

# Scottish Families

*Supporting anyone affected by alcohol and drugs across Scotland*

## AUTUMN

October 2019  
info@sfad.org.uk  
www.sfad.org.uk

Helpline:  
08080 10 10 11  
helpline@sfad.org.uk



### Recovery Walk 2019

In a mini blog, Sooze writes about this year's Recovery Walk that took place in Inverness.

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### Routes

The latest round-up of activities, group times and news from our young person's project Routes.

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### Family Recovery College

Our first ever college course is over! Read about the course and our feedback

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### South Lanarkshire Community Events

Recovery Month was an extra exciting and busy month for us here at Scottish Families with a series of asset-based community development Power of Communities events that centred on building whole-family, whole community recovery. In partnership with Liber8, who has been tasked with establishing four Beacons in four localities, we brought together over 100 people over two events to explore local assets and how these could be used to create more of the opportunities required to keep people safe, well and connected.

**Continues p.8-9**

# Autumn

There's been a lot happening with our quirky team over the past few months since our last newsletter. There's been a new staff member, celebrations with cake for birthdays and work anniversaries, and there has been a lot of new projects and events!

We have launched the final report from our year-long project Digital Families which was fun, exciting and very informative (thank you to everyone who took part). We have also been preparing for our latest Connecting Families event – The Dundee Hope Festival on the 19th October. Big thanks to all of the partners who have made this happen (and we're also screening our latest video for #BehindTheNumbers here too).

We have recently launched a new campaign called #MyFamilyMyRights which you can read about in Justina's word from the CEO and also later on in this newsletter. We're going to be having events in the Scottish Highlands, Glasgow and Fife so make sure to get yourself some tickets.

As always, to keep up to date with all of our latest news make sure to follow our social media channels (Twitter @ScotFamADrugs & Facebook @ScottishFamiliesAffected-ByDrugs). You can also sign up to our mailing list for our monthly bulletin – sign up at the bottom of this page.

## Fun in East Dun!

On the 15th and 16th of August, family members from our East Dunbartonshire family support services visited Netherurd House in West Linton. Colin who is our support officer in East Dunbartonshire said the place was beautiful and all of the family members really enjoyed themselves.



The overnight stay saw family members enjoy loads of meals, Reiki, reflexology, yoga, breathing classes and, a very classic zip slide. Only three from the group (Colin included) signed up for the zip slide, but when everyone went down to the site and saw the first couple doing it they all joined in!

The family members were texting Colin afterwards about their trip: "Absolutely fabulous, peaceful, and must I go home today?"

"A wee bit of heaven!"

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## Mailing List



Want to stay up to date with all the latest news from us? Sign-up to our mailing list and we'll send you our monthly bulletin and other updates. Sign-up here: <http://eepurl.com/c9oCYb>

# A word from Justina

I am loving the logo for our new 'My Rights, My Family' campaign which we are launching at a series of upcoming events next month (see later in this newsletter for details). A woman's arm reaches up with her fist clenched in defiance and determination, fighting for her family's rights (and I have to say with a sparking starry sky behind, this also appeals to my inner magpie).

When Rebecca and I sat down to talk about branding and imagery for our campaign, we noticed that a lot of the common imagery around human rights was around people raising their hands. But in this case their palms were open, a message of 'Hands up for human rights'. But in our view we needed something stronger. For years and years, families affected by others' substance use have politely and apologetically raised their hands to ask for support for their loved one and sometimes (rarely) for themselves. But we know that this, 'Excuse me...', 'Would you mind if ...', 'Is there any chance that...', 'Hello, I'm over here...' approach has had limited success.

As Sandra, Karen and Mhairi powerfully demonstrate in our #BehindTheNumbers film campaign, family members have for years been ignored, dismissed and judged by those very services who are paid through public funds to help and support those in need. (And if you don't know what I am talking about, where have you been?! Check this out, with a further film to be released at the Dundee Hope Festival on 19 October <https://www.sfad.org.uk/behind-the-numbers>).

