



Impact Report 2017-18

Supporting families across Scotland



Welcome from Justina Murray, CEO



On 2 June this year I celebrated my one year birthday with Scottish Families – the year has flown past and it's great to read through this Impact Report 2017-18, to take a breath and reflect on everything we have achieved!

Last Autumn we developed 'It's All Relative', our strategic plan for 2017-20, launching this at our national families conference in Stirling in November. The strategy gives us a simple yet powerful outcomes framework for everything we do: that families are **Supported, Included, Recognised, Connected to Communities and are a Movement for Change**. I have written many strategy documents over the years, and am proud that we took the bold step of abandoning multi-layered strategy speak (vision, mission, aims, values, principles, etc etc) for the confidence, simplicity and clarity of these 5 Outcomes. Many thanks to all those who engaged with us during this process and helped shape our priorities and direction.

We are fortunate to receive a core grant from the Scottish Government as one of their Nationally Commissioned Organisations (NCOs). In 2017-18 this accounted for just over a fifth (21%) of our income, with other government grants for specific services increasing this to 69%. As well as funding through contracts and commissioned services, we rely heavily on charitable trusts and fundraising to support the rest of our work. We are launching a new Fundraising Strategy in 2018-19 and have set ambitious targets to grow our funding support across a wider

range of sources. A huge thanks to everyone who has supported us and raised funds for our work this year – when we say we couldn't do it without you, we really mean this!

We have worked hard this year to increase our profile and influence – including through a greater focus on our communications and policy work. We want to get more people talking about families, and their right to support and recognition. We also want to see an increase in the use of all of our free, national flagship services – the Helpline, Telehealth one-to-one support service, and Bereavement Support Service. The feedback we get from families using these services is amazing – but we are mindful of the fact that so many families still don't know we are here, or are too ashamed to come forward and talk about what is going on at home. As we don't have a shopfront or a member of staff in each local area, we continue to rely heavily on local Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) and other services to point families in our direction, and we have introduced an easy-to-use referral form on our website to encourage this.

We continue to deliver local Family Support Services in East Dunbartonshire and Forth Valley, and have built strong links with local partner organisations and local family networks. We are involved in ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government, ADPs and others about the critical role of community-based family support and the need to upscale this significantly, and we are hopeful that we will see an expansion of services in 2018-19. Our local services provide one-to-one support, family support groups and close working with partner organisations which helps raise the profile of families and increase family-inclusive practice. All good things!

As well as our ongoing workforce development activity with drug and alcohol services and other organisations, this year we hosted two

Scottish CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training) courses in partnership with the Positive Practice Partnership. CRAFT is an evidence-based programme which supports families to challenge and change patterns of communication and behaviour at home, improving relationships, encouraging their loved ones into treatment, and increasing their own self-care and wellbeing. These training courses added a further 25 people to the existing network of trained CRAFT practitioners in Scotland, and we are looking to build a CRAFT Community of Practice to support people with their ongoing work in this area.

Our communities work this year has included some really exciting new developments, including a significant national collaboration around Stigma, and the Larkfield Conversations project in Inverclyde which explored opportunities for a recovery-friendly community. Towards the end of 2017-18 we also launched a new Connecting Families programme, focused on our new strategic outcome that 'Families are a movement for change'. This will continue to grow over the next year and builds on our 15 years of experience as a national organisation which is shaped and driven by families themselves.

Justina Murray, CEO

Supporting families across Scotland

We launched our 2017-20 strategic plan 'It's All Relative' at our national conference in November 2017. During the development of the strategy in September/October 2017, we engaged directly with **130** people across almost **40** conversations across Scotland. This included family members, practitioners, policy-makers and people in treatment and recovery. This engagement helped shape our five outcomes and inform the development actions which sit within them.

