

**Recovery College – 8/5/24**

The courses are fantastic, handy that we request slides for work. You can choose the courses and therefore be treated like an adult not a patient. Being able to get educated with a range of different problems is brilliant. We're looking for education on how to better ourselves in the outside world.

Group setting is helpful, we get to make friends with others in the service that don't pass judgement. Everyone here has lived experience.

Two years ago, I didn't want to be here. I first attended and sat in the corner silently. It was recommended by Talking Therapies. I started 'waking up' as I got into the service and started making friends. There is so much support here – we all have so much in common. Here we have sessions together – we might not share personal info, but we're connected to each other, and we all feel like we're not alone.

When you have mental health bubble you feel like you're floating, and the RC has brought me back down. I have passion now because of the RC.

The RC has become an anchor for me and now that we are facing a closure, I feel very uneasy and no longer safe. Recovery isn't instant, this place makes me feel safe and protected. It started with the staff, even the receptionist put me at ease at once.

The RC has been a huge support for me. It has reasserted my brain. Meeting other people in a similar situation gives you an air of comfort. It provides a natural feeling of openness. I feel like I NEED the RC to get out and leave the house. Please don't take it away.

Some of us have written to MPs but feel like it will fall on death ears. We need to save the RC.

I have been once to the Man Cave but felt really intimidated as I was surrounded by big guys and felt like the little man. Here I feel like I'm part of the team not a member of the crowd. The level of maturity at the RC is different – we have people from all kinds of different backgrounds.

The boundaries of conversation here is brilliant. We don't end up triggering each other with certain words. Everyone sticks to them. In other places there are no limits to what you say, which can be very confronting for people.

## Healthwatch Milton Keynes – MK Recovery College

Coming to the RC and completing some of the courses gives you a massive sense of achievement and in some cases a reason to live.

Being able to come back is great. There is an open door which is a massive help. I've started to advocate for the RC because of the work they have done for me.

The RC has kept me away from the Campbell Centre which is somewhere I didn't want to go. When I'm here, I don't feel like I'm going crazy.

My daughter is one of the success stories here – she came through the doors needing help and not wanting to be alive. She now works for the NHS after being out of work for such a long time. The Rc has given her purpose.

The Recovery College shutting will be bad for lots of people. Personally feel like I will resort back to a bad place and not being able to leave my house. The staff as well, who are brilliant, will be out of a job too. It has opened doors for me that I thought were permanently closed to me.

I felt really lonely before as I don't have any family around and lost friends. Even after three days of being here I feel more myself and not the shell I am when I'm by myself. I feel very lonely knowing that the RC might not be around anymore.

We hope that no one who provides the funding ever has to be in a situation where they have to visit a place like the RC. They will see how important it is to people. Money can't buy this kind of service, it's priceless. To take away the funding for this is almost criminal.

Considering mental health is becoming more and more important, it simply doesn't make sense to us. Services like this are needed.

Mark has been key to the RC's success. He has picked up so many people that have been almost down and out and sent them back into the world as more confident people.

It would have been great to have an open forum with the fund providers so they could see the impact of the RC has on us.