We have chosen a strong image for our My Family, My Rights campaign to match the strength of the commitments made in 'Rights, Respect and Recovery', Scotland's national alcohol and drug strategy. In this, individuals, families and communities all share all the same rights – the right to health and the right to a life free from the harms of drugs and alcohol. And there are specific commitments in the strategy that families are supported in their own right (irrespective of whether their loved one is in treatment or recovery), that



families are involved in treatment and care as appropriate, and that families participate in service planning, development and delivery. The strategy overtly references that it is building on an existing platform of human rights, carers rights and children's rights – these are already in place and should already be respected and upheld.

As we approach the strategy's first birthday (which I am sure in typical #TeamSFAD fashion we will celebrate with cake), we are mindful that we have had to fight hard alongside family members to ensure families are recognised in this document as equal partners and as assets in treatment, care and recovery. And we know this fight will continue as we move into implementation – those very services are not going to change overnight just because a Scottish Government document says they should.

We will continue to stand with families and keep shouting loud and clear about the rights we have fought so hard to obtain. We will champion and praise good practice by those services who demonstrate that you don't need millions of pounds of additional resources to treat people and their families with dignity, respect and compassion. We will call out those services who continue to breach families' rights and ignore the commitments made in the strategy. And we will offer them really practical and simple ways that they can harness families' energy, love and hope for their loved ones so they can become real partners in care, treatment and recovery.

It is not always going to be easy – we know that. It is never simple to change embedded and entitled systems, cultures and power relationships. But this is the right thing to do. We continue to be motivated and inspired by the amazing family members who are standing alongside us in this fight for family rights. Let's Do This!

# News

The latest news from Scottish Families including new projects, opinion pieces, information we want to share with our readers, and anything that we think would be worth a read!



## Recovery Walk 2019 Sooze's Blog



fair that we took the walk to them for a change.

My prep for the actual day started on Thursday evening where I baked cakes for #TeamSFAD who I knew were catching the early morning train on Saturday to come and join me in Inverness. I travelled to Inverness on Friday with true military precision (there were a lot of lists involved) and a car full of provisions, sweet treats, and arts and crafts ready to host the Scottish Families marquee.

Many people consider the Recovery Walk to be a great day of celebration but for me, it's an all-year thing. As a member of the executive committee to the planning council that organises the Recovery Walk each year, the event itself is a busy day but very rewarding. The planning for each Recovery Walk pretty much starts in October immediately after our debrief of the previous year's walk. Taking it to the Highlands this year we knew it was always going to be a big logistical ask but one we were committed to make. Highland ADP every year contributes to the funding of the Recovery Walk and have had a busload of eager Recoverists travel to each walk. It was only

This year I had the added privilege of being the host for the Roses in the River remembrance, and celebration of the lives we have lost to drugs, alcohol, and suicide. This involved welcoming everyone and introducing our speakers for the day and coordinating the choir for the roses being placed in the river. For those of you who have met me, I tend to deliver inputs with a bit of humour. Being responsible for an important respectful part of the day was a big ask. I decided not to write anything for the day as focusing on it too much would no doubt make me cry and the speakers needed someone they could rely on (also me crying is not a sight the world needs

to see). The choir started off the event and set the tone of professionalism. No pressure Sooze! In the usual Sooze fashion, I decided to speak from the heart and wing it. Thankfully it went well and I think I respectfully started the day of celebration. The choir sang while everyone came forward and paid their respects to their loved ones and placed their roses in the river. We were then ready to walk!

We had a slight delay to the start of the walk for things out with our control. This led to me randomly pulling people out of the procession to sing while we were waiting. We had gathered a big interest from tourists and passers-by at this point and I'm sure that our singing won't be the highlight of their holiday!



We had a pipe band this year to take the walk through the city and the pipes and drums were an amazing sound as they

set off. They crossed the bridge and came down the other side of River Ness under the castle. To see the walk so far away when the last of the walkers had still not passed the start line was breathtaking. We knew straight away this was a far bigger walk than we had anticipated. The atmosphere was buzzing.

