



# Foreword



Welcome to our Trustee Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2024. In what is only our second full year as a charity, the organisation has gone from strength to strength and, more importantly, has been able to help so many people who suffer from drug and alcohol addiction. The importance of what Harbour Ayrshire delivers in the community is highlighted further by the recent statistics on drug deaths in Scotland, the highest in Europe.

Although the past year has been a successful one, it is tinged with great sadness at the loss of our co-founder, trustee, treasurer and friend, John Gilardi. John lost his life in a tragic car accident, on 23 May 2024, and his death has been profoundly felt by all involved with Harbour Ayrshire and also by his family and many friends. Harbour Ayrshire will forever be in debt to John. As part of our future fundraising strategy, we have created the "My Hearts with Harbour" fundraising campaign in John's memory. This will be core to raising ongoing funding to continue the great work John started and we thank all the companies and individuals who have already shown their support.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to all of our funders, big and small. Without your support it would be impossible to deliver the services and results that have been achieved.

The trustees would like to thank our staff and our volunteers, for their continued support and ongoing desire and enthusiasm in helping to drive the charity forward. In this, our second year, we have doubled the number of employees from 4 to 8, recruiting a Digital Inclusion Officer, a Recovery Practitioner for East Ayrshire, a Fundraiser and a Community Support Coordinator. These additional roles have been vital in ensuring that Harbour Ayrshire has a wider-reach in the community and is able to help more people. Our staff support some 60 volunteers, many of whom have lived experience and have previously received support from Harbour Ayrshire. Our volunteers are key to ensuring that we can continue to support the vast number of individuals who require our help.

Looking forward, it is still Harbour Ayrshire's longer-term intention to have a residential rehabilitation unit in Ayrshire. In the shorter term, and following two years of significant growth, it is important that we consolidate our current position and make sure that we can continue to provide the range of services on offer. This will involve attracting additional trustees and making sure that we continue to have sufficient funding in place to underpin staff wages as well the cost of services provided in our communities.

Harbour Ayrshire has and will continue to change many people's lives for the better. I hope you enjoy reading through this year's Annual Report.

**David Hughes** Chair of Trustees, Harbour Ayrshire



# **Contents**

Foreword	2
John Gilardi 1974 - 2024	4
Our Story	4
Our Trustees	5
Our Second Year	6
Peer Support Groups	7
Harbour's Heartache	11
Harbour Sleep Out	12
Funding Partners and Organisations	14
Financials	15
Harbour's Heartbreak	16
Drug Deaths in Scotland 2023	17
Education and Employment Highlights	
The Next Twelve Months: Our Vision 2024 - 2025	19
Case Studies	20
Our Vision, Mission and Values	23





# "All of us, under one light"

No one in our community is excluded from the support that Harbour Ayrshire offers.

#### Cover Image: Fresnel Lens

Pronounced 'Frey Nel', this lens represented a monumental step forward in lighthouse technology and maritime safety. Hundreds of pieces of specially cut glass surround a lamp bulb, focusing rays of scattered light into a single, intense beam. The light could be seen at greater distances, allowing mariners a greater degree of safety in their navigations to the shore.



John Gilardi

1974 – 2024

He was also a Trustee and

our Treasurer.

Tragically on 23 May 2024, John lost his life in a car

accident, only six days after our inaugural 'Sleep Out'

event, much of which was

organised by John.

Harbour Ayrshire will forever

be indebted to John for his

kindness, enthusiasm and

expertise and we shall all

miss him greatly.

'My Heart's with Harbour -The John Gilardi Legacy', will

be an integral part of Harbour

Ayrshire's future fundraising

plans, allowing us to continue

the great work that John

started and help us achieve

our longer-term strategy,

which includes funding for a

residential rehabilitation

unit in Ayrshire.

# Our Story

### Why were we established?

In response to the devastating impact that drug and alcohol related deaths are having on our communities. Harbour Ayrshire was set up to deliver (in partnership) a range of solution-focused options, while creating opportunities for some of the most vulnerable people in our society, allowing them to live a life free of the



Clive Kennedy, Founder of Harbour Ayrshire

stigma and suffering of addiction.

