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New Achieve with NERAF Recovery Hub groups and timetable on pages 2 and 3

Dry January 2015

Can you stay off the booze for 31 days?

Achieve with NERAF support the national Dry January Campaign. There are many benefits of staying sober for 31 days, these include saving money, losing weight and generally feeling good in yourself.

We would love to hear your Dry January stories and will publish them in next month's newsletter. Please see a member of staff for more information.

Please remember that depending on your alcohol use it may be dangerous to stop suddenly. Always seek advice if you have any concerns.



Achieve with NERAF Recovery Hub in Sunderland

Hello, my name is Maria Irving and I manage The Achieve with NERAF Recovery Hub in Sunderland. The services within our Recovery Hub focus on the prevention of substance misuse and also the aftercare element. We have a comprehensive timetable of one to one and group support for both people with problematic substance misuse and their families and loved ones.

Our mutual aid peer support groups run 6 days a week. The atmosphere is very informal and welcoming. We have members attending regularly, some who are in the early stages of recovery and others who have been in recovery for some time. Peer support tends to occur naturally within these groups, friendships are developed and everybody helps each other along. All are welcome at these drop in groups. You don't need a referral and you can stay for as little or as long as you want. Every Monday and Friday morning we host a mutual aid peer support group for women only.

Every Monday and Wednesday we run our FLOAT (Families and Loved Ones Achieving Together) group. This is for families and loved ones supporting each other.

We also run the following structured groups:

Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy YOU! Is a programme of structured work for individuals following treatment for substance misuse and also as a preventative measure.

Managing and Maintaining YOUR Own Recovery is a peer support programme where, through the use of practical strategies and techniques, we help you to maintain recovery in many everyday situations.

The Freedom Programme is on a Friday morning. The Freedom Programme is a domestic violence programme primarily designed for women as victims of domestic violence. The Freedom Programme examines the roles played by attitudes and beliefs on the actions of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors. The aim is to help them to make sense of and understand what has happened to them, instead of the whole experience just feeling like a horrible mess.

In addition to our groups, service users can use our newly installed I.T suite, our dedicated staff and volunteers are available to assist you use the equipment.

When support groups aren't running, our group room is available between 9.30 and 4pm as a drop in. Somewhere safe and warm to have a cuppa and meet your peers.

We offer a dedicated one to one service for people with problematic substance misuse, and also for their families and loved ones. We work with our service users for as long as they require and draw in the services of other organisations to assist in an individual's recovery.

We are always looking to work with partner organisations to benefit our service users. If you would like any information about our service, or would like to come along and visit the hub please do not hesitate to contact me on maria.irving@neraf.org 0191 5148520.

Our Recovery Hub timetable is shown on the next page. If you would like any more information about any of our services please contact us on 0191 5656688, 0191 5148520 or email info@neraf.org

Achieve with NERAF Recovery Hub timetable

MONDAY	9.30 – 11.00 DROP IN	10.00 – 12.00 FLOAT SUPPORT GROUP (Families and Loved Ones)	11.00 – 1.00 WOMEN'S ONLY GROUP	1.00 – 4.00 Peer Support Group 4.00 – 5.00 Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy YOU!	5.00 – 7.00 Peer Support Group
TUESDAY	9.30 – 11.00 DROP IN	11.00 – 12.00 Managing and Maintaining YOUR Own Recovery	12.15 – 1.00 LUNCH WITH ACHIEVE	1.00 – 4.00 Peer Support Group	
WEDNESDAY	9.30 – 11.30 FLOAT SUPPORT GROUP (Families and Loved Ones)	11.30 – 12.30 LUNCH WITH ACHIEVE (Families and Loved Ones)	12.00 – 1.30 DAGS	1.00 – 4.00 Peer Support Group	5.00 – 7.00 FLOAT SUPPORT GROUP SOUTH SHIELDS
THURSDAY	9.30 – 1.00 DROP IN			1.00-4.00 Peer Support Group	
FRIDAY	9.30 – 11.00 DROP IN	10.00 – 12.00 FREEDOM PROGRAMME	11.00-1.00 WOMEN'S ONLY GROUP	1.00-4.00 Peer Support Group	
SUNDAY		11.00 – 1.00 Peer Support Group			

Managing and Maintaining YOUR Own Recovery

Managing and Maintaining YOUR Own Recovery is a peer support programme where, through the use of practical strategies and techniques, we help you to maintain recovery in many everyday situations. Delivered in an informal, safe and friendly environment, we will help you help yourself, maintain your independence, make and sustain the changes that you wish to.

