



The Story of Behind the Numbers

About this Story

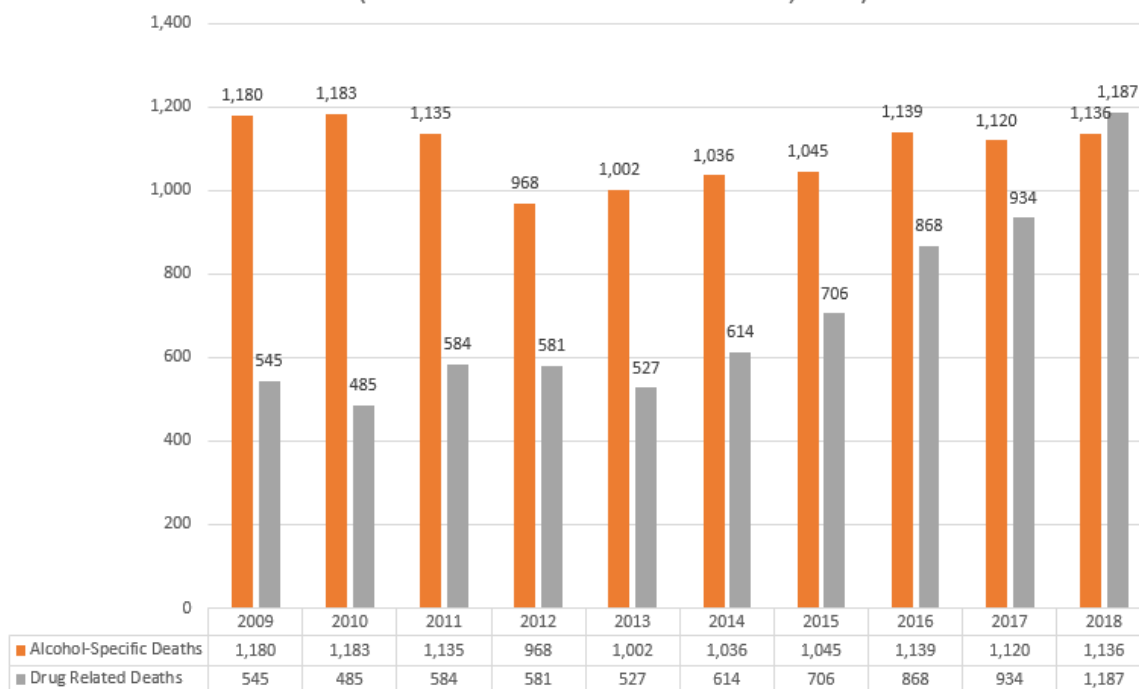
Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs is a national charity which supports anyone affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use.

Over the past ten years in Scotland, 17,975 families have lost a loved one through alcohol¹ or drug-related² deaths. Each year, we hold a day of action to mark the publication of the national drug-related death statistics. For example, we ran bereavement support outreach sessions in local communities, and organised a naloxone training day for families.

Looking ahead to the publication of the latest statistics in July 2019, we knew that a further significant increase in deaths was anticipated. We felt it was important to continue to recognise the impact of substance-related bereavement on families, and to hold these families close to our hearts on this day, like every day.

But we also knew that behind these numbers, and largely out of sight, families were working tirelessly to reduce harm and risk of death, and to preserve and save the lives of their loved ones. This was a story that also needed to be told.

Alcohol-Specific and Drug-Related Deaths in Scotland, 2009-2018
(Source: National Records of Scotland, 2019)



Behind the Numbers

To highlight this hidden role of families in preserving and saving lives, we designed a new campaign called **'Behind the Numbers'**.

We understood that political and media attention would focus on the number of people who had died, and that the families left behind would also be recognised in speeches and news stories. **Every one of these deaths is a tragedy and it is right that we recognise the enormity of the number of people lost, and the knock-on impact on their families.** Behind every number is a network of family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and community members who are affected by this loss.

Yet we also know there is an even larger group of people in Scotland who remain at high risk of serious harm and death. Many people within this group are still alive only thanks to the **tireless, unrecognised and unsupported efforts of their families.**

We believed the number of deaths would be even higher if families were not making such significant efforts each and every day to try to keep their loved ones alive. And that we could reduce the number of deaths by supporting and recognising families in their own right, and by including them in their loved one's treatment and care.