The walk made its way through the city with many stopping to see what was going on and tourists keen to know what this fabulous celebration was all about. Many of them followed the walk back to the recovery village to continue with the party atmosphere. This was the most inclusive recovery walk I believe we have had. The walk made its way into the Recovery Village with the sound of The Proclaimers 500 miles blasting from our resident DJ Ronnie Parks. Everybody then started to settle themselves in for a day of fun, food, laughter, and dancing.



The Rapid Relief team once again put on an amazing service feeding our friends and families with such speed and hospitality that there were very little queues. This is all provided free of charge and they are amazing at what they do. The village this year was packed with fun activities and freebies and the vibe on the day was amazing. #TeamSFAD had our usual arts and crafts making masks, wind chimes, keyrings and design your own jigsaw. We also had the amazing Happy Faces who were our resident face painter and glitter tattooists. We never had our usual photo booth provider with us this year but Highland Castle Entertainment provided their magic mirror selfie pod which was a great hit. We had some top banter in the #TeamSFAD marquee and it's been the best one yet. We get bigger and better every year. The day carried on with the bands playing and the highlight being Torridon who is a local Highland band and had the Recovery Village rocking to some highland flavoured tunes. We finished off the day with our thanks to the funders and also the Serenity Prayer, the circle of which was so big you couldn't see the people at the end of the Recovery Village. The sun shone all day and it could not have been any more perfect.

The personal highlight for me was meeting an American couple in my B&B and I had told them about what we had on. I met them later that night and they had changed all their plans for that day as they wanted to come and see the Recovery Walk. Their son has a history of drug use and mental health issues. They were blown away by the day. They recorded the roses ceremony, the walk route and even joined us back at the Recovery Village to celebrate. They asked me to pass on their heartfelt thanks to the Recovery communities for including them on the day and they very much wished they had such a supportive Recovery community back home.

# Recovery Walk 2019

## Claire's Blog

It all started at the beginning of summer when I was talking some of the young people from our new project Routes back home from a lovely day out in Balmaha. The kids spotted a flyer for the Recovery Walk in my car and asked what it was and within seconds they were pleading with me to take them (it's my fault, I should have told them it was a 20-mile walk over the mountains with no shoes!)

I tried to put them off by saying how far away Inverness was (I know, not my finest hour) and that I would take them next year as it was sure to be closer to Glasgow, but they're persistent little devils so eventually they wore me down and I agreed to take all 4 of them.

I picked them all up from school between 12 pm -1 pm (the schools in East and West Dun are amazing and could not be more supportive of our project) and so our little road trip began. Within two miles all I heard was 'I'm hungry' 'how much longer to go' or 'can I sit in the front now', it did cross my mind to say it had been cancelled due to poor weather but the sun was blazing in the blue sky so I had no choice but to continue. We soon got into our stride and had some great chat (none of which is suitable for our newsletter!)

We stopped for lunch outside at a kid's activity farm and although they were all at least 10 years older and four foot taller than the other children there, they had a great time going on the trampolines and go-karts and petting the animals, some of



which they had never seen before.

We eventually arrived at our beautiful Airbnb house at 7.30 pm, I was ready to crawl into bed but no, 4 hungry teenagers were looking to be fed! So we went into Inverness and had a lovely Italian dinner before coming home and playing games (and eating yet more food!).

We got up early and made pancakes which they tossed themselves (the 5-second rule was applied several times!) before setting off to the town centre to join the rest of the Scottish Families team in our blue tee-shirts. They were delighted to see some of their old friends from River Garden there too. They found the roses ceremony very emotional and it was lovely to see them comforting each other when they got upset at people they had lost. We then set off on the walk, which they really enjoyed and only asked a few hundred times 'how much further!'

