



Family Support Is A *Lifeline*

A Family Guide To Support

'Family Support Is *Lifechanging*. Here's Why...'



Availability

Family support can't just be 9am-5pm. It needs to be flexible for us. Not time-limited or on a short-term basis.

'Support during holiday times.'

Respite

This can mean more than a safe space such as a support group, but the offer of retreats.

'Some place to go to get away from it all.'

Training

Staff being well trained and knowledgeable about issues we face, as well as providing that training for us.

It's For Everyone

People need to be able to include their children. Available even if loved one isn't engaging with a service, or isn't here anymore.

'Shame needs to be removed and support needs to be put in its place.'

Make It Seen

'Good support should be well publicised.'

'Counsellors should know about family support.'

Leaflets lying about in GP surgeries. Referral process in place with GPs.

'I was a mess and went straight to the doctor.'

What's Available

Emotional Support, Practical Support, Mental Health Support, Legal Support, Financial Support.

It's Not All Doom and Gloom

'Being able to share the good stuff too.'

'The *Difficulties* We Face'



Not Feeling Included

'Even if the NHS had been willing to share things. They won't share with family members. Nobody is prepared to share info about what was going on with your loved one. It would have saved 10 years of trouble.'

'Family support didn't ever include me.'

'You were excluded. Punished for wanting to be involved.'

Being Dismissed by Lack of Understanding

'There's some diazepam go back to your house.'

'Just put him out.'

'It needs to be the same [response] as a broken arm.'

Time-Limited Support

'6 weeks and 'bye bye see you later on you go and get on with it.'

Lack of Visibility

'It's like going down a rabbit hole trying to find support.'

'Floundering around.'

Availability

'Postcode lottery.'

No Support Out-Of-Hours

'Family support didn't ever include me.'

‘What Do We Want? Family Support! When Do We Want It? Now!’



Help To Get Perspective

‘Not having it all going on in your head.’

‘Help to sort out mixed emotions.’

‘Realise it’s not your fault.’

‘Keeps your feet on the ground.’

De-Stigmatisation

‘Addiction needs to be made more open.’

‘I haven’t done anything - we need to get rid of the shame.’

‘Being around people that had been in your shoes.’

*‘People walking by the homeless person or a person that uses drugs stepping over them shame on..... shame on f***ing you! That’s what society has come to.’*

Consistency

‘Need consistency because we don’t get it from our loved ones.’

‘Support in the longevity.’

Support For All Areas

Emotional, Practical,
Mental Health, Legal, Financial

Social Aspect

‘Taking away the isolation we feel.’

‘Having people you can talk to.’

‘You’re not alone.’

‘No pill will fix this. The only thing that will help is getting out and speaking to people who know the same.’

‘Social aspect. You might be excluded or don’t want to be in certain circles.’

‘Need support from people who really know what it’s like to realise your son/husband is a drug addict. People can have their opinion but they’ve not walked in your shoes.’

‘Recognition it impacts your whole life.’

‘Not lip service – someone who understood.’

'In Our Own Words...'



Understanding

Fight the Stigma

Relate

Trust

Openness

Invested In Helping

Confidentiality becomes trust. *'If you hear it in a meeting it stays in a meeting.'*

Talk To People
On Their Level

Mutual respect. Secrets. Privacy.
Anonymity.

Connection

Break Down The Barriers -
Stop Us From Becoming Like The
Addict Themselves

*'Not a real life Bella
magazine.'*

Consideration

*'Experience of life was your first
qualification'* – in relation to staff.
*'You've got to have lived through this
to even begin to understand how
somebody feels.'*

A Problem Shared
Is A Problem Halved

Being Able To Say Out
Loud What Really Happened

Non-Judgemental

Just Doesn't Feel As Bad As
Keeping It All In Yourself

Empathetic

‘What *Support* Does For Us’



It's helped me feel less anxious. More in control. Very reassuring. Practical advice I can take on board rather than stick my head in the sand. It's made me confront what's happening rather than letting it simmer and having a meltdown.



Self-esteem has come up a bit. When things are really bad and everything gets on top of you, you can feel your mood go lower and you don't feel able to cope with your own life never mind the addicts. Confidence to be myself and have my own life. Empowered. Practical advice and moral support. Confidence to go through another day.

Life-changing. Brought me back to being confident and strong – I was previously a shell of myself. Helped me get back to the person I was before it all happened. I never thought I'd get back. Light at the end of the tunnel.



