



Scottish Families

Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

AUTUMN

October 2023
info@sfad.org.uk
www.sfad.org.uk

Helpline:
08080 10 10 11
helpline@sfad.org.uk



Family Recovery College 2024

Our Spring 2024 course is now open for expressions of interest. The course will start on Tuesday 12th March 2024.

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Lights of Love and Memory

Shine a light for someone you are remembering this Christmas. Donate and dedicating a Light of Love and Memory?

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Addicts and Those who Love Them

'Behind every addict is someone traumatised by loving them', an exhibition of portraits and words by Antonia Rolls.

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Recovery Walk 2023 in Inverclyde



September was incredibly busy with Recovery Month and we were really lucky in Inverclyde to have the Recovery Walk. Scotland came to Greenock! The walk was held in The Battery Park in Greenock with over 4000 people coming from all over Scotland.

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Mailing List

Want to stay up to date with all the latest news from us? Sign-up to our mailing list and we'll send you our monthly bulletin and other updates.

[Sign-up here](#)

*Lights of
Love and Memory*

**Wednesday 22 November
@ 7:00 PM**

**An evening of musical performances, readings
from Scottish Families staff and families.**

**Join us in shining a light for those we
remember this Christmas.**

St George's Tron Church
163 Buchanan Street
Glasgow, G1 2JX

From Justina

As autumn colours alongside dark mornings arrive, it seems a lifetime ago that my colleague Marianna and I had the privilege of travelling to Rotterdam in the Netherlands amidst a June heatwave (remember that?!). We were presenting Scottish Families' work at the Addiction and the Family International Network (AFINET) Conference. I am mentioning this, not to remind everyone I went to Rotterdam (believe me, my team are absolutely over me talking about it...) but because it was on reflection such an unusual experience. My role here is sadly not characterised by international jet-setting, so that in itself was not an everyday thing, but what was so different from my daily life was being at an event where EVERYONE was coming from a family angle. Whether they were family members, academics, practitioners or any other interested party, every single person there was immersed in all things families and substance use.

We felt so welcome, accepted and validated talking about our work with Scottish Families – we didn't need sharp elbows to get to the table, we didn't need to shout to be heard, and we didn't need to justify our own existence or prove the genuine needs of the families we support. So the lasting feeling from Rotterdam was just how unusual that is for our team and our families – so often we are on the outside, fighting for recognition and for our voice to be heard.

Since then, there have been some very powerful moments and events where this platform for families has held. It was such an honour to chair the first ever family member panel at the Scottish Drugs Forum Overdose Awareness Day conference in Glasgow in August. The panel of family members Heather, Gavin and Kerry (also one of our team members) absolutely smashed it, and they left no stone unturned describing the harsh realities of life with, and after, alcohol and drug use in the family. This followed on from a harrowing fortnight where both drug-related and then alcohol-specific death statistics were published. Our pleas to '[Just Ask Families](#)' about the changes they wanted to see, to see families as part of the

solution, and to focus on [actions not words](#), kept families at the heart of this issue, and it was rewarding to see families play such a prominent role in the media coverage.

We are proud partners in the national #SeeBeyondScotland campaign, and its Parliamentary launch in June was an emotionally charged evening of personal testimony from families, including MSPs Monica Lennon and Miles Briggs, and Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy, Elena Whitham. This was followed last month by a Parliamentary debate on the campaign, with Monica, Miles and many other MSPs sharing their own stories of loved ones lost to alcohol and drugs. Back to unusual experiences, seeing such solidarity and connection across the political divide as we watched on from the public gallery, and worth a watch [here](#) if you missed it.

As we look ahead to our 'Everyone's Invited!' AGM event in November (tickets [here](#) if you are quick), we will be focusing on our self-care and wellbeing. This follows on from a Scottish Families staff wellbeing day in September, where team members hosted a brilliant day of activities from crochet, puzzles and games, scrapbooking, lego, and mindfulness to a blustery walk along the beautiful Fife coast (and more). We all came away feeling the benefit of a day without emails, meetings or the dreaded Zoom, but were having taken the time to take a breath, connect and have fun (and of course there was cake).

It always feels there is so much still to do, and we are continuing to climb the biggest mountain (avoiding rockfalls and landslides as we do), but looking back on the last few months, there's been plenty to appreciate and celebrate too. So grab a cuppa and enjoy the read!



Justina Murray
Chief Executive Officer



Scottish Families

Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

Everyone's Invited!

Annual Event and AGM

Saturday 18 November 2023

10.00am-2.30pm

Pitbauchlie House Hotel, 47 Aberdour Road, Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 4PB

Programme

10.00am: Registration: Tea and coffee available on arrival

10.30am: Welcome to Fife!: A warm welcome from our Fife family support team and local family members, and a chance to hear more about what's going on in Fife to support and connect families.

11.00am: Scottish Families Annual General Meeting: Our Chair, Treasurer and other Board Members will present our work over the past year. We will also formally welcome our new trustees and thank those who are standing down from the Board.

11.30am: Why self-care and wellbeing matters: Karran Bonner, Brightside, will share an overview of the evidence base for promoting self-care and wellbeing, the impact this can have, and why it is so important to look after ourselves.

12.00pm: Lunch: Lunch will be served in the restaurant.

12.45pm: A Wellbeing Festival!: An opportunity to relax and unwind together, by taking part in a range of self-care and wellbeing activities. These will be led by our team members and friends, and there will be the chance to move between tables and try out different things. Further information on options will be shared before the event.

2.15pm: Reflections and Thanks

2.30pm: Close of Event

Travel directions and information



Get your tickets here

What You May Have Missed

If you've ever spoken to someone on our team, you'll know that there's always so many things going on at Scottish Families. It's sometimes hard to keep up, even as a staff member! Below are some updates from the last few months that you may have missed.

'Meet the Family!' Our Impact Report 2022-23

We launched our latest impact report in August, looking at the work we have done in 2022-23.

3,724 more people were supported by Scottish Families' services, as well as those we are already supporting.

Head over to [our website](#) to read more about our work and the amazing people we support.



Lauren and Caitlin's Skydive

We were ridiculously excited to watch our supporters Lauren and Caitlin do a skydive to raise money for us! They also did an amazing raffle and together raised an incredible £8335.

After a few cancelled jumps, they were finally able to complete the skydive and get this incredible video in the process. Well done to you both, we've loved following your skydiving journey!

[Watch their video here.](#)



Here's to Us – Friendships and Alcohol Project

'Here's to Us' was created to address a gap in conversation around how young adults can be affected by a friend's alcohol use. According to our survey, 60% of people who responded had felt personally affected by a friend's drinking, but more than half of respondents have never tried speaking to a friend about their alcohol use.

You can read more about the [project here](#).



Recovery Walk 2023 in Inverclyde



Words by Rachel Taylor, our Family Support Development Officer for Inverclyde

September was incredibly busy with Recovery Month and we were really lucky in Inverclyde to have the Recovery Walk Scotland come to Greenock! I was part of the Host Group meaning I attended weekly meetings with all partner organisations and the Scottish Recovery Consortium to contribute towards the plans for the Walk as well as all the events in the calendar here in Inverclyde.

This included a Candlelit Vigil where two of our Inverclyde family members shared letters to their loved ones which were powerful, and the strength they showed was amazing. The family members in Inverclyde are very passionate about Scottish Families and the service we deliver. Their support is invaluable. I also spoke at the vigil, sharing what Scottish Families do and more on our bereavement service.

We then had Tea in the Park, a local recovery event. This was held in Port Glasgow where there were stalls, music and food. We had a stall where our local family members and volunteers came along and put on activities

including crafting, colouring, and temporary tattoos. This was a really well attended event and brought the community together.

