



EWA

European's Welfare Association

Recovery Project

July 2025 - June 2026

Funded by: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council



The Recovery Project

The original proposal was to deliver a holistic recovery programme for people affected by alcohol misuse within the Polish and Eastern European community in Sandwell. The project aimed to provide individual counselling, social integration activities, wellbeing sessions, and community outreach to reduce isolation, improve emotional wellbeing, build confidence, and support participants to maintain recovery.

During delivery, we adapted the project to reflect participants' health needs, mobility limitations, and readiness to engage. Alcohol misuse remains highly stigmatised within the community, and mental health difficulties are often viewed as taboo. As a result, many participants were initially reluctant to take part in group activities or openly discuss their experiences.

To overcome these barriers, we adopted a flexible and participant-led approach, with greater emphasis on one-to-one therapeutic support, trust-building, low-pressure social activities, wellbeing interventions, and accessible excursions. This enabled participants to engage at their own pace, gradually build confidence, reduce isolation, and access support in a safe, culturally sensitive, and non-judgemental environment





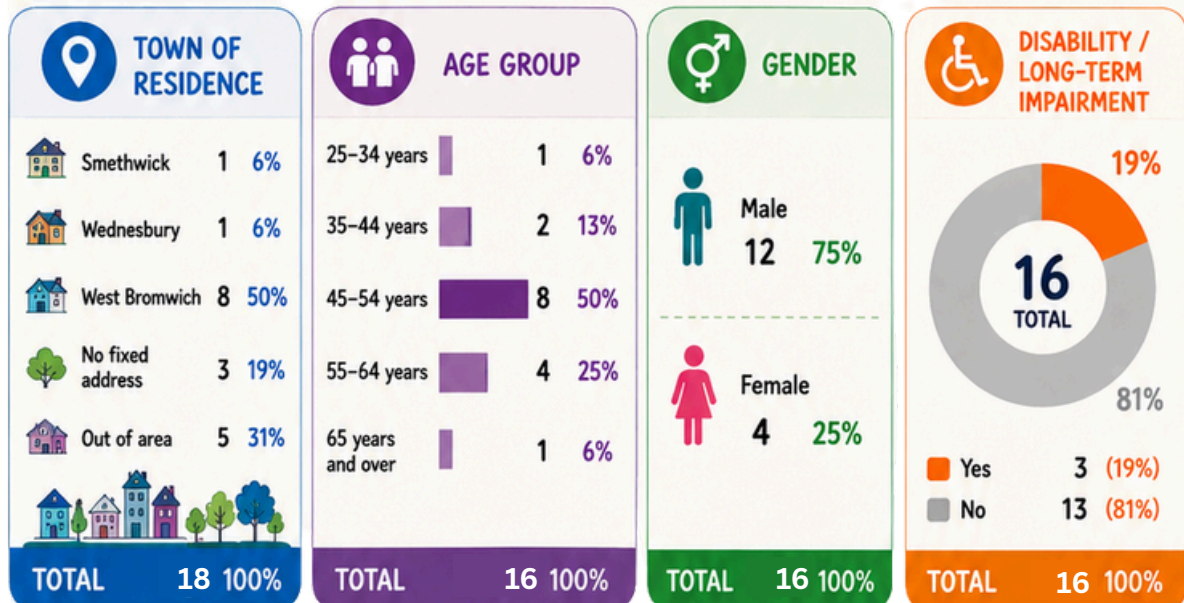
RECOVERY PROJECT

DATA SUMMARY

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 2025 – JUNE 2026

16
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS
ENGAGED

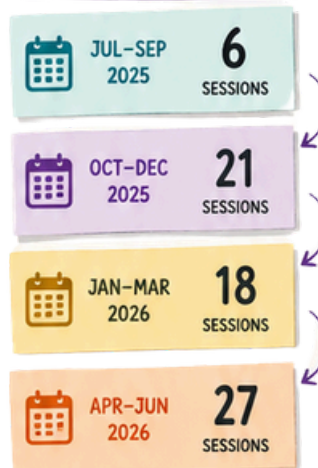
1 PARTICIPANT PROFILE



2 WHAT WE DID THIS YEAR



INDIVIDUAL THERAPY SESSIONS BY QUARTER



3 BEYOND THERAPY



4 AT A GLANCE



- ★ Number of new referrals we have received
- ★★ These numbers include people who are still attending who were referred in previous quarter.



