

Scottish Families

The latest news and updates from the team

SPRING

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'I Am Not Alone'

A trip to the movies with popcorn and everything to watch our new Routes film 'I Am Not Alone.'

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Naloxone surpasses 5000 kits!

We also featured on the news supporting the #StopTheDeaths Glasgow Taxi campaign!

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One Million Steps Challenge

Our Holding On group and staff have set themselves a challenge to walk 1 MILLION steps.

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'This Fierce Love' On Tour

After Covid delays and two years of uncertainty, This Fierce Love has finally hit the road! Premiering in Glasgow in March, and then heading as far as Inverness in April, the live performance has had nothing but glowing reviews.

The touring event has also been a great opportunity for some of our staff members to meet for the first time!

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Mailing List

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Sign-up here: <http://eepurl.com/c9oCYb>

Word from the CEO

We were delighted (and a bit overwhelmed) to be named as one of ten winners of the UK-wide 2022 GSK Impact Awards earlier this Spring. These awards recognise excellence in small and medium-sized charities across the UK, with over 350 entries this year. This Award is proving to be the gift which keeps on giving, with the announcement quickly followed by a very fun day in a (very rainy) Greenock, creating hours of footage for what will become a short 4-minute film to be shown at the Awards Ceremony in London in June. (A trip to London, did you say? Yippee!). This picture shows me being directed by the very hardy souls at Toucan Productions – who didn't let a day of west coast steady drizzle put them off their artistic stride.



There were lots of special things about that day – the chance for some of our team members to meet face to face for the first time in two years (yes there were tears!); a lovely warm welcome from our friends at Your Voice and Inverclyde Recovery Community where we set up camp for the day; spending time with members of our relatively new family support group in Greenock; and the chance to support some of the family members to share their own experiences with the film-makers.

As you will see later in this newsletter, we are currently touring Scotland with 'This Fierce Love', a family member's story which has never been told before. I have had the privilege of attending the presentations in both Greenock and Dundee in the past few weeks. It is an incredibly powerful and moving story, but also there is so much more power and emotion in hearing this story face-to-face in a room full of other people – including family members and workers, and of course with many wearing both hats. I have missed that collective experience so much over the past two years!

And it was a similar experience in Clydebank recently where our Routes Young Persons' Project hosted a community premiere of their fantastic 'I am Not Alone' film and behind the scenes documentary. A huge squad of our Routes young people took part in an open Q&A afterwards, and offered enormous insight into a day in their lives, and how much Routes meant to them. All in their own down-to-earth style, and clearly demonstrating the strong bonds and friendships which have been developed – to the point where they even finished each other's sentences, I noticed! We are keen for other areas to learn from this project and 'Grow their own Routes' – and who better to advise on this than the young people themselves?

We know the best people to talk about the impact of alcohol and drug harm on families are family members themselves, but we also know how hard it is to do this when it shines a light on experiences which are so often kept behind closed doors. I am so grateful to all those family members who work with us every day to give voice to their experiences – via podcasts, blogs, presentations, meetings, film, media interviews and every other platform we can think of. Get in touch if you would like to be part of this – we'd love to hear from you.

'I Am Not Alone' - The Routes Film Premiere

A trip to the movies... with popcorn and everything! On 30th March 2022 we were at Empire Cinema in Clydebank for the (second) premiere of 'I Am Not Alone', a film directed, produced and edited by our amazing Routes young people.

Working alongside the talented team at [BrawTalent](#), the young people were in the driving seat of creating a film that truly reflected their day-to-day lives, and showcased how Scottish Families and the Routes Young Persons' Project impacts young people and their families. So effortlessly cool, the young people also featured in the film, making their acting debut on the big screen! It was an open, honest and insightful look into how they are the driving force behind Routes and the film was a perfect example of their creativity.