Yet from our everyday work with families right across Scotland, we knew that they were being **excluded, ignored and judged by others** – including by those services who are supposed to offer help and support. We regularly heard about service and system failure which left families holding and managing risks which should be shared with services. We also knew from some areas of Scotland that change was possible when families gained their voice and services began to listen.

The best people to tell these stories were family members themselves.

*“#BehindTheNumbers
is a campaign which
highlights and
champions the hidden
and unrecognised
contribution by
families in saving and
preserving life.”*

Scottish Families Press Release, 16 July 2019³

Capturing the Stories

Members of the Scottish Families team had recently completed two days of media training with an organisation called Families in Trauma, which included an introduction to filming. We decided to put these new skills to the test and to run Behind the Numbers as a short film project, using a 'talking head' style documentary format.

To structure the films, we created a consistent set of interview questions, to act as a natural conversation arc for each film. We asked:

1. How would you describe (loved one's name) as a person?
2. How have you supported (loved one's name)?
3. What has been your experience of the different services involved with (loved one's name)?
4. Have there been times when these services have put (loved one's name) and/or yourself at risk or caused harm?
5. Are there things that could have been done differently?
6. How are things for you and (loved one's name) now?
7. What would be your message for other families in a similar situation?

Four family members agreed to take part in the project. Two chose to be filmed at home, and two were filmed at the Scottish Families main office in Glasgow. The films each ran for 8-11 minutes once edited into the final product, and a 2-minute social media clip was also created.



Telling their Stories

Sandra, Karen, Mhairi and Caroline all shared their stories for our Behind the Numbers campaign.

Although we used our question set to structure the filmed conversations, these were stories which to some extent told themselves.

Their accounts were compelling and passionate and full of personality. You could see the love and compassion they felt for their loved ones (who included a daughter, two sons and a mum). And you could hear their frustration and anger at the judgement, unresponsiveness and inflexibility of others, as well as their satisfaction when improvements had been made.

They gave many examples of their tireless and tenacious efforts to support their loved ones through their addiction. This included:

- Meeting their basic needs, e.g. food, shelter, money
- Helping them engage with treatment and care services
- Advocating on their behalf
- Offering enduring love, connection and hope.

These were stories of addiction, recovery, relapse, good times and bad times, hope for the future and sadness at lives lost too soon.

They shared powerful messages for other families in their situation, and identified clear and specific recommendations for change, to reduce harm and risk of death, and to save future lives.



The Launch

We launched our Behind The Numbers campaign on 2 July 2019, creating a pop-up cinema on the ground floor of our national office in Glasgow, and inviting family members, partner organisations and media representatives.

We launched the first two films – Sandra’s Story and Karen’s Story – on the day. Both Sandra and Karen attended the event, taking part in a panel discussion and audience Q&A, and holding media interviews along with our CEO, Justina Murray. 42 people attended.

This date was a fortnight before the official drug-related deaths statistics were due to be released, allowing us to raise awareness of families’ role in advance, and help inform the response on that day. We then ‘relaunched’ the films along with our media release on 16 July.

Across both of these dates, 13 media outlets covered our story, including 7 direct interviews. Headlines included *‘Mums fighting to keep children alive amid rising drug deaths’* (Evening Times)⁴, *‘New campaign seeks support for addicts’ families’* (healthandsocialcare.scot)⁵ and *‘Drug deaths: ‘My daughter would be dead without treatment’* (STV News)⁶.

We are very grateful to Sandra and Karen for agreeing to respond to media enquiries. This is daunting at the best of times, not least when you are talking about your own family. We are also grateful to the media for their respectful and responsible coverage of this sensitive issue.

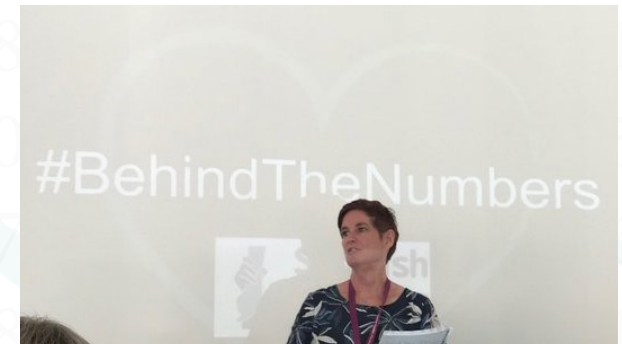
648 website page views

841 social media engagements (on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook)

5,168 film views on Vimeo and Facebook

After the launch event we created two further films, Mhairi’s story and Caroline’s story, following a public call for others to take part in the Behind The Numbers campaign. Mhairi’s story was launched to mark International Overdose Awareness Day in August 2019, and Caroline’s story was launched at the Dundee Hope Festival in October 2019.

