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Editorial

Three months into my role as Regional Development Coordinator with Adfam I am struck by the huge diversity and incredible energy in family support across the two regions I cover: the North East and the East of England. As you'll see in the regional round-up, there are big differences between the two, but what is consistent is the commitment, creativity and drive to support families facing the heart-breaking challenges resulting from loved ones' drug and alcohol misuse.

A recent government report, 'Due North' [makes for bleak reading](#), highlighting the fact that life expectancy for a baby born in the North of England is a massive 15 – 17 years less than for those in the wealthiest London boroughs. But reports like these risk coating this region with such broad negative brush-strokes as to completely obscure the incredible work that goes on here, often community-led, socially enterprising activities that (fortunately) don't rely on centralised funding or wait for government go-ahead to get going. The North East has seen some of the worst government cuts in the whole country despite needing some of the greatest levels of investment to tackle the endemic social inequalities and disadvantage that helps addiction to thrive. Yet there remains a spirit of determination to find new and creative ways to continue to support families.

I now look forward to getting to know the East of England region better, touring services there and working with the very new East of England regional forum to promote family support there. It's great to have two Family Champion training days lined up for February and I'm excited that some of those who will be training for those roles are themselves in recovery, and wanting to extend their Recovery Champion work to support families too. If I've not yet been in touch do call me on 07753218450. I'd love to visit your service and talk about how Adfam can support the wonderful work that you do.



Becky Allon-Smith, Regional Development Coordinator, North East and East

Adfam News

Adfam's Carol Concert 2014

Our annual carol concert is a wonderful evening of carols, readings and, of course, prizes. It is always a festive and cheery way to start the Christmas season – and 2014's was no exception. We would like to wish this year's Family Voices Competition Winners a huge congratulations! This year, we strived to combat the stigma suffered by the families of those who use drugs or alcohol, by encouraging people to speak out about their experiences: the winners beautifully closed the curtain on our anti-stigma campaign and really wrapped up 2014 fantastically. We run the *Family Voices* writing competition every year, so that the voices of people with lived experience of being affected by drugs and alcohol can be heard – and it is these voices that are at the very heart of all we do here at Adfam. Congratulations, also, to Victoria McLaughlin from CRI's Aspire service, this year's well deserved winner of the Gary Seaman Award for outstanding practice in family support. To be able to celebrate those dedicated and talented practitioners who work tirelessly to improve the lives of families affected by substance use, through this award, is equally fantastic! If you would like to read the winning *Family Voices* entries, you can do so [here](#). Thank you to all of those who attended and made it the special evening it was!



Winner of the Family Voices competition, Fiona Przybylska (right) with Charlotte Green

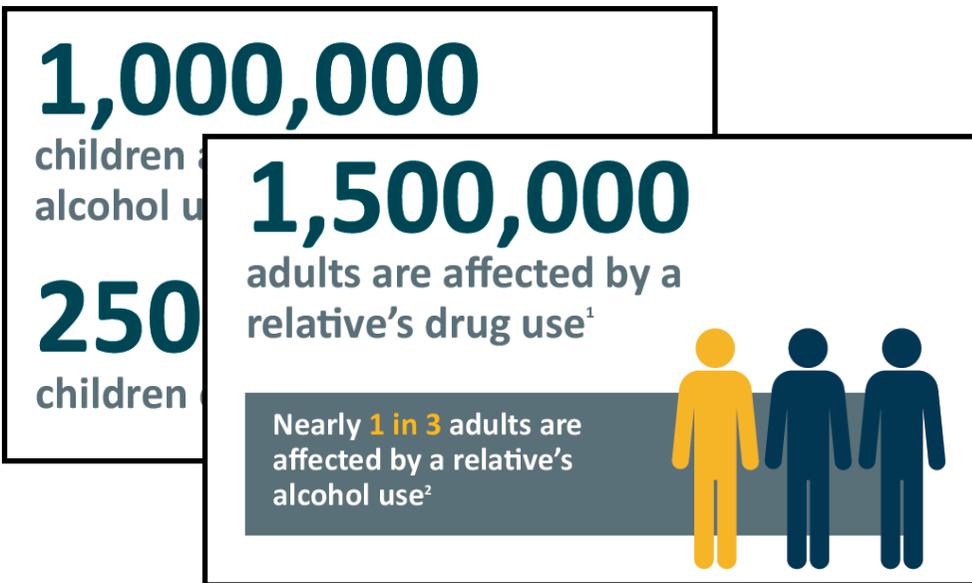


Victoria McLaughlin, CRI Aspire, Greenwich, winner of the Gary Seaman Award

Why invest?

