



**Scottish  
Families**

Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

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# Christmas Newsletter December 2017



# In this Issue

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We realised that our autumn newsletter came out only in October and didn't want to release a winter newsletter too early so we're here with a mini Christmas edition! We've gone for a modern Christmas touch to the design of this newsletter—blue and white rather than red and green, what do you think?

We've spent the last week moving into our new home on Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow and now we're saying how much we can't believe that it's December already! Just over a month ago it was our family conference (we have a summary inside of the weekend, make sure to read) and we introduce you to our newest member of the team Lynne. Our helpline will be on limited hours this Christmas but we have cover most days, more information is inside, and we have listed some useful emergency contact numbers for over the festive period.

Merry Christmas!

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## A Christmas greeting from Justina!

Well I'm not sure where to start with this? In asking me to write my regular (well I've done it twice before so now it's regular) column for this Christmas edition of our newsletter, Rebecca said "I'd like it to be 'A Christmas greeting from Justina...' – like you're doing the queen's speech on Christmas day." I think maybe I have made too many mentions of the fact that I wish I had more opportunities in life to wear a tiara? Hmm.



**Justina Murray** @ceosfad · Nov 4

Still disappointed I wasn't allowed to wear a tiara to the conference dinner  
#maybenextyear #itsallrelative

Anyway, whether you are royalty or otherwise, the end of the year is often one of those times when you look back and forward at the same time. I'm sure each of the team would have their own list, but looking back here are some of my highlights. We have welcomed new members onto our Board (hello Brenda, Colin, Lorraine and Michael) and into our staff team (hello me, hello Lynne). We developed and launched our 'It's All Relative' Strategy for 2017-20 (thanks everyone for all your input and influence) which lays out a really exciting programme of actions and improvements to ensure Families are Supported, Included, Recognised, Connected to Communities, and a Movement for Change. We held an amazing national families' conference in Stirling (which you can read more about in this newsletter) which created levels of energy, motivation and determination which will fuel our work well into next year and beyond. Along with partners, we celebrated the UK Supreme Court decision on Minimum Unit Pricing for alcohol which we have actively campaigned for over the last five years. And we continued to develop and deliver a wide range of high quality Scottish Families

support, services and initiatives across Scotland, receiving lovely feedback from families about the impact we have had on their lives.

There is loads to look forward to in 2018, especially the new areas of work outlined in our strategy. For example we will launch our new website early in the new year; mark the Year of Young People 2018 by engaging with 12-25 year olds around their experiences and ideas; support the development of a new families' movement in Scotland; work with the Scottish Government and Corra Foundation to set up a Recovery Initiative Fund for Families (announced by the Minister at our conference); look at ways to support families to re-connect through conflict resolution and mediation; engage with workplaces; and continue to strengthen and improve our existing services. And that's a few examples – phew!

I know that for many families, looking back and looking forward at this time of year does not give such cause for celebration or anticipation. Remember we are always there for you so please don't feel you have to deal with everything yourself. And our really important #caremas message about looking after yourself is true for anytime of year, not just for Christmas as the saying goes.

An absolutely massive, ginormous and HUGE thanks to all of you for the ongoing support, encouragement and inspiration you give to everyone at Scottish Families. We are going to do great things together in 2018, I just know it.

Now, where did I put that tiara, I need to take the corgis for a walk ...

- Justina Murray, CEO

## How you can help us this Christmas



Well it's that time of year again, every advert through I'm a Celebrity is Christmas-related, whether it's the John Lewis advert, M&S or the Coca Cola truck. People have already been putting up their decorations since November, and every shop you go into is blaring Christmas songs - it's always Shakin' Stevens isn't it? Christmas can be a good time for many people, where they eat loads and loads of food because why not and attempt to watch the Christmas telly—who's going to win Strictly on Christmas Day this year?

Christmas is different for everyone, everyone has their own traditions and families of all different shapes and sizes. Christmas can be a wonderful jolly time, but it can also be a time for stress, sadness, worry and grief.

For families and friends supporting a loved one with an alcohol or drug problem, the festive season can be hard, stressful and disappointing. Many services are closed between Christmas and New Year, but families will continue to support and protect their loved ones, just like every other day.

