



Cyrenians

UPDATE
REPORT

ABOUT ERA

EDINBURGH RECOVERY ACTIVITIES (ERA) IS A COMMUNITY-LED PROJECT SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN RECOVERY FROM ALCOHOL AND ILLICIT SUBSTANCES. SINCE ITS INCEPTION, ERA HAS FOCUSED ON ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL ISOLATION MANY INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCE AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEY. TIME AND AGAIN, WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE WHO HAD COMPLETED TREATMENT OR WERE ATTENDING RECOVERY MEETINGS, YET STILL FELT ALONE, DISCONNECTED, AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE FUTURE.

IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE PROJECT THAT COULD BUILD SOCIAL CONNECTION ALONGSIDE RECOVERY CAPITAL. ERA WAS CREATED TO FILL THAT GAP BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS TO RECONNECT WITH THEMSELVES, OTHERS, AND WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY THROUGH MEANINGFUL SHARED EXPERIENCES.

AT THE HEART OF ERA IS THE BELIEF THAT THE COMMUNITY ITSELF SHOULD SHAPE EVERYTHING WE DO. THIS ETHOS OF COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP IS REFLECTED THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT: FROM OUR STEERING GROUP, WHICH IS LARGELY MADE UP OF INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE, TO OUR STAFF TEAM, THE MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE IN RECOVERY THEMSELVES. MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT IS REFLECTED IN OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT TO LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY AND RESPONDING DIRECTLY TO ITS NEEDS. THE GROUPS, ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS WE DELIVER ARE SHAPED BY THE IDEAS AND INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE PART.

GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

OVER THE PAST YEAR, ERA HAS DELIVERED A DIVERSE AND ENGAGING PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO SUPPORT WELLBEING, CONNECTION, AND PERSONAL GROWTH. ALONGSIDE OUR REGULAR WEEKLY, FORTNIGHTLY AND MONTHLY GROUPS – INCLUDING THE COMMUNITY CAFÉ, CREATIVE WRITING, FITNESS GROUP, FISHING AND YOGA – WE HAVE EXPANDED INTO A WIDE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

THESE HAVE INCLUDED DRAMA GROUPS, CHOIR PERFORMANCES, KARAOKE NIGHTS, GARDENING, CINEMA EVENINGS, BARGE TRIPS WITH THE SORTED PROJECT, EASTER AND SUMMER FAMILY PROGRAMMES WITH CIRCLE, ZOO VISITS, POWER STATION TOURS, LASER TAG, CASTLE VISITS, GUIDED GALLERY TRIPS, PORTRAIT WORKSHOPS,, QUIZ NIGHTS, AND SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS THROUGHOUT CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR.

THE BREADTH OF ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH ERA MEANS THERE IS OFTEN SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF INTERESTS, CONFIDENCE LEVELS, OR LENGTH OF RECOVERY. WHILE GROUPS SUCH AS THE CAFÉ PROVIDE A GENTLE AND ACCESSIBLE INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY, MANY MEMBERS DISCOVER NEW PASSIONS AND INTERESTS THEY MAY NEVER HAVE CONSIDERED BEFORE.



BARGE TRIP



GARDENING GROUP

"It's hard work recovering from addiction on your own. Being part of ERA has got me connected with like-minded people and given me the opportunity to discover things that interest me. Who knew I would enjoy visiting galleries and gardening? ERA has also helped me with my confidence and people skills." - Ed



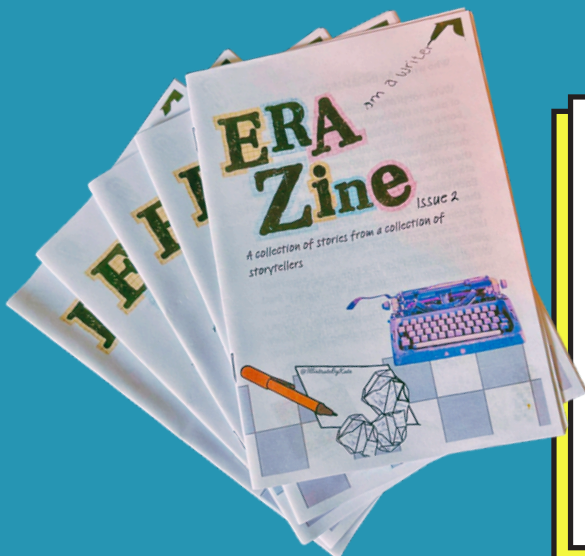
WE HAVE ALSO SEEN PEOPLE ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THEIR WELLBEING AND RECOVERY JOURNEY. OUR FISHING GROUP, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS DEMONSTRATED THE VALUE OF GREENSPACE AND NATURE-BASED INTERVENTIONS IN SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CONNECTION.