Therapy Sessions

Individual counselling formed the core element of the project and played a vital role in supporting participants on their recovery journey. A total of 17 referrals were received, with eight eligible participants engaging in therapeutic support. By the end of June 2026, 72 one-to-one counselling sessions had been delivered, with a further 22 sessions scheduled for July and August 2026, bringing the total planned provision to 94 sessions.

The sessions provided a safe, confidential and non-judgemental space for participants to explore issues relating to alcohol use, mental health, family relationships, social isolation, trauma and personal triggers. For many participants, this was the first opportunity to openly discuss the factors contributing to their alcohol use and the challenges they faced in maintaining recovery.

The counselling helped participants develop greater self-awareness, identify unhealthy patterns of behaviour, understand family and social influences, and build healthier coping strategies. It also supported improved confidence, emotional wellbeing and motivation to maintain sobriety.

The project also aimed to help destigmatise alcohol dependency within the Polish and Eastern European community. By offering culturally sensitive and confidential support, we encouraged participants to speak more openly about alcohol use, shame surrounding alcohol, mental health and recovery. This helped challenge the taboo around alcohol dependency and created a safer pathway for people to seek support earlier.

The therapeutic relationship helped build trust and stability, particularly for individuals who were initially reluctant to engage in group activities or wider support services. As confidence increased, participants became more willing to take part in social integration and wellbeing activities, helping to reduce isolation and strengthen connection with others in recovery.





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The therapy gave me a safe space to talk openly without fear of judgement. It helped me understand the reasons behind my drinking, recognise my triggers, and develop healthier ways of coping. For the first time in a long time, I feel more in control of my life and more hopeful about my future.

- Project participant

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Connection, Conversation & Community

For our recovery project, we began our journey with simple group meetings, including a pizza social and a gentle nature walk. We chose these activities carefully, taking into account the health and mobility needs of the participants, so that everyone could feel included and able to take part comfortably.

At first, many people felt hesitant about joining. Some were worried about stigma, while others were unsure what to expect.

These small, friendly activities helped people feel more at ease. Sharing food, walking together at a relaxed pace, and having informal conversations created a safe and welcoming space where people could connect naturally, build trust, and feel that they were not alone.





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The therapy helped me understand myself and my recovery, while the group trips gave me the confidence to reconnect with other people. Together, they helped me feel less isolated and more positive about the future. I finally think that i can do this.

- Project participant

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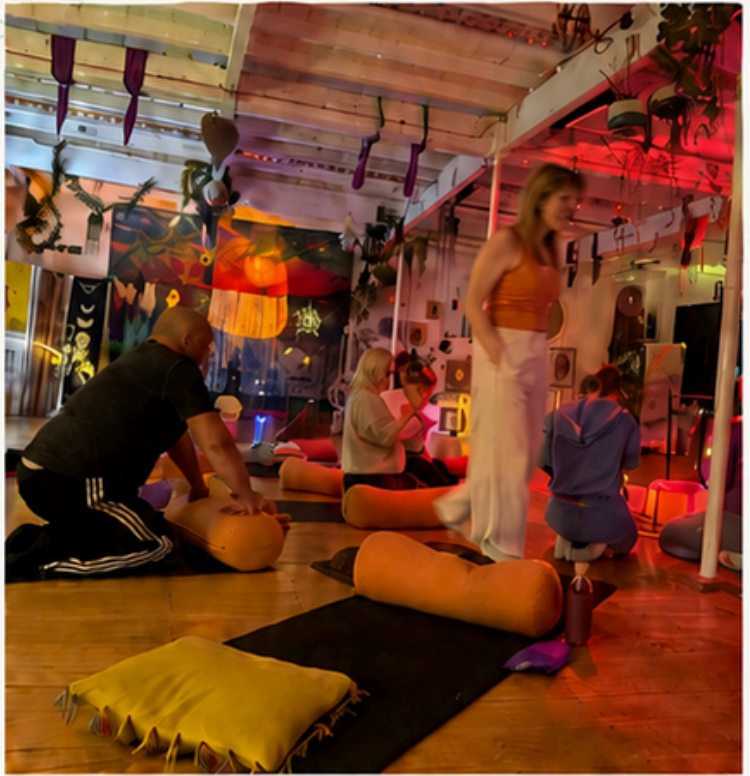
Recovery Project Workshops

