



12TH-13TH SEPTEMBER 2025

UK RECOVERY WALK WOLVERHAMPTON 2025

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL





Annemarie Ward

CEO, Faces & Voices of Recovery UK

WELCOME TO THE UK RECOVERY WALK 2025 IN WOLVERHAMPTON!

It is a profound honour to welcome you all to this year's Recovery Walk, hosted here in the heart of Wolverhampton. This is more than just a walk it is a public declaration of hope, resilience, and the power of community.

Every year, our Recovery Walk reminds the world that recovery is not only possible but thriving. We come together individuals in recovery, families, allies, and professionals to celebrate lives reclaimed from addiction and to honour the memory of those we have lost.

Wolverhampton, with its rich culture and strong recovery community, is the perfect backdrop for this year's walk. Over the past year we have faced many challenges, but as always, the recovery community has risen to meet them with courage and determination. Together, we continue to break stigma, demand better access to treatment and recovery services, and inspire those still struggling to believe that change is possible.

At FAVOR UK, our work is rooted in lived experience, advocacy, and the belief that everyone deserves access to the resources they need to heal and rebuild. Today, as you walk through the streets of this proud city, know that you are part of a movement that is saving lives, changing perceptions, and transforming communities.

Let us walk with pride and with love for ourselves, for those still struggling, and for the generations to come. Thank you for being here, and thank you for being part of this journey.

Annemarie Ward

CEO, Faces & Voices of Recovery UK

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL



**Mayor of Wolverhampton,
Councillor Craig Collingswood**

WELCOME TO WOLVERHAMPTON

"We are immensely proud to be the host city for the 2025 UK Recovery Walk.

"It provides an opportunity for people and partners across Wolverhampton to showcase our city's commitment to promoting health and wellbeing, and our city's commitment to supporting those on their recovery journey.

"Our successful bid was led by our friends at The Good Shepherd and Wolverhampton Voluntary and Community Action's Service User Involvement Team (SUIT), in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council and Recovery Near You, and we are determined to deliver a brilliant event which will live long in the memory of all of those who take part.

"We very much look forward to welcoming you to our vibrant city, and hope you enjoy admiring many of our landmarks, including the striking statue of Lady Wulfruna outside St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, famed for its Pop Art collection, the statue of Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert in Queen Square and Molineux Stadium, the home of Wolverhampton Wanderers.

"Ultimately, though, the Recovery Walk is an opportunity for us all to come together, as one, to celebrate recovery, resilience and hope, with our families, friends, and the wider community."



Image of the Wolverhampton Recovery Walk Partnership

It is with immense excitement, gratitude, and pride that we can say, for the first time ever, the FAVOR UK National Recovery Walk will be held in the Black Country (#Recoveryaywe!). Together the Wolverhampton Recovery Walk Partnership led by Good Shepherd, SUIT, Recovery Near You (RNY), and the City of Wolverhampton Council, have brought the walk to Wolverhampton for two days of celebration.

Winning the bid to host this national event was only possible with the support of our community. At one point the streets were covered with flyers to “Vote Wolverhampton”, our socials were flooded with support, and we received thousands of votes to eventually win. Because of this support we can welcome the UK’s recovery movement to Wolverhampton this September.

As a partnership we have a shared vision of promoting healthier, safer communities in Wolverhampton. By bringing this national event to our city we hope to challenge stigma and showcase local recovery. So, whether you are just setting out on your recovery journey, are supporting a loved one, championing recovery in our city, or just want to celebrate with us, please join us on Saturday 13th September at West Park.

HISTORY OF FAVOR UK AND RECOVERY WALKS

Faces & Voices of Recovery UK (FAVOR UK) was founded to give a voice to people in recovery, their families, and allies — to show the world that recovery is not only possible but alive and thriving across the UK.

Since 2009, the UK Recovery Walk has been the largest gathering of its kind in Europe. Every year, thousands walk through the streets of a different host city to celebrate recovery, remember those we have lost, and call for better access to treatment and support.

From Glasgow to Cardiff, Blackpool to London, and now Wolverhampton, each walk is a testament to the courage and strength of our recovery community. Together, we are breaking stigma and inspiring others to believe that they too can recover.



