

‘Change Will Come’

Our Strategy 2020-2023



“My message for other families would be never give up, keep going. Don’t be feart to voice your opinion. Contact Scottish Families who are a great support. Join a group, a family group that’s experiencing the same stuff as yourself, join in with them because we’re all in the same boat.

And families, if we all stick together and get our message out then hopefully, change will come.”

(Karen, family member)

What Makes You Family?

*Families can come in all shapes and sizes. No matter how your family looks or is structured, whether you are related or not, what really makes you family is your love and care for each other. At Scottish Families, we welcome all families. What makes you family? **Love** makes you family.*



‘Change Will Come’

One in three adults say they have been negatively affected by the alcohol or drug use of someone they know. In Scotland it has been estimated that up to 60,000 children are affected by parental drug use, and up to 51,000 children are affected by parental alcohol use.

Yet most families who are harmed by someone else’s substance use remain hidden from sight. Even those closest to them – friends, work colleagues and other family members – can be unaware of what is going on. This is due to the secrecy, shame and stigma of addiction in the family, as well as a lack of visible and high quality local support, feelings of isolation and loneliness, and a sense of powerlessness and disconnection.

Our ‘*Change Will Come*’ Strategy (2020-23) identifies 12 Key Changes which we want to see in the next 3 years. As well as these Key Changes, we will continue to develop and improve all of our existing services and activities. We will know we have succeeded when we have no more hidden families.

The early development of this Strategy started before the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that coronavirus will continue to impact on how we work, and the issues families are facing, for some time to come. We have taken this into account as far as possible in this Strategy and in our delivery plans. You can read more about the impact of COVID-19 on Scottish Families in our [Audited Accounts for 2019-20](#) which will be published later this year. Thank you to all the family members and partner organisations who helped us develop this Strategy during the COVID-19 lockdown in Spring 2020. We were unable to meet in person, so we held a series of online, face-to-face engagement conversations. Over half (55%) of participants were family members with personal experience of someone else’s alcohol or drug use.

Our Five Outcomes

Our previous Strategy, ‘*It’s All Relative*’ (2017-20), introduced five Outcomes which underpin all our work. These Outcomes act as a framework for everything we do. They are easy to understand and communicate to others. We use them to summarise what we do, to organise our work, and to report on our performance. For all of these reasons, and also to bring continuity, we are keeping these five Outcomes as the framework for our new Strategy.

Families are **Supported**
Families are **Included**
Families are **Recognised**
Families are **Connected to Communities**
Families are **a Movement for Change**

How We Work

How we work is as important as what we do.

We use **relationship-based practice** which places family members at the heart of everything we do.

Our relationships with family members are based on trust, respect, compassion and time. We recognise and build on families’ own strengths and expertise. We acknowledge their influence in preventing and reducing harm and risk. All of our work with families is trauma-informed.

We work with family members to develop knowledge, skills, confidence, self-care and connections. We use a rights-based framework which recognises that family members have the right to be supported in their own right; included as active partners in their loved one’s treatment, support and recovery; and involved in the planning and development of policy and practice.

About Scottish Families

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs is a national charity which supports anyone concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use in Scotland. We were established in 2003 by family members themselves who came together to support each other and to campaign for recognition. We provide both national and local services.

Each year we reach family members from all of Scotland's **32** council areas.

What We do

[Helpline](#)

[One to one Telehealth Support](#)

[Bereavement Support](#)

[Local Family Support Services](#)

[Routes Young Persons Project](#)

[Working with Communities](#)

[Connecting Families](#)

[Learning and Development](#)

[Policy and Communications](#)

[Fundraising](#)



Funding And People

In 2019-20 our annual income was just under £725,000. We receive a core grant (around one fifth of our income) from the Scottish Government as their Nationally Commissioned Organisation for families affected by substance use.

The rest of our funding is made up of other government funds, trusts and foundations, commissioned work, and fundraising. We are extremely grateful to all of our funders and fundraisers!

We are led by a Board of 11 voluntary trustees, including people with personal experience of alcohol or drug harm in their family.

We currently employ 18 staff across all of our services and activities, supported by a small number of volunteers.

You can find out more about our funding and people in our [Annual Accounts](#).

Our Impact:

Each year we publish an Impact Report which summarises our work over the previous 12 months. For example in 2019-20:

- We supported **1,927** family members across our support services (Helpline, Telehealth, Bereavement, local Family Support and Routes young persons' project)
- We trained **863** workforce members
- We engaged with **2,101** individuals through our Communities and Connecting Families programmes.