Over Christmas our helpline will be open on limited hours and our advisers will provide listening support and information for families. Family members can also leave messages, send emails or speak on our webchat and one of our advisers will be with them as soon as they can.

Over on our Facebook page, we are running a 25 day Christmas campaign called Merry Caremas—how to look after yourself and take

some time for you this Christmas. Every night at 6pm a new post goes up—we have been overwhelmed by the amount of people who have contributed to the campaign, there's information on our services, tips for dealing with stress at parties, baking recipes, stories from family members and their Christmases, breathing exercises, and we look at stress apps that you can download. Make sure to follow our Facebook each night for a new post—

[www.facebook.com/ScottishFamiliesAffectedByDrugs](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishFamiliesAffectedByDrugs)

### How you can help us

Scottish Families is the only national charity in Scotland that focuses on supporting families affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use. Currently around 20% of our core funding comes from Scottish Government. The rest of the money comes from other government funds, commissioned work, grant funding and, critically, fundraising.

Your donations will help us to continue our work in 2018 and beyond. As a small charity, every penny donated makes a massive difference to what we can achieve. Whether you can donate £5, £10 or £20, your donations will go towards helping families across Scotland.

You can donate directly through our Just Giving page [www.justgiving.com/sfad](https://www.justgiving.com/sfad), by text (**SFAD17 £5 to 70070**) - it can be any amount such as £5, £10, £15, etc. or you can contact [sarah@sfad.org.uk](mailto:sarah@sfad.org.uk) for more information.



## Our new office

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# A New Home for Scottish Families

On Wednesday 29th November we waved bye bye to our old office that was on St Vincent Street, Glasgow and said hello to our new bright office in Edward House, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. We are loving our new home and we don't know if being so close to the high street shops is a good thing or a bad thing - especially with Christmas just around the corner!



We've settled in quite nicely and are going to be putting up our Christmas decorations next week, just in time for our Christmas Coffee Morning on Monday 11th of December from 11am - 1pm. Make sure to check out our Twitter and Facebook for pictures - our staff are going to be doing loads of baking so there is going to be amazing cake pictures to share! Please remember that because we have changed office, our contact details have changed. Our helpline number is still 08080 10 10 11.

**Edward House**  
**199 Sauchiehall Street**  
**Glasgow**  
**G2 3EX**  
**0141 465 7523**

# Meet Rebecca



**What does 'family' mean to you?** – I've always seen family in a 'traditional' way because that's what I've been brought up with, but family can be different and unique. My little family is my mum, dad, brother, Graham and my aunt, and they've always been very close to me and there's never a day where I don't see or speak to them. I've been lucky to have more people join my little family over the past few years and my cats Oliver and Maisy are always considered my family when they're not destroying and eating my Christmas tree.

**What's it like working for Scottish Families?** – I work in Communications so I get to do lots and lots of different things, one thing being the first point of contact for the organisation – you've probably spoken to me on the phone, through our Twitter and Facebook or our info email. I get to write and edit all of our content; manage our social media, design newsletters and leaflets, and my favourite, data protection and cyber security. I can't even remember most of the things I do because it is so varied. I also help everyone in the office with anything they throw my way – I try my best! We're a small team and we all help each other out so you do get to learn a lot of new things working here.

**What would you like the public to know about Scottish Families?** – That the support is here and there

is nothing embarrassing about picking up the phone and asking for help. I have heard so many people say 'I never knew the service existed, I could really have done with the help' or 'I know someone who will really benefit from this.' Our services are valuable and needed and they are here, everyone should be talking about Scottish Families.

**What are the things you love most about your work with Scottish Families?** – I love learning! I've learned so many new things since I've started with Scottish Families. I've been given so many opportunities to develop my own skills that have helped me with my work. There are also things I never thought I'd get involved with such as assisting with planning a national conference, being naloxone trained and taking a two-day course in CRAFT. Another thing I love is how open people are and how they put a trust in you from the moment they meet you in telling you their story and wanting to get involved.

**What are the biggest challenges you have met and overcome in your work with Scottish Families?** – One of the biggest challenges is stigma. Witnessing stigma against family members is something we always see, but you actually see stigma when you speak to people in public at events about the charity. A lot of people shy away or walk past or don't want to hear anything as

soon as they see the words 'alcohol and drugs' on our banners and leaflets. It's difficult but you do get many people who come up to us and want to hear more about us and that is the most important thing!