When we arrived at the main stage they enjoyed going to each stall to participate in the activities and eat yet more sweets! After a couple of hours, we headed home via Loch Morlich where we tried canoeing and paddleboarding (still in our Scottish Families tee shirts!).

It was a brilliant trip, the young people we work with are amazing and it's a privilege to have the opportunity to do such amazing adventures with them.



It made me think twice about drinking. Putting the roses in the water was quite sad and made me think about my aunty.



‘ It was good, makes me not want to drink. It was all so emotional, I wouldn’t change anything about it.’



It was an amazing experience. I am really proud of Sooze for doing her speech as she was scared. It was really good to see the River Garden boys. I loved the dinner, the beach, breakfast and just being away with the group and Claire. Thank so much we were well and truly spoiled as always. It made me think of my dad and Uncle Liam, thank you!



# Routes!

Our new young person's project Routes has been up and running now for a few months. So far we have been meeting and getting to know some fantastic young people who have helped us shape the project (including being the ones behind its name Routes). The young people felt their 'roots' were important but that they did not define the 'route' their life should follow, that is down to them and the choices they make.

Some of the young people have made strong friendships with each other (others have chosen to stick to one-to-one support until their confidence grows). Some of the young people are currently taking weekly drama classes and are getting ready for their first performance in November (keep an eye out on our social media for more information closer to the time, you don't want to miss it!)

You can follow all of the latest news from Routes on their Facebook page [@youngpersonsscottishfamilies](https://www.facebook.com/youngpersonsscottishfamilies)



## Activity Calendar



### Photography workshops

Want to learn how to take amazing pictures? Come and learn new skills every Tuesday for 4 weeks starting October 29th from 4:15pm – 6:15pm at Hillhead Community Centre, 169 Meiklehill Road, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 2JT

### Football training

Every second Monday 5.30pm – 6.30pm for training sessions at Goals, 2650 Great Western Rd, Clydebank G81 2XT



### Christmas party

5th of December at Milngavie Town Hall, 71 Station Road, Milngavie, Glasgow G62 8BZ (look out for invites in November!)

### Monthly group

On the first Monday of every month, we come together at the Clydebank Community Sports Hub, 60 Dean Street, Clydebank G81 1RL from 5.00pm – 7.00pm. Join us for a variety of activities like graphic design, arts & crafts, first aid training and stage make up classes.





‘The best part about Routes is that it’s so relaxed. Pam comes to see me every week at school. She really listens and I can talk to her about anything from school, holidays, and my family. I have also been on trips and made new friends. I would recommend becoming part of the group but if you prefer, you can see Pam or Claire for one-to-one support.’ – **Carly**



‘I love being part of Routes! I feel I can’t talk about my dad to my friends so it’s been great to meet new people who really know what I’m going through. I’ve been able to do fun activities, learn new skills and make new friends! Best part is being part of something that actually takes your views on board. Claire and Pam always listen and make sure everyone gets a chance to say what they would like to do and how the group is run.’ – **Madison**



If you live in East and West Dunbartonshire, aged 12-26 & want to come along to any Routes group you can contact Claire and Pam for more information:

#### Claire

Tel: 07387852186  
[claire@sfad.org.uk](mailto:claire@sfad.org.uk)

#### Pam

Tel: 07387443756  
[pam@sfad.org.uk](mailto:pam@sfad.org.uk)

# Drug Deaths Taskforce - overview from Colin Hutcheon

Following the publication of the drug-related deaths figures in Scotland for 2018 Joe Fitzpatrick, the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing announced his intention to convene a taskforce to examine the issue of drug deaths and make recommendations for action. Professor Catriona Mathieson was appointed as Chair.

From the outset there was a determination that people with lived and living experience of drugs use, including families, should be represented on the Taskforce.