(Bottom Photo Credit: Kirsty Anderson, Evening Times)



Sandra's Story - "it's a miracle what we have done"

Sandra talked about her adult daughter, Elaine, and their experiences in Midlothian. She explained, *"I've supported her because I love her and I wanted to help save her life."* Treatment services at the local Glenesk Centre were originally *"horrendous"* with waits of several months, and frequently cancelled appointments or staff off sick. *"So she was dicing with death every day because she wasn't getting any help from the services. ... there was never any consistency at all for years."* At one stage Sandra and Elaine had to escape to a caravan in another area on police advice, as there were threats to Elaine's life. The treatment service refused to offer any flexibility around Elaine's daily methadone prescription, despite the police and GP support for their move to safety. Sandra's only option was to drive 120 miles round trip every day for three months to collect Elaine's prescription, despite having chronic health issues herself including a broken rib at the time. *"It's a disgrace that the services would not listen to me as a mother, or the police, or our own GP, that they knew better, that she would pick up that prescription daily."*

Sandra also described how the treatment service completely excluded her from supporting Elaine to attend her appointments: *"There was only six wee plastic chairs in the waiting room and there was a notice on the door to say you can't bring anyone with you because we don't have enough seats for anyone else to sit in them. So I wasn't allowed to go to an appointment to help support her when she was feeling quite vulnerable."*

This was not good enough and Sandra and Elaine took things into their own hands: *"Because of the horrific experience my daughter and I as a family, a mother and daughter, have suffered through her addiction we decided that it wasn't good enough and that the services needed to change."* The key to this change was working together with Tracey Clusker, the centre manager who had recently returned to the treatment service, and who recognised the need for change and the importance of working closely with families. Sandra said things are now *"fantastic. every service that ever happened in the Glenesk before is now the complete opposite"*.

With Tracey's support, Sandra set up a family support group in Midlothian which runs every Monday night. *"It's well-attended, well-advertised ... We have a lovely nice comfortable room with sofas, with a radio and lamps, and [we're] treated with a bit of dignity and respect."* Helpline support is also available, along with support on the day if it's needed. Sandra believes that services are better than ever before because they *"are now starting to listen to the families. It's because our voices have been heard that the services in Midlothian have changed."*

"Our change that we've made in Midlothian is now phenomenal, it's a miracle what we've done."



Message for Families

"Don't sit back and accept the services if you're not happy with it."

Speak up, get in touch with a family support group, get in touch with Scottish Families' helpline and they'll guide you towards your area, what's available for you.

Don't sit back and accept that there isn't any help or support for you out there because your family member is an addict."

Karen's Story - "change will come"

Karen spoke about her adult son, Lee, and their experiences. Lee had welcomed his mum's support over the years, for example joining appointments with services, the GP and chemist. Karen recognised, *"Lee is the type of person who needs support,"* and he also enjoyed good support from his wider family.

Karen talked in detail about her frustrations with services, their inflexibility, and lack of person-centred or recovery-focused care. When Lee was on community service, he needed to report at 8.45am, but the chemist wasn't open until 9am for his daily methadone pick-up. He was refused any flexibility (e.g. a pick-up the night before) as he hadn't had any recent contact with his addictions worker. Lee explained his worker was off long term sick and he hadn't been allocated a replacement. This made no difference, so Karen got involved as she understood he could be imprisoned for breaching his community service. She went with him, made a complaint and he got his methadone the day before. *"So again I thought, youse are no supporting my son and the choices that he's making, ... effectively you're hindering his recovery. ... Why does it take a family member to come along? Why are they no' listened to in their own right? Why are they no' supported in their choices of recovery?"*