You can find out more about our reach in our annual [Impact Report](#).

What Do Families Say?

“Sometimes I think I am going mad. Life just seems to be spiralling out of control. I look at my son and see his life falling apart but yet he doesn’t want to do anything about it. The stress of this is making my life fall apart. Speaking to you today has given me a different perspective on how this is affecting both my son (I never really appreciated why he would be using drugs, I thought he was being selfish) and the impact on me. Life feels a bit lighter today and I now have hope that things can change. Thank you for giving me your time, that on its own is priceless but also offering me support is life changing.”

“You’ve given me an emotional balance. ... I’m not alone. The things I’ve done since speaking to you are amazing, I’m returning to being me.”

“I was unsure of what to expect and was very nervous but was quickly put at ease. The understanding, empathy and guidance which I was given has made me feel a much stronger and happier person and a lot more able to deal with the pressures within my life.”



“Scottish Families have provided us with an environment where we are heard and not judged. We have been supported, guided and educated. The last few years have been hell and Scottish Families have kept us anchored to the hope that life can get better, because it can and it does.”

“I have struggled with mum’s drinking for years. Can’t talk to my friends about it as they would never understand. They don’t have a life like mine. From the outside my life looks perfect but it’s far from that. I really appreciate the information and the offer to refer me to your family team. It’s good to know it’s not a one-off chat and I can come and go when I feel I need you.”

“I have, for years, been screaming out for support and for someone who understands, without judgement, about the situation I am in with my son. Speaking to you, your understanding, knowledge, empathy and patience, has been life changing for me and, I hope, my family. You make a very confusing and unsettling situation feel more manageable.”

“Don’t know what I would have done if I never had the group, it’s been a life saver.”

“There were times I was very low and coming along helped so much. I didn’t need to share what was wrong unless I wanted to but just listening to others calmed and helped.”

“The support I have received has been absolutely amazing and without it I would be in a very dark place, I am so grateful to have this service.”

“The group is the only support I have ever had in my life to deal with mum. Not only do I get support from the workers, I have made lifelong friends with the other young people. We are more like family than friends. We have a different bond than what you have with your friends.”

“Going to family support has helped me deal with my son’s addiction and I cope much better. It’s so good to talk to someone who gets it.”



Key Changes We Want To See In 2020-2023

Families are Supported

Ensure there is **VISIBLE FAMILY SUPPORT** in every local area, through developing and promoting an evidence base and business case for family support across all ages, and inclusive of anyone affected by someone else's substance use.

Champion and support the role of **FAMILIES AS LIFESAVERS**, to reduce the risk of alcohol and drug-related harm and deaths.

Embed **CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND FAMILY MEDIATION** skills in our work with families, to help families in recovery reconnect and re-build damaged relationships.

Families are Included

Highlight the impact on families of the gap between **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE** care and treatment, and seek to close this gap.

Share the learning from our **ROUTES YOUNG PERSONS' PROJECT**, including developing a strengths-based alternative to the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) model, and enhancing support and understanding in schools.

Grow and support a robust and sustainable **VOLUNTEER BASE** for Scottish Families, including families with lived experience.

Families are Recognised

Shine a light on the impact on families of **CRIME, CRIMINALITY AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM** linked to alcohol and drug use.

Develop our **MY FAMILY, MY RIGHTS** programme to ensure the commitments in the national 'Rights, Respect and Recovery' alcohol and drugs strategy look and feel real for families on the ground.

Families are Connected to Communities

Facilitate structured **COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS AROUND ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**, including workplaces, to increase awareness and understanding, and address judgement and stigma through education and social contact.

Increase insight into **SCOTLAND'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ALCOHOL**, including the influences on our everyday culture around alcohol, and how these can be challenged and changed to reduce harm for families.

Families are a Movement for Change

Launch our **'LOVE MAKES YOU FAMILY'** campaign, to clearly and positively communicate that Scottish Families supports anyone affected by someone else's substance use, and to increase our engagement with diverse families.

Find new and creative ways to **CONNECT, LEARN AND SHARE** with families, including through a book club, film club and expressive arts.

[View our annual Delivery Plan](#)



We would love to hear your views on 'Change Will Come', our strategy for 2020-23.
Please get in touch.

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**Scottish
Families**

Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

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