I was nominated by Justina Murray (CEO of Scottish Families) and accepted the invitation to join the Taskforce but was **surprised to learn that I would be the sole family representative.**

Concerns were immediately raised about the number of members with 'lived/living experience' and the Minister agreed to an increase. There will now be 4 representatives nominated by the Scottish Recovery Consortium (SRC) instead of 1 and **we argued for another representative for families.**

The other 21 members of the Taskforce are all in positions of responsibility and influence across health, social policy, research and criminal justice. The primary role of the Taskforce is to lead and drive action to improve the health outcomes for people who use drugs, reducing the risk of harm and death. At the first meeting of the Taskforce in September it was agreed to set up a number of sub-groups to focus on specific topics such as opioid replacement/substitute therapy, addressing person-centred/complex needs across health and social care, public health surveillance, linking health and social care services with the criminal justice system and changing existing (relevant) laws.

Subsequently, Justina and I agreed **to establish a family 'reference group'** (using Scottish Families' extensive networks and connections) and **identify people who could effectively represent the views and experiences of the wider community on the Taskforce and each of the sub-groups.**

We are determined that the family's voice will be heard and that their significant contribution to saving lives is acknowledged and respected. The first meeting of the reference group is scheduled for 25 October (just before the next meeting of the Taskforce on 29 October) and we will also be planning how we can best reach out to families across Scotland and listen to their ideas about what actions should be taken.

I am very aware that every drug-related death is a tragedy affecting families in all parts of Scotland, urban and rural, regardless of social status. I am hopeful that this is an opportunity to make positive changes and save lives.

Colin Hutcheon  
Chair of Scottish Families

1. <https://www.gov.scot/groups/drug-deaths-task-force/>
2. <https://blogs.gov.scot/drug-deaths-taskforce>

# #MyFamily MyRights



**Saturday 23rd November**  
**12pm – 3pm**

1599 @ The Royal College of  
Physicians and Surgeons Glasgow  
232-242 St Vincent Street  
Glasgow G2 5RJ

Through the medium of photographs and drama, our **AGM** event hosted by comedian Gary Little aims to give insight into the experience many young people face when they are affected by a loved one's alcohol or drug use.

Join us for the premiere of '**What About Us?**' a drama co-written and performed by our young person's group **Routes**, hear from someone in recovery and his relationship with his family, and enjoy a light lunch followed by our **AGM**.

# The Family Recovery College



Our first ever Family Recovery College course is over! Students have graduated and now we're enjoying a well-deserved rest!

Our course 'Understanding Substance Use and Holding onto Hope' ran for ten weeks with ten students. To celebrate finishing the course, we took students and course advisers away on a residential weekend and our final afternoon together the course advisers led our graduation ceremony for our students.



Through the ten weeks we covered topics like positive communication, self-care, thinking about stigma and language, discussing models of support, drug and alcohol information, and overdose awareness and naloxone training.

**'Not what I expected. It was better – professional, friendly and relaxed.'**

**'Not at all as I'd imagined; not like school!'**

**'I feel that I have benefitted from the recovery aspect and I am now more able to identify my priorities regarding self-care.'**

**'Listening to people's experiences made me consider my own language and judgement towards those who use substances.'**

## Promising data emerging from our Family Recovery College evaluation

Key points from WEBMS (a highly regarded evidence based tool):

- 80% of students experienced positive meaningful change to their wellbeing when comparing their before and after WEBMS scores



The 6 questionnaire items evidencing statistically significant positive change are:

- Q1: I feel a positive sense of connection to other people in my life
- Q3: I feel that my overall wellbeing is good
- Q4: I place value on my own self-care and wellbeing even when I am worried about my loved one.
- Q6: I feel that I have the knowledge and skills to communicate with and support my loved one.
- Q7: I feel empowered to make change in my life when I need to
- Q10: I have hope that things can change in my loved one's life

# My most significant change...

We want to leave you with some quotes from the stories we asked students to tell us about the most significant change that they have noticed in their life since attending the Family Recovery College.

‘The most significant change has been learning to speak to my loved one without causing an argument. Looking back it seemed all I asked him were questions that he didn’t want to answer. This led to him getting angry and walking out. Now we can talk about topics without a blow out.’