BEYOND SOCIAL CONNECTION AND WELLBEING, ERA ALSO HELPS CREATE PATHWAYS INTO EDUCATION, CREATIVITY, VOLUNTEERING, AND EMPLOYMENT. ONE MEMBER OF OUR CREATIVE WRITING GROUP HAS GONE ON TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL PLAYWRIGHT, WITH PRODUCTIONS STAGED ACROSS EDINBURGH AND AN UPCOMING SHOW OPENING AT THE OLD VIC IN LONDON. STORIES LIKE THIS DEMONSTRATE THE WIDER OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN EMERGE WHEN PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTED TO REDISCOVER CONFIDENCE, CREATIVITY, AND AMBITION.

AS WELL AS THIS, OUR CREATIVE WRITING GROUP ALSO FEATURED IN THE PORTOBELLO BOOK FESTIVAL AND SELF-PUBLISHED OUR 4TH BOOK WHICH FEATURES A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES AND POEMS FROM OUR WRITERS.

ERA ALSO WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NHS SERVICES AND WIDER SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS. WE HOST OUTREACH SESSIONS WITH BBV TEAMS IN OUR CAFÉ AND REGULARLY ENGAGE WITH INDIVIDUALS REFERRED THROUGH OTHER NHS DEPARTMENTS AND SUPPORT SERVICES.

"I like ERA because it gets me out of the house, meeting new people and having a good time. Fishing is brilliant - one of the best things I've done in terms of engaging with ERA and others in recovery. It has helped my mental health by getting me out into nature and speaking to new people." - Ray



"My mum said you're always so smiley after writing."

"Always sets me up for the week!
Great writing tonight."

"I always feel good after creative writing."

ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

ERA OPERATES WITH AN OPEN-DOOR APPROACH THAT REDUCES BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT. MANY INDIVIDUALS TELL US THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY FELT “UNDER THE MICROSCOPE” OR PRESSURED TO DISCLOSE PAINFUL PERSONAL EXPERIENCES BEFORE THEY WERE READY. IN RESPONSE, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A SOFTER, MORE PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH — CREATING SPACE FOR PEOPLE TO TALK WHEN THEY FEEL COMFORTABLE, RATHER THAN EXPECTING IMMEDIATE DISCLOSURE. OFTEN, THE MOST MEANINGFUL AND INSIGHTFUL CONVERSATIONS HAPPEN NATURALLY WHILE TAKING PART IN ACTIVITIES TOGETHER. THIS RELAXED AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL ENVIRONMENT IS CENTRAL TO ERA’S SUCCESS IN BUILDING TRUST AND LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT.



OVER THE YEARS, ERA HAS DEVELOPED STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH ORGANISATIONS ACROSS EDINBURGH AND BEYOND. WE WORK CLOSELY WITH SERVICES INCLUDING TURNING POINT SCOTLAND, CHANGE GROW LIVE (CGL), CIRCLE, THE SORTED PROJECT, OTHER CYRENIANS PROJECTS AND THE LEAP RESIDENTIAL UNIT. WE ALSO MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS WITH THE RITSON CLINIC, THE CYRENIANS GARDENS, SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENTS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE TEAMS, AND PRISON-LEAVER SERVICES, HELPING INDIVIDUALS ACCESS COMMUNITY SUPPORT AT VITAL STAGES IN THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEY.