On a personal note, I am immensely proud of the incredible progress Harbour Ayrshire has made in its second year. Witnessing the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supported individuals has been truly inspiring. Despite facing significant challenges, the resilience and compassion within our Harbour community continue to shine brightly. It's an honour to be part of an organisation that transforms lives and brings hope to those who need it most.

#### Who do we help?

Our target group consists of individuals who are currently experiencing alcohol and/ or drug addiction and inter-related issues, primarily within Ayrshire.

Our mid to long-term strategy is to establish an affordable residential treatment centre in Ayrshire. As part of this, we are currently fostering relationships with strategic partners to provide a 'fit for purpose' facility that will house individuals who currently live chaotic lifestyles. Harbour Ayrshire Residential will provide a safe and secure environment, free of alcohol and drugs, for anyone needing to achieve and maintain recovery.

There will be intense support offered before entry (prehab), evidence-led therapeutic models of recovery during their stay and a rigorous aftercare plan when leaving rehab, all aimed at providing the best opportunity for long-term and sustainable recovery.

## Our Trustees

Harbour Ayrshire is governed by a committed, forward thinking and strategically minded board of trustees, dedicated to steering the Charity through a safe and successful voyage. The Board provide a wide range of skills and expertise from medical, legal, financial and business backgrounds.



### David Hughes (Chair)

Retired Managing Director (Scotland and Northern Ireland) for Abrdn Financial Planning and Advice, and previously Managing Director for The Munro Partnership Ltd. David is a Chartered Financial Planner and a Fellow of The Personal Finance Society. Originally from Glasgow, David has lived in Ayrshire for the past 17 years.

#### John Fulton (Vice Chair)

John is the founder of Carters, a boutique legal firm specialising in real estate development, real estate finance and commercial matters. John was a former Partner in Gilson Gray LLP, one of Scotland's leading law firms, where he developed a strong commercial and business acumen, allowing him to understand and differentiate between the key technical, legal and commercial realities which Harbour faces, on a daily basis, as it strives to achieve its goals in an ever growing financially demanding environment.





### Claire Gilroy MBChB MBA (Secretary)

Claire has over 8 years experience as a Specialty Doctor in Emergency Medicine. She is the Clinical Lead for Service Development and Improvement in NHS Ayrshire and Arran and a graduate of the Scottish Quality and Safety Fellowship. Claire has vast experience in developing and implementing robust governance processes within NHS Scotland.

#### John Gilardi (Treasurer)

Managing Partner and owner of K M Stewart & Co. Accountants & Business Advisors for over 20 years. John started with K M Stewart in 1994 nearly 30 years ago and has enjoyed the journey form employee to partner and now as owner. John is from Ayr and the firm provide advice and accountancy services to businesses across Scotland.

\*please see obituary on previous page.





# Our Second Year



As we look back on our second year, Harbour Ayrshire has grown stronger, evolving and building on the solid foundations laid during our first year.

Supporting individuals and families affected by addiction is never without its challenges, but the unwavering dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters has enabled us to make incredible strides. This year has been defined by resilience, collaboration, and a shared commitment to transforming lives.

This report captures our achievements, the expansion of our initiatives, and the profound impact we are making in our

community. Together, we are paving the way to recovery, fostering hope, and creating lasting change for some of society's most vulnerable individuals.

The people we've supported as they transitioned from addiction to living free from substances remain our most meaningful successes. Among them are reunited families, empowered employees, and valued community members whose lives have been forever changed by our work. Yet, at Harbour, we know that achieving abstinence is only the beginning.

This year, we've been privileged to witness individuals not only maintain their recovery but thrive, growing into active contributors to their communities. Through our volunteer programmes, many have rediscovered purpose, developed confidence, and taken bold steps toward brighter futures. These personal journeys of transformation stand as a testament to the power of resilience, support, and hope.

# Thank You...

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to those who have made this year such an incredible success:

**TO OUR STAFF:** Your dedication, compassion, and tireless efforts are the backbone of Harbour. You go above and beyond every day, and we are endlessly grateful for all that you do.

**TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:** You are the heart and soul of Harbour. None of our achievements would have been possible without your selfless contributions. Your passion and commitment inspires us all.

TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS: Thank you for believing in us and standing by us on this journey. Your trust and generosity have made a profound difference in the lives of so many.

**TO OUR TRUSTEES:** Thank you for your unwavering support and guidance. Your leadership has been the bedrock of our progress and growth.

Here's to another year of hope, resilience, and positive change!



# Peer Support Groups

In year two, Harbour Ayrshire facilitated 11 peer support groups, spanning from Girvan to Kilbirnie and covering the length and breadth of Ayrshire.

These groups support both men and women, providing safe spaces that foster the formation of positive relationships within the groups and, subsequently, in the wider communities. The groups also serve family members, often the silent sufferers of addiction, offering them much-needed support and understanding. In addition, the groups address areas beyond addiction, including mental health, homelessness, and bereavement.

The groups now include five men's groups, three women's groups and three family groups, offering support to family members with loved ones in addiction. Group attendances average 10-12 people per group per week, meaning Harbour supports approximately 110-132 individuals weekly.

Over 1200 different individuals have benefited from attending the Harbour groups. Many of these cases undoubtedly involved alcohol and drug-related issues, demonstrating Harbour's vital role in addressing addiction and its associated challenges within the community.

# Men's Groups



# MOT GROUPS (Men Only Time)

There are five
MOT Groups, based in
Ayr, Kilmarnock, Irvine,
Girvan and Kilbirnie.

AVERAGE WEEKLY
ATTENDANCE
10 – 15

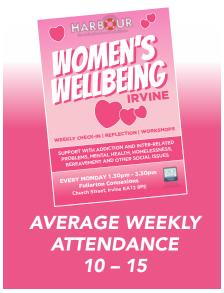








# Women's Groups

















# Family Groups

















# Out of Hours Helpline





The Helpline received 8 - 10 calls per week from people in crisis or their family members., We have 10 volunteers on the Helpline, with most calls being taken between 5pm and 7pm in the evening.

# The Community Support Vehicle (CSV)



10



The CSV supports 10 - 12 people/families per week, who fit the criteria of homelessness, fleeing violence or domestic abuse.



# Harbour's Heartache: A Sobering Reminder of the Gravity of Addiction

This year, Harbour has faced moments of profound sadness and loss, a stark reminder of the grave challenges addiction brings and the devastating impact it leaves behind. While we celebrate recovery journeys and successes, we must also reflect on the lives lost, acknowledging the heartache felt by families, friends, and the Harbour community.

#### Helen Castle

We said goodbye to a dear volunteer, Helen Castle, who passed away due to health complications.

Helen was a cherished member of our team, known for her kindness and unwavering dedication. Her absence is deeply felt by everyone who had the privilege of working alongside her.

#### Robbie Barr

In addition, we mourn the loss of four supported individuals, whose struggles with addiction ended in tragedy.



Among them was Robbie Barr, a long-term friend of Harbour who had recently embraced recovery after two decades of addiction. Robbie's courage and progress on his journey inspired many, but he was sadly diagnosed with cancer, which took his life before he could fully realise the brighter future he envisioned. His passing has left a profound void, highlighting both the resilience of those in recovery and the fragility of their path.

The loss of these individuals is a heartbreaking reminder of the devastating impact addiction has on lives, families, and communities. At Harbour, we understand the ripple effect of these losses and the toll it takes on the friends and loved ones left behind.

#### Harbour Reaches Out

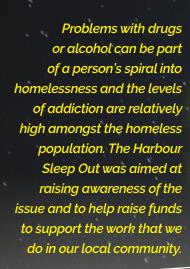
In each case, we reached out to families, offering what little support we could during their time of need. However, it also underscores the need for continued resources and support to prevent more lives from being lost to addiction.

