

Our free monthly update with the latest comment, reports, resources, policy and parliamentary news on families, drugs and alcohol.

POLICY BRIEFING

May 2016

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Editorial

Would you like to join the team at Adfam? We are looking for not just one but two talented and committed project managers to join the fight for families affected by drug and alcohol use! One job focuses on continuing to build vital family support networks for families in the Royal borough of Greenwich, the other on delivering two ground-breaking national peer support projects – one with, and for, families bereaved through substance use and the other with parents who are victims of abuse from their substance using children. The deadline for the jobs is 3 June. We wish all the best to Rebecca Peters and David Ader – our losses are [Beat](#) and Bristol Council's gains.

I am pleased to be able to detail below four new partnership projects Adfam will focus on in the coming months:

Firstly, we are working in partnership with [the Icarus Trust](#) - a charity dedicated to providing support to families affected by a loved one's addiction or addictive behaviour. Icarus can provide something Adfam cannot - a 'Family Friend' who family members can share problems with. Family Friends, via email, provide a supportive and understanding voice and look for sources of local or national support for you. A proportion of family members can also speak, without cost, to an accredited counsellor. If you'd like to access this support please contact Icarus via their website or [email them directly](#).

Secondly, we are very pleased to be part of the 2016 [Recovery Street Film Festival](#). The festival, now in its third year, asks people with personal or family experience to make three minute films about recovering from drug or alcohol misuse. The deadline for submission is 29 July, and the films will be taken our tour around the country later in the year to be screened in community venues.

Thirdly we are delighted to be working with Sheffield Hallam University to deliver a family-focused sequel to their 'Life in Recovery' project. This [ground-breaking research](#) (pdf) used online surveys to explore what every-day life in recovery is really like. The second part of the project will ask the same question of families whose loved ones are in recovery from drug or alcohol problems – what does your recovery journey mean on a day-to-day level? We will be starting this work in July.

Last but not least Adfam is a proud partner of the [I'm Worth](#) campaign which aims to raise awareness of Hepatitis C and the treatments available, and encourages people to seek support. We contributed the voices and experiences of families whose loved ones inject drugs and have, or are at risk of contracting, Hepatitis C. You can [hear a couple talk here](#) about their experiences of living with Hepatitis C.

With best wishes for the bank holiday weekend

Oliver Standing
Director of Policy and Communications

Parliamentary roundup

[Liz McInnes MP](#) asked the Secretary of State for Health if he will review provision of the FRANK drug information service to support reducing risk to young people, and what steps the Government is taking to provide harm reduction information for younger people and parents.

Jane Ellison MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, replied that Public Health England (PHE) updates FRANK to reflect new and emerging patterns of drug use, and is working to enhance the service to ensure it is in line with young people's media habits and strengthen situational advice to reduce risks to young people. PHE additionally supports local authorities commissioning drug and alcohol education, prevention and treatment services to young people and parents by providing supportive guidance and materials. PHE also provides Rise Above, an online programme building resilience in young people.

[Gregory Campbell MP](#), asked the Secretary of State for Justice what plans he has to tackle drug use in prisons. Andrew Selous MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, replied that the Government takes a zero tolerance approach to drugs in prisons in England and Wales. There are new, tough laws which will see those who smuggle packages over prison walls face up to two years in prison. In addition, he mentioned a programme undertaken by NOMS and its partners to tackle the use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). 300 dogs were trained to specifically detect NPS. At the same time, the Department is piloting mandatory drug testing of prisoners for psychoactive substances in 34 prisons.

[Tania Mathias MP](#) asked the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to support the children and families of alcoholics. Jane Ellison MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, replied that PHE is engaged in a work programme which aims to reduce alcohol-related harms to individuals, families and society. It is also working closely with local authorities to support their work on assessing local alcohol-related need and commissioning services. In addition, PHE is producing a report on the harm alcohol causes to people other than the drinker, in collaboration with governments in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The report aims to look into the impact of alcohol on others, including the children of parents with alcohol problems. The report is due to be published this year.

[Liz McInnes MP](#) asked the Secretary of State for Health when the evaluation of the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Payment-by-Results pilot programme will be published. It is a programme that examines the commissioning and delivery of drug services by rewarding the achievement of outcomes. George Freeman MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, replied that a report is going to be published by the University of Manchester, evaluating the drug and alcohol recovery payment by results pilot programme, this summer.

Consultations

[How can we improve support for carers?](#) – Department of Health

This important consultation, which closes on 30 June 2016, will inform a proposed new strategy for supporting carers, and is asking for responses from carers, people who are cared for, and any professionals who work with carers.

[Tailored Review of Public Health England – Call for evidence](#) – Department of Health

The Department of Health is consulting on PHE's performance, effectiveness, efficiency and governance. The review wishes to receive views from individuals and organisations that engage with PHE or have a wider interest in its operation, to assess how well PHE performs and whether their governance processes are appropriate and effective. The call for evidence runs from 12 May to 24 June 2016.