Karen had secured meetings with the head of the treatment service and the head clinician, who *"admitted that they got it wrong."* She found out there was no care plan in place, no goal-setting for Lee. She felt *"There's no respect or dignity. People with addiction issues don't get treated the same as everyone else."* But these complaints did not mean Lee was any better treated, for example at the time of filming he had been waiting for three weeks for someone from the mental health crisis team to call him back. She also felt there were *"lots of times when they have caused him unnecessary harm, through no fault of his own."* So this was not the addiction causing harm, but the services themselves. On one occasion Lee had asked for support to get off methadone altogether with the help of suboxone. But when he reduced his methadone to the target level, he got a new worker who moved the goalposts further – for him, out of reach. *"Again, there's the mental state away up in the air. And he said no I'm not doing another detox. ... And he got so fed up that he decided he was not going back to services because nobody was listening to him".* Karen felt services were so inconsistent it was harmful – *"people with addiction issues are already chaotic, they don't need the chaos from the services."*

Karen also talked about her experiences of being judged as a mother, *"And there's that stigma that families are up against continual...I've had it myself. ... Oh I was classed as a mother from hell, which I used to laugh. It comes from people who don't have any experience."*



Message for Families

"Never give up, give in and start again, don't give up. Keep going. Don't be feart to voice your opinion."

Join a group, if there's a local group, a family group that's experiencing the same stuff as yourself. Join in with them because we're all in the same boat."

If we all stick together and get our message out then hopefully, change will come."

Mhairi's Story - "every one of us realises things could have been done differently"

Mhairi talked about her mum, and her experiences growing up with her addiction. She described her mum as *"Funny, annoying. ... kinda like any mum ... she wanted to know everything you were doing cause she just loved being involved."* Mhairi felt her mum did so much for everyone else, she wouldn't always look after herself. As a child and young person, she gave her mum considerable emotional support as things could be chaotic. She repeatedly encouraged her to seek support, *"But sometimes that was a bit of a pointless task"*. Her mum found it hard to speak to services, and preferred to write things down. So Mhairi would spend time with her *"going through what she had written so that we could speak about how she was feeling."* She described how, as the oldest of five girls, she took on responsibilities and tasks so her mum *"could have that relationship with the rest of them that was just kinda some sense of normality"*.

She described *"mixed"* experiences of support services. Although there was lots of service involvement there was *"very little good, very much bad"*. She felt even those staff who initially seemed proactive and positive, quickly became *"fed up and had lost all hope"*. She felt they expected change overnight and just didn't want to engage or even be there, so her mum would say, *'Well I'm not going to see her 'cos she clearly doesn't want to work with me'*. So in Mhairi's view *"a lot of the time you had more people coming in and judging than you did not"*.

Her mum was frequently in prison, but each time she came out *"and she'd made so much progress"* she was *"flung straight back into the lifestyle that got her into this position in the first place"*. The inflexibility of services was problematic. For example when there were genuine reasons why her mum had missed picking up her methadone, there was no option to rearrange a new time, *"and that sent everything into a backwards spiral"*. There was no sense that services were actually trying to help and understand. Mhairi felt her mum would have engaged positively if she was treated *"with a little bit of dignity and respect"*, instead of feeling *"degraded"*. She recognised her mum could be challenging (*"I'm not saying she was an angel to work with because she most definitely wasn't"*), but workers could have spent time getting to know her and shown a real interest in her life, not just her recovery: *"I feel you can make someone feel so much more human if you talk to them like a human, ... have a little bit of compassion."*

Mhairi's mum died in April 2016. The family have all dealt with this differently, but *"Every one of us realises that things could have been done differently"* – both with services and within the family. They are all missing so much, including her mum meeting new grandchildren and the family not having their mum there for important life events. Her mum's death has changed Mhairi too, and she feels she is less *"black and white"* and more accepting and understanding. But overall *"You start to realise that ... she did deserve more and I think that's what it comes down to, she just deserved more"*.



Message for Families

"Don't feel bad if you've needed to take a bit of time for yourself."

"There's no point in ... just giving your all, all the time because you're going to end up with nothing left to give."

"There is good people out there who will help, workers that do want to make a difference Keep fighting until you get somebody who's gonna come and make the difference that you feel you deserve."

Caroline's Story - "we have to humanise health care"

Caroline spoke about her son Kevin who was *"very outgoing"*. He was *"a loving son"*, and *"the whole family loved him dearly"*, even though they didn't like his behaviour. She described how she and her husband *"supported him really through love"* and tried to do everything they could for him. At times that was *"impossible"* because of his actions. He committed crimes and was sent to prison many times, but they continued to support him and try to get help for him.