1800+

FOLLOWERS

3004

IN-PERSON
INTERACTIONS

378

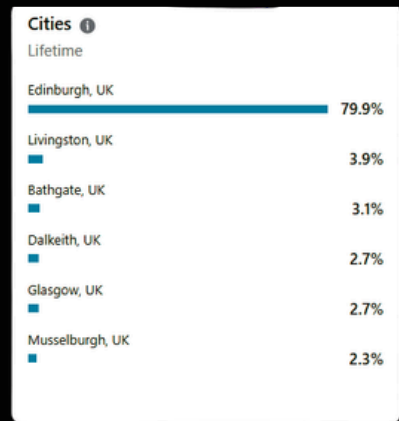
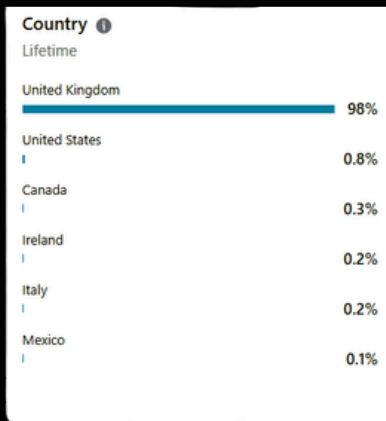
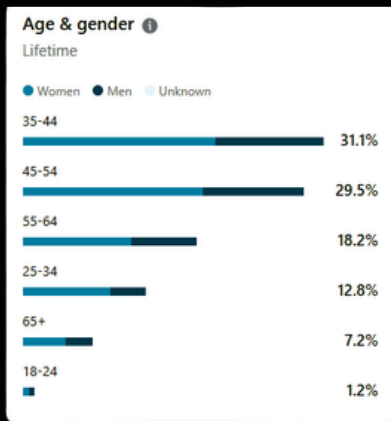
NEW PEOPLE
ENGAGING IN
ACTIVITIES

ALONGSIDE WORD-OF-MOUTH REFERRALS AND LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIPS, ERA MAINTAINS AN ACTIVE AND CONSISTENTLY UPDATED PRESENCE ON FACEBOOK, SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS. OVER THE PAST YEAR, OUR FACEBOOK PAGE HAS GROWN TO MORE THAN 1,800 FOLLOWERS AND ACHIEVED OVER 400,000 VIEWS – ALL WITHOUT PAID ADVERTISING. WE HAVE INCREASINGLY USED VIDEO AND VISUAL MEDIA TO HELP SHOWCASE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGE NEW ENGAGEMENT.

WE ALSO MAINTAIN A GROWING MAILING LIST TO ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA CAN STILL STAY INFORMED ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

BETWEEN MAY 2025 AND MAY 2026, ERA RECORDED 3,004 IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS WITH PEOPLE IN RECOVERY AND WELCOMED 378 NEW INDIVIDUALS INTO THE PROJECT. NEW PARTICIPANTS ENGAGE WITH ERA THROUGH A VARIETY OF ROUTES, INCLUDING PARTNER ORGANISATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA, REFERRALS, AND OUR OPEN-DOOR COMMUNITY CAFÉ.





Group	Sessions held in period	No of Attendees	New Attendees
Barge trip	6	45	3
Botanics	2	105	63
Bowling	1	16	2
Cinema	4	47	9
Community Lunch	51	1,614	103
Creative Writing	42	185	1
Drama Group	8	47	6
Fishing	20	193	19
Gardening Group	3	8	3
Laser Tag	1	5	-
Museum/Tour	16	107	8
Recovery Connects	1	13	-
Saughton Park	1	35	15
Scottish Chamber Orchestra	1	5	-
Singing Group	3	31	-
Soft play/Swim	2	50	24
Stirling Castle	1	9	2
Swim/Gym	14	46	3
Torness Power Station	1	5	-
Usher Hall	2	7	1
Walk Talk Snap	1	3	-
Yoga	25	205	11
Zoo	5	223	105
TOTALS =	211	3,004	378

OUR VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERS PLAY A VITAL ROLE ACROSS ERA'S ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS, AND WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE A DEDICATED AND GROWING VOLUNTEER TEAM. OVER THE PAST YEAR, VOLUNTEERS HAVE SUPPORTED FIREWORKS EVENTS, THE COMMUNITY CAFÉ, THE FISHING GROUP, KARAOKE AND SOCIAL EVENINGS, OUR STEERING GROUP, AND MOST RECENTLY, THE REFURBISHMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OF OUR NEW BUILDING.