"I think we got to show what's really important to us, in our own way though. Because sometimes, when you see ads on tv for charities, it's really like how they want to do it but this was our decision how we did and we just wanted to have fun with it." – Routes Young Person

We were in the company of some great partner organisations and funders who have played a huge part in the development of Routes. Representatives from West Dunbartonshire Fire Service, Cash For Kids, Corra Foundation and many more! It was great to hear the audience in conversation with the young people, getting a real insight into what Routes does and how it benefits each person involved.





After we had all watched the film, some of the young people took to the stage to host a Q&A, giving them an opportunity to talk directly to members of the audience. After some heartfelt thankyou's, they swiftly reminded us all that more needs to be done for families. Sharing their own personal stories and how Routes has positively impacted their lives, they highlighted the need for more Routes programmes across Scotland.

Drugs Minister Angela Constance was also in the audience and the young people were not shy about sharing with her how they believe the Routes project should be expanded and accessible to all those affected by someone else's alcohol and drug use. The overarching message being **'...everywhere in Scotland needs a Routes programme, please give us more money!'**

"I think one thing that we need is, like a safe space, one safe place. I think we need one place where we can just go and chill. If you're going home and you're overwhelmed, if arguing with your parents or your mum, whoever you live with, I feel like to stop by, if we have a wee like, I dunno, room to ourselves where we can go whenever we want..." – Routes Young Person

Hearing the young people speak so openly about their experiences and how Routes is imperative to their lives left the room completely in awe. They were un-phased by the hard hitting questions, bravely putting themselves forward to honestly answer anything that was thrown at them. Listening to them speak further highlighted the need to put families with lived and living experience at the centre of the conversation.

After a long afternoon of being the stars of the show, the young people headed for dinner, indulging in a huge buffet from Boofi, who were kind enough to give them a great discount as a treat for all of their hard work.

Well done Routes, you should be so proud of what you created!



Naloxone surpasses 5000 kits and gets on the news!

You may have spotted a familiar turquoise hoody on BBC News Scotland back in February... our Helpline Development Officer, Sooze, was at the launch of the new Glasgow Naloxone Taxi! Glasgow Taxi drivers who apply will now be trained to carry and administer the life-saving reversal drug as they travel in and around the city. The taxi firm were one of the first to take a step forward and show support for this initiative, advertising their support with a branded car, carrying the #StopTheDeaths message.



“Last night using the kit I got from you I was able to bring a young man back from overdose in my taxi. Guy was handed over to paramedics and I was allowed to go about my route. Best thing I’ve ever done. Thanks for providing this service.” - Taxi Driver

It was great to be featured alongside our friends at Scottish Drugs Forum, but it was also an ideal opportunity to shout about our Click and Deliver Service which has now

surpassed sending out 5000 life-saving kits! Sooze was sharing her expert Naloxone knowledge in front of the cameras, and training as many of the news crew as possible to administer Naloxone and potentially save a life.

As well as her feature on the 6 o’clock news, Sooze spoke to Capital News, Heart News, LBC, BBC, STV, Daily Record, Evening Times, and Herald. It was great to see not just Naloxone getting some airtime, but also us, as it is hard to miss our bright, branded Scottish Families hoodies.

“I seen the taxi on the news and realised as a bus driver I should have this too. I see many a poor soul on my bus. We need to look after people more. Thanks for making this easy.” – Member of the public

With the support of Scottish Drugs Forum, we supply Naloxone via our Click and Deliver take-home service to anyone living in Scotland who is over the age of 16. You can order the life-saving drug directly to your door via our website, as well as completing the training with Scottish Drugs Forum through their online learning portal.

[To order your own life-saving kit, visit our website here.](#)



Life with Alcohol and Drugs: Latest Episode



The latest episode of our podcast series 'Life with Alcohol and Drugs' is now available online!

In this episode we chat to our very own Kirsten, who is our Family Support Development Officer in Fife. We speak about the support service in Fife (after Kirsten's been in post for nearly a year!) and all about her recent exciting presentation with the Saga University Hospital in Japan!

You can listen to Kirsten's episode, and all earlier episodes, on our PodBean channel.