Image from UK Recovery Walk in Manchester



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

FAVOR UK is a national advocacy charity led by and for people in recovery. Our mission is simple: to make recovery visible, to demand better services and choices, and to challenge the stigma and silence surrounding addiction, we:

- Advocate for a Right to Recovery for everyone struggling with addiction
- Campaign for better access to treatment, including detox, rehab, and community support
- Celebrate recovery through events, education, and media campaigns
- Provide a platform for lived experience voices to shape policy and practice
- Challenge discriminatory narratives about addiction and recovery
- We believe that everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, deserves the chance to recover and live a full, meaningful life.

OUR AIMS

At FAVOR UK, our core aims are to:

- Make recovery visible and celebrated in every community
- Empower people in recovery to take part in the decisions that affect their lives
- Educate the public and policymakers about the reality and potential of recovery
- Ensure equitable access to a full range of treatment options, including abstinence-based pathways
- Honour the lives lost to addiction by fighting to save others

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SPONSORS & FUNDERS

We are deeply grateful to all our sponsors, funders, and supporters who make the UK Recovery Walk possible. Your generosity and belief in the power of recovery enable us to continue this vital work. Special thanks to:

- Our host city, Wolverhampton City Council, for welcoming us and supporting this year's walk
- Our national and local sponsors, without whom this event simply would not happen
- All the partner organisations, volunteers, and individuals who have contributed their time, energy, and resources to make this day a success
- Your support sends a powerful message: that recovery is not just possible it is worth celebrating.

CITY OF
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COUNCIL



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



CHRIS'S STORY

Growing up in a chaotic household marked by domestic and physical violence, Chris ran away from home as a child, left school in Year 7 and entered the care system. This led him to meet other children like him; without boundaries. By his early teens, Chris was involved in drugs, crime, and the criminal justice system. He went to prison a couple of times and unexpectedly, prison offered a sense of structure and safety that was absent from his home life.

Despite early brushes with the law, Chris's substance use escalated. Initially experimenting with alcohol and party drugs, he eventually became addicted to heroin and crack cocaine. Around the age of 17 or 18, he was homeless and heavily dependent, manipulating treatment systems to sustain his addiction. He recalls sleeping in greenhouses and sheds or wandering the streets at night with nowhere to go.

Chris's turning point came through his engagement with support services and his eventual recovery. Today, he leads the LEAP (Lived Experience into Action Project) a Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO) at the Good Shepherd. This initiative empowers individuals with lived experience to support others facing similar challenges. Chris's openness about his past is central to his work—he believes that his experiences, however painful, have uniquely equipped him to help others.



“MY STORY IS A DIFFICULT ONE AND A CHALLENGING ONE, BUT IT IS NOT SOMETHING I AM ASHAMED OF. I AM AN OPEN BOOK, AND EVERYTHING I HAVE BEEN THROUGH AND EXPERIENCED HAS LED ME INTO THE JOB THAT I AM DOING TODAY. “

His story is a powerful testament to the importance of second chances and the transformative impact of compassion, support, and lived experience. Chris's journey from addiction and homelessness to leadership and advocacy underscores the value of peer-led support in social care and rehabilitation. Through LEAP, he not only gives back but also inspires hope, showing that recovery is possible and that lived experience can be a powerful tool for change.

Read Chris's story in his words at:
www.gsmwolverhampton.org.uk/stories/chris-story-a-second-chance/

Good Shepherd

www.gsmwolverhampton.org.uk

Email: office@gsmwolverhampton.org.uk

JASONS'S STORY

My name is Jason Spreckley, and I am Outreach Project Lead for SUIT, Wolverhampton's Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO). For over 12 years I have been part of the SUIT team, working on the structured volunteer programme and supporting the clinical treatment team at Recovery Near You. My work now includes planning with our Cultural Engagement team, alongside our Punjabi & Polish-Speaking Project Workers, delivering outreach & community events, client home visits, and pastoral support for staff & volunteers across our service.