**FISHING CAR BOOT
SALE**



**FIREWORKS NIGHT
@ ARNISTON HOUSE**

I never thought I'd get the opportunity to volunteer doing something I love!

COMMUNITY IMPACT



WHILE PHOTOGRAPHS AND EVENTS CAPTURE THE ENERGY AND POSITIVITY OF ERA, THEY ONLY TELL PART OF THE STORY. THE DEEPER IMPACT LIES IN THE CONFIDENCE, BELONGING, STABILITY, AND HOPE THAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS DESCRIBE EXPERIENCING THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PROJECT.

"ERA has been an absolute lifesaver for me. It introduced me to wonderful people, some of whom I now consider close friends. It has supported me throughout my recovery and given me opportunities to take part in amazing activities and experience a better side of life. I would absolutely recommend it to anyone." - Johan

MANY PEOPLE SPEAK ABOUT FINALLY FEELING ACCEPTED AND CONNECTED AFTER YEARS OF ISOLATION.

"I never felt like I quite fitted in anywhere, something that followed me for most of my life. When I first met ERA, I could immediately feel how welcoming and easy-going it was. The focus wasn't on how bad things had been, but on where life could go next. Connecting with others has been the main thing that changed my life, and ERA gave me the chance to do that." - Arthur

ABOVE ALL, COMMUNITY MEMBERS CONSISTENTLY DESCRIBE ERA AS A PLACE OF ACCEPTANCE, OPPORTUNITY, AND HOPE FOR A DIFFERENT FUTURE.

"ERA has helped change my life. I don't know where I would be without the support. I've met new friends, discovered new activities, and really enjoyed volunteering and helping the project grow." - Alison

WHILE ERA IS OFTEN SEEN AS A VIBRANT, WELCOMING, AND ENJOYABLE PLACE FOR PEOPLE IN RECOVERY, ITS IMPACT REACHES FAR BEYOND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES. ERA PROMOTES MENTAL WELLBEING, CONFIDENCE, SELF-WORTH, PERSONAL GROWTH, AND A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY – HELPING INDIVIDUALS BUILD MEANINGFUL AND FULFILLING LIVES IN RECOVERY.

PERHAPS THIS STATEMENT FROM COMMUNITY MEMBER PAT EXPLAINS IT BEST:

"I have been attending ERA activities for some time now. I find the staff to be very caring, sensitive and understanding to people suffering the plight of addiction.

Their professional caring attitude has helped me hugely in my battle with alcohol addiction and in helping to overcome it. Their activities are a great assistance for me and others to realise there is always hope and that we are not alone. It's also a good, healthy and fun social environment too. I cannot praise and recommend ERA staff more highly for all the care and excellent work they do."



BOWLING



ZOO

THE FUTURE

NOW THAT THE ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS TO OUR BUILDING AT ANNADALE STREET LANE HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS HAVE MOVED INTO THE NEXT EXCITING STAGE: TRANSFORMING THE SPACE INTO A WELCOMING AND INSPIRING COMMUNITY HUB.

WORKING ALONGSIDE A PROFESSIONAL DESIGNER, WE HAVE INVOLVED COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN SHAPING EVERY ASPECT OF THE INTERIOR DESIGN, FROM FLOOR TO CEILING. IN KEEPING WITH ERA'S ETHOS OF COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP, THE DESIGN PROCESS HAS BEEN COLLABORATIVE THROUGHOUT, ENSURING THE BUILDING REFLECTS THE CREATIVITY, IDENTITY, AND EXPERIENCES OF THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY ITSELF.

WE ARE NOW IN THE FINAL STAGES OF PAINTING, PREPARING MURALS, AND PURCHASING FURNITURE, AND WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO OPENING THE COMPLETED SPACE IN THE COMING WEEKS.



DESIGN IDEAS



ERA BUILDING