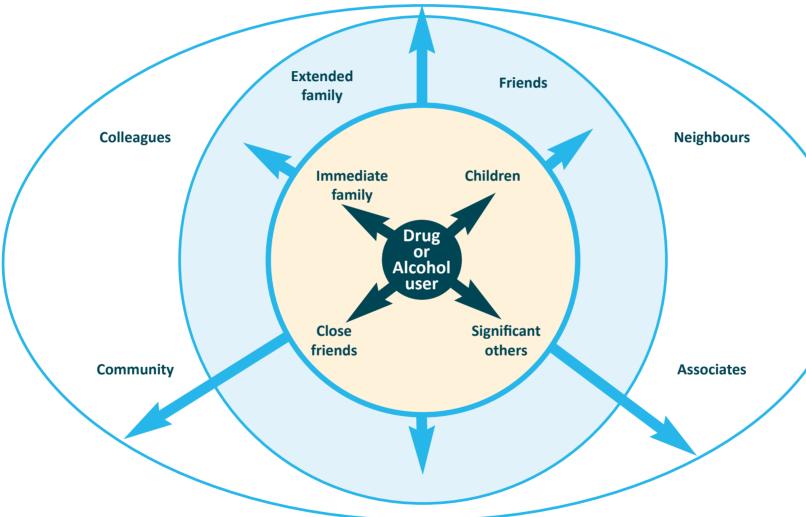
Support for families and carers affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use

Developed with the East Midlands Regional Carers Forum



Families, drugs and alcohol

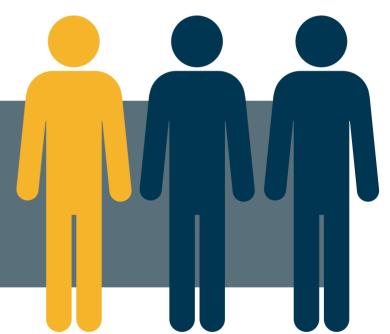
Who is affected?



1,500,000

adults are affected by a relative's drug use¹

Nearly 1 in 3 adults are affected by a relative's alcohol use²





1,000,000 children affected by parental alcohol use³

250-350,000 children of problematic drug users



Impacts on adult family members⁵

Financial Difficulties

- Give money and accumulate debt to prevent their loved one from committing crime to fund their habit
- Difficulty in maintaining work due to stress
- Grandparents or other relatives may face the financial pressure of caring for a young child
- Paying for treatment for their loved one

Physical Health

- Extreme stress can lead to physical health problems and insomnia
- Physical abuse can be experienced from family members, including children, or from external sources such as drug dealers
- Use of tobacco and other substances (including pre scription medication) to cope

Victims of crime

- Money and property stolen
- Strong correlation between the use of drugs and alcohol and domestic abuse. Where this comes from the hands of a child this is particularly traumatic
- Will often not report if they are the victim of crimes
- Threats from drug dealers to pay off their loved one's debts

Emotional stress

- More likely to be diagnosed with depression and other psychological problems
- Grandparents may find themselves looking after a young child who is themselves facing huge difficulties, whilst simultaneously feeling like a failure as a parent to their child

Pressure on family relationships

- Sections of the family may remain unaware of what's happening, creating divisions
- Resentment, guilt, shame, judgment and a lack of trust can lead to a fracturing of relationships and difficulties in family members becoming involved in their loved one's treatment

Isolation

- May not go out, or invite people around because of the unpredictability of their loved one's behavior and the fear of what will happen
- Lose contact with family and friends
- Where grandparents are caring for young children their lives may change significantly from that of their friends, limiting their social opportunities
- Creates additional barriers to accessing support

Pressured into illegal acts

- Buying drugs to 'manage' their loved one's supply
- Physically or emotionally threatened or coerced into bringing drugs or contraband into prison

Stigma

- Don't tell people anything for fear of being judged
- Society makes a judgment and may shun the whole family because someone uses drugs or alcohol
- Whole family labelled as scum, loser, low-life



The cost of the harm to family members is £1.8 Billion a year⁶

73% of domestic violence offenders used alcohol prior to the offence, with 48% seen as 'alcohol dependent'⁷

57% of kinship carers gave up work or reduced their hours to take on the care of a child

67% do not get financial support from local authorities for the children other than benefits which would be available to their parents if they still lived with them⁸



Impacts on children⁹

Emotional Neglect

May be aware that they do not come first in their parents' lives. The drug or alcohol use is at the centre of the family, not the child, which can lead to neglect.