Tich and Susie from our team delivered a Stigma and Kindness Workshop in Inverclyde. It was well attended by people from all different backgrounds such as family members, local organisations, and a local MSP.

Then there was the Recovery Walk Scotland itself that was held in Battery Park in Greenock with over 4000 people coming from all over Scotland. Our family members and volunteers done us proud with a big turnout to support the activities we had put on. They said:

'This was the best fun day I had this summer. The feeling of 'family' in our tent was so special. Saturday was so special from start to finish, the atmosphere just so loving, kind and humble. Scottish Families has totally changed my life. Thank you everyone for making me feel safe and valued.'



‘Brilliant day, loved every minute, was great to see so many people enjoying it. Also met lots of people I’ve not seen in years. Well done everyone.’

‘Thank you to all at the Recovery Walk today it was bloody brilliant. People from all over the country come to Inverclyde today that itself was amazing!! What a way to send out the message and to be heard.’

‘What a fantastic day, wow. To have this in our area was amazing. The atmosphere was buzzing on both the walk and back at the park. Inverclyde you did us proud.’

As part of Recovery Month, we also attended as a group the ‘Jericho Girls Play on Stigma’. This was incredibly powerful and shared stories from the women in Jericho House about the stigma they experience. The family members loved this and this gave them the opportunity to meet Margaret who runs the Women’s House. Margaret holds a family support meeting where family members go along with their loved ones, giving them the opportunity to share how they feel with their loved one in a controlled environment and gives their loved one the chance to hear them but also to respond. A couple of our family

members are now attending this meeting on a Monday night in the hope that they will encourage their loved one into treatment with Jericho.

An article had also been put out in the local paper of the Greenock Telegraph about drug consumption rooms which a family member had brought to our group. They weren’t entirely sure what it was about, so we took the time to read through it and discuss. Ronnie Cowan, one of our local MSPs had commented in the article, so one of our family members approached Ronnie and asked if he would like to come along to one of our groups. Ronnie attended our group in October to discuss drug consumption rooms and gave family members the opportunity to ask questions.

We now also have our local Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services coming along to one of our monthly meetings to discuss the services they offer and the process. This is in the hope of breaking down barriers between family members and services as a lot of our family members have unfortunately had negative experiences, therefore it is hoped we can bring the two together.

Inverclyde Family Support Service

To find out more about our Inverclyde Family Support Service you can visit **their webpage here** or contact: 01475 302816 / you can email inverclydefss@sfad.org.uk or call our National Helpline on 08080 10 10 11 / helpline@sfad.org.uk



The Beauty of the Ripples of Recovery

By Debra Nelson, our Connecting Families Development Officer

I recently took part in two Recovery Walks. The first in Inverclyde where over 4000 people walked and celebrated recovery. The second was in Kintyre and it was their first ever walk! There were no more 60 people there yet people remembered loved ones, went for a cold dip in very icy water holding hands, they danced, sang, and walked in celebration. Both events were joyful and moving and I felt a personal humility amongst such passion and hope, yet for an obvious reason they were also very different.



When I was in Kintyre, I was reminded of my past in Liverpool when I was a Public Health Commissioner and monitored Substance Use Services. I met monthly with all the services and there was one woman from Action on Addiction who was passionate about the growing buzz of recovery in Liverpool and was keen to make it visible. She hounded me for funding to do a 'Recovery Walk'. We did find the money and on she went to arrange the first walk in 2009. There were less than 100 people on that walk and I also took part. Walking in Kintyre, I remembered how determined she was and had a few tears thinking about the far-reaching ripples of one person's vision.

It was a beginning, and hope was palpable all around and everybody believed it will be bigger next year, that is certain.



In contrast, the week before when I was on the Recovery Walk in Inverclyde, the buzz, confidence and sheer numbers shouted out, 'We are here and we are here to stay!' Fun, compassion, and connection was all around from people all over Scotland. I met so many people from different parts of Scotland who I have come to know through my work at Scottish Families. Recovery was visible as people danced and sang, hugged, and at times cried for loved ones lost and others who have substance use issues.

So, how do I want to end my reflections here? Well, I use the phrase "big things from little acorns grow" all the time, yet, it is true, this is our work, and it works!



Our Family Champion at Recovery Walk 2023



Our Family Champion volunteer Agnes has shared her experience volunteering at the Recovery Walk in Inverclyde this year!

"I was so excited with my role as volunteer at the 2023 Recovery walk hosted in Inverclyde. I live very close to the Battery Park and I could see the stalls and stage being set up which added to my excitement.

"I was volunteering on our stall doing colourful bracelets for kids with their names, little hearts and flowers, all chosen by them. It was clearly a family day and 4,000 people came to support and remember loved ones and raise awareness of people who are in recovery.

"It made it so heartfelt and overwhelming to see and feel the love of the services in Inverclyde giving out information and noticing the volunteers helping with the families, face painting colourful masks, and blowing bubbles and excited faces catching them.

"All food and drinks and sweets were free. And people were dancing to the recovery bands. It was an array of happiness, considering an hour before they were remembering their lost loved ones from

drugs, alcohol and mental health, by placing roses in the water. It was an emotional display of love.

"Volunteering at this event made me so proud to be part of a group who value your time and structure a role to suit you - one of the many aspects of volunteering with Scottish Families. Throughout the day, the team made many checks on the volunteers, making sure we were ok, tea, coffee, water, food, plenty of laughter, and breaks to walk around and reach out to other services in the area. It gives you an education on what's going on in your community.

"It made me feel you're not just a volunteer with Scottish Families but part of a family who support others. It is amazing. And to get messages telling you how valued you are within Scottish Families and checking you're ok after every volunteer role and genuinely thanking you for your valued time.

"It tells me I'm part of something amazing. Helping others is rewarding and feeling valued is equally rewarding. And how do I know this? Scottish Families told me this. Feel the love. [Join and become a volunteer with the amazing Scottish Families.](https://www.sfad.org.uk)"

Family Recovery College - Spring 2024



The Family Recovery College offers a free informal 12-week course, Understanding Substance Use and Holding on to Hope, for anyone living in Scotland who is concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use. We will support you to build knowledge, skills, and confidence to support yourself and your loved one.

Our Spring 2024 course is now open for expressions of interest. The Spring 2024 course will take place online every Tuesday between 7pm and 9pm, starting on Tuesday 12th March 2024 and finishing on Tuesday 28th May 2024.

[You can fill out an expression of interest form here.](#)

You can also contact either Debra Nelson: 07379830357/debra@sfad.org.uk or Tich Watson: 07775252380/richard@sfad.org.uk for more information.

Eligibility:

Anyone who is affected by another person's drug or alcohol use is warmly welcomed – that includes biological and non-biological families, BAME families, LGBT+ people and families, families with or without children,

friends, partners, siblings, young people, older people, foster carers, kinship carers, neighbours, work colleagues, etc.

If you are a professional working in this field and interested in this course please contact Susie McClue susie@sfad.org.uk as we are developing a parallel opportunity for you.

This course will be delivered online using Zoom so that as many people can join us regardless of location. We will do our best to ensure everyone can get online whatever their circumstance may be.

We hope to make the Family Recovery College accessible to all. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything additional we can do to make you feel welcomed and included.



Midweek Escapes: Pages & Places

Recently We've Been Reading...



The Cost of Loving: Our New Strategy 2023-2026

Back in August, we launched our new strategy for 2023-26 'The Cost of Loving'.

When we launched our [Change Will Come strategy \(2020-23\)](#) in June 2020, we were just a few months into the global COVID-19 pandemic. At that early stage, we did not anticipate how much this would impact on our work, and the families we support – effects which continue today.

