



# Working with Parents

## Introduction

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**Welcome to the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of Working with Parents, the newsletter for all those who work with parents who have problems with drug and alcohol misuse.** It's been 10 months since the last issue and in that time everyone has been very busy. Thanks to all those who have written to share your work with us and to let us know what's coming up in the near future. Please do keep in touch between issues – we are always interested to know what's happening. Please also pass on our contact details to colleagues who are not yet part of our growing network – and if you want to be removed from our mailing list.

**e-mail Carol Marsh**  
**carolm@drugscope.org.uk**

The editorial for this issue has been written by Vivienne Evans whom many of you will know as Chief Executive of Adfam. Vivienne is optimistic about the work with families, much of which was stimulated by the *Hidden Harm* report, with which Vivienne was so closely involved. From the breadth of work included in this newsletter it seems there is much to be optimistic about.

We have a short article about progress with work arising from Hidden Harm from the Tavistock Clinic by Daniel Clay and news of work with grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren, sometimes because of drug problems, sometimes for other reasons. Mentor UK managed this project but were partnered by Adfam and Grandparents Plus. And there's more from Adfam with a report

from Eva Gesler about the Bouncing Back project which engaged families not typically involved in drug and alcohol prevention work, including fathers, foster families, families in custody and rural settings and families from Black and minority ethnic communities.

If you work in the London area you will be interested to learn about the Pan London Forum for those who work with parents who use substances. Those in Hertfordshire might like to hear about a new joined-up information service for parents which your clients can access. We hear again from Life Education and Care for the Family

We're pleased to see the children of drug using parents are not being overlooked by the bigger charities – Comic Relief and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers have funded some mentoring work with this vulnerable group in Bristol. And although our main purpose is to support those working with parents who use drugs and alcohol, we thought you might be interested in some publications from The Joseph Rowntree on parenting generally. Finally, Alcohol Concern are running some courses which might be of interest.

**Jenny McWhirter**  
**DrugScope Associate**

### Contact details

To send something for inclusion in this newsletter please email Carol Marsh at  
**carolm@drugscope.org.uk**

## **EDITORIAL**

**Vivienne Evans**  
**Chief Executive**  
**ADFAM**

I am pleased to write the editorial for this edition of *Working with Parents*. Adfam's work with families and with parents, confirms the need to provide networking opportunities to share good practice among the increasing number of professionals who find themselves coping with a family where drug misuse is a factor.

Its encouraging to note that there appears to be a 'culture shift' in policy and in service provision, a strong movement towards a recognition of the importance of families and parenting as a means of promoting healthy outcomes for children and young people. We know that strong family bonds are a resilience factor in supporting children's upbringing and there is an increasing number of projects and services which involve the whole family in building resilience as a way of preventing harm from drug misuse.

The consultation document for the proposed new drugs strategy: *Drugs, Our Community, Your Say*, includes a section on carers and the role they can play in helping to engage and sustain a user in treatment. It also asks how parents, guardians and carers can be supported to protect children from using drugs. These references are welcome. We hope that the new drugs strategy will translate support for families into practice, including, for example, recognition of their support needs, a clear target for specialist drugs services to become 'family friendly' and for the children of problematic drug users to receive support appropriate to their safety and welfare needs. We also hope that grandparents caring for the children of drug users will receive the assistance they require, and be recognised as carers with an entitlement to statutory benefits.

The recently published NICE guidelines on drug

misuse, *Drug misuse: psychosocial interventions*, and *Drug misuse: opioid detoxification*, both recommend that families should be involved in a drug user's assessment and treatment. They also recommend the use of intensive and therapeutic approaches which involve the whole family and tackle issues like communication and dealing with conflict alongside substance misuse.

And, finally, we now have a government department which includes families in its title... an affirmation of the importance of families. This newsletter will help practitioners to work with them constructively.

*Vivienne Evans*

**ADFAM**  
**25 Corsham Street,**  
**London, N1 6DR**  
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## *Hidden Harm update from the Tavistock Institute*

As part of their Drugs Misuse Research Initiative (Phase Two), the Department of Health has commissioned the Tavistock Institute to explore the provision of support for children and young people in England who have a drug misusing carer. This research builds on the work already undertaken for *Hidden Harm*, and has involved a review of the current literature, a mapping exercise, and interviews with managers in a sample of services working with this group of vulnerable children and young people.