Speaking to someone with a real response. Realise what I'm capable of. What knowledge and thoughts I already had and now I can do something about it. Like a Wii character – I was being picked up and dangled, looking at it from a bird's eye point of view. Helped me move in a situation I was stuck in.

Moral support. Makes you feel a bit better. Support when you are in the thick of it. Hearing other people's stories helps you realise you are not alone.



Learn to never give up. People at your back. Every day is worth a good try at it.

'Who We Need Supporting Us'



Someone With Lived Experience

Lived experience as a qualification.

'Knows exactly what you're talking about because they've experienced it themselves.'

'Talk straight to you. Don't beat about around the bush if you need to hear it.'

'Don't be afraid to tell us what's what.'

Consistency and knowledge.

'Access to other services and knowledge about other services.'

'When you say you'll do something you'll do it.'

Reassurance that you are always on your support workers mind. Sympathetic but not feeling sorry for you (empathetic).

'Havin' Banter'

Being able to laugh.

Connections.

'Pointing out that you might be doing something wrong is a positive thing. "Do what you always did and you will get what you always got". But we need someone to do that in a way that's not a criticism.'

'I needed someone to be thinking about the whole thing and give me practical advice, my own family and friends wouldn't understand.'

Qualities

Calm, direct, approachable, being able to listen, confidence.

'You're looking for somebody who has been through it themselves.'

‘Why Is Peer Support So Important For Us?’



‘Invaluable. Helps when your thoughts are all mushed up, it gives you a platform to talk.’

‘With family and friends you’re either getting sympathy or shouted at. This doesn’t happen in group. These people know what we are talking about.’

‘Blown away by peers and what they were saying and I could see myself in that situation. They could eloquently describe what I was experiencing when I wasn’t at that stage yet.’

‘You’re not on your own. That experience is invaluable.’

‘Meeting people who have lived it – you can offer support and receive support once that trust is there in that environment. You can speak freely and openly, more directly than anywhere else.’

‘A two way street.’

‘It helps me seeing people in the same situation because I don’t really talk to anyone else about it. My other family members don’t have sympathy for my son who uses, the group has helped me with this.’

‘Relating and support as a collective. It’s totally destructive and no one understands until they’ve lived it.’

‘Nothing but just to talk.’

‘Realise the similar patterns when living with someone else’s addiction.’

Appendix: Government Interpretation vs. Family Interpretation



Government

Family

<p>'Positive inclusive ethos.' (Workforce)</p>	<p>'It's for everyone – people need to be able to include their children. Available even if loved one isn't engaging with a service, or isn't here anymore.'</p>
<p>'Peer-support and high quality supervision is essential, enhancing skills knowledge and innovative practice.' (Workforce)</p>	<p>'Lived experience as a qualification, need to know how to access other services and knowledge about how other services, staff being well trained and knowledgeable about issues we face, as well as providing that training for us.'</p>
<p>'Holistic.' (Services)</p>	<p>'Relating and support as a collective. It's totally destructive and no one understands until they've lived it.'</p> <p>'Recognition it impacts your whole life.'</p>
<p>'Families should be empowered to know how to 'reach in', not be 'referred to'. (Services)</p>	<p>Leaflets lying about in GPs. Referral process in place with GPs.</p> <p>'I was a mess and went straight to the doctor.'</p>
<p>'Recognition of the savings upstream by working early, effectively and sustainably with families.' (Investment)</p>	<p>'Shame needs to be removed and support needs to be put in its place.'</p>
<p>'Adequate resources are required to back up delivery of the sustainable long term financial framework to meet the aspirations of this work.' (Investment)</p>	<p>Family support can't just be 9-5, it needs to be flexible for us. Not time-limited or on a short-term bases.</p>
<p>'Are built on trusted relationships, mutual respect and a common approach to recovery and growth.' (Models)</p>	<p>'Meeting people who have lived it – you can offer support and receive support once that trust is there in that environment. You can speak freely and openly, more directly than anywhere else.'</p>
<p>'Clearly connecting areas of distress (mental health/recovery), wellbeing, parenting and family support.' (Models)</p>	<p>'Even if the NHS had been willing to share things. They won't share with family members. Nobody is prepared to share info about what was going on with your loved one. It would have saved 10 years of trouble.'</p>

This booklet was written by family members supported by All in the Family, a partnership in South Lanarkshire led by Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs and My Support Day.

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