Secret Keeping

Parents often don't talk openly to their child about the drug or alcohol use, although children are aware that something is wrong. If they are told, they may be asked to keep it a secret, leading to stress, anxiety and trust issues.

Additional responsibilities & role confusion

May have to take on caring roles for other siblings, or for their parents, and may experience confusion when this role changes according to their parents functioning and recovery

Risk of social care involvement

Strong correlation between social care interventions and parental drug or alcohol use. One study shows that 62% of children subject to care proceedings and 40% of children placed on the child protection register are from families with parental alcohol misuse

Own relationship with drugs & alcohol

May use substances as a way of connecting with, and understanding, their parents. The use of drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism may be normalised.

Isolation

May be bullied by other children. Where alcohol is involved they may also feel that there is nowhere for them to turn, since the use of alcohol is socially acceptable. They may face constant fear that they will be separated and taken away from their parents.

Missing out on childhood

May miss out on what might be considered 'normal' childhood experiences and a 'normal' child-parent relationship, with long reaching impacts on their own parenting.

Social behaviour & conduct

Heightened emotions can be compounded where parents aren't able to support the child to understand learned emotional responses and appropriate behaviour, leading to conduct problems including aggression, offending, drug & alcohol etc.

Child abuse & dysfunctional family responses

Parental alcohol and drug use is strongly correlated with family conflict and domestic violence and abuse.
Children often recognise the links between parental drinking and the presence of conflict, violence and abuse.

Education & achievement

School attendance issues, stress, anxiety and behavioural issues may lead to a reduction in educational achievement and aspirations, with the potential for long term economic impact and loss of potential.



The care provided to drug users by family members would cost

£747,000,000 per year if it were provided by health and social care providers¹⁰



When family members receive support for their own needs...



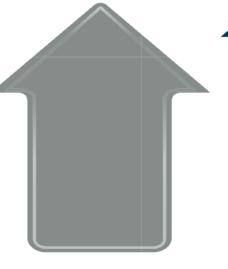
This happens to adult

family members:11

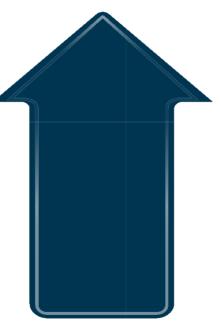
Positive relationships inside and outside the home



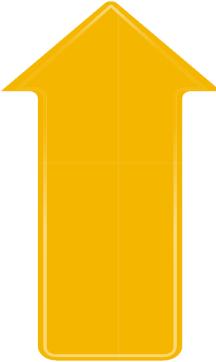
Increased participation in society



Increased productivity at work



Improved health and wellbeing





This happens to adult family members:

Reduced Mortality:

Better social relationships can decrease mortality risks.

Individuals with adequate social relationships have a 50% greater likelihood of survival compared to those with poor social relationships.¹²



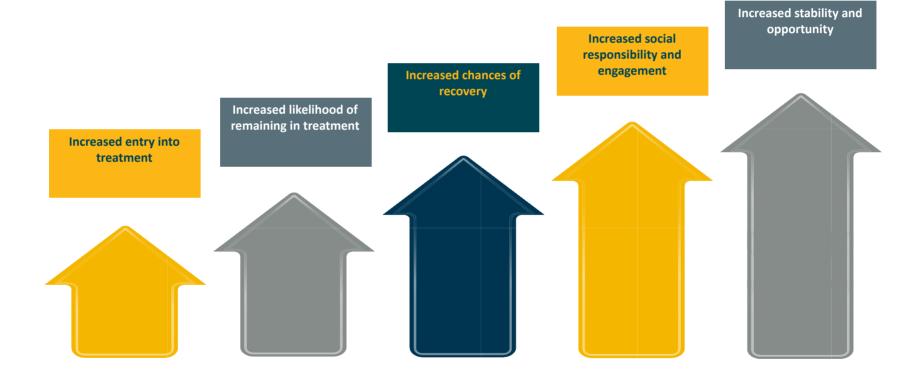


This happens to children:13

educational **Ability to deal** attainment with change **Increased self** esteem and confidence **Aspiration for** the future