I was a service user, who progressed to be a volunteer, and when the opportunity to volunteer opened for me, to use my lived experience of addiction, so many barriers came down. I've been accepted as who I am, was encouraged to learn in a positive environment, and I was given motivation, support, and skills that teach you to be in control and think for yourself. Before that, I experienced first-hand the stigma and feeling of negative self-image that comes with addiction. I hated seeing people. Especially as I lost so much weight. I would wear two jumpers, so I didn't look so skinny. Then I would put overalls on top – I wouldn't take off my jumper because I knew people would notice that smell. As a young man of 24 or 5 I looked awful, so ill. Unrecognisable. Really embedded in the addiction.



“UNTIL YOU BECOME INSPIRED BY SOMEONE ELSE, THE CHANGE CAN'T HAPPEN. WE MUST SEE IT THROUGH OUR OWN EYES.”

But my drug use was always influenced by others. I started listening to support workers in recovery and they taught me how to decision make and turned me into who I am now; someone with goals and direction. I am living testament that sharing knowledge and experience to find strength in recovery really does work. My aim is to help as many people as possible in reaching their recovery goals.

Service User Involvement Team (SUIT)
suitrecoverywolverhampton.com
Email: suit@wvca.org.uk



SARAH'S STORY

Hi my name's Sarah, I'm going to give a brief overview of my lived experience. 10 years ago, I experienced multiple traumas.

My mother was alcohol dependant and sadly lost her life 10 years ago. I started to drink, and this became more often, even though my mother had passed away due to alcohol, my knowledge around alcohol awareness was very limited. Alongside this, I had a decline in my mental health.

I began self-neglecting and was also in debt/arrears, 'I LOST MY HOME' I had been referred to Recovery Near You (RNY), which I never followed through, this led to hospital admissions, two detoxes which were incomplete.

I became excluded and gave up! My day consisted of drinking and repeating this cycle for over a year, with some abstinence but this never lasted.

I was bed bound and unable to walk, this gave me a wake-up call, I knew I had to change, I completed a detox and accepted support and became alcohol free.

This was challenging, I had to find ways to cope, I was introduced to service user involvement team, I started to spend a lot of time at SUIT.



"I AM PROUD OF MY JOURNEY, AND I AM PROUD TO SHARE THIS, AND I HOPE THIS CAN EMPOWER OTHERS!"

I then became a SUIT volunteer progressing to senior Volunteer for two years, I then gained employment with RNY as a support worker, during this I set myself a challenge to write the 'female empowerment programme' 3 years on this is still running.

After 2 years, I applied for a practitioner role, I now work as a Criminal Justice Practitioner, this allows me to continue working with complex females/males. 7 years on, I am proud of my journey. To be continued...

Recovery Near You
www.recoverynearyou.org.uk

I CAN'T, WE CAN – COMMUNITY AND UNITY IN ADDICTION RECOVERY

FRIDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2025

HAYWARD SUITE, MOLINEUX STADIUM, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV1 4QR

9.30: Annemarie Ward, CEO, Faces and Voices Of Recovery UK:
Opening

9:30 AM
START

9.35: The Rt Hon. Pat McFadden is the Labour MP for
Wolverhampton South East: **Welcome**

9.50: Dr Ed Day, Clinical Reader in Addiction Psychiatry
(University of Birmingham) & UK Recovery Champion: **Keynote
Speech – social networks and communities in addiction
recovery**

10.30: Marcus Johnson, Warren Sutherland, Kiran Kaur &
Christiane Jenkins: **Service User Involvement Team (SUIT)**

11.00: Expert by experience: **Brian**

11.15: Dr Jane Booth, Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Social
Policy (University of Wolverhampton): **How Research
Partnerships between Universities and Community
Organisations could enhance Social Action**

11:45 AM
COFFEE BREAK

12.15: Expert by experience: **Steve**

12.30: Sabrina Ellis, Mental Health and Wellbeing Specialist,
NICS Wellbeing: **I Can't Carry This Alone - But We Can Rise
Together**

1.00: Navraj Dhesi, founder, No More pretending: **Recovery
and Culture**

1:30 PM
LUNCH

2.30: Tom Hayden, Chief Executive, & Chris Cole, Service
Manager: **Good Shepherd, Wolverhampton**

3.00: Dr Amanda Roberts, Professor of Psychology and Sarah
Burtenshaw (University of Lincoln): **From Struggle to Strength:
Assessing the Power of Recovery Coaching in the UK**

3.30: Expert by experience: **Bill**

3.45: Alan Jarvis, head of Services: **Base 25**

4:30 PM
CLOSE

4.15: Q&A

UK RECOVERY WALK 2025

Spiritual Service

THIS IS A SERVICE TO CELEBRATE ALL JOURNEYS OF RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION AND ALSO TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE DIED THROUGH ADDICTION. THE SERVICE IS OPEN TO PEOPLE OF ANY FAITH, OR NONE.