Our strategy can be read: <https://www.sfad.org.uk/content/uploads/2018/03/Strategic-Plan-2017-20.pdf>

This impact report focuses on the five key outcomes of our new strategy. These are:

Families are Supported

Families are Included

Families are Recognised

Families are Connected to Communities

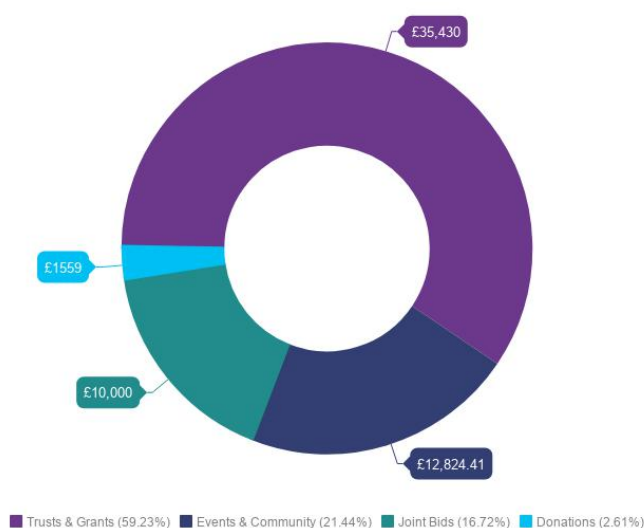
Families are a Movement for Change



What we raised



We receive funding from a range of sources, as reported in detail in our Audited Accounts. This includes core and other grant funding from the Scottish Government, contracts and commissioned work, charitable trusts and foundations, and fundraising. We raised **£59,813** through fundraising in 2017/18. A key part of this total is the generous support from individuals and communities through donations and events, alongside support from funders, trusts, grants and joint bids.



Thank you to the trusts who funded our work: Robertson Trust, James T Howat Charitable Trust, Falkirk Community Schools Charity, Margaret Murdoch Trust, Martin Connell Charitable Trust, The James Wood Bequest Fund, Nancy Roberts Charitable Trust, Miss ME Swinton Paterson's Charitable Trust and The Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust

Trusts & Grants: £35,430 - Events & Community: £12,824.41 - Joint Bids: £10,000 - Donations: £1,559

We want to thank the **70** incredible walkers who raised **£12,000** by walking either the Glasgow, Dundee or Edinburgh Kiltwalk with us in 2017



With your continued support, we are able to provide our vital services to families and friends across Scotland who are affected by alcohol and drugs. We want to thank everyone who has donated and raised money for us in 2017/18 - **your support is invaluable.**

"Thank you for the work you are doing to help Scottish families affected by alcohol & drugs."

"Having lost my soul mate to the effects of alcohol misuse, I whole heartedly support the work of this wonderful charity to aid the effects on families and friends."



“Thank you. I really feel that the support you have given has saved my family. I don’t think we would be in such a positive place if it wasn’t for your support. The whole family has benefitted.”

- Telehealth feedback

Families are supported: Helpline



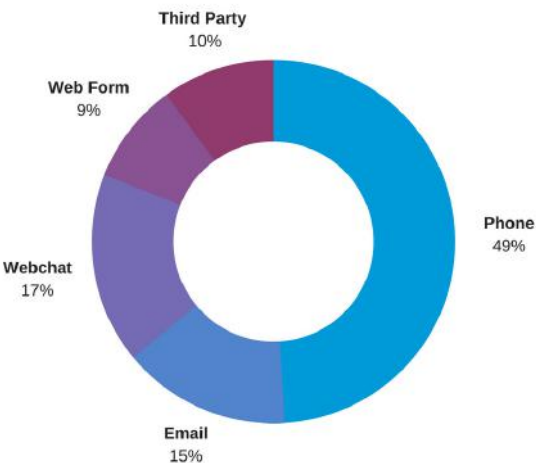
Our helpline is for anyone concerned about someone else’s alcohol or drug use, including practitioners, through the telephone, email and online.

Our helpline in 2017/18

We had **658** contacts to our helpline - a 4.6% increase from 2016/17. The majority of contacts came from phone calls 49%, email 15%, webchat 17%, web contact form 9% and third party call-backs (GPs and Police) 10%.

