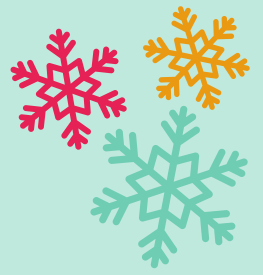




**SMART Recovery®**

Life beyond addiction



## Christmas Newsletter 2024

WISHING YOU ALL  
A JOYFUL  
FESTIVE PERIOD  
& A HUGE  
THANK YOU!

From all the staff at UK SMART Recovery, a heartfelt thank you for your continued commitment and energy in delivering SMART meetings, both in the community and within your organisations.

You really do make a massive difference to all of your participants, who use the SMART tools to achieve and maintain their recovery, and live fulfilling and balanced lives.

Without our wonderful partners, facilitators and volunteers, our charity wouldn't be able to reach the people who need us most, and we're so grateful to every one of you for your hard work and dedication. Thank you!

### ☆ STAYING SAFE IN RECOVERY AT CHRISTMAS TIME ☆

Make plans for the main days of the Christmas period.

Try not to spend it alone, unless being alone is genuinely the healthiest option for you.

Be honest about your feelings concerning Christmas and the New Year. There's nothing wrong with admitting that you're finding it tough.

Try to avoid people who are likely to encourage you to make poor choices.

It's OK to make an excuse not to go somewhere or spend time with a particular person or group if it's going to keep you safe.

Have a routine; get up at a decent time, eat regularly, drink water, get some fresh air.

Bored and sick of TV and mince pies? Phone someone or go for a walk. Switch things up.

If you get invited to a party and feel a bit nervous about going, take a supportive friend with you.

Be honest about your triggers and turn down invites to high-risk events.

Come up with and practice a standard response as to why you are not drinking or using.

If you go somewhere which you know could put you in a vulnerable situation, plan your escape route.

At parties, keep a soft drink in your hands at all times. You'll be less likely to be offered a drink.

Keep in regular contact with supportive others. Remember the importance of connection!

Attend a SMART Recovery meeting. Even (especially!) when you don't feel like it.

Don't give up. Accept any moments of sadness, and remember that they will pass.

If you feel like you are going to lapse, reach out for help. Call anyone you can.

If you do lapse or relapse, don't panic – all is not lost. Reach out for help ASAP.

Use your SMART tools. They work!

And remember... it's just a short period of time out of a whole year, and will be over really soon.



UKSR Central Office will be closed from 5pm Friday 20th December until 9am Thursday 2nd January.



# UKSR 2024 ROUND UP



As we reflect on the year, we feel immensely proud of all our small charity has achieved during 2024, with some of the highlights being...

In January we launched our first ever Volunteer Recognition Award Scheme and opened up voting for the categories of -

- Significant Achievement Award (won by Angela Reid)
- Volunteer of the Year Award (won by Dr Manrutt Wongakaew, AKA Manny)
- Annual Ambassador Award (won by Hydebank Wood YOI, Start 360)
- Campaigner of the Year Award (won by Ben Delija)
- Leadership Volunteer of the Year Award (won by Ian Preece).



The whole campaign, which culminated in our online ceremony at the end of September, re-affirmed the incredible work which takes place on a daily basis around the UK on behalf of SMART, and was a wonderfully uplifting event. The fact that we deliberated for so long over the votes is a testament to the vast pool of volunteers who received nominations for their dedication and hard work. In fact, we found it so hard to narrow it down that we ended up creating a sub award for Volunteer of the Year and awarded the following facilitators a Highly Commended Award each -



Robbie Lyttle; Steve Saunders; Charlie Sampson; Richard Quinn; Mick Hirst; Dan Murphy; Louise McColgan; Matt Flegg; Joe Doherty; Michelle Honey.



The ceremony also saw the first ever showing of our SMART Family & Friends Documentary, which moved many in the audience to tears. Watch out for the official launch of the documentary in 2025 (and if you can't wait until then, you can find a short sneak peak of it on our website!) Big thanks to all of the F&F participants who shared their stories on the documentary, and to Malcolm Moore and Tom Kent for producing and directing it.

Also in January, the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund awarded UK SMART Recovery with funding to roll out the Veterans Programme across England. The grant is from the Reaching and Supporting Armed Forces Communities fund, and has enabled us to launch our SMART Veterans Programme, which has been developed by military veterans and has its own training module and bespoke publication.

Fast forward to April and we welcomed our new Operations Manager, Sam Parker, to the team. Sam quickly established himself as a valued member of staff and is making great strides to help UKSR grow and flourish, as well as being fantastic support for the whole team.

In July we were ecstatic to announce that we won the 'Addiction Recovery Training Charity of the Year 2024', from Acquisition International. This is the second consecutive year we've won this award, and we couldn't be any happier about it. It's a huge honour to be recognised in this way, and it really does make us incredibly proud.

September saw us attend the FavorUK Recovery Walk, this year held in London. As always, the annual event was a wonderful celebration of recovery and we were surrounded by happy, smiling faces everywhere we looked. As we all know, it's so important that recovery is visible and nowhere is it displayed so heartwarmingly as it was at the Recovery Walk.

And finally, just a couple of weeks ago, we were overjoyed to announce that we have again reached 500+ SMART meetings per week in the UK. Prior to the pandemic this amount of weekly meetings was normal for us. However, in March 2020 we dropped - for obvious reasons - to just five meetings per week. It's taken a lot of hard work and over four years to get us back to pre-pandemic levels, but thanks to all of you, our partners, facilitators and volunteers, we've done it. What an incredible way to end a truly fantastic year!



A full list of all of our National Online Meetings, including SMART Recovery, SMART Family & Friends, & SMART Veterans, being held over the festive period, can be found here:

<https://smartrecovery.org.uk/2024/12/10/festive-season-2024/>