We have developed this new strategy for 2023- 26 in the grip of a Cost of Living crisis, which is quite rightly the focus of significant political, practical and media attention. Cost of living pressures are increasing harm to many families affected by alcohol and drugs. This includes both direct harms (having less money and costs increasing) and also indirect harms (additional pressures increasing alcohol and drug use and levels of family stress – as with the COVID pandemic).

We are doing everything we can to reduce cost of living pressures for families, and to reach families where alcohol and drug harm has increased as a result.

However we are very aware that for families affected by a loved one's alcohol or drug use, the cost of living is just one of the many, many challenges they face on a daily basis. It is only one of the multiple plates they have to keep spinning.

Our families face an everyday and ongoing crisis, which will outlive the timescale of the current financial situation. This is the Cost of Loving, a relentless and exhausting tally of financial, practical, relationship and emotional costs.

Our family member, Amanda Barr, created the striking artwork for our strategy powerfully illustrating this experience. We would like to thank Amanda for translating our words into such a memorable and powerful image.



The cost of loving includes monetary and non-monetary costs, as these family members describe:

“Over the years I have paid his rent, food, clothing and his daughter's clothes. Husband and I re-mortgaged house 3 times to pay debts caused by son's addiction. Taken more equity out of the house to pay drug debts. Drive son all over town to appointments, to 'score', to chemist and for his shopping. Always feels my time is his to use. He always wants money, food, vapes and the use of my car (I always put the petrol in). Buy his Xmas presents, birthday presents to give to his children or his wife (now ex). I have spent thousands and thousands over the years.”

“Cigarettes £77 weekly. Beer £35 weekly. Heating £194 monthly. Food £400 monthly. Loss of time for me – no time left for anything social or seeing friends. Loss of sense of self. Everything revolves round his

needs. Must buy everything high fat high protein as he is unwell and very thin. This means I am eating high fat foods, and this had caused high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Heating needs to be kept on all day as he is always cold.”

“[My] Daughter uses crack cocaine. Her children live with me but I pay for her to maintain her relationship with her children. Costs £300 a month. Pay her heating £150 month. Clothes £50 month. Petrol to pharmacy daily £100 month. Mobile phone £45 month. Looking after her children full time £800 month. No price to put on lost relationship, lost friendships and family. Lost identity as mother, grandmother.”

The Cost of Loving is an everyday crisis for families, but it does not attract the same level of attention, sympathy or response.

Through our new Scottish Families strategy, we identify 8 ‘Big Questions’ around the Cost of Loving which we want to answer, to understand, highlight, and reduce these costs for families harmed by alcohol and drug use.

Our Big Questions include complex, uncomfortable and unrecognised issues, such as family members’ own serious mental health issues; what life is like for families whose loved ones are in recovery; and the stark implementation gap between what we say we will do in Scotland in policy and strategy, and what actually happens in practice.

The Cost of Loving is unrelenting and unacceptable. It is time for change.

Our Big Questions: 2023-2026

Our Cost of Loving strategy will answer these 8 Big Questions over the next three years:

Families are Supported

- What is the relationship between neurodiversity and substance use, and how does this affect families?
- What is the state of family members’ own mental health, and how should we highlight and respond to this?

Families are Included

- What can help and support services to involve families in their loved ones’ treatment and care, and how can we embed more family-inclusive practice?
- How can we promote more equality and diversity in our work, so all families feel Scottish Families is for them?

Families are Heard

- What is the Cost of Loving for families, and how can it be reduced?
- How do families navigate life after alcohol and drugs?

Families are Connected

- Can we start a national ‘Meet the Family!’ conversation about alcohol and drug harm in families, recognising everyone knows someone affected?

Families Create Change

- Can we close the implementation gap in Scotland between good policies and strategies and what actually happens in practice?

What actions are we going to take?

Each year we will also publish a Cost of Loving Progress Report alongside the next year’s Delivery Plan. The Progress Report will say how we are getting on with putting our Strategy into practice, and answering our 8 Big Questions. This will sit alongside our annual [Impact Report](#) which summarises Scottish Families’ overall performance and notes key highlights.

[**Our full strategy can be read here.**](#)

[**You can also read the Year One Delivery Plan of our strategy here.**](#)

Addicts And Those Who Love Them

Addicts And Those Who Love Them, behind every addict is someone traumatised by loving them, an exhibition of portraits and words by Antonia Rolls.



My name is Antonia Rolls, I am an artist and I created this exhibition because I am, I was, someone traumatised by loving an addict. My son Costya was always different. He found life hard and people impossible to understand. By the time he was 18, he was finding relief in alcohol and drugs. I had no idea what I was dealing with, no idea what was happening, and absolutely no conception of addiction. I was angry, ashamed and offended. How could he do this to me? I don't think I behaved very kindly. At the beginning of this journey, I blamed him for wrong, destructive choices. He needed to stop. But he didn't, and it got worse.

By 2018 I had sought help for us both and had completely changed my mind. The crazy, dark, destructive life Costya lived, the danger he put himself in, the pain and horror he experienced in the world he had fallen into had a hold over him that nothing could break. He was beyond my help. I needed to look after myself, it was breaking me too. But all the way through, I loved him and wanted him back. And I know, in his lucid moments, he wanted to come back too.

Somehow in 2018 he agreed to me creating an exhibition exploring his addictions, and the Brighter The Light (the darker the shadow) exhibition opened in 2019 for just one showing here in my home town. Despite working on it with me, Costya hated it, and on the opening night he kicked off high on drugs and vodka. We saw addiction in action that night, in an exhibition about addiction.

I couldn't show this exhibition about Costya again but I needed to understand him and what was in this dark world he seemed to choose. I decided to work with other people in and around addiction and ask them exactly what was happening. I painted their portraits and wrote whatever words they said, whatever story they wanted to be known, on their portraits. The first person I painted was Ian from Fife, who was present at the opening night of the Brighter The Light. Ian, now a friend, was forty years an alcoholic. Over ten years sober now, on that night in 2019 he was the first person I had ever met who told me how it was to be an alcoholic, and an addict. He opened my eyes to what was happening to and for Costya and has remained a rock over the years that followed.



I so wanted to understand Costya. I asked people in addiction and in recovery to tell me their stories. I contacted people in drugs research, I contacted two politicians, an ex undercover drugs cop, wanting to know what this addiction world was. In my first exhibition in Brighton, two teenagers came in and told me their stories. They only had each other, together since they were 13. Both from families of extreme neglect and addictions, they were in Brighton on a holiday from London. They spent many days at the exhibition and wanted to tell their stories, and so became a part of the exhibition too. It took a year of working with them, the finished portraits and words are very powerful. I met another young man in London at a book launch. How we connected and he told his story of his struggle with drugs and alcohol is pure chance. A man walked into the exhibition last year with a history of chem sex addiction and a terrifying suicide attempt. Clean and sober now, his story and portrait joined the exhibition this year and is important for young men like Costya who are overwhelmed by this lifestyle. I did understand Costya more. It worked.



Despite all the times I blocked him, told him I couldn't see him and that he couldn't come anywhere near my home, we became as close as we could when he was able to function. He felt I didn't go far enough in the exhibition though, and wanted to introduce me to all the strange and outcast people in his world, on the absolute edges of society, and have me tell their stories. It would be

a collaboration. I so wanted to do this with Costya, it would have been challenging and inspiring.