Three quarters of callers are female (78% female, 22% male) and most are aged over 25 years:

18 & under - 1%	46-55 - 18%
19-25 - 3%	55-65 - 14%
26-35 - 13%	Over 65 - 9%
36-45 - 20%	Undisclosed - 22%



Only a quarter (**24.9%**) of those initially contacting the helpline are looking for help for themselves as family members, with over half looking for help for their loved one (**50.4%**) or for information on treatment services (**16.3%**).

We received helpline contacts from **25 ADP** (Alcohol and Drug Partnerships) in Scotland:

Aberdeen City – 4%	City of Edinburgh – 6%	Lanarkshire – 14%
Aberdeenshire – 4%	Fife – 5%	Perth & Kinross – 3%
Angus – 1%	Forth Valley – 11%	Renfrewshire – 5%
Argyll & Bute – 2%	Glasgow – 16%	Scottish Borders – 1%
Dumfries & Galloway – 2%	Highland – 3%	South Ayrshire – 1%
Dundee – 4%	Inverclyde – 1%	West Dunbartonshire – 2%
East Ayrshire – 2%	Mid & East Lothian – 1%	West Lothian – 2%
East Dunbartonshire – 2%	Moray – 1%	Outside Scotland – 1%
East Renfrewshire – 2%	North Ayrshire – 3%	

“I have phoned a million people looking for help and everybody says its not something they can help me with. I’m so frustrated that people don’t care that I think my daughter is going to die. You are the first person that has listened, and I know you get me. That in itself is overwhelming. Thank you.”
- Helpline caller

Families are supported: Bereavement



Our Bereavement Support Service is for anyone who has lost someone who used drugs in their life.

Bereavement support in 2017/18

49 family members accessed bereavement counselling. The referral figures have varied widely from month to month. **17 ADP** areas are covered in this number.

Through consultation with family members we have found that families are still reluctant to come forward for support through fear of stigma or lack of knowledge of where to go for support.

Family members accessing bereavement counselling complete CORE-IMS on entry and exit from the service, an outcome tool providing an objective measurement of the impact on mental health, risk and wellbeing.

The CORE-IMS average start score was 22 (moderately severe symptoms) with an average end score of 11 (mild symptoms).

This suggests there is a **50%** reduction in the symptoms individual family members are impacted by at their intake screening.

“This is the first time I have felt heard. I felt like I couldn’t really talk about my son cause of the looks I got. Having someone to talk to without judgement has helped me build my life back a bit.”

– Bereavement Client

As a result of a drop in bereavement referrals in 17/18, we held a ‘**Bereavement Month**’ campaign in March 2018. Information about bereavement as a result of a drug-related death and information about contacting our service and what to expect was published on our various social media platforms, generating engagement and traffic to our pages. Additionally, an email was sent to all ADPs with our new service leaflet and bereavement companion and an update on our bereavement service – this was then disseminated by local ADPs to their alcohol and drug services and local support.

We also presented on families bereaved through substance use, including the learning from our own service, to ADP Conferences in Forth Valley, Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway.

In 2018/19 we are running a pilot extension to the Bereavement Support Service, taking on 30 referrals of family members bereaved through alcohol-related death.



“Thank you for arranging bereavement counselling for my mother, I only contacted you this morning and the counsellor has now phoned and her first session is next week.”

– Bereavement Service Client

Families are supported: Family Support Services



Our local family support services include one-to-one support, family support groups, and partnership working across Forth Valley and East Dunbartonshire.

Our family support services in 2017/18

We had **148** new referrals access our support services in Forth Valley and East Dunbartonshire. As of March 2018 we have an **142** active caseload.

At our groups we deliver support, invite guest speakers to talk about alcohol and drugs, health & wellbeing and various other subjects, host social events and organise activities for family members such as yoga.

Our Forth Valley Support Service contract was renewed and now includes support for 16-17 year olds.



“The group is a safe space for us to talk without being judged because we all have a fear that nobody will understand, when in fact you find you’re not alone and that’s why it works so well, everybody is there to support each other because we’re all going through the same feelings, it’s like a family you choose to have in your life.”