The programme focuses on the following 3 areas:-

YOUR Motivation and how you can build and maintain it

Coping with situations and managing your urges

Your thoughts, feelings and behaviours and how to manage these

This programme is delivered EVERY Tuesday between 11.15 – 12.15 at:

**Achieve with NERAF
56 John Street
Sunderland
SR1 1QH**

If you would like any more information about the programme please contact Megan on 0191 5656688





Volunteer and Staff Christmas Do!

To thank our volunteers and staff for their hard work over the last year we hosted a Christmas Party on 12th December. Christmas jumpers were compulsory and senior management (well Lynn) waited on staff and volunteers.

Shellie organised party games which went down a treat including the mars bar game, musical chairs and a game where you had to roll a chocolate biscuit down your face into your mouth without touching it. We also had a Christmas quiz. Shellie also made everybody a sweetie sleigh, absolutely lovely.

Everybody enjoyed the day and special thanks to Shellie for working so hard to put it together.



Massive Thank you!!

We would just like to say a massive thank you to all of our Volunteers on behalf of all of us at Achieve with NERAF for all the time you have given us this year. We really could not have achieved so much without you all. We hope that you continue to volunteer with us and look forward to working with you during our exciting adventure in 2015.

Meet and Greet

My name is Anna Kennedy and I am eighteen years old. I am currently studying a foundation degree at college. I ultimately want to have a career as a social worker and I think volunteering at NERAF is



really helping me to develop skills that are important in working life. I have been volunteering at NERAF for over a month and I am really enjoying it. It's also great getting to know all the members, staff and other volunteers of NERAF.

Thank You From Shellie

I would just like to say a massive thank you to all the volunteers for the beautiful flowers especially Sonia for organising them.

I'm so glad you all enjoyed the Christmas party and the little gifts I made for you all.

I have such an incredible team of volunteers you have made doing this job a pleasure. Roll on next year.



Volunteer Opportunities

NERAF has always provided volunteering opportunities in the role of Group Facilitator but we have recently restructured our volunteering program. We are now providing exciting opportunities in the following roles;

Advocacy, I.T Facilitators, Groups, Events, Receptionist Duties

For more information about volunteering opportunities contact Shellie on 0191 5148520 (Sunderland) or 0191 4785422 (Gateshead) or email shellie.nichols-key@neraf.org.

You can also come to our volunteer drop in on the first Thursday of every month and speak to our current volunteers.

Gateshead Christmas Party

On the 19th December Gateshead held a Christmas Party, Michelle our recovery coach decided to do this a little differently this year and our clients loved it. We even attracted a new client who had popped in to the centre.

Michelle decided to set out the tables so that we could all sit round and have food together, she also hand crafted some beautiful decorations to make the room a little bit more festive. We had Christmas Crackers which were going down quite well until I told Jim a little trick which ruined his life.



We decided to do something a little different this year and all decorated our own cupcakes. You would think that this might have been a little

difficult as all we had was icing we didn't have any tools to help us but we adapted improvised and overcame the problem and produced some fabulous cakes which we did then eat

later. All clients, Volunteers and Staff got very creative some off them even decided that they might decorate their own cakes at home.



The Christmas party turned out to be a really enjoyable afternoon and got everyone in to the festive mood ready for Christmas the following week. Thank You Michelle for all you're planning for this fabulous afternoon.

Happy New Year from all of us at Gateshead!

A Tale of Recovery continued – Confusion

I had been volunteering for the Prince's Trust (PTV) for a year now; going to college twice a week and supporting my IT tutor during the day, I was also heavily involved in a Community Computer Recycling Programme in the West End of Newcastle when out of the blue I was offered a full-time job with the PTV as an Access and Learning Support tutor delivering ICT and Job search to various classes including a contract with Newcastle Council. Until recently I had considered myself unemployable; eight years of living as 'no fixed abode' in shelters, dosshouses (otherwise known as hostels or bed and breakfast accommodation), sofa surfing or sleeping rough and generally trying to drink myself to death, mixing with what the media would describe as undesirables or people with anti-social behaviour tendencies!

In reality this would be a massive understatement! My 'mates' and associates were comprised of people with serious addictions, career criminals, drug dealers, con artists and other petty criminals, I also met a few seriously bad people who were best avoided at all costs!