As mentioned in the last edition of *In Practice*, Adfam and the East Midlands Carers Forum have been working in collaboration to create *Support for families and carers affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use: Why Invest?* This new resource, with accompanying guidance notes, is now available on Adfam's website, and can be [found here](#).

The presentation is aimed at commissioners, and provides key facts and figures for why it is vital to invest in support for families and carers of drug and alcohol users in their own right, and the consequences of not investing in these services. It can also be used for training and awareness-raising purposes for colleagues and other organisations to raise the profile of the importance of family support. We ask that you notify Adfam when you are using it so we can measure the reach of the presentation and evaluate its effectiveness.



Regional Round Up

North East

The North East forum continues to forge ahead following a recent review of its role and structure. The forum has existed for a long time and while enjoying wide participation, has benefited from a re-focusing of purpose and objectives.

The forum is currently working to map local structures and services to enable them to influence strategically across the region. On February 2nd we will enjoy the annual joint celebration event along with the North East service user forum. This promises to be a great event hosted in conjunction with Newcastle College, with those in recovery and family members sharing testimonies, and entertainment provided by members of the service user forum, carers' forum and students of the College.

Many North East services are currently out to tender and there is a move in much of the region towards integrated services which, as with any change, provides challenges as well as opportunities as we seek to adjust and influence within this continually-changing environment.

There are some great examples across the region of partnership working to build referral routes through GPs, encourage outreach in the seven North East prisons and support young people to be carer champions within their schools. Keep an eye out in the Local Practice section for more details over the coming months.



East of England

The East of England Region is finding its feet after the establishment of a regional forum in April 2014.

There is growing participation from across the region and it is proving very beneficial to services and carers to have the opportunity to discuss challenges and share experiences.

The main focus of the forum in the coming months will be improving referral chains, including developing a referral form to share across the region, and outreach, including raising awareness of family support amongst first-contact professionals.



Adfam's Kinship Carer project, based at Peterborough prison, is just getting off the ground after the appointment of Victoria Hilliard. Look out for more on that in the next *In Practice*!

The East of England forum is keen to encourage participation from agencies and carers that have not yet been able to attend. Do send [Becky Allon-Smith](#) an email if you would like further details of the upcoming meetings.

Local Practice

Peer-led support: Taking Steps, Greenwich

Taking Steps is a peer-led group launched in partnership between CRi Aspire in the London Borough of Greenwich and Adfam in March 2014. The purpose of the group is to offer peer support to anyone affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use, giving families and carers the opportunity to meet and chat with others in a safe and relaxed space without fear of judgement. As a peer support group, Taking Steps helps to break down barriers around shame, stigma and isolation.

Adfam has been working closely with CRi Aspire on Adfam's Family Recovery Champion (FRCs) project. It was felt that, once trained, FRCs would be in an ideal position to lead the group with the support from the Adfam Coordinator. Initially, Adfam provides training and support to family members in Greenwich which provides them with the skills to offer peer support families and carers of drug and alcohol users and facilitate group sessions. By being peer-led, Taking Steps will be self-sustaining and empowering for all those involved, giving families the opportunity to make positive changes in their lives and the wider community.

Whilst setting up Taking Steps, it was recognised that a FRC-led steering group needed to be established to inform the direction of the group, alongside family members and carers who regularly attend the group. This helps to ensure that the group meets the needs of the families and carers that attend and empowers them to develop the group accordingly. The families identified what they needed and agreed a format for the group and a programme of guest speakers and activities. All the guest speakers have been invited from the local community, with a focus on support, information and activities that will be of interest to families and help them to keep moving forward with their recovery. To date guest speakers have included Greenwich Get Active, Greenwich Healthy Living service, and Recovery College. Taking Steps recognises it is important to link with other community groups and services to build a network of

support for families. One notable session so far has been knitting; this was a very popular activity and a great way to share skills. In fact, the group decided to knit a blanket for St Mungo's, a homeless charity (pictured).

This year sees the launch of the Taking Steps monthly newsletter, coordinated by a FRC. It is hoped the newsletter will help to promote Taking Steps and family support in Greenwich, whilst continuing to build links with the community.