– Family member at support group



Our Impact: Cathy

My name is Cathy and I'm a 65 year old mother to an older son who is 44. I was so delighted when I found out at the end of 1972 that I was pregnant. Paul was born on 30th July 1973 – my little bundle of joy! This feeling was short lived as a couple of weeks later his dad left us. He had been having an affair whilst I was in hospital.

I met my now husband Danny in 1983 and we moved in together. He was really good with Paul, but as Paul was growing up he became cheeky and would often tell Danny "you're not my dad so don't tell me what to do."

We married in 1989, by now Paul was a 16 year old teenager and was quite rebellious, he was a punk rocker and was hanging around with a bad crowd. His first dabble in drugs began around this time with cannabis. This really worried me, but there was no telling him – it was his choice was his answer.

When Paul was almost 20, we told him that he should be settling down and have his own place. He continued hanging around with the same crowd. Since he left school he had several jobs but never lasted long. His last employment was in the nineties.

Paul got his own flat and we done it up for him, it was lovely and only 2 minutes from us. My father became terminally ill and I was too wrapped up looking after him that I had no idea how Paul's drug use was doing, but the family all noticed. He was not using heroin – he was smoking it. His once lovely wee flat was now a drugs den – he was even growing cannabis!

His flat was broken into and he got a beating, he was a mess. A while after this I had been

trying to contact him but never got an answer, I phoned round the hospitals looking for him, next I tried the police and found out that he was in prison, I broke my heart.

Once he was out of prison, he now had more friends he met whilst there and he was spending a lot of time away from his home. I still continued to live behind closed doors, his behaviour really took a toll on me and my marriage was suffering.

I spoke to my GP around September 2014 and broke down. She gave me the name and telephone number of 'Claire Wadsworth of Scottish Families'. I telephoned Claire and had a brief conversation, she asked me along to one of her family groups in Kirkintilloch, but because of my state of mind I knew I wouldn't be able to go along.

Claire kindly agreed to come visit me at home. We had a good blether and I opened up to her. It took me a few weeks to get myself along to Claire's group, but Claire was there at the door waiting for me. I was introduced to the other ladies in the group and made to feel very welcome. I honestly don't remember much about that first meeting!

I remember trying to talk but cried. The ladies were so lovely and understanding and from then I knew I wasn't alone and had their support. Some of the things I heard were heart breaking and awful. It was then I thought **'I need Scottish Families.'**

I am so proud of what Scottish Families has given me. I've learnt to love myself and my life again. As far as Paul is my son and I love him unconditionally, I need my life!

Families are supported: Telehealth



Telehealth is intensive one-to-one sessions with family members using the evidence-based CRAFT programme, delivered via telephone, webchat or video chat (e.g. Facetime)

Telehealth in 2017/18

Our one-to-one Telehealth support service which utilises the CRAFT evidence-based intervention was accessed by **96** family members – a 33% increase from 2016/17.

Clients from **23 ADP** areas have accessed Telehealth support (an increase from 20 in 2016/17), evidencing the increased reach of the service across Scotland.

100% of telehealth clients stated that their personal or family circumstances had improved because of the support they had received

Family members accessing Telehealth complete CORE-IMS on entry and exit from the service, an outcome tool providing an objective measurement of the impact on mental health, risk and wellbeing. The average start CORE-10 score was 20.4 (moderate to severe symptoms) with an average end score of 14.3 (mild symptoms) demonstrating an average **42%** improvement in wellbeing for families accessing support.

Evaluations are completed after the family member's final session of Telehealth.

Feedback includes:

100% stated that they felt calmer, more able to cope and felt they had somewhere to turn for support because of the support they received

29% reported that their loved one had stopped or reduced substance use

72% felt that they now know how best to support their loved one

72% found that they took more time to look after themselves

"I'm so pleased with myself for taking the step and contacting SFAD. I feel confident to control the impact in my life from my mum. I handle each situation with control and no longer feel afraid or smothered by them. I will be forever thankful."