**If there was one piece of advice you would give to a family member supporting recovery, what would that be and why?** – You really need to consider how you feel and how you want to live your life first. It's hard, and trust me when I say that it takes a long time to start looking at things differently if you have been so used to the same routine. Even though there are sad and difficult things that happen in the world, there's always an equal amount of good and happy things. I'd also say find something that you enjoy and that calms you down because supporting someone through recovery is not easy. I listen to music because it's always helped me!

**What has been your favourite moment at Scottish Families?** – I'm not sure if I've had one favourite moment yet, but there have been so many moments that have made me laugh and have made me happy. One moment was when we were on our way to the Recovery Olympics in Stirling with Sooze driving us dressed up as a cheerleader and we got lost and ended up on a country road in the middle of nowhere because John put the wrong postcode into his phone!



## The newest member of our family

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# Say hello to Lynne!

The newest member of Scottish Families is Lynne (sorry Justina it's no longer you!). Lynne is our Family Support Development Worker for Forth Valley. She was thrown into the deep end very early as her first week of work saw her at our two-day family conference but she says it was great because she got to meet so many people and didn't feel awkward at the family support groups the next week! Lynne has answered some of our questions below.



### **Tell us a bit about you!**

I'm married with two sons, they are both funny and kind and make me proud because they are turning into lovely people. I've also been with my husband for 25 years which makes me feel ancient!

I tap dance and Zumba, not in time with the music or anyone else, or as my teacher and instructor would like me to but I love it!

### **What are you most looking forward to working with Scottish Families?**

I started working in a Community Rehab in 2011, before that I didn't really know much about Recovery but I quickly became passionate about the Recovery Message. I believe that people can and do recover, I've seen it happen, so I'm most looking forward to bringing that message to family members and I hope that it will empower them to take control of their own situations and move forward in more positive ways. I love working with people and it always amazes me how much individuals are willing to give of themselves to help others, it's a real privilege to be part of that.

### **What does family mean to you?**

Family to me isn't just about the people you are related to, it's about the people that come into your life and that you make connections with. I'm very lucky to have a very supportive family and to still have my grandparents and parents in my life and I love spending time with them. Some of my favourite people in the world are people that I met at school, tap class, in different job roles and through having my kids and I am a fiercely loyal

friend. All of these people together make up my family.

### **What are your plans for Christmas?**

It's all systems go for Christmas now in our house! I've been helping out with Christmas crafts for my sons' school and dusting off the decorations from the loft, it won't be long until I'm modelling my collection of Christmas jumpers, much to my sons' horror! My favourite part of Christmas is decorating the tree, but I'm quite fussy and I tend to get stressed when other people help, I know that's terrible but I like to be just so. That's not the spirit of the season, I know! To make up for it, each of my boys have a little tree in their bedroom which they can decorate any way they like, I'm not helping myself here am I?

In the afternoon of Christmas Eve myself, my hubby and boys are going to a panto with friends and their kids, then we'll have a full Christmas dinner with all the trimmings because on Christmas Day we are eating out with my parents and grandparents and we're all having curry. Mmm... mistletoe malaidier. Boxing Day will be spent with my husband's family, we all gather at my parent-in-laws; 3 sons, 3 wives, 5 granddaughters, 2 grandsons, various aunts, uncles and cousins....and a partridge in a pear tree! It's a noisy day with way too much food and enough crackers for the entire street to pull—what is it about those little toys that fascinate the kids so much?!

After all that excitement, I really enjoy lazing around with my jammies on, watching all the old films I've seen hundreds of times and playing games with my boys.

## Our helpline over Christmas

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Messages left out of hours will receive call-backs—also any web forms or emails to [helpline@sfad.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sfad.org.uk) will be answered daily

Helpline: 08080 10 10 11

Webchat can be found on our website [www.sfad.org.uk](http://www.sfad.org.uk)