Here we provide a brief overview of the findings so far about how services which work with children also involve their parents. A total of 67 services were confirmed as currently undertaking direct work with children affected by parental substance misuse. Of these, approximately 10% stated that they specifically aimed to offer interventions to substance misusing parents. However, when asked about actual provision, managers in over half of services reported undertaking work with parents, offering either whole family work (13%), work with parents and children separately (16%), or both whole and separate work (27%). Depending upon their remit, projects worked with parents in a variety of ways which included: one-to-one support and information; advocacy; drop-in support groups; counselling; and parenting programmes.

That services are increasingly catering for both children and parents in a single setting can only be seen as a positive development in improving the situation of the affected children. Findings from our literature review suggested that a holistic approach, where both parents and children are engaged in an intervention, leads to improved parent-child relationships, communication, and awareness of needs. Parental feedback within service evaluations suggests that this support is highly valued and can serve as an opportunity for parents to re-engage and develop their relationship with their child. As outcomes for children are largely determined by their parents' cessation or control of their substance use, parental commitment to seeking and engaging

with support is a crucial factor for their children's future well-being.

This work was undertaken by Daniel Clay and Judy Corlyon who received funding under the Department of Health's Drugs Misuse Research Initiative. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily of the sponsor. A full report will be produced in 2008. If you would like more information about the research or to speak with a member of the research team please contact: **Daniel Clay at [d.clay@tavinstitute.org](mailto:d.clay@tavinstitute.org)**

## *Mind the Gap: supporting grandparent carers to protect their grandchildren from drugs and alcohol*

Mentor UK has been working with Adfam and Grandparents Plus, with funding from the Department of Health, to assess the needs of grandparents who are bringing up grandchildren, so that they can help protect their grandchildren from developing problems with drugs and alcohol.

*The Hidden Harm* report highlighted that many children of drug misusing parents are being cared for by grandparents and research points to the benefits for young people raised by grandparents, as opposed to being in foster care or children's homes. Despite this, grandparents often lack information and support in their role as carers. This project was launched to find out about grandparents' needs and respond to them, so that they can protect their grandchildren from drug and alcohol related harm.

Grandparents across the country told us that that they face huge financial hardship, their health often suffers as a result of caring for their grandchildren and they feel very isolated: many have never met other grandparents in a similar situation. We also heard that their relationships with friends and family suffer as a result of caring for the grandchildren and that dealings with professionals are frequently strained because they feel that professionals don't understand the issues that they face. Some have /...

concerns about drugs and alcohol and many are struggling to cope with bereavement whilst trying to support a child who has lost a parent.

In response to what grandparents said, a set of Mind the Gap resources have been produced to improve the support and advice available to grandparents bringing up their grandchildren. These resources are for grandparents and for professionals working with them, including social workers, those working in drug treatment agencies and those running support services for families where there is a drug or alcohol issue. They include a training guide and service assessment tools for professionals; policy recommendations for policy makers and planners; and a leaflet and DVD for grandparents to reduce feelings of isolation and give them information about where to go for support and advice.

There has already been a huge demand for the Mind the Gap resources and professionals who've used them have said it's vastly improved their understanding of this issue, enabling them to provide a better service for grandparent carers. The success of this project has been recognised by the project being nominated as a finalist for two Third Sector awards: Best Charity Partnership and Volunteer of the Year for Pam Carnegie's outstanding contribution.

**For more information about this project or to order the Mind the Gap resources go to [http://www.mentorfoundation.org/about\\_mentor.php?nav=3-27-34-144](http://www.mentorfoundation.org/about_mentor.php?nav=3-27-34-144) or contact Susie Farnworth, Development Officer on 0207 739 8494 or email [Susie.farnworth@mentoruk.org](mailto:Susie.farnworth@mentoruk.org)**



## ***Bouncing Back! Exploring resilience, diversity and family in drug and alcohol prevention***

Bouncing Back! is a national initiative, exploring good practice and innovation in engaging diverse and vulnerable families in drug and alcohol prevention work.