‘This story is significant to me because for the last few years I have been consumed with worry and now I have learned the importance of self-care. I would never have given myself time to meditate or have a day away from all the stresses. It’s an everyday thing for me now.’



‘It has increased my feeling of hope for my loved one, myself and my whole family.’

‘My loved one still takes drugs. Nothing has changed in his life with regards to drugs but I have changed the way I communicate with him which has had a positive impact on both of us.’

‘People have noticed a change in me. My significant other has remarked that I seem a lot happier in myself... I’ve become calmer, I talk a bit more about my situation to people that I would never have spoken to. People have also commented in my work that I seem to be more the old me that they have known in the past.’

**THE FAMILY  
RECOVERY  
COLLEGE**



# #MyFamilyMyRights

Please join us to mark the launch of our My Family, My Rights programme!

**My Family, My Rights  
Highlands – 6, 7, 8 November**

**My Family, My Rights Glasgow  
(includes Scottish Families  
AGM) – 23 November 2019**



**My Family, My Rights Fife – February 2020  
(date tbc)**

In November 2018, the Scottish Government published 'Rights, Respect and Recovery', Scotland's national alcohol and drug strategy.

This introduces what we have called transformational rights for families affected by alcohol and drugs.

**This includes universal rights which apply to all individuals, families, and communities:**

- **The right to health**
- **The right to a life free from the harms of alcohol and drugs.**

**The Strategy also states that individuals, families, and communities should be:**

- **Treated with dignity and respect**
- **Fully supported within communities to find their own type of recovery.**

For families, the Strategy makes three specific Commitments, summarised as:

1. Family members will have access to support in their own right and, where appropriate, will be included in their loved one's treatment and support. (Commitment C1)

2. All families will have access to services provided through a whole family approach. (Commitment C2)

3. Children, parents and other family members are involved in the planning, development, and delivery of services at a local, regional and national level. (Commitment C3)

The Strategy recognises that "The Whole Family Needs Support", and defines families as "anyone who is concerned about someone else's drug or alcohol use, including family members, carers, friends, neighbours, siblings, older children, partners, parents, grandparents, formal and informal kinship carers, work colleagues or any other 'Concerned Significant Others'."

Scottish Families is launching a My Family, My Rights programme of work to help ensure that the rights and commitments outlined in Rights, Respect and Recovery become reality for families across Scotland.

**Our My Family, My Rights programme includes:**

• **My Family, My Rights events (in Glasgow, Highlands, and Fife).**

• **Campaigning and awareness-raising – so families and services are aware of these new rights and commitments, how to access them and what to do if their rights**

are not upheld;

- Learning and development – so families and the workforce can learn more about a rights-based approach for families and how to bring this to life;
- Advocacy training for our staff and volunteers – so our work is embedded in a robust rights-based framework (working in

partnership with Reach Advocacy);  
 • and Advocacy support for families – so we can test out whether families need additional support to access their rights, and how this can best be delivered across Scotland.

Register for our events through this link:  
<https://bit.ly/2Mww9xA>



## Highlands Roadshow

Join us for a cuppa, crafts and a conversation about #MyFamilyMyRights & the Scottish Government's Alcohol & Drug Strategy!

We welcome families and people from Highlands communities to talk to us about their human rights in the strategy and about what this means for them and their community.

**Fort William** Wednesday 6th November 10am-1pm at  
 DMAC Halls, The Parade, Fort William, PH33 6BA

**Inverness** Thursday 7th November 9.30am-12pm at The  
 Spectrum Centre Theatre, 1 Margaret Street, Inverness,  
 IV1 1LS

**Wick** Friday 8th November 10am-1pm at Pulteney  
 Project, Huddart Street, Wick, KW1 5BA



Register on  
 Eventbrite!