– Telehealth Client



“The girl on the phone was very helpful and calming, it’s nice to know there are people just to listen and advise. Would recommend the service.”

– Helpline feedback form

Families are included: Workforce Training

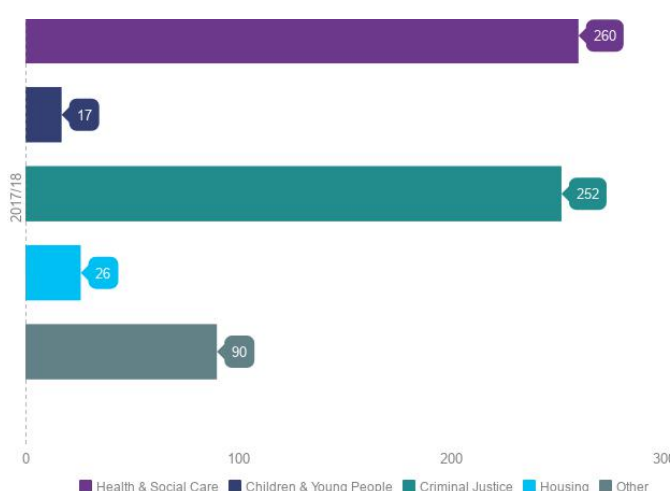


Training in 2017/18

We delivered training to **703** practitioners in the alcohol and drug and wider workforce, a 39% increase from 2016/17. The training includes reference to family inclusive best practice, evidence-based interventions, and getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) principles.

We delivered learning & development events in **10** ADP areas (Aberdeenshire, City of Edinburgh, Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, Perth & Kinross, and Stirling). When looking at attendees of learning & development events they covered **22** ADP areas.

We use the Skills for Justice 'Alcohol & Drugs Competence Assessment Framework' (ADCAF) occupational categories to record training participants by occupation. Training for 2017/18 has reached various professions including: health & social care, working with children and young people, housing, criminal justice, education & training, and other which includes family members affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use.



Health & Social Care: 260 - Children & Young People: 17 - Criminal Justice: 252 - Housing: 26 - Other: 90

"I will be more mindful of families' place in the recovery journey.... family views are essential"
– Substance Misuse Worker

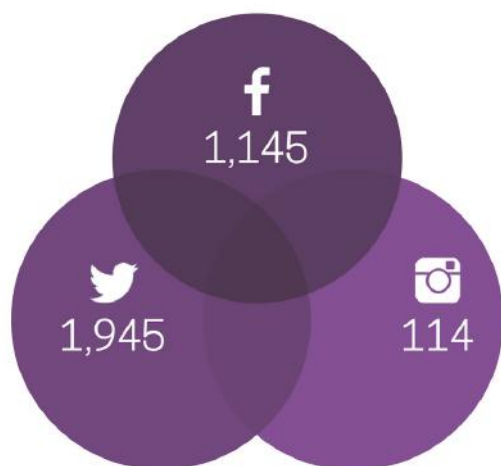
CRAFT

In November 2017 and March 2018, we organised and hosted national Community Reinforcement and Families Training (CRAFT) practitioner training, delivered by the Positive Practice Partnership. While they trained their 1000th practitioner this year, we were pleased at helping to add 25 new CRAFT graduates to Scotland.

We continue to offer advice and guidance to commissioning bodies who are interested in developing family support; family inclusive practice and evidence-based interventions.



Families are recognised: Communications



We continue to grow our followers and our reach across our social media channels:

Social Media Engagement (as of March 2018)

Twitter: 1,945 followers with 30,000-70,000 impressions each month

Facebook: 1,145 followers with up to 20,000 impressions each month

Instagram: 114 followers

Mailing List

258 individuals on mailing list

Website engagement (year to March 2018)

37,928 page views

6,691 total visitors

Significant progress has been made in increasing our communications reach through redesigning our newsletters to ensure they are **family-focused**; introducing e-bulletins, and sharing news, policy, videos, images and relevant feedback/blogs from family members through our social media channels.

