

Groups Who Have Made a Difference 2014 Winners ~ County Durham Recovery Ambassadors

County Durham Recovery Ambassadors is a group that helps people who are addicted to alcohol, drugs and gambling. They do this by offering support and guidance to people who are suffering from addiction. The group also promotes the prevention, recognition and treatment associated with use and misuse of substances.

The group is the first of its kind in the North East and has influenced the strategic direction of the organisation. The ambassador programme is being rolled internally with marketing taking place externally.

County Durham Recovery Ambassadors was set up in 2013 to provide a peer led support group for people experiencing or recovering from substance misuse. The group is made up of individuals who once misused substances but are now clean and are endeavouring to help other people who are trying to make the journey. The group was set up to show people that change is possible and life in recovery is extremely positive.

The accredited programme is designed to prepare individuals with the skills to work within adult social care and covers 6 units over 60 hours of guided learning;

- Understanding drug use and the treatment journey
- Understanding and managing challenging behaviour
- Motivational Interviewing and Relapse Prevention
- Using Effective Communication Skills
- Understanding Emotional Intelligence
- Understanding and Applying Professional Boundaries



County Durham Recovery Ambassador representative, winners of Groups Who Have Made a Difference, with Zoe Phillips, Middlesbrough College, category sponsor



equality north east

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There are currently 10 trained ambassadors working for NECA. The group is very diverse and shows that addiction can affect anyone. Current ambassadors include a veteran, dual diagnosis, senior person, professional and a person with a disability. One trainee ambassador is a family member who can provide support for families in the future.

The group members provide visible recovery within treatment services. They advise staff about mutual aid and do joint visits / appointments with staff. They visit local prisons to talk to prisoners before release about recovery services in the community and to show visible recovery; they support individuals to make steps towards abstinence and speak to community groups about recovery and how to get help. They tell their stories publicly to educate and inform and encourage others to take the path to Recovery.

Recently they were recognised for their contribution working with the critical pathways team by Durham Police. POP (Problem Orientated Partnerships) awards and were awarded £250

Following the completion of a 12 week training course. Each member of the group is now a qualified level 2 NECA volunteer. This gives them the confidence to continue on to achieve other qualifications and get their lives back on track.

As a result of the work that County Durham Recovery Ambassadors does, two of the members have been able to find employment and are employed by NECA. A further programme of recovery development and peer support is currently being established and will be rolled out across the organisation to insure inclusion going forward.

50% of the original group have secured paid employment; 100% of the group have secured voluntary positions and are now providing peer support for people in the criminal justice or treatment system, many of whom they have known in their "former lives".

For more information about the North East Equality Awards, please visit our website, www.equality-ne.co.uk/awards or contact Equality North East on 0191 426 4399 or email info@equality-ne.co.uk.

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