If you would like any more information about Taking Steps, please contact Bex Peters, Adfam's Family Support Development Coordinator by emailing r.peters@adfam.org.uk.



NEPACS—Prison networks in the North East

NEPACS is a North East-based organisation building bridges for prisoners, their families and the community across all seven North East prisons. NEPACS works to help prisoners maintain healthy family relationships and offers further support for children and families affected by imprisonment. They recognise that family relationships can be key to motivating offenders to change their behaviour, and if family bonds remain strong, there is a better chance of resettlement. For instance, the Ministry of Justice statistics demonstrate that prisoners who receive regular visits are 39% less likely to re-offend on their release. By recognising the specific needs of children of prisoners and offering appropriate support, the service hopes to reduce the chance of children growing up to repeat the cycle of offending.

NEPACS and Adfam have recently begun a joint initiative to raise awareness of substance misuse family support amongst NEPACS staff and volunteers in each of the North East prisons. NEPACS run visitors' centres in the prisons, welcoming families with a friendly smile and supporting them through the often daunting process of prison visiting. They also provide family support in four of the prisons as well as a range of other services – tea bars, visitors' transport, play areas, groups, short family caravan breaks and training.

It is recognised that prisoners and their families come from across the North East, and neighbouring areas such as Cumbria and North Yorkshire. By sharing information with families through the prisons, via volunteers and staff, as well as posters and flyers, it will encourage families to access family support in their local communities. Some of the prisons also have dedicated substance misuse family support workers and this service is to be extended throughout the region in the coming months. NEPACS and Adfam will also work closely with Lifeline, who will be providing this service.

With drug users more likely to commit crime, almost 60% of female prisoners reporting Class A drug use in the four weeks prior to custody (43% of men) and over 55% of



Supporting a positive future
for prisoners and their families

all offenders saying that their offending was related to drug use (their own or someone else's), there is good reason to develop initiatives to enable prisoners' families to access family support services. And what better time than when their loved one is in custody to themselves seek support, inform themselves and prepare to work with the offender for a new start upon release?

Helen Attewell, NEPACS Chief Executive, says:

'We know that many of the people in our prisons have substance misuse issues, and often this leads them to get involved in the 'revolving door syndrome' of repeat offending. There can be a variety of triggers which lead people to resolve to make changes to their lives and try and build a crime-free future, but an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on family members can lead to real change. Once you are determined to be a 'responsible Dad' or 'loving partner' then there is an added incentive to turn your life around. We often get comments from Dads and Mams in prison that there is no way that they would want their children to follow in their footsteps and get involved in crime. It is really important that there are effective support and treatment services for people with substance misuse issues in prison and in the community but it is also essential that there is support for the supporters - friends and family members who may themselves have been through a painful and difficult time.

'We are really grateful to Adfam for skilling up our staff and volunteers at the Visitors' Centres to ensure they have the information they need to be able to signpost family members for community-based help to get through the 'hidden sentence' and prepare for the release of their loved one'.

In Focus

CRAFT approach to family support

CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training) is an evidence-based, non-judgmental programme for family members and carers affected by someone else's substance misuse.

Delivered either one-to-one or in a group context, CRAFT supports family members to recognise, anticipate and respond safely to potential aggression or violence, improve communication with the substance user, establish and maintain appropriate boundaries to care and involvement, and engage the substance user into treatment and recovery. It aims to decrease substance use as well as to support family members in their own right.

CRAFT is more directive than some family support approaches, encouraging family members to recognise patterns of behaviour and communication within the family, and to manage changes to their own role which often precipitates a change in the substance user too.

CRAFT usually takes place over eight individual or group sessions as set out on page 7, although there is flexibility in how it is delivered. As well as structured sessions, the principles of CRAFT can be used to underpin the delivery of less structured one-to-one or group support sessions.

Where some family support approaches deliberately seek to separate the support for the carer from the behaviour or decisions of the substance user, CRAFT has as a stated aim of supporting users to access treatment and enter recovery, and many of the themes centre around the relationship between the carer/family member and user. It remains, however, a carer-centred approach that results in often dramatic positive changes for carers themselves. Rather than emphasise that the family member has no control over the behaviour of their loved one, CRAFT encourages them to recog-

nise the influence that they *do* have and to develop strategies to change their own attitudes and behaviour in such a way that often leads to wider changes within the family.