So, I had learned to keep myself to myself and where possible to drink alone and somewhere that it was safe for me to do so; more than once I had been given a kicking by people that I had been drinking with or robbed by people who I thought I could trust. I had learned to trust no-one that nobody did anything for nothing and that if someone did you a favour that they would be looking for a lot more in return. Woe betide the person who accepted a joint or a bottle that was being passed around who could then not afford to return the compliment. That was a big no no!

Now here I am working as a teacher in adult education; an upstanding member of the community, not only delivering training but writing courses, giving people advice and guidance, training staff, supporting learners and volunteers and mixing with 'ordinary' people. The irony was hard to reconcile. Outwardly I was in a position of authority, head together and learning new skills at a rapid pace of knots, a role model! Inwardly was a world of confusion and self-doubt; who was I trying to kid, I was angry at the whole world, angry at myself, how had I let things get so bad? Guilt, shame and embarrassment were my constant companions but my peers and mentors kept telling me to be proud of what I had achieved, of how far I had come. Uppermost in my mind was respect. I was very conscious of how people spoke to me; I would react badly to any imagined insult or slight, any derisory or detrimental comments and would absolutely not tolerate any patronising remarks from anyone. This was not good.

There were many hours, days, weeks and months of deep introspection, trying to make sense of the (at times) overwhelming emotions that threatened to derail everything that I had worked so hard for, trying desperately to contextualise my life and to understand what my place in society was now. Where and how did I fit in? More than anything though was the question; what is the point?

And that was the point. The physical recovery had been tough but I had got there, now the real hard work was beginning, my answer at this point was to throw myself into work and study, to fill up my days, work myself to a point of exhaustion and maybe even start respecting myself again and maybe even learning to trust again..... Continued next month.

Support Groups

Day	Venue	Time	Location
Monday	Gateshead/Women's	10.30-12.00	Trinity Church, Gateshead High St, NE8 1EP
Monday	Gateshead/Mixed	1.00-3.00	Trinity Church, Gateshead High St, NE8 1EP
Monday	Sunderland/Women's	11.00-12.45	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Monday	Sunderland/Family and Carers	10.00-12.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Monday	Sunderland/Mixed	1.00-4.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Monday	Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy YOU!	4.00-5.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Monday	Sunderland/Abstinence	5.00-7.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Tuesday	Managing and Maintaining YOUR own Recovery! (structured)	11.00-12.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Tuesday	Sunderland/Community Lunch	12.15-1.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Tuesday	Sunderland/Mixed	1.00-4.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Wednesday	Sunderland/Family & Carers Group	9.30-11.30	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Wednesday	Sunderland/Family & Carers Group community lunch	11.30-12.30	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Wednesday	Sunderland/Mixed	1.00-4.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Wednesday	South Shields/Family & Carers Group	5.00-7.00	Horizons, 21 Beach Road, South Shields, NE33 2QA
Wednesday	Gateshead/Mixed	1.00-3.00	Trinity Church, Gateshead High St, NE8 1EP
Thursday	Sunderland/Mixed	1.00-4.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Friday	Freedom Programme	10.00-11.30	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Friday	Sunderland/Women's	11.00-12.45	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Friday	Sunderland/Mixed	1.00-4.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH
Friday	Gateshead/Family & Carers Group	10.00-12.00	Trinity Church, Gateshead High St, NE8 1EP
Friday	Gateshead/Mixed	2.00-4.00	Trinity Church, Gateshead High St, NE8 1EP
Sunday	Sunderland/ Mixed	11.00-13.00	56, John Street, Sunderland SRI 1QH

Achieve with NERAF

“Our mission is to deliver and enable real positive differences to the lives of people affected by substance misuse and their family networks”

If you need help finding the Route to Recovery whether it is from a substance addiction or if you are caring for someone with an addiction Achieve with NERAF can support you.

We offer;

Face-to -Face mentoring

Motivational work

SMART Groups

Volunteer opportunities

Peer Support

Group work

Partnership working

If you want more information about our service please contact

info@neraf.org

Or

Tel. 0191 5656688

Tel. 0191 5148520

Fax: 01915656715

Fax: 0191 5101827

Substance Misuse Peer Mentor Opportunities



Do you want to help people to get on their road to recovery and share your story?

Do you have life experience that you want to share and could benefit people who are where you were a few months/years ago?

Have you ever thought you wouldn't get where you are today?

Become a Peer Mentor

Today !!!

Contact Shellie on

**0191 5148520 or email
shellie.nichols@neraf.org**



Achieve with NERAF

56 John Street
Sunderland
SR1 1QH

Phone: 0191 5656688
Fax: 0191 5656715



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