This section of the report is not just a tribute to those we have lost but also a call to action. Addiction is a battle that requires comprehensive support, long-term commitment, and sufficient funding to make meaningful changes in the lives of vulnerable individuals. Harbour remains steadfast in its mission to offer hope, healing, and help to those who need it most, but we need your support to do so.

Let this be a reminder of why Harbour's work is vital, why it must grow, and why together, we must do everything possible to prevent future heartaches.







# HARBUUR SLEE



# IN PARTNERSHIP WITH









The event was a tremendous success, with a magnificent turnout and the sun blazing down on the day. It was well-attended by members of the community, including representatives from local businesses, who actively participated and supported the cause. The atmosphere was vibrant, filled with positivity and camaraderie.

#### Activities and Highlights

Participants enjoyed a variety of engaging activities, including the Harbour Olympics, with events like baseball and running races being notable examples. These activities brought people together and highlighted the spirit of teamwork and community.









Food was generously provided free of charge by Michael O'Neil, owner of Ghillie Dhu, Ayr, and Martin McGlone, owner of Venice Cafe, ensuring everyone was well-fed and cared for. Their contributions exemplified the incredible community spirit that Harbour inspires.

The event received excellent media coverage, with Tom Grant from West FM and Euan Ruddick from Ayrshire Daily News helping to amplify awareness about Harbour Ayrshire's mission and the challenges faced by those struggling with addiction and homelessness.



The day included a touching balloon release to remember lost loved ones, creating a poignant moment of reflection and unity for all attendees.

Volunteers shared their heartwarming journeys through Harbour, moving and inspiring attendees with stories of resilience and transformation. These testimonials highlighted the vital role Harbour plays in supporting individuals on their recovery journey.

The event concluded with a hearty breakfast roll, a gesture of warmth and community spirit to end the day on a positive note.

The Harbour Sleepout not only raised significant funds but also strengthened community ties, showcased the power of collective action, and provided a platform to share inspiring stories of recovery. It was a day to remember, reflecting the core values of Harbour Ayrshire - hope, resilience, and community.

#### Fundraising Success

The Sleepout event raised an impressive £30,000, which will go directly towards supporting Harbour's ongoing projects, including group and 1:1 support, as well as the operation of critical resources such as the Community Support Vehicle and minibus services.

# Funders

# **Our Funders**

We are grateful to the many funders who have supported our activities in the last twelve months, allowing us to grow our unparalleled rehabilitation programme.























ADP North Ayrshire

Aria Fund

Asda Foundation

Barrack Charitable Trust

Community Capacity Resilience Fund

Community Mental Health Wellbeing Fund, East

Community Mental Health Wellbeing Fund, North

Community Mental Health Wellbeing Fund, South

South Ayrshire Council Coastal Communities

Diana and Allan Morgenthau Charitable Trust

East Ayrshire Council

Elizabeth Drummond Charitable Trust

Carrick Futures

**Garfield Weston Foundation** 

Himat Tanna Charitable Trust

**Hufstetler Foundation** 

Lennox Hannay Charitable Trust

The Goodman Foundation

**MPMH** Construction

North Ayrshire Ventures Trust

South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

South Ayrshire Council Charitable Trust

South Ayrshire Council Financial Inclusion Fund

Scottish Children's Lottery

Scottish Council Voluntary Organisation

Stafford Trust

Sydney Black Charitable Trust

Tesco Groundworks

Westfield Health

Wood Foundation

The Arran Community Trust

The Council of Voluntary Organisations East Ayrshire



# **Financials**

ANALYSIS OF INCOME 2024	
Restricted Funds	£221,661
Unrestricted Funds	£84,545
Total	£306,206

ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE 2024	
Charitable Activities Restricted	£204,162
Charitable Activities Unrestricted	£17,081
Total	£221,243

FUNDS HELD AT 31st JULY 2024	
Restricted	£113,524
Unrestricted	£73,027

**NOTE:** A significant amount of restricted funds held in bank are to pay fixed salaries in Year 3.

The above accounts are at 31 July 2024 and since then, we have appointed two new Trustees, Clive Kennedy and Stephen Usher, who have also both approved our independently inspected year end accounts.