<b>Monday 18th</b>	9am - 5pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Tuesday 19th</b>	9am - 5pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Wednesday 20th</b>	9am - 5pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Thursday 21st</b>	9am - 5pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Friday 22nd</b>	9am - 5pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Saturday 23rd</b>	6pm - 9pm	Webchat only
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	5pm - 8pm	Phone calls only
<b>Christmas Day</b>	No advisers available	
<b>Boxing Day</b>	10am - 1pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Wednesday 27th</b>	10am - 1pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Thursday 28th</b>	10am - 4pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Friday 29th</b>	9am - 12pm 1pm - 4pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Saturday 30th</b>	6pm - 9pm	Webchat only
<b>Hogmanay</b>	5pm - 8pm	Phone calls only
<b>New Years Day</b>	No advisers available	
<b>Tuesday 2nd</b>	10am - 1pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Wednesday 3rd</b>	10am - 4pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Thursday 4th</b>	10am - 4pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Friday 5th</b>	10am - 4pm	Phone & Webchat
<b>Saturday 6th</b>	6pm - 9pm	Webchat only
<b>Sunday 7th</b>	5pm - 8pm	Phone calls only



## Family support groups

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Run or know of a family support group and want to share your group's details with us?  
Contact [info@sfad.org.uk](mailto:info@sfad.org.uk)

### Love N Light Recovery

The Pilgrim Community Centre, 1 Victoria Place, Airdrie, ML6 9BY / 07473102974

23rd December - Christmas Party

30th December - New Year Cafe from 12 noon - 4pm

Group will start back in the New Year on Saturday 6th January

**All events will be held in The Pilgrim Community Centre**

### FASS (Family Addiction Support Service)

123 West Street, Glasgow, G5 8BA / 0141 420 2050

FASS will be closed from Christmas Day and will reopen on Wednesday 3rd January

### SEA (Someone Else's Addiction)

YMCA, 40 Soulis Street, Kilmarnock, KA3 1AP 12pm—2pm / every Wednesday

Group stops December 20th and will start back Wednesday 10th January

### Midlothian Family Support Group

Glenesk Centre, 1 – 5 Duke Street, Dalkeith, Edinburgh, EH2 21BG / 07549510387

Last group of the year is Monday 11th December 6:30—8:30pm. Group starts back Monday 8th January 6:30pm - other dates 22/01/2018 05/02/2018.

## Other news

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### The National Kinship Advice Service

Citizens Advice Scotland are very pleased to have been asked by the Scottish Government to continue to deliver the National Kinship Care Advice Service. The Service will be delivered across Scotland, with advice and information available from every Citizens Advice Bureau, supported by four Regional Officers delivering specialist advice, to address more complex circumstances. Advice and information will also be available from the Kinship Care Helpline (0808 800 0006), which is available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and through the Citizens Advice Scotland website ([www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)) and the dedicated Kinship Care Service website [www.kinshipcarescotland.org.uk](http://www.kinshipcarescotland.org.uk).

The service will continue to provide advice and information directly to kinship carers around the legal and financial aspects of kinship care, and also second tier support to Citizens Advice Bureaux and other stakeholders, across Scotland and an information and training service to local authorities and other stakeholder agencies. In addition, the service will offer:-

- a listening ear, advice, information and signposting for kinship carers, around the emotional and practical elements of their role
- workshops, information leaflets and newsletters for kinship carers and for the young people in their care, which will respond to the issues which they have highlighted as important to them

Citizens Advice Scotland is delighted to welcome Mentor UK as partners in the delivery of the service, and to support the Mentor UK Kinship Care Guide and Website, and also to be working with the Child Poverty Action Group who will continue to provide expert help, training and reference materials for the CAB service.

## Support over Christmas

Many services will be closed over Christmas. Here we've put together some emergency numbers should you need them.

	Phone Number: 111 Phone is open 24 hours Website: <a href="http://www.nhs24.scot">www.nhs24.scot</a>
	In emergencies call: 999 Phone is open 24 hours To report a crime: 101 <a href="http://www.scotland.police.uk">www.scotland.police.uk</a>
	Phone Number: 0800 1111 Phone is open 24 hours Service for children and young people up to the age of 19
	Phone Number: 0141 572 0237 Website: <a href="http://www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk">www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk</a> Help and advice for debt problems
	Phone Number: 0808 2000 247 Phone is open 24 hours Email: <a href="mailto:helpline@sdafmh.org.uk">helpline@sdafmh.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.womensaid.org.uk">www.womensaid.org.uk</a>
	They run a Parent Line and Kinship Care Service Phone Number: 08000 28 22 33 Text: 07860 022 844 Email: <a href="mailto:parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk">parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.children1st.org.uk">www.children1st.org.uk</a>
	Phone Number: 116 123 Phone is open 24 hours Email: <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.org">jo@samaritans.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>