Based on a review of the evidence base, the programme supported six pilot projects across the country, to develop good practice and innovation.

The programme aimed to engage families not typically involved in drug and alcohol prevention work, in projects. It focussed on programmes to engage fathers, foster families, families in custody and rural settings and families from Black and minority ethnic communities.

The programme explored a broad definition of drug and alcohol prevention and included parenting and resilience based approaches, in its pilot work. Pilot projects focussed on a range of ways of engaging families in drug and alcohol preventative work, including drama and arts, outreach, whole families work and youth projects. All the projects were successful in engaging a range of diverse and vulnerable families in diverse programmes.

The Bouncing Back! programme has been written up in a new report, published by Adfam and includes a *Good Practice Guide for Engaging Diverse and Vulnerable Families in Drug and Alcohol Prevention Work*. The report is available as a PDF document on the Adfam website ([www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)) or in a printed version from Adfam.

Phase two of the Bouncing Back! programme is ongoing, focussing on developing learning materials for practitioners, to engage families in drug and /....

alcohol prevention work. A set of group work activities has been developed, to support practitioners working with families in informal educational settings. The materials aim to raise awareness of drug and alcohol related issues, and develop skills in resilience, parenting and family communication.



**For more information about this programme,  
contact Eva Geser  
[e.geser@adfam.org.uk](mailto:e.geser@adfam.org.uk)**



## ***The Pan London Parental Substance Misuse Worker Forum***

Established in August 2006 we are a group of professionals whose job is to meet the challenge of *Hidden Harm*.

Although our job descriptions vary (based either within substance misuse services or children's services) we all aim to reduce the impact of parental substance misuse on children. Some of us work more directly to support the substance misusing parent; others work in a more consultative and training role to professionals. For all of us there is a role in improving how services work together and developing services and protocols.

We meet every two months in the central London area and share ideas through email. The agenda for meetings includes opportunities to share and develop good practice, research and training ideas. We also offer peer support around practice and work planning. We are planning to have regular guest speakers in the future. We are currently collating a list of articles, tools and training resources for practitioners that work with families affected by parental substance misuse. If you have any resources that you think would be helpful to our practice please contact a forum member.

If you would like to know more about the forum and our next meeting please contact **Lyndsey Strachan, on 020 8871 8984, [lstrachan@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:lstrachan@wandsworth.gov.uk) or Suzanne Olsen, on 020 7926 7857, [solsen@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:solsen@lambeth.gov.uk)**

We would welcome any new members to the forum and the opportunity to share ideas to meet the challenges of *Hidden Harm*.

## ***Pulling it together in Hertfordshire!***

Since April 2007, a new role within the district partnership teams merged the functions of parenting support and information and advice. Combining these two aspects to create the role of parenting and information officer (PIO) means that parents, carers and partners are now able to access information, advice, guidance and support in a seamless and joined-up way. Using the local knowledge of the parenting and information officers, their local children's centres and extended schools, parents will receive up-to-date and comprehensive information. It has also resulted in the development of needs-led, sustainable, cost-effective, and easily accessible quality support.

Getting this new role off the ground, and addressing both aspects of it, has meant different things for different teams. Parenting and information officers (PIOs) Jacqueline Evans and Sharon Louzado in the Stevenage and North Herts area, are building on their current approach of developing relationships with existing groups and making sure they know what is happening in their area. They find that this enables swift and easy identification of need in their area. Where families are already engaged with a service, they find it easier to access the support they need and the PIOs are creating a stable and credible system for parents and families.

Parenting support, information and advice has always been around in some form or another. The key to improving this service and delivering a seamless one is by joined-up working, creating networks to deliver the services and, first and foremost, identifying and responding to local parents' needs.

Sharon and Jacqui recognise that the task in hand

for Stevenage and North Herts is to broker the excellent support already available to parents and carers. Through partnership working and the organisation of services, they can match the support to the need.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of the service and provision are key to this success; ultimately Sharon and Jacqui, and in turn the District Partnership team, are sure to become a central resource for their partners and local families. They do not intend to inundate parents with useless printed information and leaflets that may not be relevant; instead, they will source the information required by all customers based on need.