12TH SEPTEMBER

6-7PM

PLEASE BE SEATED BY 6PM
FOR A PROMPT START

ST. PETER'S COLLEGIATE CHURCH, LICH GATES,
WOLVERHAMPTON WV1 1TY



THE 2025 UK RECOVERY WALK

WOLVERHAMPTON

A two-mile public parade, starting and ending at West Park via Southgate entrance, with an adapted shorter route for those with physical mobility difficulties of no more than 1 mile, meeting point for the adapted route will be outside of St Peters Church on the Piazza.

The full two-mile walk will commence at 12:00hrs from West Park, with those wishing to participate in the adapted route scheduled to leave the designated meeting point at approximately 12:15hrs. The walk route taking in local landmarks, including the striking statue of Lady Wulfruna outside St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, famed for its Pop Art collection, the statue of Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert in Queen Square and Molineux Stadium, the home of Wolverhampton Wanderers.



RECOVERY VILLAGE, WEST PARK

A festival-style celebration, known as the 'Recovery Village situated at West Park, 1-5pm. The village will host an outdoor stage area, with a selection of live artists and bands. Family fun activities including fun fairs and inflatables, along with wide ranging food vendors will also be available. *Expect performances from:*

Hit the Dhol: Asian Dhol Drumming from Antonio Jhalli and the collective.

Emma Smallman, Drum & Bounce: Emma's fitness classes are the perfect mix of high energy drum & bass tunes and aerobic exercise. An interactive, fun, accessible, and dynamic fitness experience.

Fallen Angel Dance Theatre: FADT are the only company in the UK providing exceptional dance theatre experiences for people in recovery from addiction.

Detox Factor: The Detox Factor are recovering addicts using creativity to build a sense of unity and inspire others on their journey to sobriety. With their motto "Inspire the addict who still suffers," the group is dedicated to showing the world that recovery can be a fun, fulfilling and creative experience.

Geese Theatre: The Geese specialise in the use of theatre and drama in criminal justice and social welfare settings. They deliver bespoke projects, performances and training, having a lasting impact on participants.

Wendy Dossett: A writer and poet who captures, processes and understands intense experiences.

Saida Chowdhury: A local poet and human rights advocate, Saida has been writing poetry for over 20 years.



ART IN RECOVERY

The Good Shepherd art group (partnered with SUIT) has been an integral part of the Good Shepherd's mission to create safe welcoming spaces and inspiring opportunities for our service users. For the last four years our weekly sessions have been based at the wonderful Wolverhampton Arts Centre in G5 studio.

Over the years we have exhibited at multiple venues across the city but perhaps our greatest coup was being awarded Arts Council England funding in 2024. We ran workshops with Wolverhampton emerging artists from January to September and held a large scale multi-disciplinary exhibition for Recovery Month at Wolverhampton Arts Centre with over two hundred guests attending the exhibition launch.

After the success of that project, we have been further awarded three years of Arts Council England (ACE) funding to coincide with Wolverhampton hosting the National Recovery Walk. The three-year Recovery Project is our most ambitious project yet and has already begun with ACE funded workshops running over the Summer Holidays with children, families and young people as well as the Good Shepherd art group.



From 5 September, we're partnering with Rethink Mental Illness at the new Mental Health Hub in Wolverhampton train station to host a Recovery Month exhibition.

The launch event takes place on Friday 5 September, 12–2pm, with the exhibition open Monday to Friday, 12–2pm until the end of October. On Saturday 13 September, the Hub will open 10.30am–12pm to welcome guests arriving for the national Recovery Walk.

A pop-up art exhibition will also be part of the Recovery Village at West Park bandstand. Thanks to ACE funding, we will be running creative workshops at the Recovery Village from 1-4.30pm. All are welcome and we look forward to seeing you and celebrating our recovery community and the role the arts play in inspiring recovery journeys.