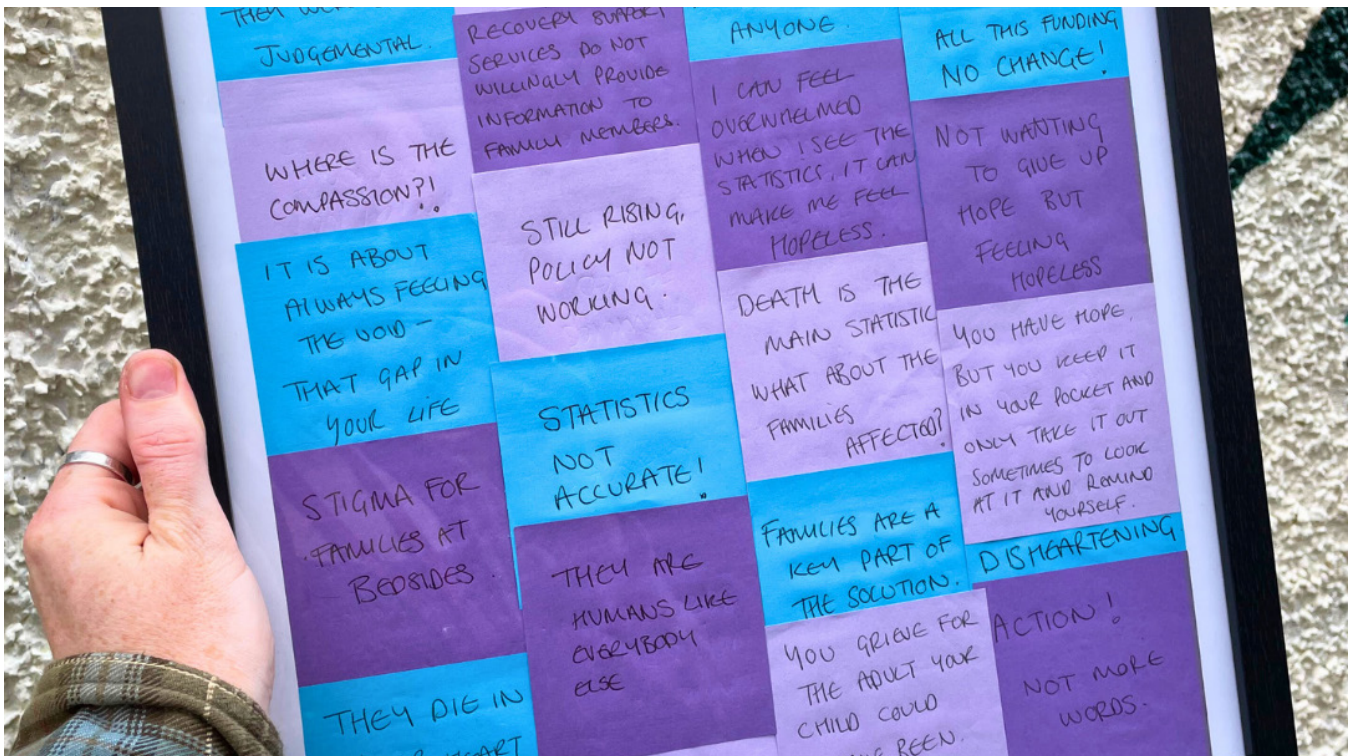
Costya became more and more lost in his addictions. His physical body could barely hold out, his attempts to end his life increased. At 29, he was like an old man with Alzheimer's. In February of this year, I found him cold and dead in his flat, on his sofa. In front of him was a syringe, next to him a quarter bottle of vodka. Nothing would ever



hurt him again. The crazy was over. The Addicts And Those Who Love Them, behind every addict is someone traumatised by loving them exhibition is more important than ever after Costya's death. There are so many of us trying to make sense of the death of an addict in our lives, so many of us having to carry on. In all the exhibitions over the past four years, in all the stories I have heard from people coming to the exhibition and those in it, the humanity of the addict is the most moving takeaway. We do love our addicts, those of us who are connected through family or circumstance. But we do not love with a sweet, reciprocal and easy love. It is a hard, powerful crazy love that crashes around us time and time again, hurting us and seeming to go nowhere. And so many times, we pick ourselves up, learn a bit more about boundaries and love being something that starts with ourselves so that when the times or time comes, when there is a chink in the crazy mad and frightening world of addiction, we are ready. And still we love.

www.antoniarolls.co.uk
Twitter (X): @AntoniaRolls
Instagram: @antoniarolls
Facebook: Antonia Rolls

Just Ask Families



The latest [annual drug-related death statistics](#) were published in Scotland on the 22nd of August. 1,051 deaths are registered, meaning 1,051 families are grieving. Until we reach our target of zero drug deaths, we will continue to campaign alongside families who have lost loved ones and those who are fighting every day to keep their loved ones alive.

We know that families have the answers to Scotland's drug deaths crisis – but they need to be heard, and for change to happen as a result. We need to Just Ask Families.

Every day, families are struggling to access the treatment, care and support their loved ones desperately need; they are blamed, and judged by others; and their own rights as family members and carers are not recognised. Their complaints about access, choice and quality of treatment services are ignored, and they are actively excluded from their loved one's care planning and from services' decisions which affect the whole family. Bereaved families are not invited to take part in formal service reviews which follow every drug death, so their valuable insight and lessons which could be learned are lost.

We asked family members to share their thoughts on what is going on in their lives, and the changes they want to see. All of these families have been harmed by Scotland's drug deaths crisis. They have shared heartbreaking notes about their own grief and loss; practical and straightforward recommendations for treatment services which will save lives; the importance of hope for whole families; the impact of stigma; and their frustration about the slow pace of change.

We received so many notes from family members, so to make sure these could be seen and heard, we have put together this artwork that will be on display in our Glasgow office. A reminder of what families feel, and why it is so needed to Just Ask Families.

Families affected by a loved one's drug use understand more than anyone else what needs to change to tackle Scotland's ongoing drug deaths crisis. Whether they have lost a loved one, or are battling every day to keep their loved one alive in the most trying of circumstances, families need to be part of the solution.

Every year on the day the statistics are released, there is quite rightly an outpouring of sympathy and condolence for the families left behind. But the same families are not asked to take part in formal drug death reviews to share their insight into what has gone wrong and what needs to change. Families' complaints about treatment services are ignored, and when they advocate for their loved ones, they are seen as awkward and interfering. Families want their rights as carers to be upheld; their expertise to be recognised; and for real change to happen.

We need to recognise that families have the answers to Scotland's drug deaths crisis, to hear what they are saying, and to see real change as a result.

'They die in your heart so many times.'

'It is about always feeling the void – that gap in your life.'

'You grieve for the adult that your child could have been.'

'You have hope, but you keep it in your pocket and only take it out sometimes to look at it and remind yourself.'

'Recovery and substance use support services need to be revised – if the person is stable and getting a prescription, they see their worker less often. If you use, they see you every week to get a swab off you. This seems the wrong way round.'

'It starts with education. Our culture is all about drinking only to get drunk. Foreign visitors recently commented "is this behaviour normal?" after witnessing scenes at the weekend.'

'The media need to change on how they report on drug issues; it is always pictures of needs and dirty alleyways. Why do they portray drug use as being about social class when in reality it can affect anyone of any class or background?'

'We need to reduce the stigma faced by families as well as the stigma experienced by drug users.'

'Engaging with social services (e.g., about

children's welfare) was very difficult – they were so judgemental.'

'The media need to develop a narrative beyond the family's role being solely about supporting the individual through recovery – it is also about the family's journey and what they experience. We need to promote that there is help and support available for families.'

'Recovery support services do not willingly provide information to family members, and they need to engage more with families e.g., when a loved one goes into residential rehab.'

