

Summary Report from Children Affected by Parental Substance Use Conversation Café Event held 17 June 2014

A. Background

The event, facilitated by the Scottish Recovery Consortium and Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) support team was held in the Benarty Centre in Ballingry. A range of partners from voluntary and statutory services were invited. Over 50 people attended from children and adult services for the half day event.

B. Purpose/aim of the event

We wanted to hear about current supports for children, young people and families in Fife and to pose the questions what is working well in Fife and may not be working? Are there gaps in provision? How can we do things differently to improve services and provide best value with resources available? It was also hoped that people would network and use learning in individual practice.

C. What methodologies were used?

A variety of activities took place. These included watching DVD's hearing about children's experiences; hearing directly from a mum from Fife; table discussions and listening to someone who had set up a successful community project to support families in the west of Scotland.

D. What were some of the outcomes?

The Fife picture – views from participants.

1. A mapping exercise of services available for children and families in Fife and known to be working well highlighted over 50 known to attendees. A further 28 were listed as being available. Participants were also asked to map services in the seven local area committees and these showed services as being more diverse (presumably due to local different needs). The main outcome from this exercise was that there are lots of **separate** services available but most only operate during the day, Monday to

Friday. The list for known services available at weekends/holiday periods was fairly sparse and for some areas non-existent.

2. Participants found listening to people's direct experiences particularly useful, especially hearing about the far greater perceived stigma for people using drugs rather than alcohol, despite statistics showing that alcohol can cause as much if not more harm to families and communities. Attendees heard that people can 'recover' from alcohol and drug use and lead successful lives.
3. Attendees enjoyed hearing from the Blameless charity which has evolved from a community base supported by an enthusiastic campaigner and local businesses and people. The project supports many families with a range of activities many of which take place during weekends and holiday periods.
4. Table discussions highlighted the need for children's and adults services to work more closely together. Many described networking as being invaluable at events such as this one. Headline information was available to tables showing how, despite efforts being made, more children and young people are being adversely affected by substance use in families. A huge amount of data and suggestions was collated. Some of the main themes can be summarised as follows –
 - (a) Communication – needs to improve with cascading of information and people talking to each other more.
 - (b) Change needed in way services are delivered – need for more 'one stop shop' approach; co-location; multi-agency teams; attaching voluntary sector staff to social work teams.
 - (c) Services need to be public centred not service led – need for more supports outside traditional 9-5 Monday to Friday.

Big Cloud Ideas – some suggestions from participants

1. Take services to the people. Use some of the mobile buses available to support families in communities and have more services on board, such as benefits advice, food parcels, home start, and addiction services.
2. Open up community resources free of charge including NHS Fife bases and open community use schools in the school holidays!
3. Recruit foster carers who can offer placements for parents and children linking into 'recovery in the community'.
4. Stop saying 'NO' and just say, 'HOW'!

E. Conclusions and what next?

It was agreed that a report with main findings would be prepared for the September meeting of Fife ADP. It was acknowledged that Fife ADP cannot be responsible for implementing all of the changes required to improve services for children and families affected by substance use. In fact, it may not even be helpful to look at substance use in isolation, as many other complex factors are often present in 'neglect' situations. Mainstream services are working with families affected by substance use and we need to build capacity for the workforce.