Sound & Breath Sessions

Gentle workshops supporting relaxation, grounding and wellbeing.

- Sound bath experiences
- Breathwork and mindful breathing
- A calm and welcoming group space
- Support for rest, reflection and recovery

**Thank you to Octavia
& Om for having us!**



■ *Photos from recent workshops* ■



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At first I was sceptical about the session, but once I allowed myself to relax, I found it incredibly calming. It gave me rare time to stop, breathe and focus on myself, and I left feeling much more relaxed

- Project participant

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Rose Garden Trip

Recovery Project

Roses, sunshine and good company.

As part of our Recovery Project, we recently visited the beautiful Rose Garden for one of our wellbeing and social inclusion activities. It was an opportunity to slow down, enjoy nature, share conversations and spend time together in a calm and welcoming environment.

Recovery is about more than counselling sessions. It is also about rebuilding confidence, creating positive experiences, forming meaningful connections and remembering that no one has to face life's challenges alone.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the day so special.





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Thank you very much for the wonderful trip. The Rose Garden is absolutely beautiful. I had a lovely time and got to see a truly beautiful place. I would be very happy to take part in similar outings more often. Once again, my sincere thanks.

- Project participant

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I am very grateful that I was able to take part in yesterday's trip to the David Austin Garden. The atmosphere and beauty of this place are truly unique, not only for people who love roses and spending time in nature. Although it is relatively nearby, for someone like me who does not have a car, it is very difficult to reach. Without EWA CIC, I would not have had the opportunity to visit this wonderful place. I hope I will have the chance to take part in many more opportunities like this in the future. Thank you.

- Project participant

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Case Study

Background / Need

The client was a female in recovery from addiction who was also struggling with gambling. The client needed a safe and supportive therapeutic environment where she could explore the emotional function of gambling and begin to understand the deeper issues connected to her addictive behaviours.

Support Provided

Regular counselling sessions were provided in a safe, non-judgemental, and supportive environment. As the therapeutic relationship developed, the client was able to speak openly about her gambling, addiction, her previous alcohol tendencies, emotional distress and feelings of shame. The therapeutic work focused on increasing self-awareness, identifying emotional and situational triggers, and helping the client understand the links between her past experiences, emotional needs, and addictive behaviours. Together, we explored how gambling often acted as a way of escaping difficult emotions, avoiding painful. Support was provided to develop healthier coping strategies, emotional regulation skills, and self-compassion. The client was encouraged to recognise urges without immediately acting on them and to challenge the critical inner dialogue that contributed to shame and relapse. Furthermore, the client received advice from our service in relation to liaising with her landlord preventing her eviction.

Outcomes and Impact

Throughout the counselling process, the client demonstrated courage and commitment in exploring behaviours that had previously been difficult to acknowledge. She developed greater insight into the underlying causes of her addiction and gambling difficulties. Over time, she began to make more conscious and informed choices and expressed increased hope about maintaining her recovery and improving her overall wellbeing.

The therapeutic work helped reduce shame, increase emotional resilience, and support the client in developing a healthier relationship with herself and her recovery.

Ongoing Engagement

The client continued to engage positively with counselling and used the sessions to reflect on her progress, challenges, and ongoing recovery needs. Further therapeutic work focused on strengthening relapse prevention strategies, developing emotional regulation, and maintaining healthier coping mechanisms.