'Recovery support needs to be more holistic and focus upon practical skills (cooking, cleaning, shopping). Where is the throughcare support once someone is back in their community? Only offering 9-5 support and expecting people to turn up sober: it's not designed for the service user.'

'It seems that there are lots of different (support) agencies and organisations all in competition for funding and not working together or sharing information.'

'Families are a key part of the solution and they should be involved in conversations with support/recovery organisations.'

'Stigma for families at bedsides, pressure on the NHS.'

'Death is the main statistic, what about number of families affected? Number of admissions to hospital every week because of ODs or alcohol poisoning? Or drug/alcohol injuries or accidents?'

'Sadness and heartbreak experienced every day. Toll on family member's mental/physical health and cost for NHS.'

'I can feel overwhelmed when I see statistics, it can make me feel hopeless. They are of course impersonal and each addict and family have individual circumstances.'

'No longer feel alone and isolated.'

'Enabled me to express my emotions safely.'

Scottish Families Fundraisers Nominated for Award

Congratulations to our fundraisers Clare Morrison and Sarah Campbell who were recognised for their success in fundraising by the Chartered Institute of Fundraising.

The team were nominated for Fundraising Team of the Year and Clare was additionally nominated for the Rising Star award.



Lights of Love and Memory

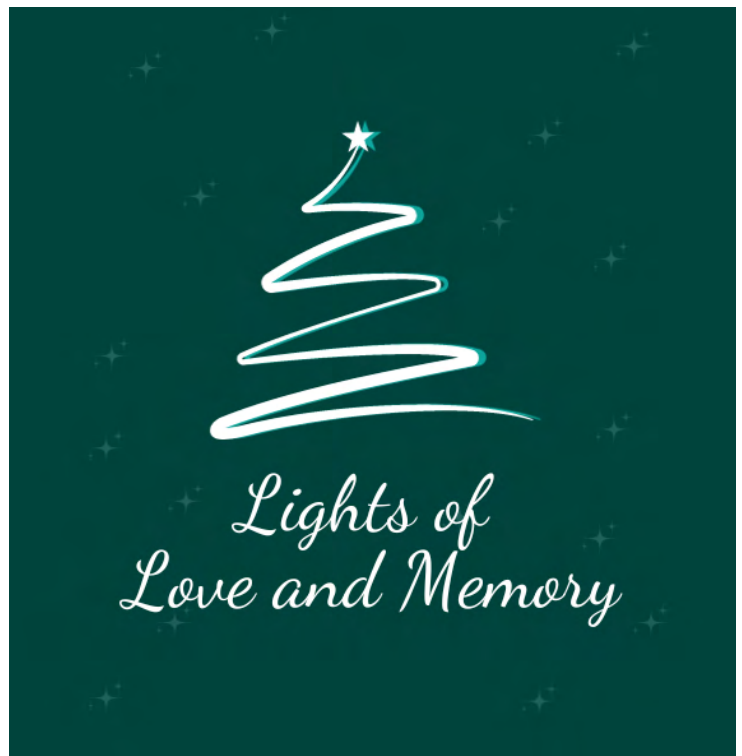
Shine a light for someone you are remembering this Christmas.

When we have lost someone we love, Christmas will never be the same. At this time of year, when families can feel pressure and isolation at a time when smiles and joy are expected, we are coming together to shine our light.

Each light on the tree represents the love we have for our families, wherever they are.

With Scottish Families no-one needs to feel alone. Every donation to our tree will help make sure we are here when they need us, the leading charity in Scotland providing expert support for families.

Will you help us by donating and dedicating a Light of Love and Memory?



[You can dedicate a light on our tree here.](#)

Lights of Love and Memory Concert

Tickets are on sale for our Light of Love and Memory Concert which will feature a mixture of musical performances and readings, and everyone in attendance will be invited to shine a light for those we remember at Christmas.

The event is on Wednesday 22 November, 7pm, at St George's Tron Church, Glasgow. Tickets cost only £5, this includes a festive cake and hot drink. [If you would like to come along find out more here.](#)



**Thank you to everyone
who walked the
Kiltwalk in 2023 for
Scottish Families...stay
tuned for how to take
part in 2024!**



Every month we've been celebrating our incredible supporters who take part in events and challenges to raise money for families across Scotland.

This month we want to shout out...



Cameron ran the (hilly) Loch Ness Marathon and raised £116 for Scottish Families!



Kelsey joined thousands of other women who ran the Edinburgh Women's 10k, and she raised an amazing £175!



Fraser's incredible run at the Scottish Half Marathon raised £100 for families across Scotland!



Marcin smashed the Scottish Half Marathon this month and raised £235 for our Routes Young People!

Say hello to our new staff!



Kim Klufas

Development Officer
(National Support and
Harm Reduction)



Rachel Taylor

Family Support
Development Officer -
Inverclyde



Emma Moir

Support Assistant -
Young People



Jordan Stewart

Family Support
Assistant - Inverclyde

Your Stories: Family Inclusive Practice



'Your Stories' is part of a new piece of work we are doing, called 'Family Inclusive Practice'.

Family Inclusive Practice is about how professionals in the drug and alcohol workforce actively involve someone's family in their care, treatment and recovery.

And it is also about how the workforce ask about the needs of the whole family and make sure family members are supported in their own right.

The project Daryl on our team is working on aims to offer training to the drug and alcohol workforce on how to better include families. Rich, authentic stories often hit home and connect the most with people, and help people to learn a new way of working.

In order to make the most impact, Daryl wants to be ready with authentic experiences from families across Scotland which can be used as case studies, as examples of what not-to-do, and examples of getting it right.

So in conclusion – Your Stories is about your experiences of the times when services have made you feel included, and also when services left you feeling excluded.

Your Stories can make an impact like nothing else can.

Do you have a story you would be willing to share with us?

[If so, click this link and tell us Your Stories.](#)

Family Inclusive Practice with Daryl

Daryl McLeister, our Family Inclusive Practice Development Officer tells you about his work in our new programme.



What is Family Inclusive Practice?

Family Inclusive Practice is about how professionals within the workforce would actively involve a person's family or their wider social network with their care, their treatment and their recovery.

It's about how the workforce asks about the needs of that whole family as well. Even if someone doesn't want to be involved in treatment or isn't ready for recovery, that family still has needs so it's about professionals being aware and having a plan in place to how they're to ask about those needs and try to respond to those needs. It's about having that compassionate and caring approach, that warmth at the front door when someone comes to your service and says, "I'm a family member and I'm really worried about my loved one and I don't really know what to do about it".

Could you give us an overview of what the Family Inclusive Practice Development Programme is?

The Programme is a new initiative that we're launching and what we're interested in doing is trying to see if we can resolve what we call the 'implementation gap', that describes the difference between what the government says should be happening within services and what families have seen on the ground. Scottish Families want to try and bridge the two pieces of that gap; we want to help cross that gap and help people figure out how to connect with another.

The way the Programme is designed to work is as an alternative to regular training. We're going to come in, understand what's going on in an area, deliver the training as

we normally would, and then keep supporting that service afterwards. We're going to ask the workers in the service to continue accessing a community of practice with us where they'll come and talk about the latest understandings of Family Inclusive Practice, what's going on in different regions and sharing really good practice.

Could you walk us through what the process has been like?

The main thing we want to get right at the beginning was exactly what kind of support we were offering. We spent a lot of time just putting together a guide to what it is we're offering out to the services and to the people who commission those services. We have to know what we can realistically do. We've now moved into the process where we've got services signed up already, which is really good. We've been talking to many Alcohol and Drug Partnerships across Scotland to understand what their needs are and what family support is currently like and what their views are on family support. It's been enlightening to do that in many ways, but one of the key things that's come across is clearly that there is a lot of support for the programme. We're also talking to services directly; services can approach us on their own.