Respecting other professionals and developing an understanding of each other's roles are also fundamental to their work. Jacqui and Sharon are informing professionals about their role and the support available, so that ultimately they can avoid duplication of services, unnecessary spend, and can provide the information parents need, when they need it and how they need it.

Children's centres and extended schools will benefit greatly from this team's approach and are already involving the parenting and information officers in processes to identify their community's needs. Jacqui and Sharon's measure of success will be services that will continue and prosper without them, and won't dissolve because they are the only link between the groups and families – an inspiring vision and example of multi-agency working that is already paying dividends.

**If you would like to learn more from Jacqui or Sharon in the District Partnership team, give them a call on 01462 704246 – they will be happy to talk to you.**

## *Life Education Courses for Parents and Parenting Professionals*

Life Education is best known for its longstanding work delivering innovative health education to children via its specially trained educators. However the charity has also now for some years been working with parents and carers. Parenting skills courses are being facilitated in response to the local authority need to deliver public-health and well-being agendas for children and families, meeting the objectives of Every Child Matters and Joint Area Reviews, the Respect Action Plan, national behaviour and attendance strategies, Healthy Schools and Ofsted Self-evaluation Forms (SEFs).

Life Education's programme model for parenting support is based on extensive research, including an 18-month consultation and needs assessments with practitioners in schools and local authorities; an analysis of good practice; a literature review of the available research; and Life Education's 20 years' experience of drug and health education. It was first piloted in Bradford and the West Midlands in 2002.

The research indicated that the most effective way of promoting children's health and well-being is to work directly with parents and carers. Building recognised protective factors and resilience has a powerful effect on the likelihood of children making positive choices about their health and drug use. By building parents and carers' confidence, skills and knowledge, Life Education therefore facilitates their ability to play a positive role in their child's development.

### **'Family Friends' – Life Education's Seven-Sessions Parenting Course**

*"For the first time ever I have been made to feel I am not a bad mum."*

Parent

The courses comprise seven (voluntary) weekly two and a half hour sessions and cover topics including: increasing children's desirable behaviour, decreasing undesirable behaviour, health and well-being, drugs prevention and taking care of their own well being, including stress management.

Parents and carers learn about how to understand and implement positive behaviour strategies; how thoughts, feelings, behaviour and physiology relate to each other; how to manage their own stress more effectively; and how they can help prevent their child from using drugs.

Parents are enthusiastic and positive about the course, and evaluations consistently show that they feel more positive and confident about being a parent after the course.

Life Education believes that one of the keys to the course's success is a positive, relaxed and enjoyable environment in which the parents can address their parenting needs.

One parent who attended the course was Jane, a 27 year old single mother of 3 from Birmingham who had been using amphetamines and liquid diazepam. When she received the letter from her children's school, the Parental Involvement Worker explained that the course covered issues such as stress, being aware of drugs and looking after yourself, as well as offering the opportunity to discuss parental concerns with other parents. She enlisted and found the course had a tremendously beneficial impact on her life. The course inspired Jane to address her drug use. She has now successfully overcome her dependence and also reports that both her relationship with her children and her own self-esteem have improved significantly.

### **Training for Local Authorities**

*"I have yet to meet a parent who hasn't taken away at least one key thing that that improves*

*their relationship with their child and makes them feel more positive about being a parent.”*

Training commissioner for Life Education  
Training for Local Authorities

In order to build local capacity so that community-based organisations and agencies can deliver parent support and children's health education equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge, Life Education developed a six-day course to train appropriate local authority staff to deliver the Seven-Sessions Parenting Course.

Life Education works with many agencies targeting hard-to-reach parents and providing parental support, including for example, Parent Involvement Teams, Learning Mentors, Sure Start and parents themselves. In this way, Life Education ensures that the gains achieved are sustainable and that the benefits to schools and communities extend beyond the length of the course.