Artwork by Sally Rowley - Good Shepherd Art Group

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need a ticket?

No ticket is required. This is a free, non-ticketed event open to all.

Is there an age limit?

All ages are welcome. It's a family-friendly event designed to celebrate recovery together.

Is the walk accessible for all abilities?

Yes. There are two walking routes:

- A 2-mile main route starting at 12pm from West Park, Southgate entrance.
- An adapted shorter route (approx. 1 mile) for those with mobility difficulties, starting at 12:15pm from St Peter's Church Piazza

What are the timings of the day?

- Walk Start: 12pm (main route), 12:15pm (adapted route)
- Recovery Village: Open from 1pm to 5pm

Where is the Recovery Walk Village in the park?

The Recovery Village will be located within West Park, featuring a festival-style setup with an outdoor stage, live music, food vendors, and family activities. Check out the floor maps to specific things within the village.

Will there be food and water available?

Yes. A variety of food vendors will be present offering refreshments. Attendees are also encouraged to bring their own water bottles

Are there any prohibited items?

Please note this is an alcohol free event. Other prohibited items include illegal substances, weapons, fireworks, glass bottles or other items that could disrupt the family-friendly nature of the event. Bag checks will be in place.

Are dogs allowed at the event?

Dogs are generally welcome in West Park, but it's recommended they be kept on leads and that owners clean up after them. Please consider the crowd and noise levels when deciding to bring pets.

Is there a children's area?

Yes. The Recovery Village will include family fun activities such as inflatables and fun fairs, making it a great day out for children

Will there be stewards at the event?

Yes. Event stewards and volunteers will be present throughout the walk and village to assist with directions, safety, and general support

What if I get injured or lose someone I am attending with?

- First Aid: On-site medical support will be available.
- Lost Persons: A designated help point will be set up in the Recovery Village for lost persons and general assistance.
- It's recommended to agree on a meeting point with your group in case you get separated.

Is parking available?

Parking is available near West Park. Use postcode WV1 4PH for directions. Public transport is also recommended due to expected crowds. Faulkland Street will be the designated car park for coaches.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will there be seating available?

Picnic benches are located in the Recovery Village but seating is limited. Attendees may bring foldable chairs or picnic blankets.

What is the purpose of the Recovery Walk?

The walk celebrates recovery from addiction and mental health challenges, raises awareness, and promotes hope, connection, and community support.

Can I bring banners or signs?

Yes, banners and signs that promote recovery, hope, and positivity are welcome. Please avoid anything offensive or political.

Is there public transport nearby?

Yes. Wolverhampton has good public transport links. The nearest train station is Wolverhampton Station, and several bus routes serve West Park. Attendees are encouraged to use public transport where possible.

Is there a dress code?

There's no formal dress code, but attendees are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing and walking shoes. Recovery-themed t-shirts and wearing purple - the colour of recovery!

Can I bring my own food and drink?

Yes, you can bring your own food and non-alcoholic drinks. Please dispose of litter responsibly.

Will there be toilets available?

Yes, portable toilets and existing park facilities will be available, including accessible toilets.

Is photography or filming allowed?

Photography and filming may take place during the event for promotional purposes. If you prefer not to be photographed, please speak to a steward.

Will there be information stalls or services?

Yes. The Recovery Village will host information stalls from local services, charities, and support groups related to recovery, mental health, and wellbeing.

What time are the mutual aid meetings?

1.30 - Families Anonymous
2.15 - Al-Anon
3.00 - Alcoholics Anonymous
3.45 - Cocaine Anonymous

Can I donate or support the event financially?

Yes. Donations to support recovery initiatives are welcome.

What happens if it rains?

The event will go ahead rain or shine, so please check the weather forecast and dress appropriately. Some covered areas may be available.

Will the event be filmed or photographed?

Yes. Please be aware that photography and video recording will be taking place during this event and maybe used in promotional material. If you have any concerns or would prefer not to be photographed or filmed, please speak to a member of the event team.



UK RECOVERY WALK 2026

BRADFORD

More details coming soon...

Image from UK Recovery Walk in Manchester