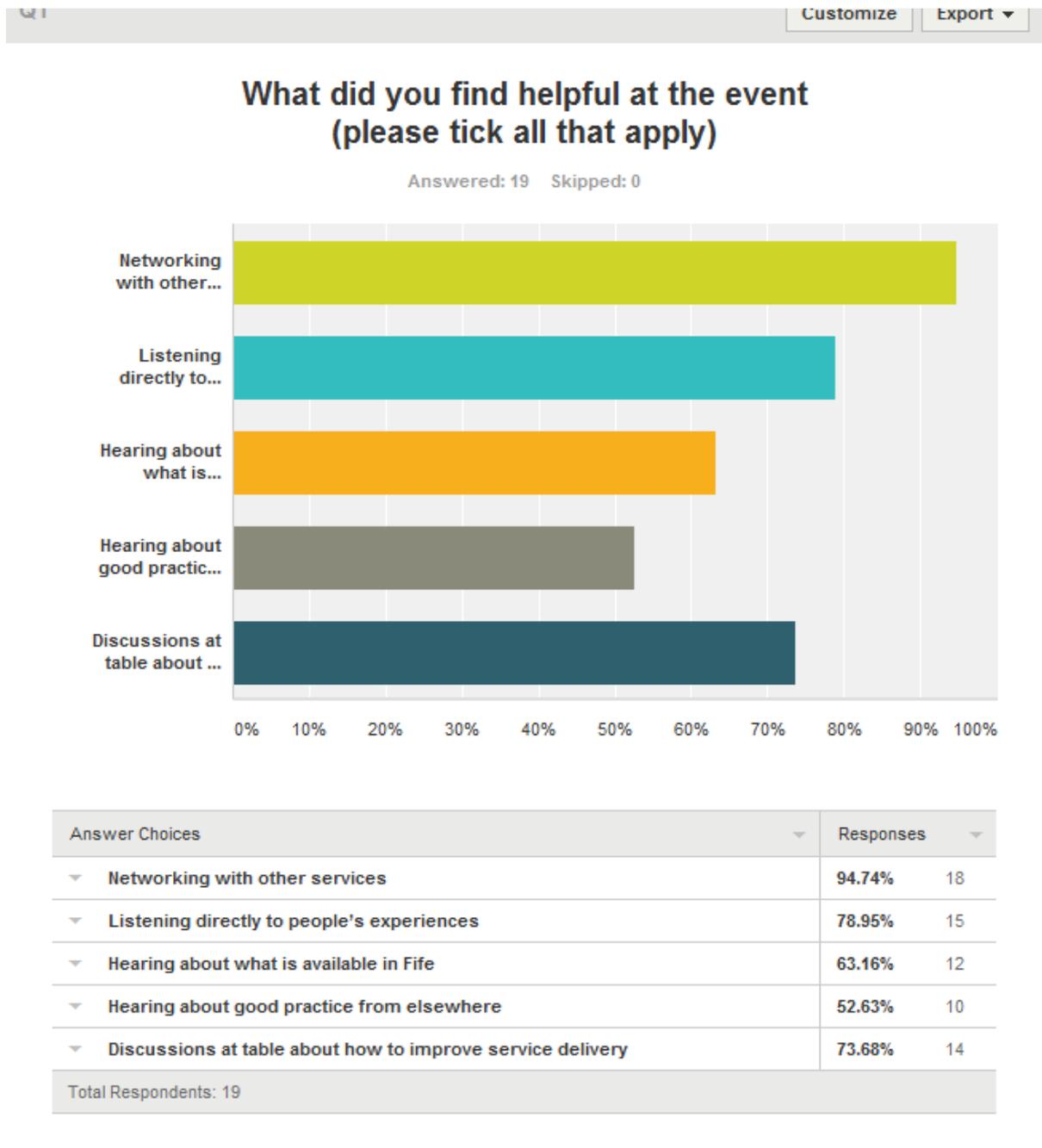
Fife ADP may wish to look at the data when considering any revision to services it commissions but clearly others need to do the same. The report should therefore be distributed more widely to enable others to consider the findings when planning future service provision and delivery.

The main findings from a post event survey are attached as appendix one.

Fiona Power
Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership
20 August 2014

Appendix one: survey monkey results

Summary of Survey findings



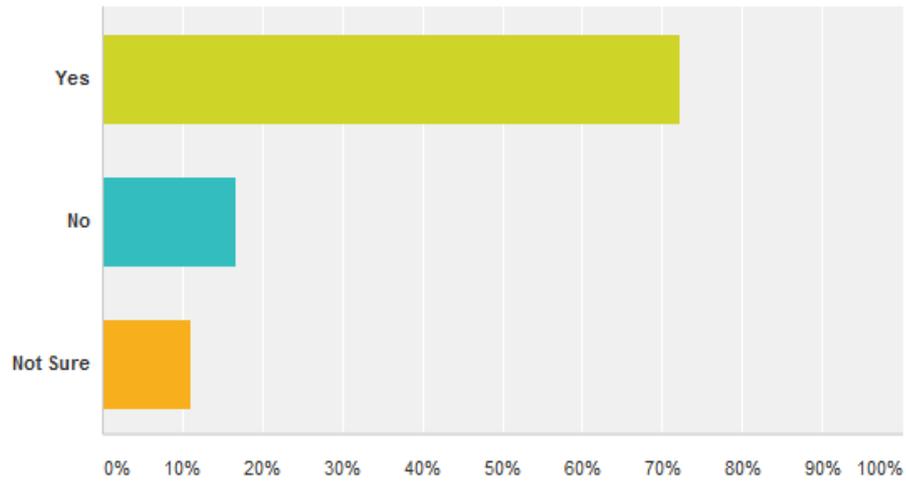
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Did you learn anything at the event which has helped improve your individual practice?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|-----------|
| Yes | 72.22% 13 |
| No | 16.67% 3 |
| Not Sure | 11.11% 2 |
| Total | 18 |