Scottish Government  
 Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
 gov.scot

e: [info@sfad.org.uk](mailto:info@sfad.org.uk)  
 t: 0141 465 7523



# Digital Families

Over the past 12 months we ran a project to answer the question of ‘how do we support families better online?’ Digital Families was created after we launched a new design for our website but felt that it wasn’t having the impact we wanted to see with family members. Part of our new design had online services like message boards and a chat room. We also currently have an online webchat service which is used frequently by people who visit our site.

The project consisted of secondary research of asking other organisations with successful online services how this success happened and what their opinions were on our own online services. We then took primary research in the form of activities including one-to-one interviews, an online survey and a small social media training session for support group practitioners. These activities helped us understand the digital skills and needs of our audiences and what we are to do to adapt our website and online services based on their recommendations.

We have just finished putting together all of the findings in a report and thought we would share some of the information we have found out. Thank you as well to everyone who took part in our project including those who attended training, those who took our survey and interviews and the organisations who kindly spoke to us about their services. We felt that our survey really brought out some brilliant findings.

71 people took our online survey which had four main topics:

- How you get online
- How you use the internet
- Your opinions of online support services
- Scottish Families online support services

We asked respondents to the survey if they had ever used a webchat platform before. There was a divided response with 31 people saying yes, and 30 people saying no. Several of the ‘no’ responses came from a support group setting with older women who said they had never used webchat to solve their problems.

There was also an interesting response to the question on whether you prefer speaking to a person face-to-face or speaking to a person online (webchat, email, etc.) Most respondents said they preferred speaking to a person face-to-face, but 22 people said they preferred email or webchat. This reflects the feedback that we have had from people who contact our helpline. Of the 461 people who used our webchat between April 2018 and April 2019, 65% said they would not have contacted us by phone if there was no webchat available. 20% said they may contact and only 3% said yes they would contact by phone.

We also asked respondents if they ever had any issues getting information online and 48% said yes and 52% said no. Most of the ‘yes’ responses were to do with:

- Poor website navigation
- Lack of content
- Out of date information
- Issues with website design
- Not being able to see contact information clearly

*‘Sometimes it is difficult to establish what is directed at professionals and what is directed towards the individual.’*

*‘Some services have closed down but websites are still active.’*

*‘There is often printable information which is no good without a printer.’*

The last few questions of the survey invited respondents to comment on specific questions relating to online support services; their thoughts, opinions and what they see the barriers are for people getting online.

We asked respondents what they thought online support services could do for people and key takeaways are:

- Online support services will make people feel ‘more comfortable’
- People will feel connected to others even if they live remotely
- Online support means information will be readily available
- Online support may make things impersonal

*‘I think there are many things people could use online support for especially in this technological age as it’s easier and quicker to contact groups, peers, share problems, etc. However, there is often limited information or out of date information in regard to services for many agencies or unanswered emails and questions. It’s about finding what works for an individual.’*

*‘Could be a readily available means of support when needed. Could encourage someone to take a first step in seeking support.’*

Digital Families was very successful in highlighting the major benefits of an online support service. Most of the respondents in our activities spoke highly of online support.

The major key takeaways in favour of online support are:

- It will make people feel ‘more comfortable’
- People will feel connected to others even if they live remotely
- Information is easy to find and readily available for whenever a person needs it
- It can be the first line of contact for someone with anonymity
- May be the only support available to people living remotely
- Would reduce travel costs, etc. if people had to make their way to the closest city for support
- Young people would definitely use an online support service

[You can read our Digital Families report on our website now by clicking here.](#)