It is a comprehensive approach which requires workers to be on their toes - listening, questioning, challenging and responding throughout sessions, whilst establishing and maintaining the trust, rapport and mutual respect which forms the basis of any supportive relationship. This alertness is crucial to helping the family member to recognise their own thought and behaviour patterns, and in ensuring that CRAFT principles remain front-of-mind and have the opportunity to take hold.

CRAFT is a member of the Community Reinforcement group of interventions which have been developed and researched by Dr Robert Meyers and colleagues at the Centre on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Addiction in the US over the last 30 years.

CRAFT has a significant evidence base in the USA where it can be demonstrated that that 70% of substance users supported by families employing CRAFT skills will enter – and stay in – treatment six to seven times longer than those not supported in this way.

A number of organisations around the UK have trained workers in the CRAFT approach, including PROPS North East, Barnardo's, CRI and Lifeline.

The Carer Champion at PROPS in Newcastle has adopted this approach in both one to one and group settings over the past 18 months. He noted:

'I have to say that I am totally astounded by the progress that many carers make as a result of engaging in CRAFT training. Within a short space of time people who I met only weeks earlier feeling frightened and confused are beginning to transform into confident and strong individuals who have a real sense of where they are headed and a better understanding of how they will get there. CRAFT for me is a remarkable programme; I find myself wanting to learn more and more as a practitioner so I can pass on this on to the carers that I work with on a daily basis.'

An Outline of the sessions

Session 1 – Introduction to CRAFT

In this session family members/carers identify the problems created by the substance misuse of their loved one, their own current strengths and resources in dealing with the situation, priority problem areas and their own 'reinforcers' – what will keep them motivated to change their loved one's behaviour?

Session 2 – Functional Analysis

Family members are supported to produce a 'functional analysis' of their loved ones substance-misusing behaviour. This includes the circumstances that typically trigger or accompany drinking/using behaviour and consequences, both positive and negative. The process of functional analysis helps family members to better understand their loved one's behaviour and their own role in this.

Session 3 – Keeping Safe

Making use of functional analysis skills again, session 3 works with family members to identify abusive or dangerous behaviour, spot red flags and plan how to keep themselves safe.

Session 4 – Communication Skills

This session compares communication within the family around substance misuse and other problem areas with communication about general topics (such as films, hobbies, meals etc.)

Family members consider how their own communication style could be improved to create more positive outcomes.

Session 5 – Use of positive reinforcement

In this session family members look at how roles or habits within the home can reinforce or undermine agreements with the loved one to change their behaviour. They identify ways in which they can 'reward' positive behaviours in their loved ones to create a cycle of positive reinforcement.

Session 6 – Natural Consequences

Following on from session 5, session 6 looks at how family members can motivate their loved one to make positive changes by removing 'rewards' when agreements are not fulfilled. Family members consider how responding calmly and consistently and maintaining their own boundaries can create incentives for change for the user.

Session 7 – Helping family members enrich their own lives

If family members are angry, frightened, tired or depressed, they are not only going to be unhappy, but they will not be effective in supporting a substance-misusing loved one. This session encourages family members to think about themselves – their social and emotional life, relationships, jobs, education or activities and general happiness. Using problem-solving techniques and other tools they are supported to plan changes that they would like to make.

Session 8 - Entering Treatment

This session consider motivational hooks and opportunities for encouraging family members into treatment.

Practical resources

The most useful practical resources released since the last *In Practice* include...

As part of our work with the Mentor-ADEPIS project, we published a new guide on [Involving families affected by substance use in alcohol and drug education](#). This informs schools, families and support services about the best ways to collaborate effectively



on educating children and young people about drug and alcohol issues.

The online fundraising platform JustGiving has [produced a guide](#) for charities and community organisations on how they can raise money through social media. It's full of useful tips and case studies on making the most of Facebook, Twitter and so on.

Is your service open and accessible to LGBT families? [London Friend's new report](#) on improving drug and alcohol service provision for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people explores the difficulties of reaching their needs and provides audit tools for commissioners, managers and practitioners. If you feel your service needs development in this area then of course, there are also Adfam's own [Including Diverse Families](#) materials to help.

Many treatment agencies and family support services use volunteers in their work. What about young people with a history of offending? A [new set of guides](#) give advice on how services can involve them and what the benefits can be for the young person and the organisation.