# Harbour's Heartbreak

In recent months, Scotland has faced an overwhelming and heart-wrenching surge in suspected drug deaths, with the latest figures showing a grim reality for communities across the country. According to the Scottish Government's quarterly report on suspected drug deaths from January to March 2024, there were 279 suspected drug deaths - an increase from 248 in the previous quarter and among the highest levels recorded in recent years. These figures highlight a 13% rise from the same period last year, underscoring the devastating impact of addiction on individuals, families, and entire neighbourhoods.

These statistics are not just numbers - they represent lives lost, families torn apart, and the heartbreak that ripples through our communities.

For Harbour, whose mission is to support those affected by addiction, these statistics hit especially hard. We are not just witnessing the effects of this crisis; we are living it, day in and day out. Tragically, we have had to deal with the loss of several members of the Harbour community including individuals we support, their family members and volunteers. These deaths are a painful reminder of the relentless nature of this public health crisis and reinforces the need for Harbour to continue to diversify to ensure we can meet the needs of our whole community.

Addiction does not discriminate. It touches the lives of young and old, rich and poor, employed and unemployed. The loss of those we have supported is a stark reminder of how easily addiction can claim a life, regardless of background or circumstance. Every death represents a person with hopes, dreams, and loved ones left behind to mourn their loss. The emotional toll on families is immense, often leaving them struggling to cope with the grief and trauma that follows.

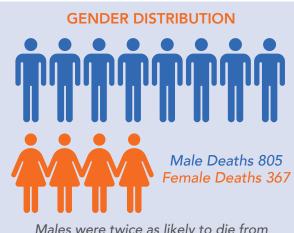
Throughout our second year, Harbour has been a beacon of hope and a vital lifeline for many. Our work extends far beyond offering support; we build relationships, provide a sense of community, and help individuals find a path to recovery. Without our interventions, these already devastating statistics could be much worse. We are deeply committed to our mission, but the challenges we face are growing. As we continue to confront this crisis, we recognise that we cannot do it alone and are grateful to all of our volunteers, funders, partners and supporters for all they do.

We have worked tirelessly alongside local authorities, healthcare providers, and community leaders to advocate for better policies, increased funding, and more comprehensive rehabilitation services. However, the scale of the problem demands even greater action.

We are committed to doing everything in our power to prevent further loss and to support those who are struggling. But we cannot do it without your help. To get involved as a volunteer or to support our work by doing a fundraising event please visit our website: www.harbourayrshire.co.uk

# Drug Death Statistics in Scotland 2023

In 2023, Scotland recorded **1,172** drug misuse deaths, marking a **12% increase** from the **1,051 deaths** reported in 2022.



Males were twice as likely to die from drug misuse as females.



45 YEARS OLD

The average age of those dying from drug misuse has increased from 32 in 2000 to 45 in 2023.



#### **SUBSTANCES**

Opiates
and opioids,
including heroin,
morphine and
methadone,
were implicated
in 80% of all
drug misuse



Individuals in the MOST DEPRIVED AREAS were MORE THAN 15 TIMES AS LIKELY TO DIE from drug misuse compared to those in the least deprived areas.

National Records of Scotland

#### AYRSHIRE SPECIFIC DATA

83

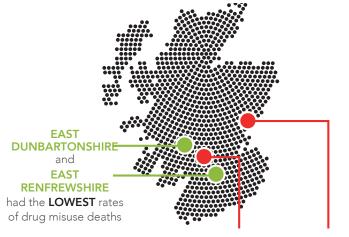
suspected drug-related deaths (decrease from 93 in 2022.)

Ayr Advertiser

#### **NORTH AYRSHIRE**

36

drug-related deaths in 2023, equating to 32.8 deaths per 100,000 people, making it the fourth highest rate in Scotland Ardrossan Herald



GLASGOW CITY and DUNDEE CITY
had the HIGHEST rates of
drug misuse deaths

These statistics highlight the ongoing challenges Scotland, and specifically Ayrshire, face in addressing drug misuse and its associated fatalities



# Education Highlights

12 individuals have enrolled in educational programmes, expanding their knowledge and skills to prepare for future careers.