I'm able to share our families' experiences. You can just see the atmosphere shift in the room when you know professionals are maybe not used to working on the frontline, or suddenly just spending one or two minutes listening to a real family story, you can see things shifting and that empathy building a little bit.

We will be sharing lots about our Family Inclusive Practice Development Programme in the next few months. Please keep informed by [signing up to our mailing list](#). If you are interested in the Programme and the Training, please contact Daryl McLeister at daryl@sfad.org.uk.

New Learning and Development Sessions



Scottish Families is really pleased to announce some new Learning and Development sessions, brought to you in a new way.

These 3 new sessions will run from our head office – Edward House, on Sauchiehall St in Glasgow throughout November and December.

Traditionally, we have offered courses to one workplace at a time or been commissioned by an agency. These new sessions are exciting because you can book on individually - a bit more of an 'à la carte' approach!

Spaces are limited to 15 per course – so please do book now to avoid disappointment!

Introduction to Supporting Families

Are you looking to get a bit of an understanding about why families need support?

Our Introduction to Supporting Families course is perfect for you. Learn about the unique needs and experiences of family members, and understand how empathy and listening skills are so important to family support.

Next Session: Monday 20th November 10am - 12pm (2 Hours)

Price: £35 per participant

[Book following this link.](#)

Facilitating a Support Group

Are you interested in knowing how a Family Support Group runs?

Our 'Facilitating a Support Group' training is perfectly suited to helping you explore the role of a facilitator. We touch on key things to think about in how you structure and manage a group. This course is helpful for anyone looking to run a support group – families and beyond.

Next Session: Monday 27th November 9:30am - 1pm (3.5 Hours)

Price: £55 per participant

[Book following this link.](#)

Family Inclusive Practice

This course is designed for the workforce - for practitioners working in the drug and alcohol support sector.

Family Inclusive Practice is about how professionals in the workforce actively involve a person's family and social networks in their care, are proactive in asking about the needs of the whole family, and make sure all family members are supported.

Next Session: Wednesday 6th December 9:30am - 1pm (3.5 Hours)

Price: £55 per participant

[Book following this link.](#)



The Reality of Christmas for Families

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs is putting together a campaign around the reality of Christmas and what the festive season looks like for families affected by someone else's substance use.

We are collecting stories that share the emotions and real-life struggles that often go unnoticed during a time when we're expected to be joyful and care-free.

By sharing these stories, we can connect on a deeper level and truly understand the difficulties and strengths of families.

If you have a story on the reality of Christmas for families affected by substance use, you can anonymously share your story with us using our online form. This is your story, so please include as much or as little detail as you like. You will also be asked on whether or not you consent to your story being shared.

If you have any issues with the form or would like to speak to someone on our team you can contact rebecca@sfad.org.uk or shana@sfad.org.uk.

Thank you.

If the button below does not work for you please copy and paste this link into your browser:

<https://forms.office.com/e/5tJX1w0sHR>

Share your 'Reality of Christmas' story here



Policy Round Up

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland: Information around the Consultation and Scottish Families' Response

In 2018, an independent Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership was established by then-First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to recommend the steps Scotland must take “to lead by example in human rights, including economic, social, cultural and environmental rights”. The Group’s recommendation was to advance human rights in Scotland through an Act of Scottish Parliament which would be created with the participation of diverse communities and driven by a National Taskforce. In 2021, this National Taskforce put forward 30 recommendations for embedding international human rights laws into Scottish law. These recommendations, in addition to input from a Lived Experience Board, an Advisory Board, and an Executive Board, form the basis of a proposed Human Rights Bill for Scotland.

Scottish Families has responded to the Scottish Government’s consultation around this proposed Bill, which closed on October 5th and can be found [here](#). It was a complex consultation that touched on courts and complaints system, reserved versus devolved powers of government, holding public bodies accountable, and much more. However, the main idea of the Human Rights Bill for Scotland is to incorporate certain international human rights laws into Scottish law. These include:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- The right to a healthy environment

In our response, we have included a section that gives more in-depth

background around this proposed Human Rights Bill for Scotland before answering the questions put forward by the Scottish Government. If you are interested in reading our response to the consultation, you can find it [here](#).

Minimum Unit Pricing

In September, the Scottish Government opened a consultation around the future of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) for alcohol. Despite the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act being passed in 2012, MUP was actually first put into place in May of 2018, setting a minimum price of alcoholic drinks at 50 pence per unit of alcohol. The aim of MUP is to reduce alcohol-related harm amongst people drinking at hazardous and harmful levels, as well as to reduce harm at a whole-population level. Conversations around MUP have also touched on how the policy can contribute to preventing alcohol dependency before it develops.

In late June, Public Health Scotland had published its report around the evaluation of MUP since its implementation. The [report](#) states:

“Overall, the evidence supports that MUP has had a positive impact on health outcomes, namely a reduction in alcohol-attributable deaths and hospital admissions, particularly in men and those living in the most deprived areas, and therefore contributes to addressing alcohol-related health inequalities. There was no clear evidence of substantial negative impacts on the alcoholic drinks industry, or of social harms at the population level.”

However, the sunset clause attached to the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012 means that MUP will expire in April of 2024 unless new legislation is created to continue MUP. Therefore, the Scottish Government’s most recent consultation is about whether MUP should continue to exist, and if it should be increased from 50

pence per unit to at least 65 pence per unit – to consider inflation since the Act was first passed. Organisations like Alcohol Focus Scotland and Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems have also been advocating for an automatic uprating mechanism to ensure changes in inflation would automatically result in changes in MUP. Inflation has eroded the effects of a minimum unit price of 50p, so newly implementing a floor price for alcohol that also adjusts with inflation is a way of keeping the policy effective.

Scottish Families will be responding to this consultation, and we want to hear what families have to say around Minimum Unit Pricing, as well as alcohol-related treatment and care, alcohol marketing, and other alcohol-related issues. There are different ways family members can get involved in developing Scottish Families' response to this consultation around MUP:

- Scottish Families is holding an online Zoom session alongside Alcohol Focus Scotland, to provide information around and discuss Minimum Unit Pricing, alcohol-related treatment and care, and other alcohol-related issues. **For more details and to receive the link for this Zoom session, please contact Marianna Marquardt (our Policy and Research Assistant) at Marianna@sfad.org.uk.**
- We've also set up a Microsoft Forms [survey](#), which contains the three questions asked in the MUP consultation. If you are unable to make our online session around MUP and other alcohol-related issues, you can still anonymously contribute your thoughts around MUP using the Forms survey.

- If you'd like to chat to Marianna about MUP and alcohol-related policy, please contact Marianna@sfad.org.uk.

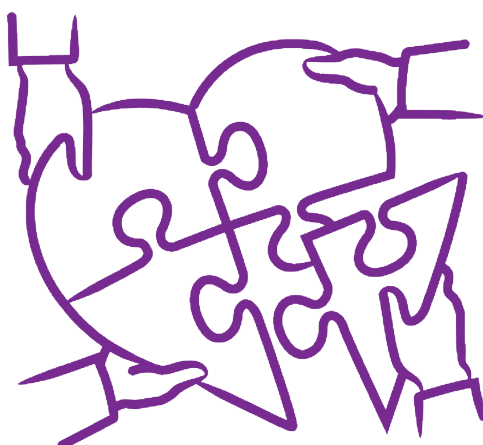
We are also encouraging family members to respond to the consultation as individuals. The consultation contains only three questions, which you can answer with as much or as little detail as you prefer. You can respond as an individual by clicking "Begin Consultation" at the bottom of [this page](#). The consultation closes 22 November.