Back then services were *"quite non-existent"*. Caroline went to the GP with Kevin and *"he was totally horrible. He more or less just said 'well there's nothing I can do' or 'it'll pass, it's a phase'."* She got to know a number of other mothers in the same situation, and they met a local councillor to express their concerns. *"And we were told that they didn't really see a problem and that things would probably just pass, it was a passing phase. Which as it came to be, it wasn't"*.

She didn't know about the local Drug Action service until another mother mentioned it by chance. However when she attended with Kevin, she was excluded from the initial interview. The worker explained Kevin was an adult and had to be seen alone. *"So it was an experience for me of exclusion that I didn't like. ... I just wanted to know what was available, how they would treat him with his problem."* Caroline felt services caused risk as *"they put unrealistic actions onto him"* like setting 9am appointments, then he would lose his methadone script for not attending. She would have to take time off work to look after him: *"These unrealistic limits, ... they still go on today actually and that's something that somebody should be looking into. Because if anybody knows what the chaos of addiction is, there's just nobody in their right mind going to ... turn up at 9 o'clock in the morning."* She made complaints, but was *"shot down in flames in usual, my say didn't come into it, it didn't matter."* Caroline didn't come into contact with other services, and felt there was *"Nowhere else to tap into."* She *"decided that I was going to look after Kevin myself as well as I could"* and learn about addiction.

Caroline felt that services should *"start looking at people with a bit of empathy, that they understand what that person is going through, that it's not a choice in life, it's something that can happen to anybody, any aspect of life. And that people show a bit of dignity and respect to other people."* She spoke passionately about the need to *"humanise health care"* and *"start respecting people"*.

Kevin died over twenty years ago. Caroline and another lady established a group for family members bereaved through alcohol or drugs. The group is still running and continues to offer *"invaluable"* support, *"because we all know what it is we've went through, we can speak about it, we feel comfortable, we don't feel judged, and we've had good reports back from everybody. In fact we've made lifelong friends."*



Message for Families

"I would say just to seek all the help that you can. To make sure you are included in your loved one's care because that is your basic human right, to be included."

Just love. Just love them. Make sure that you get the correct care, just be there, and be supportive. That's what I would do."

Family Reflections on Behind the Numbers

"I was happy to do the #BehindTheNumbers film to hopefully let the wider public and professionals see what lived experience is really like. What families live with daily when addiction is in the family. The services letting us down constantly. The publicity has brought positive attitude from the 99% of the people who have watched it, who got in touch by phone, email, and text. It brought media and press attention as well, wanting to highlight our plight with a positive outcome. ... I thought the Behind the Numbers campaign was a fabulous campaign. It really did highlight the families and how much the families suffer and how much they are needed to be part of your loved one's recovery." (Sandra)

"The reason I did #BehindTheNumbers was to highlight the fact that people are not numbers, they are our loved ones, and it has encouraged me to keep fighting for change in services. It has been a fab experience, so much so that the positive feedback has been amazing from family, friends, newspapers, TV, and radio. The campaign has highlighted that we families are the forgotten people doing everything in our power to keep our loved ones alive. I would say to any family member that wishes to join the campaign, please do it. It reiterates the need for change, especially in services. The more families who speak out then services, politicians and the government can no longer stand to ignore us and make the changes needed to start saving lives. Never be afraid to stand up for what you believe in when it involves your loved ones. Together we can be the change. Let's do this. ... I thought it was a great campaign because it lets the public see how family members cope, how they're treated, the stigma that's attached to boot as well. I thought a load of more people would've come forward, but I get that not everyone wants to go on camera and again it's that stigma related to addiction." (Karen)

"I took part in this because I had felt that I'd been ignored forever. As a child through every aspect I was ignored and then when I got old enough to feel I was old enough to be taken seriously, and given all the years of knowledge I had, I was still ignored. Not always professionals that know best and that's ignored so I want to highlight that we NEED to listen to those who know them best to stop these deaths. It was a great experience that helped me realise a lot of myself I think, and helped me solidify the fact that this is 100% the area I'm best working in. I ended up doing a university project on decriminalisation and drug deaths in Scotland that my lecturer loved and that's helped other classmates see what's going on. ... I thought it was an amazing campaign, opening people's eyes to the struggles families face when trying to support their loved ones and the barriers they still face due to the stigma surrounding addiction." (Mhairi)