Quarter 2- Case Study

Background / Need

We have known this individual since December 2024, when she first attended our Foodbank. She was experiencing multiple and overlapping disadvantages, including addiction, declining mental health, housing insecurity, family breakdown, and barriers to accessing mainstream services due to limited English proficiency. Her situation worsened after becoming unemployed, following work with a company known for exploitative employment practices, which contributed to increased stress and instability. She also experienced conflict with her son, who was himself struggling with addiction. In early 2025, she became homeless, further compounding her vulnerability. Unfortunately, in October 2025, she required urgent medical treatment and was admitted into palliative care. She sadly passed away in December 2025 due to complications related to her addiction.

Support Provided

Our service provided ongoing practical, emotional, and advocacy-based support. This included regular engagement through our Foodbank and Talking Therapies Plus group sessions, where she accessed culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health support. We supported her during a period of homelessness and made an early mental health referral to her GP to help her access clinical support. In addition, we provided intensive advocacy to support her in securing her settled status in 2024, a highly complex process that required sustained guidance and intervention.

Outcomes and Impact

Securing settled status was a significant outcome, removing a major source of anxiety and enabling her to access essential services and support. Our ongoing engagement helped maintain her connection to support services during periods of crisis and instability. While her addiction and mental health challenges continued, the support provided reduced isolation, improved access to healthcare, and ensured that safeguarding concerns were identified and responded to promptly.

Ongoing Engagement

She remained engaged with our service over time and participated in our Talking Therapies Plus group sessions. Through multiple conversations, she expressed interest in joining our Project Recovery programme. However, she did not feel mentally prepared to engage fully, as she was still experiencing relapses. Our team continued to offer consistent, non-judgemental support, recognising that readiness for recovery is not linear and that trust and sustained engagement are essential.

Funder Value

This case highlights the vital role of community-based, accessible services for individuals who are unable to engage with mainstream treatment due to language barriers, complex trauma, and social exclusion. Funding enabled early intervention, long-term relationship-building, and practical advocacy for someone facing extreme and compounding disadvantage. This individual's story demonstrates why investment in community-led mental health and recovery projects is essential to reach those most at risk and least likely to access statutory services.

Quarter 2 - Case Study

Background / Need

This individual first engaged with our organisation in August 2025 after becoming homeless and accessing our food bank. At this time, he was experiencing significant instability and increased alcohol use, which escalated as a direct result of sleeping rough. His English is very limited, which created additional barriers to accessing and engaging with mainstream support services.

Support Provided

We initially supported him with emergency provision, including food parcels and bus tickets, to address his immediate needs. Recognising the growing risk associated with his alcohol use, he was offered six one-to-one therapy sessions through our *Talking Therapies* project. This support was delivered by a Polish-speaking therapist, allowing him to communicate fully in his first language and engage more openly and effectively in the therapeutic process. The sessions were delivered in a person-centred and trauma-informed way, enabling him to participate at a pace that felt safe and manageable.

Outcomes and Impact

As a result of the therapeutic support he was able to stop drinking alcohol and begin stabilising his life circumstances. He successfully secured accommodation and moved away from crisis support into a more sustainable and independent situation. Being able to access therapy in his own language played a key role in building trust, understanding, and long-term engagement.

Ongoing Engagement

When the current project launched, he chose to continue engaging with the support offered in order to maintain his recovery, reduce the risk of relapse, and continue improving his overall wellbeing.

Funder Value

This case study demonstrates the importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Access to Polish-speaking therapists enabled him to engage meaningfully with support, achieve recovery outcomes, and reduce reliance on emergency and crisis services.

Background / Need

The client is a male of pension age who has been known to the service for a couple of years. He had previously struggled with alcohol addiction but has made positive progress in his recovery and has slowly begun to get his life back on track. Although he had stopped drinking, he continued to face challenges linked to maintaining his recovery. Being of pension age meant that he had a significant amount of free time, which at times was not helpful for his wellbeing or recovery. Without structure, routine, or meaningful activity, there was a risk that boredom, isolation, or lack of purpose could negatively affect his progress. The client needed ongoing encouragement, positive social connection, and opportunities to take part in constructive activities that would support his recovery, confidence, and emotional wellbeing.