We redesigned our marketing materials (including leaflets, posters and booklets) and they have been widely distributed across ADP (Alcohol and Drug Partnership) areas and via other stakeholders.

We handled regular media enquiries, and increased the number of press releases we published. We had live radio interviews on BBC Scotland and NewstalkZB (New Zealand) in 2017/18 and featured in BBC News and STV News.

In December 2017 we delivered a 25-day **#MerryCaremas Christmas Campaign** - a joint fundraising and marketing campaign with the goal of showing an accurate reflection of what Christmas is like for families, and offering advice and support at what can be a challenging time of year.

We undertook a **six-month redesign and relaunch of our website**. This includes a live chat room and support forum to allow peer to peer support. We have also improved the level of self-help modules we have to offer and a platform for families and the recovery community to tell their own stories.



Families are recognised: Policy



We are actively involved in policy and influencing work through our membership of numerous expert groups and other networks. We are often the only organisation championing the role of wider families affected by alcohol and drugs in many of these networks.

A not exhaustive list of our policy/campaigning networks:

PADS

- Communities
- Quality & Consistency including Quality Principles Sub-Group
- Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse (CAPSM)

Cross Party Groups (Health Inequalities/Children and Young People/Drugs & Alcohol)

Alcohol Advocacy Alliance (with Alcohol Focus Scotland, BMA and SHAAP)

Expert Advisory Group on Alcohol-Related Mortality

Drug Research Network Scotland (Families Portfolio)

Scottish Alcohol Research Network (SARN)

Parenting Across Scotland

Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum

Alcohol and Family Alliance (UK)

Alcohol Health Alliance (UK)

Addiction and the Family International Network (AFINet)

We submitted consultation responses to Scottish Government consultations on the Carers (Scotland) Act, Minimum Unit Pricing and Connected Scotland.

We have linked in with the new Drug Research Network Scotland, the families workstream led by Dr Anne Whittaker, and we assisted in the selection of their Network's Steering Group members.

Internationally we are contributing to the 'reaching family members in large numbers' project in conjunction with the Addiction and the Family International Network (AFINet). This entailed gaining the views of practitioners and family members to ensure a Scottish response to this international project.

Families are connected to communities: Community



We work with communities across Scotland and together we identify ways to strengthen connections and create opportunities for people to work together and support recovery.

Communities in 2017/18

We worked with communities in **Glasgow, East & West Dunbartonshire, Ayrshire, Argyll & Bute, Highlands, Aberdeenshire, Renfrewshire, North & South Lanarkshire and Edinburgh.**



Forth Valley College: Community Champions

ALEC (Adult Learning and Empowering Communities) was introduced to students in five 2-hour sessions at Forth Valley College. 12 Health and Social Care students completed the training and learned about family recovery, drug and alcohol awareness and explored assets to co-designing opportunities within the college community to improve mental health and well-being, challenge stigma and create a recovery friendly campus.

'I found the whole course informative and enjoyed finding out what Scottish Families do. It has given me the incentive to explore the service and assets in my own area with the view of getting involved in some of them.'
— Social Care student

Larkfield Conversations Project

A 6-month ALEC project was delivered in Larkfield in Inverclyde, supported by Paul Ballantyne, an experienced community development consultant. This project engaged with over 100 people across the region which culminated in a community-based learning event in March 2018. Local people, services and the recovery community came together to learn about the project, explore opportunities to build more recovery friendly communities and agree next steps. We are now actively working with Inverclyde ADP to help shape their family support services as part of this work.

Falkirk Community Justice Project

An extensive piece of work was carried out between the Criminal Justice Service and Scottish Families to investigate the feasibility of linking community projects to volunteering opportunities for people within the criminal justice system.

Approximately 200 people across Falkirk engaged with the project and there has already been an impact through increased awareness of some of the challenges facing those with lived experience of the justice system.