# Power of Communities South Lanarkshire



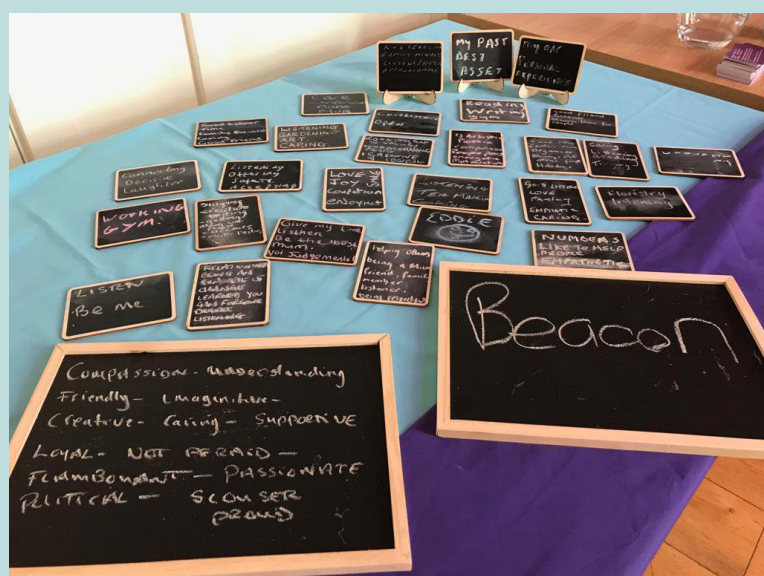
Recovery Month (September) was an extra exciting and busy month for us here at Scottish Families with a series of asset-based community development Power of Communities events that centred on building whole-family, whole community recovery. In partnership with Liber8, who has been tasked with establishing four Beacons in four localities, we brought together over 100 people over two events to explore local assets and how these could be used to create more of the opportunities required to keep people safe, well and connected. These events were part of a project we were involved with on behalf of South Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership, exploring a Whole Family Approach.

In preparation for these events, we worked alongside an active steering group made up of family members, volunteers, recovery peers and people from services. We identified suitable venues and co-produced the full programme for each event. Local participants decided that both of these events should be called 'Connecting for Change in Your Community' to try and inspire people who attended to take what they had learned forward. Everyone was keen to help people

who might not normally get involved in community activities, to engage with the new Beacons and create their conversations or opportunities to break down stigma, help people to feel more connected and support long-term change with substance use.

At each event, we heard from families and people with lived-experience who shared what keeps them well. The group shaping the conversation felt it was important to highlight what keeps people well in their recovery so we could build on this beyond the event. Mel, who co-created My Support Day - a family support group in East Kilbride, spoke about her own experience of living with addiction in the family and how her experience, local connections and a little support from Scottish Families led to her to establish her group and create something for families where there was no support before. We also heard from Tony who talked to us about his experience of finding recovery and the right support through Liber8 and how he keeps well by supporting others who are in a similar position as he was before.

The events, held at The Venue number 18 (Rutherglen) and Hamilton Accies (Hamilton), were a huge success and we are excited to see what further opportunities develop. We were delighted to have the opportunity to take our Power of Communities work and toolkit to South Lanarkshire to shine a light on what already exists there and help people create plans for change to build upon and create more recovery-focused communities. We look forward to supporting the development of the Beacon in South Lanarkshire that will have a Whole-Family approach.



'It was very informative and I felt very at ease. It was lovely to be in a room full of people from all walks of life trying to come together to make a change.'

'It gave me great hope and inspiration that there is people out there that do care no matter what profession they were in.'

'I think the event was very well presented and had very relevant content throughout. Engagement was

very good and the energy created was excellent. A great day all in.'

'Energised a focus to include the community as a whole and strengthened my focus on an asset based approach.'

'Hopefully I will be able to start volunteering in the beacons and it has also inspired me to look into college courses as well.'





**Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs**

**Main Office:** Edward House, 199 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3EX

**Helpline:** 08080 10 10 11

helpline@sfad.org.uk

webchat available at: [www.sfad.org.uk](http://www.sfad.org.uk)

**Twitter:** @ScotFamADrugs

**Facebook:** @ScottishFamiliesAffectedByDrugs

**Instagram:** @ScotFamADrugs

**General enquiries:** 0141 465 7523

**email:** [info@sfad.org.uk](mailto:info@sfad.org.uk)

**website:** [www.sfad.org.uk](http://www.sfad.org.uk)



**Scottish  
Families**

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