

# The UK Recovery Declaration of Rights



**FACES AND VOICES OF RECOVERY UK** spent a year travelling through England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, holding consultations with many varied groups. Those in treatment, Harm Reduction and Mutual Aid communities, professionals and families, people who currently and formerly used substances; together we created this Declaration of Rights.

In response to funding restrictions and increasing drug related deaths we feel a need to step forward and to make our voices heard. Our collective hope is that this Declaration of Rights will galvanise all concerned, and contribute to improving the lives and health of those with Substance Use Disorder.

To add your organisation or name to the Declaration of Rights please email: [annemarie@facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org](mailto:annemarie@facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org)

## FREE FROM STIGMA

We have the right to be **free from the social stigma** imposed upon us, which we experience within the healthcare system and wider community, fuelled by media stereotypes and a lack of understanding of the root causes of addiction.

Stigma attached to substance use disorder makes it harder to seek help and to recover. We call for a **public awareness campaign** on stigma reduction for those of us with substance use disorder, as has been successfully seen with mental health.

## ACCESS TO CARE

We have the right to fully resourced, **easily accessible effective and specialist care**; entry into which is non-punitive and non-discriminatory.

Assertive outreach, out-of-hours support and provision of family-friendly and culturally appropriate services, will increase engagement and outcomes.

## INFORMED CHOICE

We have the right to be given clear, objective and up to date information on all evidence-based pathways; their advantages and disadvantages and suitability for us as autonomous competent individuals at different stages of our recovery and with differing lifestyles and needs. The **principle of informed choice and consent** empowers us to participate fully in our own health and care.

## QUALITY OF CARE

We have the right to investment in the **highest standards of effective, and specialist care**, delivered by a fully trained and competent workforce. We have the right to individualised, patient-centred care. We call for collaborative and integrated physical, mental and social healthcare pathways which are associated with better cost effectiveness and improved outcomes. Best practice treatment, consistency of care, a non-punitive approach and to be treated with respect are vital to our recovery.

## PRISON

We have the right to **health and recovery within the criminal justice system**; to have the same access to quality specialist care and informed choice of pathways as in the community. Continuity of care prior to and on leaving the criminal justice system is an essential part of our recovery.

## POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

We have a right to **meaningful political representation**. People with Substance Use Disorder and their families are a constituency of consequence, deserving of support, commitment to positive change and accountability from our elected representatives. We invite policy-makers to work together with us to actively promote the removal of all barriers to treatment, educational, housing and employment opportunities.

## FAMILIES

We have the right for our families to be recognised as stakeholders in our recovery journey, and to be involved in our path where appropriate.

**Families, including children, also need independent professional support in their own right.**

## AFTERCARE

We have the right to access a comprehensive range of aftercare options so that we may nurture our recovery, lessen the chance of relapse and maintain a healthy and fulfilling life. The ongoing building of connections and recovery capital are important to our survival and wellbeing, and enable us to transition from **dependence to independence**.

## SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT

We have the right as individuals with lived experience to inform the development, delivery and review of policies and services that affect us. Barriers to effective service user involvement must be addressed. Putting the **service user perspective** at the heart of the decision-making process has been shown to enhance the quality of healthcare, improve patient satisfaction, working relationships and outcomes.

## HUMAN RIGHT TO HEALTH

We have the right to health. 'The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition. When people are marginalised or face stigma or discrimination, their physical and mental health suffers. **Discrimination in healthcare is unacceptable** and is a major barrier to development.'

**World Health Organisation**

Now endorsed by 104 organisations across the UK: • Abbeycare • Adfam • Alcohol Concern • Alcohol Research UK • APPG • Blenheim • Bridge • Camurus • CGL • CSARS Group • Disc • DrugFAM, • DrugWise • Drugs, Alcohol and Justice Cross-Party Parliamentary Group • Federation of Drug & Alcohol Practitioners • The Hepatitis Trust • Indivior • Lancashire User Forum • The National Association for Children of Alcoholics • National Needle Exchange Forum • Reach Advocacy • Recovery Cymru • Recovery Connections • Red Rose Recovery • Scottish Drugs Forum • Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs • Scottish Recovery Consortium • SMMGP.

Visit our website [www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org) and see who else has endorsed the UK Recovery Declaration of Rights.