'It's been a really big learning curve over the last nine to ten months, kind of building this service and the links with all the services in the area. I've got to say, we've been greatly received by everybody else, all other services, and also by families that have not had that specialist support in place previously and now are able to access that.' - Kirsten Holland

[Click here to listen to our latest episode!](#)



One Million Steps for Holding On

Our Holding On group and staff have set themselves a challenge to walk 1 MILLION steps during the month of April. The Holding On group runs every Thursday, in addition to this family members have one-to-one support calls with their worker. It became apparent through support calls and conversations during the group that family members often do very little for themselves, they always put other people first and this can have a negative impact on their own well-being. Self-care is often non-existent or very little self-care takes place. Therefore, a challenge was put to the group for everyone to contribute steps to the 1 million steps challenge, even if this was someone just taking 10-15 minutes to themselves each day to get out a walk with a friend, a family member or on their own.



The staff wanted to join in on the challenge and have been contributing to the steps. We utilise the WhatsApp group to share images, our steps, our walks but mainly to encourage each other. We are already at **615,539** (last counted week beginning 18th April) and we have every confidence that we will reach our target. The Holding On group are starting to realise the importance of their own self-care and this challenge is making steps towards this, quite literally.

Here's what some of the family members and staff had to say about the step challenge:

"I am enjoying taking part and it keeps me motivated to get out and moving even just a little bit each day, I am going to keep going with it and it's been great for me having some "me" time."

"I think it's a great thing as it pulls us all together for something positive in a tough situation."

"I have enjoyed taking part, I am not a gym person but it gets you motivated, clears the head and is good for your skin. I am going to keep doing this as its giving me time for me."

"It has given me a feeling of independence and breaking free from my troubles it releases me from a certain amount of stress."



Routes on the Farm

On the 14th of April, Claire, Pam and Callum took a group of our animal-loving Routes young people Alpaca trekking near Stirling. They all got an Alpaca to lead on an hour-long trek round the farm, some of them were better behaved than others!

Once they had finished the trek, the young people got to hold gorgeous baby ducklings and rabbits, and told us it was very tempting to sneak one home with them. They finished off a great day out with a picnic on the farm. There were lots of requests to return in the summer!



Online Humour vs Ridicule



– Written by our volunteer, Megan

When it comes down to what makes something funny or not, trying to pinpoint why something personally makes us laugh can be tricky. Not only are personalities vastly diverse and influenced by individual experiences and culture but there are also many different styles of humour. In social situations, humour can sometimes serve a purpose too. Someone might use humour as a form of self-enhancement, while another person might use self-deprecating humour to get people on their side. Most of the time though, we just want to make others laugh while putting life's accomplishments and failures into a light-hearted context.

We know that our 'social life' now extends to virtual spaces. In 2020, 87% of 12–15-year-olds had a social media account and 95% of young adults between the ages of 16-24 also used social media, making young people the biggest users in the UK. Unsurprisingly, we spend a lot of time laughing online whether it's through sharing memes with friends or watching videos uploaded by our favourite content creators. Just like in real-life social situations, what we laugh at online varies in style and purpose. Sadly, this frequently extends to a more disturbing style of humour in the form of mocking others and if you're a

young person affected by drugs and alcohol, you're probably already very aware of this. Content involving alcohol or drug use is very common online, but the type of content we see often reflects the different perceptions of problems and prejudices that exist in real life.

Humour as a Coping Mechanism:

Self-deprecating humour can provide some people with relief from anxiety and tension. We can turn something we are struggling with into a joke and instantly feel better. During the Covid lockdowns, we kept in touch online and continued to make each other laugh. We posted about our struggles and fears as we blindly navigated ourselves through events none of us had faced before. This meant we saw a lot of people posting about how much more they were drinking during lockdown, often in a way that was meant to be light-hearted and relatable. Although this likely reflects behaviour we should take more seriously, it was ultimately a way to cope with the weird reality we were faced with.