Notable pathways include the following training programmes:

- South Ayrshire Peer Worker Programme: Equipping participants with the skills and experience to support others in recovery.
- North Ayrshire Pathway to Progress: Providing a structured development pathway for individuals looking to build skills for future employment.
- East Ayrshire (Ayrshire College): Offering creative and vocational training, including photography courses, to open doors to new career opportunities.

# **Employment Highlights**

A diverse range of employment successes have been achieved, with a total of 30 individuals securing meaningful roles:

- Some participants have returned to work after long-term sick leave, overcoming significant personal and health challenges.
- Others have regained employment after years of struggling with addiction and instability.
- A few individuals celebrated milestones by securing their first-ever job, marking a pivotal moment in their recovery and independence.

Employment opportunities within Harbour include:

- One individual employed as Harbour's Digital Inclusion Officer, providing vital support to digitally excluded individuals.
- One individual employed as a Recovery Practitioner in North Ayrshire, strengthening Harbour's service delivery.
- One trainee currently in training with Harbour to become an Addiction Worker, progressing through a structured development pathway.
- Additionally, Harbour has supported three trainee paramedics from the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) on placement, contributing to their practical training and awareness of recovery-focused services.

This achievement reflects the dedication of Harbour Ayrshire to creating opportunities for beneficiaries, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and lead independent, fulfilling lives. Harbour continues to support individuals in overcoming barriers to employment and education, offering tailored support and guidance every step of the way.



# The Next Twelve Months: Our Vision 2024 - 2025

Over the next year, we'll focus on consolidating what we've already built and strengthening the infrastructure to ensure both staff and volunteers are secure and supported. This will allow us to grow and improve how we help people and communities.

# Support Groups within Hospitals

One of our main priorities is to establish our peer support groups within hospitals. In doing this, we can make sure people have continuity of care when they leave hospital, giving them a better chance of staying on track and succeeding in their recovery.



#### Extend Our Reach

We're also determined to reach more rural areas. A big part of this will involve using the minibus to bring people from rural communities into the bigger towns, where they can access support groups and services. This will break down the barriers caused by isolation and help people feel more connected.



#### Raise Awareness

On top of this, we'll keep pushing forward with early intervention work. We'll focus on getting awareness presentations into schools and colleges, helping young people understand the impact of addiction.

The goal is to make sure they have the knowledge and support to make healthier choices for their future.

The future for Harbour Ayrshire and the people we support looks positive.



## Case Studies

The successes and achievements of Harbour Ayrshire are not measured solely by facts and figures. The most rewarding aspect of the work that the Charity does is when we read real success stories, from real people, who have made positive (and sometimes life-saving) changes to their lives.

#### **CASE STUDY #1**

I am a 65-year-old man who has experienced profound personal challenges and transformation. My journey has been marked by the tragic loss of my two sons to addiction and the deep impact of being the son of an alcoholic father.

For many years, I struggled with unresolved grief, loss, and resentment toward my father, all while feeling isolated and unsupported. I had no knowledge of any available support services, and no one signposted me toward any form of help. This lack of support led to chronic mental ill health and a diagnosis of PTSD. As a result, my relationships - both at work and in my personal life - deteriorated.

Everything began to change last year when I was invited to attend New Beginnings (East Ayrshire). This opportunity became a turning point in my life. By attending regularly, I had the chance to engage with the shared experiences of people in recovery from addiction. Little by little, I gained a deeper understanding of addiction and the addict's experience. This understanding was transformative. It allowed me to reconcile my negative feelings towards my father and my sons. I found a sense of peace of mind and experienced an improvement in my overall well-being. My outlook on life shifted, and my mental health improved significantly. I was able to make personal changes that I once believed were beyond my reach.

Feeling inspired to give back, I decided to become a volunteer within the New Beginnings (North) family group. My goal was to offer support to parents with children in addiction, just as I had been supported. By sharing my experiences, I aimed to let them know that they are not alone and that they, too, can acquire the skills to cope with their loved one's addiction. Importantly, I wanted to show them that they could recover from the emotional and mental impact of addiction within their family. My role as a volunteer has been deeply fulfilling and has allowed me to turn my pain into purpose.