Attendee's comments on how to improve service delivery in future-

"Have support available as identified instead of having to refer and being put on waiting list for services." (Social work)

"Professional's made aware of how to support children and young people in their own settings. E.g. education and to ensure that all professionals are aware of how their responses affect children." (Education)

"Better awareness locally of support services and trying to encourage access/awareness of these services to families, plus trying to deliver services in a non stigmatised way." (Education)

"To ensure the children and families are not seen as two totally different client groups...ensure adult and young people services integrate better...more 'family' orientated services." (Voluntary sector)

"Not having to wait until there's a crisis before securing support required." (NHS Fife)

"Listen more directly to people's experiences." (Anonymous)

"Better communication between services on all levels, statutory and voluntary would enable a much more holistic approach." (Anonymous)

"Greater joint working which opportunities like this help. It is easier when you can put a face to a name. Joint training." (Education)

"That services continue to provide and adapt, to grow for the benefit of children and families affected, so their lives always have the greatest opportunity for change, in the long term." (Community Learning Development)

"Provide support regarding trauma, bereavement and loss, the children and families have lost so much." (Voluntary sector)

"Ensure a proportionate response to the needs of children affected." (Education)

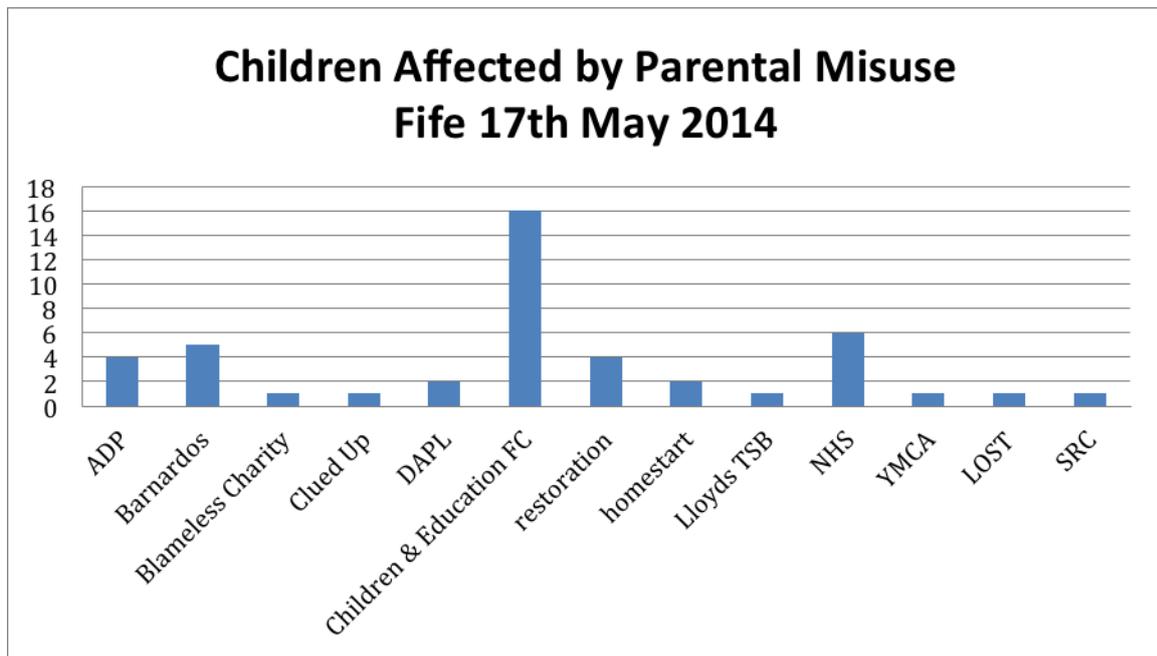
"Awareness of services available in Fife to be given to all other specialist agencies." (NHS Fife)

"Provide more funding." (Anonymous)

"Joining up services more and multi-agency teams operating across Fife." (Anonymous)

"Whilst I think it is improving a more joined up approach to the work, i.e. adult and children services working more closely together, would be helpful." (Voluntary sector)

Who was there



Recovery Status