Outside of lockdown, we have always laughed (or cringed) at ourselves when we are hungover. Drinking too much is something we do well in Scotland and when we joke about it, almost everyone is in on

the joke because we've all been there. The fact that everyone is in on the joke makes this behaviour seem socially acceptable and sadly 'normal' in Scotland, even from a young age. However, it's worth noting that humorous stories and social media content depicting other types of substance use don't always get the same type of laugh. There are other types of videos we see where we aren't laughing collectively but laughing at a group or person instead.

Mocking Others Online:

Although drug deaths are at an all-time high in Scotland, that doesn't seem to stop some of us from laughing about those experiencing substance use problems online. There are some pretty 'famous' videos littered around social media that are re-uploaded time and time again on every new platform and manage to make their way into every funny Scottish compilation video on YouTube. The person being recorded is normally heavily under the influence of drugs and struggling in an everyday situation where they aren't fully aware they are being filmed. These videos instantly take on a very different tone in comparison to comedic clips of friends drinking or taking 'party drugs' where everyone seems to be in on the joke and there isn't a torrent of hateful language in the replies. It's clear that we separate certain types of drug use from others and although it is not a new question to ask, it's worth continuing to consider how fair or hypocritical this is.

Shock-value humour works for a reason, and we have all laughed at something we felt we shouldn't have after. Even though I've been a young person affected by family members' drug and alcohol use myself, I have still found myself laughing at these types of videos on rare occasions (even though I shouldn't). However, catch me at the wrong time and the opposite can happen, ruining my whole day. Family members already deal with stigma by the association in day-to-day life and not being able to escape this online either can add to the feelings of isolation they already experience in real life.

We know that public shaming can have serious psychological consequences on individuals. By filming these videos and constantly re-uploading them, we are potentially making substance use more of a national problem than it already is by negatively impacting the mental health of the people struggling in the videos. Telling a dark joke where a group of people are the target will likely always be defended as a form of free speech, but it's a different matter when a single individual features in an online video that will exist forever. At the expense of a laugh, some people seem to forget that these individuals also have parents, children and friends that worry about them.

What Can We Do?

There are no quick and easy solutions to problems such as these. The language often used in the comment sections of these videos highlight the stigma and hate some individuals with substance use problems continue to face. Terms like 'the J word' focus on the problem rather than the human being and serve to further dehumanise the people in these videos, making this type of public humiliation seem acceptable. We need to keep educating those around us to try and use people-first language to humanise people experiencing these problems and reduce the stigma felt by friends and family. Maybe then, it will get to the point we realise how cruel it is to film someone when they are in such a vulnerable state.

If you're a young person affected by this issue you could try and cut back on social media usage if it's impacting your mental health, or at least try and be mindful about the types of virtual spaces you visit. It is impossible to police the internet, but we can try to control what we see and if it helps us avoid content that might ruin our day then it's worth it.

An Interview with Steven Bartlett (Run Revival)



Q1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself and the connection you have to Scottish Families?

My name is Steven and I'm currently raising funds for Scottish Families by running the Edinburgh Marathon.

I chose to run for Scottish Families because my mum has been impacted by alcohol addiction throughout her life and I felt compelled to play my part in helping others access support and break the stigma.

Like I could tell that she's a loving, caring person and that we've not seen each other for a long time, but she does care about her kids and she does want the best.

I strongly believe that by wearing the Scottish Families' shirt during my marathon and shouting about the work that Scottish Families do I can play my part.

Q2. How long have you been running and what events are you taking part in this year?

I've been running for two years now but I wish I started much sooner! The Edinburgh Marathon is the only event I currently have planned because I want to make sure I give my first marathon my all. I'm doing it for a cause very close to my heart and I didn't want to take away from this goal.

That said, all going well, I hope to enter the Loch Ness marathon later in the year once my marathon is complete.

Q3. How has running and training for events benefited you?

This is a question that I could give 100 different answers for! Running has benefited me in many ways. It's been a great way to escape from the stress life can sometimes bring. It's been like a reset button at times and can offer a nice sense of achievement. I've really enjoyed following a structured plan in the build-up to my marathon, it's been a good way to hold myself accountable on those days when the weather is bad, or you just don't feel as motivated.