Stigma2Respect Summit

Through our membership of the Partnership for Action on Drugs in Scotland (PADS) Communities Group and Stigma sub-group, we played an active role in the planning and delivery of the national Stigma2Respect Summit at the Tramway on 1 September 2017. This brought 350 people from communities across Scotland to explore stigma, develop the evidence base required to tell policy makers and service commissioners what needs to change to help make services better.



©Buzzfeed



Our Impact: Paul Ballantyne

Scottish Families invited me to carry out the 'Local Conversations – taking a whole community asset based approach to creating recovery friendly communities' project in the Larkfield area in the South West of Greenock during October 2017 to March 2018.

It was a very positive experience working for an organisation that values the assets and power of local people to create positive solutions in their own community.

The core involved creating 'conversations' with a range of local residents in the area. Rather than focus on what were regarded as problems in the area these encouraged participants to focus on "what keeps me healthy?" and "what keeps this place healthy, makes it a good place to live?"

I also arranged meetings and discussions with local staff from public bodies and the voluntary sector. They saw the value and need for such a project and welcomed the Scottish Families initiative. Staff at the local Housing Association, the Youth Connections Centre and Community Learning and Development were particularly helpful in clueing me into the area and life there.

Towards the end I organised a 'learning event' in conjunction with Scottish Families staff to share what had been done and look ahead. Staff from local agencies, recovery projects, services users and a family member attended. That produced a variety of views and suggestions to provide the basis for building on the work undertaken.

The support of existing recovery projects in Greenock also proved invaluable. They all contribute in different ways: Michael at Jericho House brought along male residents

to take part in a conversation cafe event and the learning event. Alex at Moving On gave me really useful pointers on possible challenges and managing them. Alice and Jamie at the Your Voice project invited me to meet their members in the recovery cafe initiative. It was a fabulously welcoming and supportive environment for those individuals who attend.

Substance misuse is a difficult subject to talk openly about. Lots of local people recognised the issues and associated problems but were hesitant about getting into more in depth discussions with an 'outsider.' Engaging others beyond those already involved in an existing group/activity was difficult in the time available. It was also a challenge to get beyond issues associated with crime, stigma and a 'blame the victim' culture.

So, maybe more attention and greater profile could be given to the role that families, a wider network of services and local communities can play in creating recovery opportunities and recovery friendly environments. And achievements? Well, local agencies got to know and understand more about Scottish Families and some made positive concrete commitments to engage further in this agenda.

The existing recovery projects based in the centre of Greenock also began to talk about how they could do more outreach work in support of any local initiative continued by Scottish Families.

My final reflection relates to community development and asset based approaches. It needs a more regular presence beyond what I was able to do in this project. Key to any success is building trust, engaging with people on their terms and moving at their pace.

Families are a movement for change: Connecting families



Connecting families in 2017/18

Family support groups

We continue to provide direct support and guidance to independent family support groups in Linlithgow, Midlothian, Kilmarnock, Renfrewshire and Airdrie and a community carers group in Cumbernauld.

Recovery Walk

The Recovery Walk on 30th September 2017 on the theme of 'Love Makes you Family' saw over 2000 people walk through Dundee to raise awareness of recovery. We played an active role, including in planning and organisation, sponsorship, communications (e.g. social media) and having a strong presence on the day during the walk and at the Recovery Village.



It's All Relative- Scottish Families Conference

In November 2017 we held our national conference with the goal to bring family members affected by alcohol and drugs together. 133 people attended the two-day event, family members made up two thirds of the final number and the other third included practitioners and Scottish Families staff and board members. 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 support for yourself. Aileen Campbell, Minister for Public Health and Sport, opened the conference with a speech and an open Q&A session which was received well.

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

- Family member who attend It's All Relative

“Families play an integral role in making recovery a reality for people affected by alcohol or drug use and it is important to ensure that family members are also well supported. This new fund is an excellent opportunity to help build support networks and local groups that will help family members affected by substance use to access the help they need to support their own wellbeing”

Aileen Campbell, Minister for Public Health and Sport, March 2018

RIF Fund



Within the first three weeks of the Family Recovery Initiative Fund launching on the 7th March 2018, we received **26** enquiries, engaging with **32** family members and **15** practitioners. The enquiries came from **20** different places in Scotland covering **17** different ADP areas. The Fund received **10** completed applications in March 2018 - **8** of these were directly supported by Scottish Families before submitting to CORRA. **£11,000** was awarded to **8** successful applicants at the end of April. There are three more rounds with the final round in June 2018.

