

# How do Recovery Navigators **support** people in North East England after hospital discharge?

Alcohol use in North East England harms many people's health and wellbeing. Some people who struggle with alcohol use need to visit the hospital often and can find it hard to get the right support after leaving. This is where Recovery Navigators come in.



## What do Recovery Navigators do?



Support people who come to the hospital for alcohol-related reasons



Stay in touch with them afterwards, so they know where to get help and don't feel alone



Give advice about alcohol and other issues like housing, health or money

## What did we\* do?

We worked with:



**5 NHS Trusts in North East England** to understand how the Recovery Navigators work across different places

We talked to:



**17** healthcare practitioners

**1** carer



**7** people supported by Recovery Navigators

## Here is what we learned about Recovery Navigators

### 1. They work in varied ways

Some only work in hospitals, others also visit people at home after they have left the hospital depending upon hospital rules and needs of their area.




### 2. They build trusting relationships

with the people they support. By creating meaningful connections, Recovery Navigators are better able to understand what kind of support that person needs.



Talking about [...] lots of different things, so she gets a better picture of you, rather than just looking at alcoholism, and the effects it's had on you."

– patient participant, female (40–50 yrs)

**3. They act as a central link**   
by connecting different services and professions allowing them to share vital information.



I think [the Recovery Navigator] has been sort of central to everything. She's come to see me when I've been at my worst, but then from that point she's been able to signpost here or there. To have her at the centre of things, that's been really good."


- patient participant, male (50-60 yrs)

**4. They listen to people who were used to not being heard,**   
making them feel respected. This builds trust and allows for honest conversations about alcohol use.



When it actually feels as though people are looking out for you, it's a good feeling. And obviously it just makes you think, right, I've got to sort things out now."


- patient participant, male (30-40 yrs)

**5. They face challenges**   
when someone refuses help, but they keep the door open for future change and do what they can to keep them safe.



For me, it's been exactly what I needed, at the time I needed it. And even before I was ready. [...] Once I became ready, [the Recovery Navigator] had already made me aware of everything that I needed, in order to really give it a good go."

- patient participant, female (40-50 yrs)

**6. They connect hospital staff with community services,**   
providing support when individuals are most vulnerable. Many people who have been supported by Recovery Navigators have said that the hospital is the best place for the Recovery Navigator to be.



To have a dedicated worker like [the Recovery Navigator] who knows why I'm there and can offer me a way out, there's not many things worth going into hospital for but that's certainly been one of them."

- patient participant, male (50-60 yrs)

## What should happen in the future?



The Alcohol Recovery Navigator Service needs **long-term support and funding from health services** to succeed.



When measuring the success of the Alcohol Recovery Navigator Service, we need to **capture the many ways it supports people**, reflecting how complex the recovery process is.



Recovery Navigators rely on emotional support from **alcohol care team colleagues**, supporting such networks is essential to help them work at their best capacity.



Making the **job position more secure** could encourage more people to work as Recovery Navigators and support current Recovery Navigators' wellbeing; most Recovery Navigators work in fixed-term roles.

For more details, visit the [project website](#) or contact Dr Emma-Joy Holland [Emma.holland@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:Emma.holland@newcastle.ac.uk).



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