"I agreed to take part in the campaign because I thought it was important to let services and the public know how important it is for families to be involved in their loved one's care should they wish it. My experience doing it has been very positive, a feeling of belonging with likeminded people striving to better the health and wellbeing of ourselves and our loved ones ... I just thought it was a brilliant idea because it just let you showcase to other people out there what goes on, what happens within a family unit at that time, how you go about getting the help that you need. Because as it goes on you become a bit more adept at looking for things, focusing on other things, and I just think it was a brilliant idea to get it out there and out into the public domain." (Caroline)

What Happened Next

Behind the Numbers catch-up conversations

In Spring 2020 we asked the Behind the Numbers participants to update us on how things were now, whether there had been any significant changes in their lives, their views on ongoing campaigning, and what they thought now about their involvement in the films and the campaign. We have created a further short film of these catch-up conversations. As is so common with families affected by others' substance use it has been a tale of ups and downs.



Sandra described things as *“so much better”* and *“real good”*. Her daughter Elaine has completed rehab, and been substance-free for nine months. She has her own flat and is very involved in recovery work. Sandra is *“filled with a lot of hope for her this time”*, and felt there had been *“massive changes in both myself and Elaine”*. She explained *“The co-dependency that we had; I would say is completely broken”*, and that day she was looking forward to going to visit Elaine's flat for the first time and stay overnight. Sandra continues to be passionate about championing and highlighting family involvement, as *“That's the reason I'm sitting here today, because if I didn't fight to be a part of my daughter's treatment she'd be dead by now. It's me that helped keep her alive while we fought the services to get the treatment she deserved”*. Elaine now gets good support from treatment services, and Sandra is continuing to run the Midlothian Family Support Group *“to encourage other families to do the same”*.



In contrast, for Karen things have been *“Not very good. Reason being Lee is back down a slippery slope.”* Karen has stepped back from regular contact with her son – *“Haven't spoke to him in a long time.”* Karen believes part of the reason Lee has relapsed is that *“He also lost his friend last year. The boy they [treatment service] put off methadone on the February and went back to street drugs and he was dead by the August. ... Lee was absolutely devastated, as was everybody who knew him.”* Karen herself attended six funerals in a year, including close family. Not all were drug-related but most were sudden and unexpected deaths. *“So, in order to look after myself I've had to step back from everything. Walk away and look after myself. And then I will get back into the guts of things when I am in the right mindset.”* She continues to be committed to campaigning for family involvement by services. *“It's important because the families are also included in the treatment of their loved one, and also if they're not being treated well they can advocate on their loved one's behalf which I've done myself for Lee the past few years. And it also gives them an insight to see how treatment works when they are involved with services, not always good may I add.”*



Caroline felt *“things have been good”* for her since the original filming. She is very involved with Aberdeen in Recovery, including writing a piece on family inclusion for their magazine and taking part a week of campaigning around addiction. *“We got quite a lot of media space on Northsound, we did some interviews in there, speaking about stigma and so on.”* Caroline talked very powerfully about how she had shown her family the film and found they were *“quite humbled by it”*. In particular this impacted on her sister, who she felt had had a good life and hadn’t really had the same ups and downs. *“So, when she was watching it she said ...it makes me upset actually...she said she didn’t really know how much it had impacted on me. You know.... how addiction impacted on my life and my family’s life during the time when Kevin was here. So, it brought home to her that this could happen to anybody. So, I thought well that’s a plus, she’s thinking now that this just doesn’t happen to a ‘certain type’ of person, it can happen to anybody.”* Caroline also continues to champion family inclusion *“because it’s the only way you know that you can get help or knowledge in how to handle somebody while you are going through that addiction. And I think that was a great loss for me when I was going through because there just wasn’t that there.”*



Mhairi has had a really busy year studying for her social work degree, working part-time and being mum to her young family. She completed a work-based learning placement with Scottish Families in July 2019 as part of her studies. She wasn’t able to take part in our catch-up conversations due to lots of other juggling! But she did give us a little email update. She says things for her have been *“better”* although there are still members of her family struggling with addiction. However Mhairi feels that her experience of losing her mum has helped *“shape a new view on how I can support them. It made me realise that the smallest things can mean the most to people”*.

#BehindTheNumbers on tour!