Despite running for 2 years, I now feel the fittest I have ever felt, and I put this down to having a goal and something to train for. I strongly believe that one of the best ways to maintain strong mental health is to get your body moving. Whether this is regular walks, runs or cycles. Running has helped me understand that our physical and mental health is strongly connected and not two separate areas. When one is suffering, the other will inevitably falter too.

Running has also helped boost my confidence and in turn enabling me to make better decisions in other areas of my life.

Q4. What can people expect when training for an event like that, whilst also fundraising at the same time?

Training for a marathon while fundraising is one of the most rewarding things I have done and I would recommend it to anyone considering.

I have learned a lot while fundraising and

gained a lot of confidence when discussing alcohol problems too. So many people have asked and been invested in what I am doing and it's helped me realise the importance of talking and just how beneficial it can be when tackling difficult issues or experiences.

Q5. If you could give advice to someone entering a running event, what would you say?

I would say to give yourself 16-20 weeks to train for your marathon. Not only will this give you the best possible physical base to get to the finish line but it prepares you mentally too, which is just as important as the physical aspect at times.

The day after like you're quite sore and you're like, ugh, but then two days later you're like, "great, when's the next run?"

I would also recommend running the majority of your sessions at an "easy" effort, keeping your heart rate below 140BPM. This is a great way to not only enjoy the runs but to build a great aerobic base before your race.

Q6. You use your platform (Instagram) to put out a lot of really useful information, can you tell us more about Run Revival and what made you want to educate your followers alongside training and raising money?

I started Run Revival because of my love for running and my passion for making a difference and breaking the stigma surrounding alcohol.

My plan is that one day we can create a community of people that love running but also want to make a change. I hope to eventually host virtual running events to raise money for causes such as Scottish Families. In many ways, Run Revival is an indirect way for me to give back to my mum and make sure that people that are struggling don't feel alone and cast to the side.

The more awareness I can raise via this platform the better – even if this is one family

or one person, my account has achieved its goal.

I don't want to use my account to be negative or angry, I want it to be a place that can help people of all ages feel empowered to go "you know what, why do I need alcohol when there are so many mental and physical benefits to drinking less or not at all."

I also use Run Revival as a place to share my personal experience of not drinking alcohol as a young person. I have found great benefits to not drinking including being more alert, less anxious, heightened mood, increased productivity and better sleep. Not to mention the financial benefits and the lack of lost time due to hangovers. I also find that I am more present in my surroundings and being sober forces me to feel all feelings, not just the ones I want to.

Sharing this with my audience is important to me because perhaps it can in some small way break this idea that not drinking is in some way a weird choice.

The more people talking about these benefits, the more the conversation starts to change. I wish my mum and generations before had the option of following similar accounts. Maybe we would all be in a different place right now?

I wanted to create a community of like-minded people, that are interested in sport that are interested in and what I have to say.

Q7. What does the word 'family' mean to you?

Growing up I haven't had a big family network. I'm a great believer that "family" can take on different meanings and it means something unique to us all.

The New Scottish Families Communications Group!



Through the Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs communications, we promote our outcomes that families are included, supported, recognised and connected to communities. Many of our audiences enjoy reading our content and we would like you to get involved with advising on the content we are creating.

By joining our Comms Group, you will give input and share your ideas on the content we are creating/will create. You will advise on podcast topics, content for the website, blogs and articles, campaigns, and how to reach more people.

You will make sure people have their voices heard correctly and that information, resources and experiences are accurate, engaging and supportive.

The Comms Group will meet 4 times a year online to discuss our communications. We will also be in touch throughout the year to ask for feedback for content and anything else that may come up!

We are currently looking for 5 members to join our team, please fill in the questions below and we will read through your application and be in touch by email.

[Click here to submit your application!](#)

Men's Group Q&A

Our 'Family Support is for Men Too' group is run by Daryl McLeister and Colin McIntosh. We spoke to them about the group, who it's for and why they believe it is important for anyone, including men, affected by someone else's alcohol and drug use should reach out for support.