Those who have participated in the training report that all of their work is more highly valued by parents and other staff following their training. They have also indicated that as well as impacting directly on their own work, the positive learning and behaviour management techniques they are taught can be effectively implemented across whole-school environments when supported by the school community.

**For further information on Life Education,  
please contact: David Burton at  
[enquiries@lifeeducation.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lifeeducation.org.uk)  
or T: 020 7831 9311  
www: [lifeeducation.org.uk](http://lifeeducation.org.uk)**

## ***Mentoring for Children of Drug-Users***

In April 2007 Bristol Drugs Project were awarded funding from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Comic Relief to develop a mentoring programme for children of drug-using parents. The mentoring programme sits within our Family Support Service, which in the past worked primarily with drug-using parents. This new project means that we can now also work directly with children who are affected by parental substance misuse.

The programme will involve matching volunteer mentors with young people, whose parents should be engaged in treatment for the duration of the project. One-to-one mentoring sessions will take place on a weekly basis for a year. Six volunteers have so far been recruited and trained as part of the initial pilot project.

I shall submit a more thorough article for the next edition of this newsletter, but in the meantime would be keen to make contact with other people who have used mentoring in approaching the needs of children affected by parental substance misuse.

**Please e-mail me at [jenny.cove@bdp.org.uk](mailto:jenny.cove@bdp.org.uk)  
More information about this project is available on our website: [www.bdp.org.uk](http://www.bdp.org.uk)**

## Research on Parenting

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has published a number of reports on research into parenting and a summary of the findings, which may be of interest to those working with parents who have problems with drugs.

*Parenting and the different ways it can affect children's lives: research evidence* by David Utting, provides a summary of the findings of seven reports that reviewed existing research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to inform its own Parenting Research and Development programme.

The reports consider parenting from the perspectives of mothers, fathers and children, including those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and those living in poverty, and cover:

- o Parenting and outcomes for children
- o Parenting and resilience
- o Fathers and fatherhood
- o Parenting and ethnicity
- o Children's views of parenting
- o Parenting and poverty
- o Barriers to inclusion

The summary and individual reports are available now as free PDFs from

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubID=910>

**If you would like further details or a free review copy of any of the reports, please do not hesitate to contact me, Maria Beech at: [publishing@jrf.org.uk](mailto:publishing@jrf.org.uk)**

## BOOK REVIEW

### *MUM, CAN YOU LEND ME TWENTY QUID? What Drugs Did to My Family*

One question kept nagging at me throughout the first half of this book: "How could a mother not guess her twin sons had both become heroin addicts?"

The physical signs were there for all to see: gaunt faces, emaciated bodies, dark circles under the eyes. This was coupled with their lifestyles of not being able to hold down jobs, constantly moving flats and losing their deposits and continually blagging money from family members, using one excuse after the other.

But then this really is the premise of Elizabeth Burton-Phillips' book *Mum, Can You Lend Me Twenty Quid?*

The author and I are of a similar age and both grew up during the so-called decadent 60s and 70s. But here the similarity fades. Burton-Phillips came from a solid middle-class upbringing in Nottingham, growing up largely in ignorance of drug culture and its lifestyles, to teach at a prep school. I grew up in London, my first job was in the music industry and I later went on to edit magazines for teenage girls. So perhaps she can be excused her gullibility and I my world-weary cynicism

The story of Nick and Simon's downward spiral is all too common. From that first cigarette they shared at age 13 in the local park, to the 'wacky backy' they purchased a year or so later from the local Travellers' site. In sixth form, the twins were smoking pot in bonges, a lifestyle shared by their friends. For the twins, it led to further experiments with other drugs until they were both hooked on heroin.

In 2000, Simon finally confessed to his mother. But he never informed on his brother, who would put blusher on his cheeks before meetings with his mum. Naivety? Is it true the family is always the last to know? Sadly, Simon's confession did not make his Mother suspect her other son. So her loans to him were still forthcoming. Whilst she battled to get Simon help, Nick was in dire straits, resorting to dealing and stealing to get his fix.

The author admits the realisation of Nick's addiction came from a number of incidents but culminated when her bank card went missing the night Nick and his girlfriend came to dinner. The next day £200 was taken out of a cash machine.

