

Executive Summary

Shaping Recovery in Scotland

How Scottish Recovery Network makes a difference

March 2024



**Scottish
Recovery**
Network



“ They create spaces where people who wouldn't have come together before and are learning from each other. How can we help to showcase this?

– Manager, NHS, Event Observation

Scottish Recovery Network works to promote and support mental health recovery. They believe that in working together, Scotland can be a place where people expect mental health recovery and are supported at all stages of their recovery journey.

For over 20 years, they have been bringing people, services and organisations across sectors together to build a mental health system that embraces peer support and is powered by lived experience. Their work centres around ensuring people with lived experience are involved in a meaningful way in the design and delivery of mental health support; putting their voices at the centre of all they do.

In July 2022, Scottish Recovery Network commissioned Habitus Collective to undertake an independent evaluation of its activities and impact. This took place between July 2022 and January 2024.

The evaluation looked at how their day-to-day work has an impact on positive changes to the mental health system. In particular, this evaluation sought to address the following questions:

1. How is their approach unique? And;

2. Does this unique way of working result in accelerated impact? And, if so, why?

Ultimately, Scottish Recovery Network were looking to understand if, and how, they are enabling and contributing to systems change in the mental health system in Scotland.

We worked with the team to develop and implement a measurement framework that could robustly capture their day-to-day and longer-term impact. In addition, we connected with external stakeholders through interviews, focus groups and observations to gather further evidence of their impact.

KEY FINDINGS

- The evaluation found evidence that Scottish Recovery Network are contributing to systems change through the unique ways in which they work.
- Rather than a top-down approach to changing systems, such as working heavily at the policy level, the team at Scottish Recovery Network **intentionally take a bottom up, grassroots approach**. This means building capacity in people, groups and organisations, working alongside them, as well as enabling people to find their voice and have it platformed. Additionally, this work helps to **build the confidence of others to take action, creating grassroots change-makers that influence wider systems change**. That does not mean that Scottish Recovery Network does not work at the policy level at all, rather, they are an important interface between communities and organisations and the government. Their deep connections and understanding of community needs and wants, enables Scottish Recovery Network to share the influence they hold with others to facilitate change.
- There are three broad areas of activity: 1) Broadening engagement; 2) Sharing what is possible; and 3) Inspiring change. In broadening their engagement with the wider community, they are intentionally building networks, convening and curating relationships with people with lived experience and organisations seeking to, or already delivering peer support. Intentional effort is made to ensure that people feel included, connected and knowledgeable. Much of this work is done so that people can hear and see what is already happening, **in order to inspire and motivate others to act and make change**.
- The team at Scottish Recovery Network convene knowledge and expertise rather than designating themselves as the experts. They host the expertise of the community and people with lived experience. This drives the trust needed to collaborate and make change.

- The evaluation found that **Scottish Recovery Network is creating the conditions for systems change and contributing to change through its own activities**. By working with organisations and the government to change policies and practices, they are contributing to **structural changes** in systems work. Secondly, by building meaningful connections between lived experience groups, third sector and statutory services, they are creating the **relational changes** needed for systems change work. This includes ensuring that spaces of devolved power to lived expertise are created. Lastly, much of their work centres on challenging the way in which lived experience and peer support is seen and activated within the mental health system (community and clinical). This **transformational change** occurs when people's deeply held beliefs of what is possible and their expectations are changed.
- Through its limited resources, Scottish Recovery Network is contributing to accelerated systems change through its **unique position in the mental health sector**, its highly relational approach rooted in a values base of equity and inclusion and its ability to inspire change both in and outside of the system.

CASE STUDY

CONVENING THIRD SECTOR PARTNERS IN STRATEGIC WORKSTREAMS

Ross is the manager of a network of substance use providers. He first learned about Scottish Recovery Network by attending an in-person event hosted by them.

Since then, he continues to engage with their online content and has made use of their 'Conversation Café' materials, which he mentions being very easy to use and adapt to his needs. He continues to attend online and in-person events hosted by Scottish Recovery Network, as he says they are useful for networking. As a result of his engagement, his organisation went on to work with Scottish Recovery Network to help them further embed peer working. He notes that a major strength of Scottish Recovery Network is their adherence to their values through their work, as well as the great materials that are shared.

"[this] authentic approach; actually kind of caring about people with experience, wanting to do their best for them, wanting to think carefully about how they approach doing it, and uplifting their voices, I think, has been one of the things that's really struck me."

The dashboard below is a snapshot of the scale and reach of Scottish Recovery Network over a nine-month period during the evaluation. There is evidence of Scottish Recovery Network's ability to create the conditions for their stakeholders to build new connections, learn and build the capacity and confidence needed to take action.

Data shows that **67% of people who attend events made a new connection**, as change requires more than one person or one organisation, this convening and networking of others in the sector is an important activity that Scottish Recovery Network facilitates. Furthermore, **91% of people leaving an event or session said they were motivated to take action** to drive peer support and recovery forward with the top two actions identified as 1) connecting into existing projects and/or connecting further with someone they met at the event/session (38%) and 2) looking to get more involved as a person with lived experience or looking to involve more people with lived experience in their work (31%).

EVENT DATA DASHBOARD

Apr 2023 - Dec 2023

OVERALL MOTIVATION TO ACT

8.3/10

Average rating of how motivated people felt to act after all events/sessions



Facilitated Events

8.6/10

Motivation to act after a facilitated session



Capacity Building and Collaboration Events

8.5/10

Motivation to act after a capacity building session



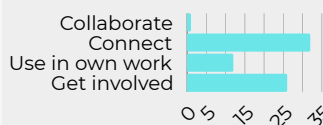
Training Events

7.8/10

Motivation to act after a training session



Actions they will take



943

Individuals engaged through events, programmes and projects

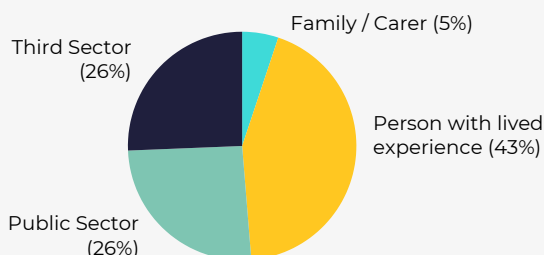
560

Individuals engaged through strategic workstreams

166

Organisations engaged and supported

WHO ATTENDED



73

Sessions hosted through

17

online events

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Share how systems change is being facilitated:** Share with stakeholders how Scottish Recovery Network is facilitating systems change through data collection so they can replicate the approach.
- 2 Steer into the unique approaches being used:** Steer into the unique approaches Scottish Recovery Network takes and use this to continue to leverage its position as a key systems player in the mental health sector.
- 3 Create a process for project resourcing based on the evaluation framework:** Use newly developed measures, stages of change and evaluation framework to create a project resourcing process.
- 4 Create a tangible recovery future with stakeholders:** Work alongside stakeholders to tangibly create what the future for recovery looks like.
- 5 Nurture, empower and skill existing community leaders:** Nurture, empower and hold them to account with the development, skills and conditions to take action within their own settings and systems.
- 6 Further integrate communications and government relations activities:** Integrate the communications and government relations activities into the project work from the planning and commencement of every project.



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