Q1. What is the 'Family Support is For Men Too' group and who is it for?

This is a group aimed at any men who are affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use. You could be a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a friend, or a work colleague. If it's affecting you – making you feel worried, concerned, or stressed, then this is the right group for you. It's a space where men can connect, socialise, and explore their problems in a way that focuses on solutions and moving forward.

Q2. What can people expect a group meeting to look like and what happens?

People can expect something relaxed and held together by a clear structure that gives everyone time to speak. The group lasts 90 mins, and during that time, we get people to say a little bit about themselves, and the difficulties they may be facing. Some examples of the difficulties men have shared with us include:

- Feelings of anger and frustration when their loved one isn't changing
- How to respond when crises happen, like relapses, or episodes of poor mental health
- Personal feelings of depression and worry
- Uncertainty around changes, even when positive.
- When and how to trust their loved one again

We then give time to the group to focus on brainstorming ideas, including practical suggestions or new perspectives, that might

help someone in their situation. Our approach is that the men within the group are the experts in their own situations, and everyone's views are equal. We don't necessarily have a blueprint for success, but by giving ourselves this time and space we can draw out our own experiences and expertise.

Q3. Tell us why you think these groups are important.

As a charity, we're already really good at supporting women across all our services – but men don't come to us for support in the same way. Men tell us that when they do go to a group, they can sometimes feel outnumbered and hesitant to say their thoughts and feelings. I think men lean towards slightly different ways of dealing with things and have different perspectives on what might be the best response or approach. Offering a men's space allows those viewpoints and perspectives to be said in a place that is judgement-free.

Q4. What is one thing you would like to say to someone thinking about reaching out for support but hasn't been able to so far?

Everyone needs support sometimes. We can't always solve every problem that comes our way by ourselves. The good news is you're not alone, and together we can find the answers you need.

Q5. How can people get involved/get in touch?

'Family Support Is For Men Too...' currently runs twice a month, on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month between 6pm and 7:30pm, on video chat platform Zoom. If you're interested in coming along, just email Daryl or Colin – daryl@sfad.org.uk / colin@sfad.org.uk – and we'll get you the link and send you a reminder.

Glasgow Kiltwalk 2022

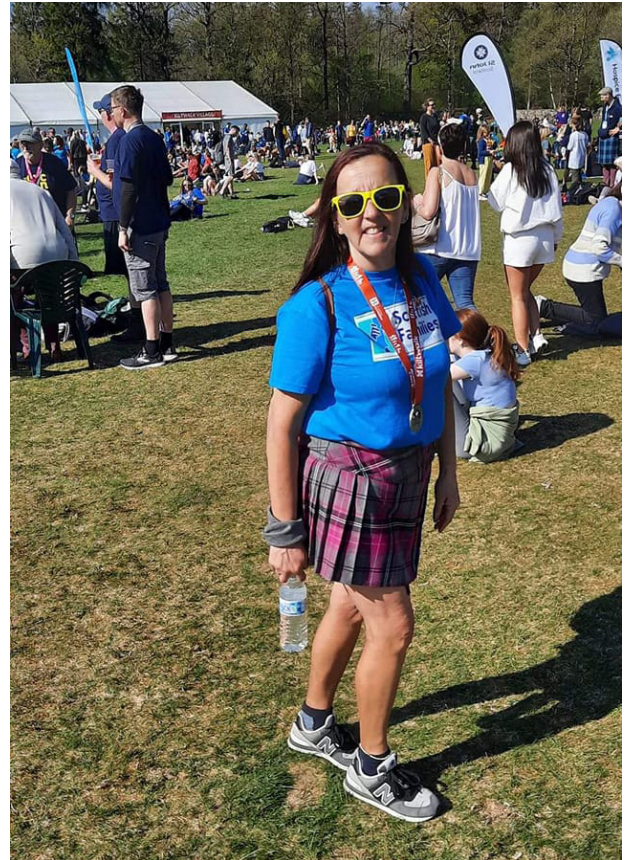


After rescheduling, virtual events and lots of walking around our gardens for the last two years, the Glasgow Kiltwalk was finally back and we couldn't have asked for a better day for it!