## Support over Christmas



Housing advice helpline: 0808 800 4444  
Weekdays: 9am - 5pm  
Website: <https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/>

Drinkline  
National alcohol helpline

Phone: 0300 123 1110  
Weekdays: 9am - 8pm  
Weekends: 11am - 4pm

Helpline for drug information and advice



Phone: 0800 587 5879  
7 days a week lines are open: 8am - 11pm

Helpline for depression and anxiety



Phone: 0800 83 85 87  
Monday - Thursday: 6pm - 2am  
Friday - Monday: 6pm - 6am

For support and advice from Scottish Families, our helpline number is **08080 10 10 11**. We are on limited hours because of the holidays, please read page 8 so you know what hours the helpline is running. You can also email **helpline@sfad.org.uk** and one of our advisers will respond as soon as they can.



## Our conference

### It's All Relative

On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November, we held a conference with the goal of bringing family members affected by alcohol and drugs together. 133 people attended the two-day event at the Stirling Court Hotel. Family members made up two-thirds of the final number and the other third included practitioners, Scottish Families staff and board members, and six children who were in the creche!



As a charity, we recognise the importance of family members coming together so we offered a free overnight stay for family members affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use. Places for the event sold out within two weeks – amazing! We were overwhelmed by the number of people who wanted to come along to the event (which is a learning point that will be taken into consideration for future events!)

The conference was made up of a mixture of sessions: some relating to alcohol and drugs, real stories from family members, and tips on how to get

vital time for yourself whether through attending a family support group or trying ways to relieve stress such as mindfulness or yoga.

Aileen Campbell Minister for Public Health and Sport opened the conference with a speech and an open Q&A session which was received well. The Minister discussed the need for family support and announced that a new fund offering small grants to assist the development and delivery of family support groups and activities will be formally launched in early 2018.

The Minister's speech was followed by



## Our conference

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**'I enjoyed the way family members could enjoy their time away learning more about addiction and how to help their family members through their addictions and also how they could connect with each other.'**

an input of 'experts by experience'. Two speakers talked about their direct experience of the impact of alcohol and drugs on families. Beverley Francis, Head of the Scottish Government's Substance Misuse Unit, then gave an overview of the main themes in Road to Recovery, including key achievements to date; current priorities and recognised gaps; and the narrative direction for the next stage. Attendees were invited to take part in a workshop discussion on the five key themes of the strategy refresh:

- Education and Prevention
- Promoting Recovery
- Enforcement
- Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse (CAPSM)
- Making it Work.

The workshop is just the start of our conversations around the Road to Recovery refresh. We will update our social media and website with further information as soon as it is available.

Over the course of the two days, attendees to the conference got to hear from a range of speakers including Karyn McCluskey from Community Justice Scotland, Katy Macleod from Scottish Drugs Forum and Laura Mahon and Nicola Merrin from Alcohol Focus Scotland.

There are too many highlights from the weekend to mention, but one speaker whose stories resonated with a lot of the guests was Saturday's after dinner speaker Paula Maguire.

By the age of 30, Paula was living the life of a virtual recluse, crippled by social anxiety and depression. Adventure became Paula's therapy in 2012 when

she became Paula Must Try Harder [www.paulamusttryharder.co.uk](http://www.paulamusttryharder.co.uk)

Initially trying the 17 Commonwealth sports, then moving on to attempting a range of other nerve-wracking challenges such as being a nude model for an art class and wing walking. In 2018, Paula will be attempting to become the first person to swim the coastline of the UK (1800 miles!). Paula's story shows that we all have an adventurer inside of us and that no matter what our life circumstances are, we are all braver than we think.

Some feedback we have received

**'I wanted to say a massive thank you for the fab time and how much I appreciate the support you have given me.'**

**'Very uplifting hearing about various 'recovery' situations and meeting new people. We really are 'family'.'**

**'Met lots of different people who had interesting stories.'**

**'(I met) lots of people and we all have something in common, it makes it easy to speak to new people about something that can make you feel embarrassed and ashamed at times.'**

**'It brought people together but also gave a massive insight into the lives of addicts and support options for families.'**

**'Families coming together, sharing expe-**

## CRAFT Training with Scottish Families and Friends

There's nothing quite like training and learning some new things! Our practitioners use CRAFT regularly in Telehealth and support groups, and we talk about it pretty much daily to supporters, at meetings, and online. We see CRAFT as a truly important practice so we decided to host a two-day training session with George Charlton from PROPS North Tyneside so that some of our staff and friends could learn more about Community Reinforcement and Family Training.