[Patterns of use –United Kingdom](#) – European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

The EMCDDA is currently looking for UK residents to participate in a survey to gather information on how UK patterns of drug use compares with other European countries. This survey hopes to draw a detailed picture of drug use within Europe, to facilitate the design of future European drug policies. They are looking to hear from individuals over 18 that have used one of the following drugs in the past 12 months: cannabis (hashish or marijuana), cocaine (powder), ecstasy/MDMA or amphetamines (amphetamine and/or methamphetamine).

Resources

[Building Recovery Capital: Recovery and Relationships](#) (pdf) – Adfam on behalf of the Recovery Partnership

This briefing focuses on the theme of recovery and relationships, outlining the range of relationships that support individuals in their recovery. The briefing is informed, in part, by a policy and practice seminar held by Adfam on behalf of the Recovery Partnership in December 2015. It identifies the interconnectedness of families, friends and recovery, and provides case studies illustrating how different types of relationship can support individuals and their recovery, ranging from family and friends to online support and the wider community. It finds that intensive family intervention could result in individuals being happier, more confident and assertive.

[Better Care in My Hands: A Review of How People are Involved in their Care](#) – Care Quality Commission

This report is based on new evidence from CQC's national reports on what enables individuals and their families to work with health and social care staff, and also describes the extent and quality of that involvement. It concludes that perception of the quality of involvement in health or social care has changed little, despite the national drive for person-centred care. One of the report's key findings is that certain groups of people are likely to be less involved in their care than others: normally adults and young people with long term-physical and mental health conditions, people with a learning disability and people over the age of 75. The report makes several recommendations for service providers, commissioners and the voluntary and community sector to encourage individuals to be involved in their own health care.

[The Rehabilitative Prison: What Does 'Good' Look Like?](#) – Clinks

This paper aims to promote a constructive dialogue between the Government, voluntary sector and others on how to achieve prison reform focused on rehabilitation. It proposes a more holistic 'whole system's approach,' encourages the local authority and voluntary sector to provide more individual and family support and access to wider community networks and resources for offenders. It considers the new prison reform as a great opportunity to advance rehabilitation, encouraging positive support for family contact, strengthening community links and promoting prisoners' self-development. In addition, Clinks welcomes interested parties' response to any of the questions raised in the discussion paper or any ideas and examples of 'good' rehabilitative initiatives in prison.

[Public Health England Strategic Remit & Priorities](#) (pdf) – Department of Health

This paper sets out the priorities of Public Health Education (PHE) in the period from April 2016 to March 2017, and discusses the role that PHE is expected to play in the health and care system. PHE aims to protect health and address health inequalities and promote the health and wellbeing of the nation through providing sustainable health and care services. In 2016/17, PHE will support people to make healthier lifestyle choices (specifically through the Change4Life programme), review the evidence on the estimated number of children affected by parental drug or alcohol use and provide advice to national and local government. In addition, PHE has established a cross-governmental engagement strategy to focus on tackling illegal drugs, and strengthening the life chances of disadvantaged children and families.

In Focus

State of Caring 2016 – Carers UK

Carers UK is an organisation with a network of local branches and contacts to support carers and put them in touch with others in their community. The report sets out the findings from an annual survey of carers to collect evidence on a whole range of issues affecting carers' lives. This annual report is the largest State of Caring Survey carried out by Carers UK to date, in which over 6,149 people shared their views and contributed to the finding of the report.

The report highlights the value of unpaid care that carers provide in the UK; this year amounting to £132 billion, which is shockingly close to the value of health spending in the UK (£134 billion). In addition, it also raises the issue of practical support, finding that one in five carers providing 50 hours or more of care each week receive no practical support. Without this kind of support, carers are often found struggling to strike a balance between their caring role and other responsibilities such as work, study and other interests. Practical support ranges from helping with the use of technology, relieving the burden of their carer role or simply offering a short break.

Survey findings suggest that a failure to take into account the carer's needs or the support available at home can have distressing and counter-productive consequences. In terms of carers' experiences following hospital discharge for instance, 57% felt they did not have a choice in providing care to the individual for whom they were caring, and a quarter reported not having been consulted about the process. Often, carers have to take on the responsibility without additional help or advance preparation for the role.

According to the findings, carers often face financial hardship. Carers UK's year-long Caring and Family Finance Inquiry found that carers often face higher utility bills, transportations costs and greater spending on care services. More than two thirds of carers are struggling to pay the bills, adding extra stress that could exacerbate their own health conditions.

Carers UK asks that carers' priorities are reflected in the agendas of all the UK's legislatures and in the new cross-government Carers Strategy in England. This includes greater financial support for carers and their families, so that they do not have to suffer from financial hardship. The need to reduce the impacts on carers' health is similarly stressed, as is the need for more practical support and a more 'carer friendly' health setting, provided under the NHS. Finally, it calls for the strengthening of carers' rights in relation to those who wish to work whilst also providing care.