Our incredible Scottish Families fundraisers have been training hard, sharing their sponsorship pages and preparing their tartan ready for the big day. With three different routes to choose from, the Glasgow Kiltwalk really is for anyone.

“Body is in absolute tatters, but I finished! Thank you for your support through it and meeting others walking for Scottish Families, I walked yesterday as I lost my step mum to alcoholism nearly a year to the day! Love the work that you guys do.”

The sun was shining and Glasgow was filled to the brim with walkers, supporters and



media crews. Starting at various locations, some of our team were able to watch our walkers cross the start line and wave them off on their walking endeavours. We really wanted to spot as many of our Kiltwalkers as possible, so we rushed from the start lines out to Dumbarton to cheer them on as they approached the last six miles of their walk. It was a great place to set up camp, and we saw most of our Mighty Stride and Big Stroll walkers, as well as being right next to The Guide Dogs who kept us entertained throughout the day.

With so many charities now having turquoise as their t shirt colour, there was a lot of waving and cheering for other walkers mistaken for our own. Clare, Sarah and Shana really were everyone's cheerleaders for the day!

After cheering most of the Kiltwalkers onto the last six miles, we jumped in our cars



again and headed for Loch Lomond Shores. The atmosphere was electric, with so many people flooding to Balloch to watch their loved ones walk over the finish line. Our hats go off to the amazing Kiltwalk crew, from midday onwards they kept the crowd's energy levels high and gave every single walker the praise and celebration they deserved as they finished their walk. We were able to get a place on the barrier, right next to the finish line and once again were cheering on anyone in a turquoise-coloured shirt.

Eventually, we spotted our first Scottish Families Kiltwalk finishers; shuffling along those last few yards, hands in the air, they collected their medals and went straight to the food tent!

We loved being able to cheer on so many of our supporters as they crossed the finish line, and we even got to catch up with a few of them afterwards... albeit sat on the floor with walking boots finally off! Thank you to everyone who not only walked the Glasgow Kiltwalk, but also donated to those who donated to their fundraisers, without your support we wouldn't be able to continue supporting families across Scotland affected by someone else's alcohol and drug use.

There's still five more Kiltwalks taking place

this year, so if you're reading this and feel inspired to get involved, [head to our website for more info!](http://www.sfad.org.uk)

“We, ‘The Walking Talking Cousins’ had a fantastic day and managed to raise almost £1500 for Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs. We so appreciate everyone’s support and to all the lovely people that donated we thank you so much!”



Scottish Families Book Group Review 'Girl A'



By Lena McMillan, Family Support Development Officer

April's book choice for our group was 'Girl A' by Abigail Dean.

'Girl A' tells the story of the Gracie children, seven siblings who endure much at the hands of their parents, in the 'house of horrors' they grow up in. Narrated by Lexie, otherwise known as 'Girl A' and the eldest sister in the family, the book starts in the present day, with the siblings all grown up. As the story progresses, the timeline jumps around historical events which gradually reveal what happened to the children and how they have moved on, or not, from their childhood trauma.

Some of our readers found the changing timeline and number of characters confusing while others liked this aspect of the book. Everyone felt the topic was realistically portrayed and, while not based on a true story, could identify real life criminal cases that related to it.

This book earned a rating of 6.9 out of 10 from our group. Some members found the subject matter off-putting, with many saying it wasn't the kind of book they would normally go for. Others found it an easy read but fairly forgettable once finished. Comments were

made about the fantastic reviews the novel received and the superlative recommendations it carries from other liked authors – these drew readers in but ultimately felt like a bit of a letdown, with some readers anticipating more and being left wanting.