Applicants directly supported by Scottish Families had an initial telephone conversation with the lead officer for the fund and dependent on the needs and requests made by the group. We either visited the group to progress the application, followed up with email support and a final read through of the draft application, or we arranged subsequent phone calls and emails to assist in drafting the application.

Each enquiry also gave us the opportunity to discuss the range of work of Scottish Families and highlight particular services as determined by the type of group and the initial discussion.

“When we heard about the fund we enquired because we wanted to stage a remembrance service this year as we haven’t been able to have one for four years. We were delighted to be successful and have already got a plan in action, working alongside other members of the Bereavement Group.”

- Family member

“We believe in family recovery as we need to stick together and raise awareness and keep up the ongoing connections we have developed over the years. As family members, we have the right to our families being recognised as stakeholders in the recovery journey, and be involved in our families recovery pathway where appropriate. We should also be free from the stigma we experience within our communities.”

- Family member



Our Impact: Debbie - Volunteer

My name is Debbie Craig and I'm one of the helpline advisers with Scottish Families. I always wanted to be involved in work that was helping people, so the first point of that was getting involved as a volunteer. I was making a big life change coming out of an old career into a new one and a huge part of that transition for me was getting involved with volunteering. Part of what I'm doing actually has a strong interest in addictions and those with substance use of any kind, so working with Scottish Families is an absolute perfect fit for me.

A day in the life of a volunteer is quite mixed. I can do it from home so I can log-on from there which is really straight forward. You get a mixture of interactions – a webchat, an email or a telephone call; it can be a variety of different reasons why people are calling in. Sometimes they want some information on how to help their loved one, sometimes it's just them wanting a breather and for someone to talk to. Sometimes we get asked to do a call-back to those people who have phoned in and no one has been available at the time. It can be a real mixture. Sometimes it's busier than others but most shifts there are interactions of some kind.

It's quite hard to narrow down what I like most about volunteering because there are so many things that I find valuable in it. I find it very rewarding, particularly at the end of a call when you know that you've really helped someone and they're very grateful for that support, it gives you a nice warm fuzzy feeling inside. Some people you speak to think they've got absolutely nowhere to turn and no one to talk to and once you explain what Scottish Families offers with the service and the different places we can signpost to including just chatting to ourselves, they get a real sense of relief, they're so much more relaxed and

very grateful for the support. It's nice to always remind family members that we're always here regardless, so even if they just need that wee bit of a time out to talk, then that's what we're here for and I find that incredibly rewarding.

I think volunteering full stop is something that everyone should consider in a lifetime. It is so rewarding, particularly Scottish Families, I would say do it. It's such an amazing organisation, it's a great charity to work for, the people are fantastic and something I personally feel, which is different to a lot of other organisations and charities, is because it's such a small charity you feel part of a family. So when Scottish Families is changing and developing and growing, you're actually a huge part of that and it's nice to know you're actually making a bit of a difference. You on a personal level are achieving something as well as supporting the family members who call into the service. I would say absolutely volunteer because you can fit it around your life.

One of my favourite memories was an elderly gentleman called and he was having difficulties with his elderly wife who had unfortunately gotten into the habit of drinking quite excessively. Unfortunately she just found herself in this situation and her husband was really struggling with it. He had been to the doctors and asked for help quite some time ago but that fell by the way side and he felt he had nowhere to turn. He was relieved to hear that Scottish Families had a one-to-one over the phone service. He left that helpline call feeling so much better, he really thanked me for the support and I reminded him that if he ever just needed a wee blether about how he was feeling he could always phone the helpline and he'd get someone like me at the end of the phone just to talk to.





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