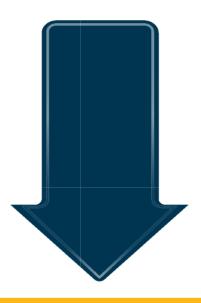
Improved

This happens to the drug or alcohol user:





This happens to the community and state:14



26% reduction in use of the criminal justice system



28% reduction in use of the NHS by both the family member and the drug or alcohol user



This happens to the community and state:15



Every £1 invested



Gives £4.70 in social value



What happens without family support? Spending on child social

increases Crime goes up **Increased unplanned** treatment exits Risk of mortality goes up The cost of a child in **Family members remain** Where families are **Crimes perpetrated** Where families are care can be up to isolated and vulnerable not supported to against family members facing significant £56,000 per year. Less recover, drug and with greater physical carry on, and continue emotional and financial support within the and mental health alcohol users are less to go unreported. The pressure they have an family may mean an problems, increasing likely to enter and increase in drug users increased need to rely increased risk of a their risk of dying 16 remain in treatment not in treatment also on the welfare system child being taken into leads to an increase in care.17 acquisitive crime

care increases

Spending on welfare

So why spend on family support?

It builds stronger and safer communities

- Reduced crime and criminal justice spending
- Increased understanding and decreased stigma across the community
- Troubled families stabilised

It protects public health

- Reduces social isolation
- Reduces severe physical and mental health impacts
- Reduces the burden on the NHS

It helps drug users overcome addiction

- Increases the number of drug and alcohol users entering treatment
- Families become an effective and central part of a drug or alcohol users recovery

It helps the next generation

- Increases resilience and ability to deal with change
- Children achieve more



Effective investment in family support can give you a service that...¹⁸

- Offers a free and accessible service to all, regardless of the treatment status of their loved one
- Offers a discreet, confidential and safe space, just for families
- Provides a non-judgemental and caring approach
- Has staff who are well trained and supported, and receiving regular clinical supervision
- Involves family members in the design and development of the service
- Offers choice and flexibility to provide families with support that meets their needs
- Supports family members to look after themselves
- Supports the families role in the drug or alcohol users' recovery
- Has clear boundaries, understanding what they can offer and where to refer clients onto for additional support



Family support cannot work in isolation

Family Support

- Structured interventions
- Information sessions
- 1:1 and counselling
- 4-way sessions with the user and

their key worker

- Mutual aid
- Advocacy
- Mediation

Drug/alcohol recovery in prisons & the community

- Psychosocial interventions
- Residential and community rehabilitation
 - Inpatient detoxification
 - Prescribing
 - Harm reduction
 - Self-help groups
 - Mutual aid

Other local services

- GPs
- Carers Services
- Family and parenting support
 - Housing
 - Police, probation, courts
 - Mental health
 - Citizens Advice



Everyone has a part to play

Councillors & Directors of Public Health

Invest in support for families in their own right to support recovery for the whole family and improve outcomes

Police

Identify family members and work with family services to minimise the impact of crime and the criminal justice system on the family member

Generic Children and Family Services

Work with specialist family support services to identify and support vulnerable children and families

Housing

Provide housing and support to fractured families to give them the space to heal and to enable full recovery

Drug Treatment Services

Work with family services to identify family members and support them to understand their loved one's journey

NHS

Identify and treat family members own health problems early and refer onto family support for family members additional needs

Mental Health

Work with family services to identify and support vulnerable people



Find out more at www.adfam.org.uk