We discussed whether Lexie is a reliable narrator and discussed how differently the book might have come across if written from another viewpoint or in the third person. We looked at the relationships between the characters and acknowledged that the author isn't graphic in her descriptions of what took place in the home. This leaves it open to each reader's imagination and within the group, we had differing views on what we thought may or may not have taken place. The ending itself is ambiguous and this divided opinion – some readers preferred the later chapters to the rest of the story while others disliked the vagueness. Overall, readers felt Lexie found peace, however you interpreted the closing chapter.

Some comments from our readers:

'It was good to read but didn't stay with me.'

'The comments on the cover left me anticipating more.'

'I found the present, late past and early past confusing.... but it had good characters and was fantastic.'

'I've forgotten lots of it but enjoyed it.'

'I felt very ambivalent about reading it in the first place.'

'I kept reading it to get a resolution – it felt very realistic – voyeuristic.'

This Fierce Love On Tour



“It was wonderful to meet with some good people in the one room (my first time in 2 years!). The afternoon was very thought provoking, though safe.”
– Professional

After Covid delays and two years of uncertainty, This Fierce Love has finally hit the road! Premiering in Glasgow in March, and then heading as far as Inverness in April, the live performance has had nothing but glowing reviews.

The touring event has also been a great opportunity for some of our staff members to meet for the first time! So many of us started at Scottish Families during the lockdown, and we’re dotted all around the country, so some of us have never actually crossed paths. Being able to finally connect in person at these events has made it even more special. We even got to confirm who’s taller or shorter after playing numerous guessing games on zoom!

This Fierce Love tells the story of a family member living with alcohol and drug use. The events are interactive workshops where

the audience can listen to the story and then discuss and reflect on what they have heard together. It has brought together family members and professionals to openly discuss the story and share their own experiences.

“Such a powerful story, really stays with you.” – Family Member

The workshop is hosted in four parts, giving the audience a chance to digest and discuss each part of the performance. Discussions so far have been so insightful and beneficial, often covering subjects like; what do families need to access support, how have the themes of the story affected the audience and what more needs to be done to support families across Scotland?

Many of the audience members across all the events have shared that this story does an excellent job of further highlighting the need for families to be at the centre of the conversation when it comes to their loved ones seeking support for alcohol and drugs, and that more partnership working is vital for improving services.

“One of the most moving, informative and impactful events I’ve ever attended. You must see this.” – Family Member

The overarching message of This Fierce Love has been that alcohol and drugs can affect anyone and any family. Stories and events like this one are a positive step towards breaking down barriers in society and tackling stigma. Everyone who has attended so far has been able to relate to the characters involved in some way and by the end, everyone identifies the growing need for change.

“Really emotive story to listen to. Unfortunately all too common in our communities today! Let’s keep on breaking down the stigma to treatment and support.” – Professional

If you would like to be part of the conversation and hear the whole story, there are more This Fierce Love events in May. You can use [this link](#) to find out more and sign up to attend. We look forward to seeing you there.



Advocacy Skills Development Course



We are delighted to offer Advocacy Skills Development to families.

We are looking for a panel of family members to be course advisors. You will help us create a programme families can work through to learn and develop skills to increase their knowledge and understanding of their Rights. In turn this can help families advocate on behalf of themselves or their loved ones.

Course advisors will be required to attend the equivalent of 4 panel days across a 3 month period from July to September 2022, likely online. Course advisors will shape the planning, delivery and evaluation of the

program. In recognition of how significant these roles are; we are offering course advisors a £50 donation per day (£25 per half day) that they support the project as well as any travel expenses if we meet in person.

Together we will develop sessions for families that will help them:

- Understand their Rights and their loved one's Rights
- Feel more empowered to use their voice in order for their Rights to be upheld
- Gain knowledge of the role of advocacy and how to advocate on behalf of themselves or others
- Have the opportunity to help develop an advocacy service with Scottish Families
- Have the opportunity to have a paid placement in the Scottish Families Advocacy Service

For further information please contact gill@sfad.org.uk / 07340732517

[Click here to submit your application!](#)



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**Scottish
Families**

Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

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