Support Provided

The client was supported through regular contact with the service, including opportunities to attend meetings, social activities, and organised trips. These provided him with a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment where he could connect with others and feel part of a community. Support focused on helping the client maintain his recovery, develop a healthier routine, and use his free time in a positive and meaningful way. He was encouraged to identify activities that he enjoyed and that could help him stay occupied, motivated, and socially connected. The service also provided informal emotional support, encouragement, and reassurance as the client continued adjusting to life in recovery. Taking part in group activities and trips helped reduce isolation and gave him something positive to look forward to.

Outcomes and Impact

Over time, the client made clear progress in rebuilding his life after alcohol addiction. He remained committed to his recovery and began to develop a more structured and positive routine. The client found activities to fill his free time, which helped him manage the challenges associated with retirement and reduced the risk of boredom or isolation. He particularly enjoyed taking part in the service's trips and meetings, which gave him opportunities for social interaction, connection, and enjoyment.

Ongoing Engagement

The client continues to engage with the service and remains involved in meetings, activities, and trips. Ongoing engagement is important in helping him maintain structure, social connection, and positive use of his time.

This case demonstrates the value of funded community-based recovery support, particularly for older adults who may face isolation, lack of structure, and increased free time after retirement. While the client had already made significant progress in overcoming alcohol addiction, continued support played an important role in helping him sustain his recovery.

Quarter 4 Case Study

Background / Need

This individual is a 58-year-old male who has a history of severe alcohol dependency and lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. He required additional support to reduce social isolation, improve his mental and physical wellbeing, and increase his engagement with community and support services. He previously took part in the TT Plus service in 2025. At that time, he was drinking heavily every day and was living with friends following separation from his partner. His children were also involved with social care, which became a significant emotional factor for him. After completing TT Plus, WT wanted to continue receiving support. He was highly motivated to stop drinking and, impressively, had already begun maintaining sobriety independently. When the Recovery Project became available, he was very eager to join and continue building on his progress.

Support Provided

He has accessed our Recovery Programme, including regular one-to-one support sessions, participation in group outings, and ESOL provision. Through one-to-one sessions, he has been supported to recognise his strengths, understand what he can achieve, and set realistic goals for the future. He needed someone to help him look clearly at his situation, lay out the facts, and encourage him to see that positive change was possible. He is confident in his ability to remain alcohol-free. He actively counts the length of time he has been sober and takes pride in this achievement. Seeing his children again is his biggest motivation, and this goal continues to drive his commitment to recovery.

Outcomes and Impact

His main goal is to rebuild contact with his children. He wants to remain sober, improve his health, and reach a position where he can return to work and live more independently. Since engaging with the Recovery Programme, he has shown strong motivation and commitment. He is proud of his sobriety and is using this as a foundation to improve both his mental and physical wellbeing. He has also started to distance himself from environments where alcohol misuse is common. This is an important step in protecting his recovery and reducing the risk of relapse. He has been supported to contact social services again, and he now has an appointment arranged. This is a significant step towards reconnecting with his children and addressing one of the key reasons behind his motivation to stay sober.

Ongoing Engagement

He continues to engage positively with the project. He is interested in volunteering with a community garden, as he enjoys gardening, being outdoors, and practical activities. This opportunity will help reduce isolation, build confidence, and give him a positive routine. We will continue to support WT with his recovery goals, social services engagement, volunteering opportunities, and steps towards improved health, stability, and future employment.

This support has helped him maintain his sobriety, reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, and reconnect with key services. The project has provided consistent, person-centred support at a crucial stage in his recovery.

Without this ongoing support, he may have remained isolated and at higher risk of relapse. Instead, he is now motivated, engaged, and taking practical steps towards rebuilding family relationships, improving his health, and contributing positively to the community.