"I felt violated and sickened that my own son could steal from me." But wasn't this exactly what the twins had been doing for almost a decade: blagging money? Burton-Phillips worked out she and her husband had loaned her sons about £70,000 over the years, which put them in financial hardship at a time when they should have been planning for retirement.

The book is an open and honest account of one mother's struggle and heartache, written as a warning to other middle-class parents. Her sons were willing to be cunning and deceitful to keep the truth from their mother. Or perhaps it was a source of income they could always rely on to feed their addiction.

The author and Simon, now free of drugs, give talks and campaign at schools throughout the country. As the mother of a teenage daughter, I am aware of how street-savvy and aware she is of drug culture in her everyday life.

For, unlike Burton-Phillips' sheltered upbringing, in today's age a solid middle-class background does not shield families from drugs, because they are readily available to everyone, of all classes, in all communities.

Not any consolation, but my daughter and her peers will grow up being able to tell from

common experience when someone is 'out of it' or if they are being blagged by their own children.

**Gerry Fallon**  
Freelance Journalist

### **MUM, CAN YOU LEND ME TWENTY QUID?** **What Drugs Did to My Family**

**Burton-Phillips, E.**  
**London: Portrait, 2007. 252p.**  
**ISBN 9780749951559**

**The above article first appeared in the July/  
August 2007 edition of Druglink**

## POLICY

To see DrugScope's response to the Government consultation on the national drug strategy (specifically the section on Young people, education and families) go to :-

<http://www.drugscope.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/07A53395-7BFB-4DCD-92E8-164D2FD1896E/0/youngpeople.pdf>

## RESOURCES



Druglink is a bi-monthly magazine for all those UK professionals interested in drugs and drug-related issues whether it's treatment, public health, education and prevention, criminal justice or international. Druglink includes the latest news, feature articles, interviews, factsheets, reviews and listings.

The November issue has a police focus. We have an analysis of police operations to take out drugs gangs in Ipswich, a look at how the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) is faring and a feature on the use of drug sniffer dogs at schools and train stations.

Other articles include a piece on soldiers and drugs, the drinking of aftershave in Russia, and a look at the ability of social workers and the housing sector to help drug users.

To find out more about Druglink and to subscribe go to:- <http://www.drugscope.org.uk/publications/druglink/>

## DrugScope Information Service

Provides a range of resources to support you in your work such as reading lists on various drug topics. Our reading lists on education and prevention provides an overview of articles, books and other material and is freely available to download at :-

<http://www.drugscope.org.uk/ourwork/educationandprevention/briefingsandreadinglists.htm>

Helpfinder is DrugScope's database of drug treatment services. Helpfinder provides contact information and basic service provision details for drug treatment and care services in England, Wales, Scotland and the Channel Islands. Helpfinder enables you to search for organisations providing treatment for drug users, their families and friends. Helpfinder can be used to search for organisations in your area and print their contact details.

<http://drugscope.soutron.com/helpfinder.asp>

### Download a form

To add your drug treatment service to the database. We welcome submissions from all UK treatment services.

<http://www.drugscope.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0F5C8388-22DE-4838-9B01-466B8EE738F2/0/helpfinderform.pdf>

### **PAST ISSUES OF "WORKING WITH PARENTS"**

You can now access all past issues of the newsletter via the Education and Prevention section of the DrugScope website

<http://www.drugscope.org.uk/ourwork/educationandprevention/newsletters.htm>

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MINIMISING DRUG-RELATED HARMS

[WWW.DRUGSCOPE.ORG.UK](http://WWW.DRUGSCOPE.ORG.UK)

*Working with Parents* is an initiative of DrugScope, Alcohol Concern, Adfam and the Parenting Education and Support Forum.

Through this newsletter we intend to learn and share information and good practice. We know the field is looking for information as work with parents is developed, so please get in touch and let us know what you are doing.

If you do **NOT** want to receive future editions of *Working with Parents* or invitations to our meetings, email Carol Marsh at [carolm@drugscope.org.uk](mailto:carolm@drugscope.org.uk)



PARENTING  
EDUCATION  
& SUPPORT  
FORUM