The training was in our new home at Edward House on Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. We were a big group of 17 trainees - Sarah, Rebecca, Lynne and Justina from Scottish Families were joined with Families Outside, Addaction (Glasgow and South Ayrshire), SEA, Step Together and FASS. The training was active, intense, insightful and really delved deep into CRAFT and how it all works.

# CRAFT

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George who delivered the training says:

**'What can I say? This has been one of the best CRAFT courses I have ever delivered. Every single person taking part showed real enthusiasm and excitement about learning new skills that would support family members to work towards 'recovery'. It was an absolute pleasure to meet you guys and feel as though I gained 17 new friends as a result of our time together, thanks guys, you were brilliant!'**

Justina Murray, CEO of Scottish Families:

**'I loved every minute of the CRAFT training with the amazing and inspiring George Charlton. And I'm sure it wasn't just because I love a Geordie accent! Having seen our practitioners using CRAFT so positively with families, it was great to get the chance to learn more about the evidence base, to hear loads of real practice examples and to test out the methods for ourselves. It was great to be training as part of a group of energetic, experienced and entertaining family members and practitioners – we were all #Craft #Daft (as George would say) by the end of two full-on days! The training confirmed for me that CRAFT is an amazing programme which really empowers and supports family members in their own right, and which can play a vital in encouraging their relative into treatment. I am proud that Scottish Families uses CRAFT in our work, and look forward to working with George and others to build a strong community of practice in Scotland.'**

## What is CRAFT?

CRAFT teaches the use of healthy rewards to encourage positive behaviours. It focuses on both the family and the person who has an alcohol or drug problem. CRAFT has two goals—one is to teach you how to encourage the person to reduce their use and get into treatment and the other goal is to help you enhance your own quality of life.

You can read an introduction to CRAFT [here](https://the20minuteguide.com/) on our website  
<https://the20minuteguide.com/>



## Family Christmas

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In order for the light to shine so brightly,  
first the darkness must be present

So let me tell you where I am right now. It's Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 8.45pm and I'm sitting on my bed in the Premier Inn on Argyle Street in Glasgow after spending what has been a wonderful day delivering Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) to some amazing folk (already I'm sounding Scottish) who support families affected by addictions across Scotland.

I was asked to write a short blog to support Scottish Families' Christmas Campaign 'Merry Caremas' and have to say it was the easiest thing I've ever agreed to do as I passionately believe in supporting any family that is affected by drug and alcohol issues.

I know my family was affected greatly - I put them through a living hell.

My name is George by the way, I'm from Newcastle, I'm 44 years old and I'm also in recovery. I have been for a little while now, 17 years to be exact. I work for a family support service in Newcastle called PROPS and I love the work I do. I truly mean that, I love it, every day getting to work with the most brilliant and courageous people I know: carers, family members, mams, dads, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, whatever you choose to call yourself. Each of you are truly inspirational people in my eyes, who I value, love and respect so much.

I am always humbled by all of your journeys and whilst I don't know you personally, in many ways I know you all, and the struggles you face on a daily basis.

My parents who were in their 70's faced problems like yours, seeing someone

they love destroy themselves on a daily basis with drink and drugs, watching their son (me) losing his mind, his identity, his self-respect and almost losing his life.

However through it all, one thing they never lost was their **love** for me and their belief in me, even when I was in the darkest of places they held on to **love** and they held onto me. They loved me; they used to say that they would wait until I was in bed asleep / comatose / out of my head / blacked out. They would come into my room and stroke my head and hold me, I never knew this at the time and it still pains me to know what I did to them and how I made them feel for well over a decade, but I was ill. I wasn't a bad person trying to be good; I was a sick person who desperately needed to get well.

I was asked to talk about managing family conflicts at Christmas for the blog and I think I can tackle this answer with one simple word and that word is '**LOVE**'.