The ongoing impact of Harbour's intervention in my life has been

nothing short of empowering.

I have gone from being emotionally stunted and insular to becoming an outgoing and happy person. This newfound positivity has had a ripple effect on my relationships with family and friends. One event in particular stands out as a symbol of my transformation. Last year, I traveled to New Zealand to attend my sister's 60th surprise birthday party. Before my involvement with Harbour, I would have never dreamed of making such a trip. But the support and encouragement I received gave me the confidence to go.

That trip to New Zealand turned out to be lifechanging in ways I couldn't have anticipated. While I was there, I met the woman of my dreams, and my life changed completely. Three months ago, I made the bold decision to move to New Zealand to spend the rest of my life with her. I even brought my three dogs with me, and to top it all off, we bought a horse together for my arrival. Today, I can proudly say that I am living my best life - something I never thought possible.

None of this would have been possible without Harbour. Their support gave me the tools to understand addiction, reconcile my feelings about my father and my sons, and rebuild my life. They helped me grow, heal, and become the person I am today. I've gone from living in emotional darkness to living a life full of love, connection, and adventure. For that, I will always be grateful.





#### CASE STUDY # 2

I came to Harbour in January 2023 and was alcohol dependent, my kids were in foster care, I had no confidence, my mental and physical health was deteriorating and I was absolutely broken, I just didn't see a future.

I had been drinking since I was 13 and in 2017 I had a spell in rehab, basically for everyone else, to try to get my family back. I didn't even last the 2 weeks I was in there and I was back drinking again.

After a few years of continuous drinking I managed to stop for a little while and had my son, but I found myself drinking every day and night and became alcohol dependant again.

I then had my youngest son and my life became unmanageable. I was totally broken and had so much guilt and hated my life and how it had all turned out. Social work became involved and my sons were placed into foster care whilst I attempted to get sober, although I just couldn't stop drinking.

It wasn't until Christmas 2022 when I wasn't seeing my sons on Christmas Day that I felt a pain that I can't even describe. There and then, I made a vow to get myself help. I had been referred into all different services and my worker in 'We Are With You' told me about a woman's group that a charity 'Harbour Ayrshire' had opened and thought it would be good for me, although I really couldn't think of anything worse than sitting with other women talking about my problems, as I felt I was just a burden to anyone and I'd lost hope for myself.

I eventually asked my sister to come along with me to Harbour's 'EmpowerHer' group in Ayr. All the women were lovely but I was a bit apprehensive as I thought there's no way I could be this happy without a substance! They just gave this loving, caring feeling and I went back every Friday and started to grow relationships with them.

I was also on a waiting list to go back into Woodland View Rehab and the women were all very supportive and kept me calm throughout the full process. They all kept in contact and came and visited me.

After leaving rehab, I was straight back to the group and also started going to CA. I was becoming stronger my physical and mental health and I'd also had healthy relationships with all the women that went to the group an they were quickly



becoming really close good friends.

Istarted my 12 steps with my sponsor, who is also one of the female volunteers at Harbour, and I loved it. I became a helper within 'EmpowerHer' and, after being sober for five months, I got my kids back full-time. When I was 6 months sober, I asked to become a Volunteer with Harbour and completed my training. I was so excited at being able to give back to the women and to help the ladies that had helped me was a really good feeling.

I started to feel like I was on the right journey in my life and that I wanted to grow further and do this line of work. I spoke to Vicki and Eddie at Harbour and explained this was something I was really eager to do and they gave me some advice and told me about the traineeship with the Scottish Drugs Forum. I was called for an interview in Glasgow and received an offer of employment. I couldn't believe it! I asked if I could do my placement with Harbour and was accepted.

I am also a buddy within Harbour and support people going in and out of rehab - just being there for them if they have any problems or just someone to talk to.

