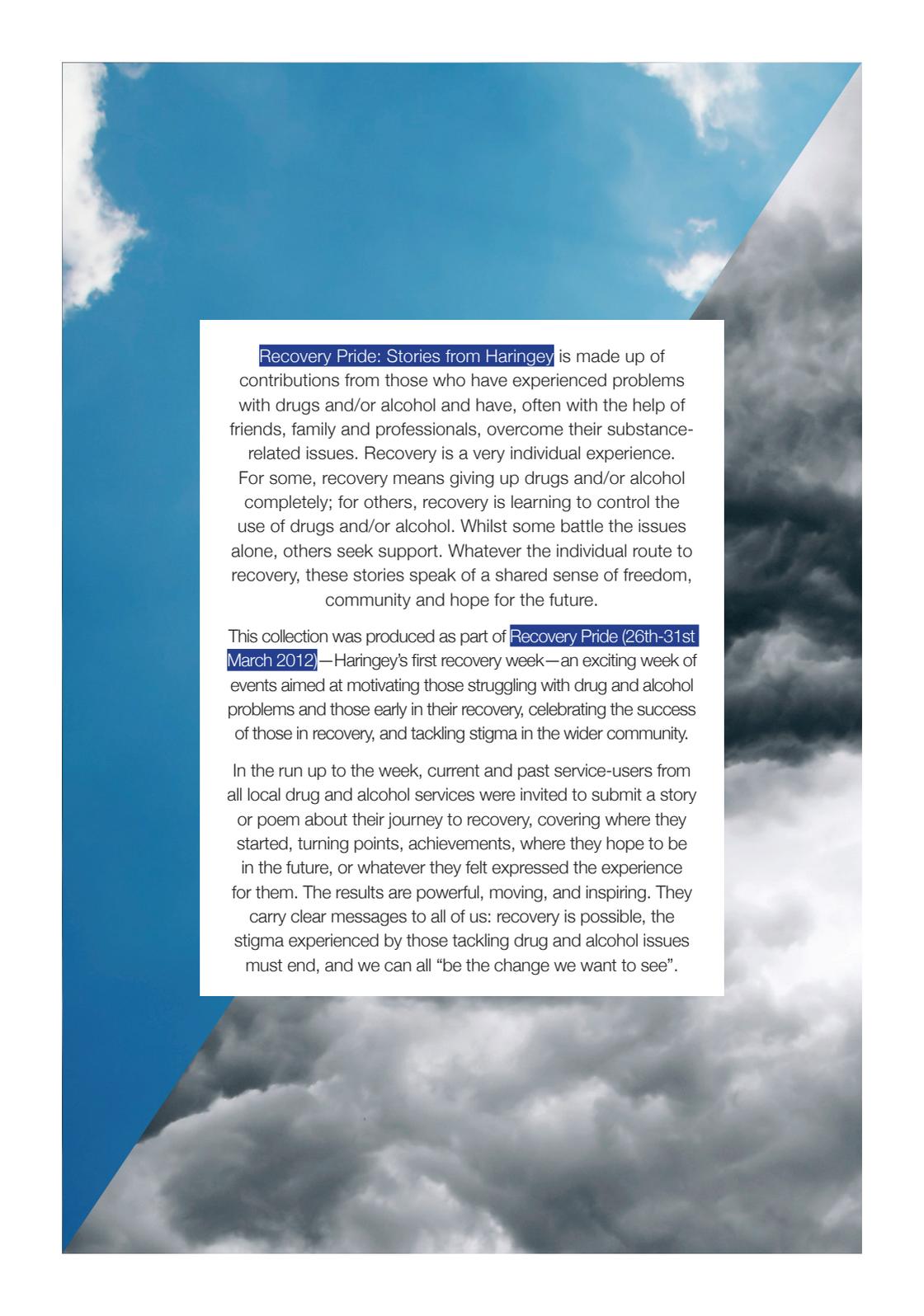
www.wiredintorecovery.org

Your Recovery Story - Your Past

Inspired by other local people's recovery stories? What about your own story? Whatever stage you are at addressing your drug and/or alcohol use, writing down your own story of the past, present and the future that you hope for, can help. You might choose to share this with your key-worker, family or friends, or keep it as your own personal record. We've left some space on the following pages for you to start writing your recovery story.

Your Recovery Story - How Things Changed

Your Recovery Story - Your Present & Future



[Recovery Pride: Stories from Haringey](#) is made up of contributions from those who have experienced problems with drugs and/or alcohol and have, often with the help of friends, family and professionals, overcome their substance-related issues. Recovery is a very individual experience. For some, recovery means giving up drugs and/or alcohol completely; for others, recovery is learning to control the use of drugs and/or alcohol. Whilst some battle the issues alone, others seek support. Whatever the individual route to recovery, these stories speak of a shared sense of freedom, community and hope for the future.

This collection was produced as part of [Recovery Pride \(26th-31st March 2012\)](#)—Haringey's first recovery week—an exciting week of events aimed at motivating those struggling with drug and alcohol problems and those early in their recovery, celebrating the success of those in recovery, and tackling stigma in the wider community.

In the run up to the week, current and past service-users from all local drug and alcohol services were invited to submit a story or poem about their journey to recovery, covering where they started, turning points, achievements, where they hope to be in the future, or whatever they felt expressed the experience for them. The results are powerful, moving, and inspiring. They carry clear messages to all of us: recovery is possible, the stigma experienced by those tackling drug and alcohol issues must end, and we can all “be the change we want to see”.