An Update on Alcohol Marketing in Scotland

On 18 April, First Minister Humza Yousef announced to the Scottish Parliament that he was taking proposals around tackling alcohol marketing "back to the drawing board", due to concerns raised by the alcohol industry. In response, 137 people signed our [open letter](#) to the First Minister, urging him to prioritise the voices and the lives of those impacted by alcohol harm.

The First Minister has committed to meeting with family members affected by alcohol harm, in order to discuss the impact alcohol marketing has within communities.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Government has finished analysing all of the responses it received around the consultation, and it is in the process of releasing a report around these responses. Restrictions around alcohol advertising and promotion will be undergoing a second stage of consultation delving into more specific aspects of alcohol marketing. You can find our response to the Scottish Government's initial consultation on alcohol marketing in Scotland [here](#).



Cocaine and Families

Scottish Families is putting together a campaign around how families are affected by someone else's cocaine use. We want to shine a light on how cocaine affects families, relationships, and mental health, and how it impacts both urban and more suburban or rural communities. An important part of this is asking families about their own experiences.

We are asking for people who have been physically, mentally, or financially affected by cocaine use to share their experiences and raise awareness around the realities of cocaine use across Scotland. One way in which you can do so is by sharing your experiences anonymously through our survey.

A part of the campaign will also focus on the difference between how cocaine is portrayed in media and the popular imagination, and the real impacts it causes in communities. If you are interested in completing the Microsoft Form, you are also welcome to write about your views of media depictions vs. reality of cocaine use as well.

If the button below does not work for you please copy and paste this link into your browser:
<https://forms.office.com/e/knmV1aGUYZ>

[Share your Cocaine and Families experiences here](#)



This Fierce Love - Returning February 2024

Scottish Families have a big ambition: No more hidden families. During Spring and Autumn 2022 we hosted 17 in-person events across Scotland telling a family member's story of living with alcohol and drug use.

"I just wanted to say how impressed we were with the Fierce Love workshop. It was so well thought through and organised. Our team from CAP commented on the difference it made to their understanding of issues affecting substance users and their families and the difference that new awareness will make in their practice going forward."

This Fierce Love is going back on tour from February 2024. Each event is an interactive workshop where we listen to a family member's story, discussing and reflecting on what we have heard together. Scottish Families' aim is to raise awareness of families' experiences and create opportunities for families to be seen and heard. We believe that listening to, supporting, and including families is the change we need to see in Scotland to reduce alcohol and drug-related harm.

These events are free and open to all, including practitioners and family members and are hosted alongside partners.

Our first event is happening in partnership with Alternatives West Dunbartonshire and will be held in Clyde Venue, 11A Alexander Street, Clydebank, G81 1SQ on Wednesday 7th February at 10am. Save the date! Registration for this event will go live in December 2023.



THIS FIERCE LOVE

The Family Recovery Initiative Fund



Since the Family Recovery Initiative Fund (FRIF) opened applications up again, with an increased maximum grant amount of £5,000, the panel have awarded 23 groups across Scotland. Here's one innovative project we are excited to tell you about.

CHILL Perthshire CIC is a non-profit organisation based in Crieff Perthshire. With their funding they will provide CHILL courses to participants looking to experience the cold water and learn new skills in water safety and open water swimming in some of the most beautiful locations Perthshire has to offer.

These FRIF funded courses will offer a new open water swimming life skill to participants; help ease stress depression and anxiety, reduce burnout, boost metabolism, and instil self-confidence and empower participants. CHILL Perthshire will offer education on water safety; the swimming environment and how to look after our countryside. A CHILL Course typically consists of 8 x 1hr sessions and is available for 16 participants per course.

We asked Murray from CHILL Perthshire how this would improve the wellbeing of people impacted by someone else's substance use.

"Known as Green prescribing, getting out into nature offers a natural remedy for those struggling with many ailments and more notably mental ill health. Another common

and increasingly popular way to reduce the symptoms of mental ill health is Blue Prescribing. This is the use of cold water to stimulate the vagus nerve providing instant and sustained relief from various ailments, boosting energy levels and the immune system whilst reducing stress, burnout, and inflammation; the main culprits of mental ill health. CHILL Perthshire combine Green and Blue prescribing on their Chill courses giving participants a safe way to access nature, an introduction to cold water exposure, and discover new skills in open water swimming, water safety, and relieve symptoms for people coping with anxiety and depression.

"We are currently running the first course at the moment where an overwhelming majority of participants have been affected by drugs and alcohol. We have already seen some incredible results from the participants with some of them becoming quite emotional through experiencing the sheer release and empowerment. Some of the comments from participants so far:

"Thank you for the session today, I had an outstanding moment of joy which is such a relief amongst the madness that if life right now."

"There is something so touching about how open and vulnerable you make yourself during these courses and so how open and vulnerable people can be in return. You have created safe haven space."

Humanising Healthcare Project in Dundee



Educating a future generation of doctors through sharing lived experience.

8 conversation cafes took place at Dundee Medical School during October. It built upon work started by medical students and the recovery community in Glasgow, which Scottish Families have supported since its inception to make sure there was also a family voice.

How medical students are trained directly influences how they practice as doctors. As healthcare professionals they will undoubtedly interact with people struggling with addiction or in recovery, and their friends and family, as well as people impacted by other's substance use. These conversation cafes give them the opportunity to learn from people with lived experience removing stigma around

addiction and making them aware of different approaches to recovery. This should bring more compassionate medical care and more effective signposting to community resources and has given us the opportunity to promote family inclusive practice, mapping out in conversation where families can be included and supported at every stage of someone's journey through substance use, harm reduction, and recovery.

Our staff and family members we support were able to attend on 3 of the 8 sessions.

"The most insightful way to learn about recovery and addiction. It has very much changed my views as how I can help as a future healthcare professional." - Dundee Medical Student



Family Support Service Highlight

Family Support **IN FIFE**

CUPAR

**October
25th**

**November
22nd**

Scottish Families in Fife are hosting an in person group support in Cupar. The group will be our safe space to chat and do activities that will improve our wellbeing.

Drop in from
12:30 - 2:30pm
or contact
fifefamilies@sfad.org.uk
[01592 382330](tel:01592382330) for more
information.



@ Cupar YMCA
Marathon House
93 Bonnygate, Cupar
KY15 4LG



Testimonials



We want to share with you the lovely feedback we have had from the people we have been supporting. It always makes our day when we hear how well you are doing, how things are going, and of course, your kindness to our work. We wouldn't be where we are if it wasn't for the amazing people we support – thank you.

'Before the Family Recovery College (FRC) I lived with a feeling of guilt that I had missed signs or opportunities to prevent my son using substances. With the support of the FRC, and the others that were there with me, I learned that it wasn't my fault, and this reassurance has been so beneficial in allowing me to shape my outlook and how to provide support going forward.' – Family Recovery College Student

'Claire, see in all honesty, I could not have got this far in my life without you, Pam and Angela. Genuinely I wouldn't have even made it to here today. I have so much respect and appreciation for you all that I'll never be able to show you how much you all mean to me and the genuine difference you make. You are like my mum and dad in the one, you help me in ways I didn't even know was possible. So understanding and show you care. When my mum and dad aren't showing up for me you are. I am only 18, I don't even know what to do with my life but you are helping me find my way as time goes on. Now I'm not just saying this for a laugh, I genuinely wouldn't still be here and if I was, I know my life would be so badly different. Love you all.' – Routes

'I find it difficult to engage with other support services in the group, to talk about what issues are affecting my family but do find that using Project Balance helps me to deal with stress and anxiety. Just having time dedicated to myself every so often to switch off from all the worry that comes from supporting a loved one with addiction is invaluable and without the group, I don't think I would make that time for myself as often. I am extremely grateful for the service.' – Project Balance, Forth Valley

'The group is friendly & informal. Whilst we all share a common bond of having a loved one who struggles with alcohol/drugs, it is not the focus of the group. It feels like a safe space away from all the chaos & worry where we can focus upon something positive for ourselves.' – Scottish Families Book Group

Acorn Person: Easy Autumn Craft from Scottish Families!