I'm currently doing my SVQ Level 2 and I'm really enjoying it and I do three day's placement with Harbour. My confidence and self-esteem have grown so much since I started and I actually feel like I have such a purpose in life and the work we do is amazing it really changes peoples lives.

I now have all my family back. I can be a present mother, sister, daughter and friend. I can use all my past experiences to help other woman and men and give people some hope that we do recover and life can be great again.

Harbour is where I got my first taste of recovery and I'll be forever grateful for walking into EmpowerHer and being shown love and compassion. Harbour is my family and they all play a massive part in my recovery and just my life in general.



#### CASE STUDY # 3

I was an alcoholic for 30 years. Over those decades, I experienced some wonderful moments, but also some deeply difficult ones.

A year ago, my alcoholism had taken such a toll on me that I could barely walk. My liver, kidneys, and heart were failing. I was vomiting blood, fainting, and injuring myself every time I drank. I couldn't eat and lost a significant amount of weight. Most of all, I lost hope.

At my lowest point, my son reached out to Harbour. I was so unwell and defeated that I couldn't do anything for myself. Looking back, I feel incredibly lucky to even be alive to tell my story.

I am deeply grateful for Harbour and the 12-step fellowship. Harbour was a lifeline, calling and supporting me countless times when the doctors couldn't come for home visits. During those first five months, I was in an unimaginable state: I had lost three stone, I was hallucinating, shaking, unable to sleep, and consumed by anger. I was in a dark and lonely place.

Harbour worked tirelessly to help me access the support I needed from doctors, nurses, and addiction services. Paul stepped in as a buddy to guide and support me during this difficult time. He is now not only my sponsor but also a dear friend. Harbour became my network of support, and through their dedication, I finally received the treatment and help I desperately needed.

In December 2022, I was admitted to hospital over Christmas. Following my discharge, I joined the MOT group in Irvine, which marked a pivotal turning point in my recovery journey. I began as a helper within the group, offering support to others in small yet meaningful ways. Gradually, I worked my way up to becoming a group facilitator.

My journey with
Harbour began
as a volunteer in
the very group
where I first found

the strength to start my recovery.

With Harbour's unwavering support, I was able to progress through the programme, which ultimately led to a life-changing opportunity for employment. Through hard work, dedication, and the ongoing encouragement from Harbour, I was offered the chance to join the team as a Recovery Practitioner.

This was a transformative moment for me. The opportunity to work with Harbour and support others on their recovery journeys has given me a sense of purpose and fulfilment I never thought possible. Now, I have the privilege of giving back to the community that played such a vital role in saving my life.

Through Harbour, I've made wonderful friends, shared many laughs, and gained invaluable tools for living a meaningful life. I'm working through my 12-step programme and attending courses, all of which allow me to help others on their journies.

This has truly been a life-changing experience. I owe so much to Harbour for giving me the opportunity to live a sober, fulfilling life.







# **OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES**

#### Our Vision

Harbour Ayrshire will work to empower individuals who are recovering from drug and/or alcohol addiction, assisting them to become independent and supporting their integration back into the community.

### **Our Mission**

We will deliver a variety of support in collaboration with organisations who share our vision and values. We will facilitate group work, one-to-one support, signposting, future wellbeing and activities. We will be guided at all times by people's own shared experience, their recovery journeys, their hopes, and aspirations.

## Our Values

#### **HONESTY**

This will be the foundation of our organisation. Relationships will be built on transparency, openness and sincerity.

#### **COLLABORATION**

We will work with organisations that share our vision and values. We will use a whole-systems approach to bring about sustainable and long-term change for individuals. "It takes a village to raise a child".

#### **INTEGRITY**

We will act in a timely and principled manner, demonstrating confidentiality and respect towards each individual. We will always "say what we do and do what we say".

#### **INDIVIDUALITY**

Everyone in society has their own strengths, abilities, resilience and uniqueness. Individuals who have experienced hardship are no different and we will work with them to develop and nurture these qualities.

#### **EQUALITY**

Positive action is needed to help people and their families who face forms of bias or discrimination. We will work towards removing the barriers and injustices that limit opportunities for people overcoming addiction.