People say that Christmas is just another day and not that important, but trust me when I say this, a day, any day, no matter what day with someone who is using problematically, is such an important and crucial day as it may be the last you ever have with them, maybe for you it is already is. I have lost many people who I was close to over the years, people who were there one minute and gone the next.

**George's full blog will be going on our website [www.sfad.org.uk](http://www.sfad.org.uk) at 6pm Monday 11th December. Check out our Facebook too for more Merry Caremas posts.**

## From Rosie

Addiction has been part of our lives for around 20 years now. Having had many Christmases overshadowed by pain and anguish, the festive period this year looks set to be a time for being grateful for the love we have within our family and for our sons and granddaughter still being with us to share the day.

Over the years Christmas became a time to be endured, our situation thrown into sharp focus by all the hype driven by commercialism. If you are on this site you too may have wanted to hunt down the speaker in the supermarket blasting out "Merry Christmas , Everyone" and put a brick through it. No escaping the call to be jolly !

My dad died on Christmas Day 7 years ago. A very strange day. My 2 boys worked together in the kitchen and I came home to a full Christmas Dinner, their gift to me! Our Granddaughter came to stay later in the day. Though I was very sad we chose not to tell her about Papa. We pulled crackers , put the music on and played games. At 96 I knew he would have approved .

The following year my lovely son was in a city centre hostel. He describes now walking along a Christmas-decorated Princes Street; shoppers laden with parcels or on work nights out passed shoulder to shoulder as he struggled in despair in the grip of his addiction.

Two brief and somewhat diluted encounters with my experience!

We now try to appreciate just being together and try to be less driven by the consumerism which has taken over .

We also remember those for whom Christmas is a painful, lonely desert of a day, even in company at times and giving to those who provide much needed care and kindness is very much a priority for me.

Our Cafe, 1st Step, will have a free Christmas Lunch and fun packed family party on 27th December open to the whole recovery community. In the evening our Family Support Group will meet together...maybe finish off the goodies .

Then in January, for the third year, Step Together will have our winter social get together. New Year, new beginning and a good laugh as we have a few jokers in our midst.

**- Rosie - Step Together Family Support**



## Forth Valley Groups

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### When do groups start back in 2018?

Stirling - Thursday 4th January

Grangemouth - Monday 8th January

Falkirk - Tuesday 9th January

Alloa - Tuesday 16th January / phone support on Tuesday 8th January

Lynne will also be available for phone support Friday 22nd December  
Wednesday 3rd January and Thursday 4th January / 07484024407

### Grangemouth

Mondays: 10am - noon

**Last meeting of 2017 is 18th December**

Grangemouth Education Unit (next to  
Grangemouth Sports Complex)  
Abbots Road  
Grangemouth  
FK3 8JB

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### Alloa

Tuesdays: 1:30pm - 3:30pm

**Last meeting of 2017 is 19th December**

CTSI/ACE Recycling Hub  
Whins Road  
Alloa  
FK10 3TA

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### Stirling

Thursdays: fortnightly 6pm-8pm

**Last meeting of 2017 is 21st December**

Raploch Community Campus  
Forth Valley College  
Drip Road  
Stirling  
FK8 1RD

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### Falkirk

Tuesdays: 6pm - 7pm

**Last meeting of 2017 is 19th December**

ASC  
32 Vicar Street  
Falkirk  
FK1 1JB



## East Dunbartonshire Groups

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### When do groups start back in 2018?

Bishopbriggs - Tuesday 9th January 1pm

Milngavie - Thursday 11th January 6:30pm

Kirkintilloch - Thursday 18th January 10am

### Bishopbriggs

Tuesdays: fortnightly 1pm - 3pm

**Last meeting of 2017 is 12th December**

Woodhill Evangelical Church  
30 Wester Cleddens Road  
Bishopbriggs  
Glasgow  
G64 2NH

### Kirkintilloch

Thursdays: fortnightly starting 10am - noon

**Last meeting of 2017 is 7th December**

Kirkintilloch Baptist Church  
52 Townhead  
Kirkintilloch  
G66 1NL

### Milngavie

Thursdays: fortnightly 6:30pm - 8:30pm

**Last meeting of 2017 is 14th December**

Milngavie Community Library & Education  
Centre  
Allander Road  
Bearsden  
G62 8PN





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