A fun autumn craft from the lovely Gillian on our team.

All you need:

- Hot glue gun or other glue
- Acorns
- Pine Cones
- Leaves
- Small Twigs
- Twine if desired
- And any other autumnal bits you fancy
- adding (i.e. little props, fishing rods made from twig).

Step 1:

Go for a walk, breath and take in the autumn colours. Take your time and look for the little things you want to use.

Step 2:

Leave your collection to dry near your fire, your heater, or somewhere in your house where they won't get broken.

Step 3:

Once dry, lay out the pieces you want for limbs, body, and acorn for the head and any extras i.e. leaves for wings.

Step 4:

Glue your pieces together and use your imagination to bring your little autumn creature to life!

Step 5:

Marvel in the joy of your creative pursuit!

If you create a little Acorn Person, please share it with us on our social media channels!

Your Stories



Your Stories: Coffee Time by Karen Macdonald

Time for me.
Time to sit and watch other people.
Time to watch the world go by, as the old saying goes.

If there's an old saying about it, it would seem that it must have been going on for a long time.

Maybe since the beginning of time?
Do we need this activity? Is it something that helps us to put our lives in perspective? The two women at the next table, for instance, are connected to me for this brief space of time by the fact that we're sharing the same air smelling of supermarket food and the same sounds -background voices and low volume boom-boom music with the occasional bleep-bleep of some electronic device or other.

There's a big freezer at the counter filled with a truly glorious selection of ice-cream in oblong containers, creating a patchwork pattern of unlikely exotic colours. The bubble-gum ones for instance! A harsh shade of turquoise and a deep shade of Barbie pink. Both those colours scream "poison" at me!

The front of the freezer just says "cream". Not sure where the "ice" bit went, but as if to validate its identity the freezer motor springs into life to capture my attention. My willpower crumbles. I get up and go for a "Bueno" flavoured ice-cream in a cone. Next week I'll go for a different flavour, I tell the girl. Really? Surely I'll be "backonadiet" by next week, won't I?

This week I'm "notonadiet", so I've had a decaf cappuccino and an excessively sweet "healthy" oat biscuit with almonds and apricots. All those oats and almonds and apricots must be healthy, right? So just in case none of them were sufficiently appetising in their own right, they've been glued together with a thick layer of white chocolate! Well, a little of what you fancy does you good!

Does all of that do me good? My nice lady counsellor said I should take time for me. At least, I think she did! I was talking so much that it's a wonder she got a chance to say anything. She definitely drew my attention to the fact that I enjoy writing, and that writing helps. So here I am, taking time out for me, sitting in the coffee shop at the supermarket whose car park I have used for my visit to the counsellor. And instead of playing sudoku endlessly (addictively) I'm writing this.

Those ladies sitting next to me, two ordinary ladies what are their lives like? One is fairly unremarkable in appearance, the other has dyed blonde hair, shoulder length, cut in a straight fringe over a face that speaks of hard times, too thin and angular. She has a husky, smoker's voice and just got up and returned her plate of food to the girl at the counter. I heard the words "disgraceful" and "shouldn't be allowed", but she has returned with something else and the two ladies are continuing their lunch, deep in conversation.

I wonder if their lives are as chaotic as mine. Are they too taking time out for themselves, escaping the tyranny of a loved one's addiction that dominates their lives? Are they taking a brief therapeutic hour to restore some normality to overwrought nerves and emotions by talking to each other over a café lunch and doing some retail therapy? The world keeps on going by, and I've watched it for a while. Coffee time over. Time to do my own retail therapy. Then back to my own chaos, the chaos of loving a son with alcohol use disorder.

Mindful Moment



As you step outside into the crisp autumn air, take a moment to pause and centre yourself. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable, or simply soften your gaze.

Breathe deeply: Begin by taking a few slow, deep breaths. Inhale through your nose, feeling the coolness of the air entering your lungs, and exhale slowly through your mouth, releasing any tension.

Notice the temperature: Pay attention to the temperature on your skin. Feel the cool breeze against your cheeks, the warmth of the sun on your back, or the sensation of the cool air filling your lungs as you breathe. It is Scotland after all, so you may experience all of these!

Listen to the sounds: Tune in to the sounds of autumn. Notice the rustling of leaves underfoot, the gentle swaying of branches, and the distant chirping of birds. Try not to judge or label these sounds; simply let them wash over you.

Observe the colours: Open your eyes and take in the vibrant colours of the season. Notice the rich reds, oranges, and yellows of the leaves, and how they contrast with the deep greens of evergreen trees, the blue or grey of the sky.

Feel your footsteps: As you start walking, pay attention to the sensation of each step. Feel your feet contacting the ground and notice any textures or unevenness beneath

your shoes or beneath your bare feet if you're walking on a natural path.

Engage your senses: Engage your sense of smell by taking in the scents of the season. Breathe in the earthy aroma of fallen leaves, the faint scent of woodsmoke, or any other fragrances that may be in the air.

Touch nature: Reach out and touch the leaves, bark, or any interesting textures you encounter along your walk. Feel the roughness of tree bark, the softness of moss, or the crispness of fallen leaves.

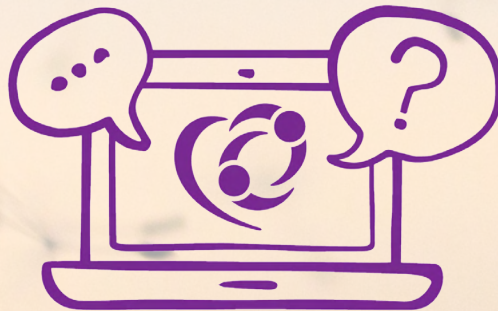
Breathe in peace: Finally, take a few more deep breaths and soak in the serenity of your surroundings. With each breath, let go of any stress or worries, and allow yourself to fully embrace the tranquillity of the autumn walk.

Conclude mindfully: When you're ready to end your walk, take one last deep breath and slowly open your eyes if they were closed. Carry the sense of mindfulness and calmness you've cultivated during your autumn walk with you as you continue your day.

Remember that mindfulness is about being fully present in the moment, so try to let go of distractions and worries as you immerse yourself in the beauty of autumn during your walk. Enjoy the peace and tranquillity it can bring to your day.

Are you affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use?

We are here to support you.
We can chat, offer listening support and
information, and link you either into our own
services or services local to you.



Freephone Helpline: 08080 10 10 11
Email: helpline@sfad.org.uk
Webchat Available: www.sfad.org.uk



**Scottish
Families**
Affected by Alcohol & Drugs





Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

Main Office: Edward House, 199 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3EX

Helpline: 08080 10 10 11

helpline@sfad.org.uk

webchat available at: www.sfad.org.uk

Twitter: @ScotFamADrugs

Facebook: @ScottishFamiliesAffectedByDrugs

Instagram: @scottishfamilies

General enquiries: 0141 465 7523

email: info@sfad.org.uk

website: www.sfad.org.uk



**Scottish
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