Since the launch, the Scottish Families team has taken the films on tour around a wide range of different events. For example:

- The Scottish Association for the Study of Offending (SASO), Dumfries and Galloway
- 'My Family, My Rights' Rights, Respect and Recovery roadshow, Highland
- 'Keys For Change', Rights, Respect and Recovery event, Fife
- The Dundee Hope Festival
- Connecting for Change community events, South Lanarkshire.

The families who took part have shared the films at events and with family and friends. Sandra said: *"I've taken the Behind the Numbers film around a few places and been part of it and I've enjoyed it, not enjoyment in a happy sense, it was enjoyment in showing other families how things can change because it certainly has in our family."*

We also submitted the films to the Charity Film Awards in 2020. (We didn't win, but enjoyed the experience!)

'Families are Lifesavers'

We will continue to use the original films and the catch-up film as part of our new 'Families as Lifesavers' work which is part of our Strategic Plan 2020-23.

This builds on the Behind the Numbers campaign by continuing to highlight families' critical role in preserving and saving lives, and to campaign for this role to be properly supported and recognised.

CHARITY
FILM
AWARDS



Behind the Numbers - Key Recommendations for Change

LOVE

1. RECOGNISE THAT EVERYTHING FAMILIES ARE DOING FOR THEIR LOVED ONE IS MOTIVATED BY LOVE. There may be tension, conflict and anger, and sometimes family members will have to take a step back to focus on their own self-care and protection. But love has power and this can be harnessed by services too. Love can motivate service engagement and recovery, and inspires hope and compassion in the most challenging times.

WELCOME

2. OFFER FAMILY MEMBERS A WARM WELCOME IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, even if their loved one does not want family involvement in their care. Remember they know their loved one better than you – probably better than anyone – and can provide you with a significant amount of additional support and information to help with treatment and care. They will understand that you cannot share confidential information about their loved one, but there is no law against listening to their views and experiences. As well as this family-inclusive practice, services should offer one to one and group support for any family member who wishes this, in their own right. This may be delivered in-house or through partner organisations such as Scottish Families or other providers.

LISTEN

3. LISTEN TO FAMILY MEMBERS. You may not always want to hear what they say, but they will give you an honest and true reflection of any service performance issues, and how to improve your service. Remember they may be angry, frustrated, afraid and traumatised. All of this may influence how they communicate with you. This includes children and young people who are affected by others' substance use. They commonly describe being ignored when they are trying to shout out for help.

DIGNITY

4. TREAT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT ALL TIMES. This comes at no cost and brings significant rewards. Each one of our family members talked about being judged and stigmatised by others, including those services who are paid to help and support others.

RISK

5. SHARE THE RISK. We understand that supporting people with alcohol and drug issues involves significant risk. Not supporting people increases risk even further, including risk of harm and death. Families and services can share risk by working together on treatment and care planning and delivery. This will help preserve and save lives, and reduce deaths. Share harm reduction information and approaches with families, including supplying naloxone where appropriate.

About Scottish Families

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs is a national charity that supports anyone concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use in Scotland. We give information and advice to many people and help them with confidence, communication, general wellbeing, and we link them into local support. We also help people recognise and understand the importance of looking after themselves.

When we say family, we mean who you see as your family. It could be your spouse, your parent, your sibling, your partner, your friends, your friend's family, your colleagues, your neighbours, and anyone we may have missed.

We were created in 2003 by families themselves who came together to support each other and campaign for recognition.

We support people through our helpline, bereavement support service, telehealth (one-to-one support), and our family support services in Aberdeenshire, East Dunbartonshire, and Forth Valley (plus South Lanarkshire from mid-2020).

We also deliver workforce development through our training courses, communications and campaigning work, our young person's project 'Routes' in East and West Dunbartonshire, and wider community development including our Connecting Families programme.

We are one of the Scottish Government's Nationally Commissioned Organisations (NCOs) for alcohol and drugs and are recognised as Scotland's leading charity for families affected by alcohol and drugs.

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

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With Thanks To...

Sandra, Karen, Mhairi and Caroline for telling their stories with such passion and insight, and making such a massive contribution to our Behind the Numbers campaign. You are an inspiration to all of us, and we are forever indebted to you. We could not have done this without you.

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Maggie and Steve Wright from Families in Trauma, who provided our two-day media and film training course, which gave us the skills and confidence to go for it in-house!

Where to Find out More

Behind the Numbers <https://www.sfad.org.uk/behind-the-numbers>

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