



SUBSTANCE USE & THE FAMILY

A UK-analysis of the impact of substance use on families, and the importance of support provision for families.

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ABOUT ADFAM

Adfam is a UK charity tackling the effects of alcohol and drug use on family members and friends. Our mission is to do this by:

- **empowering families and friends** to get the support they need.
- building the confidence, capacity and capability of **frontline practitioners** to provide effective services.
- **influencing decision-makers** to understand the needs of thousands of people coping with a family member or friend's drink, drug or gambling problem

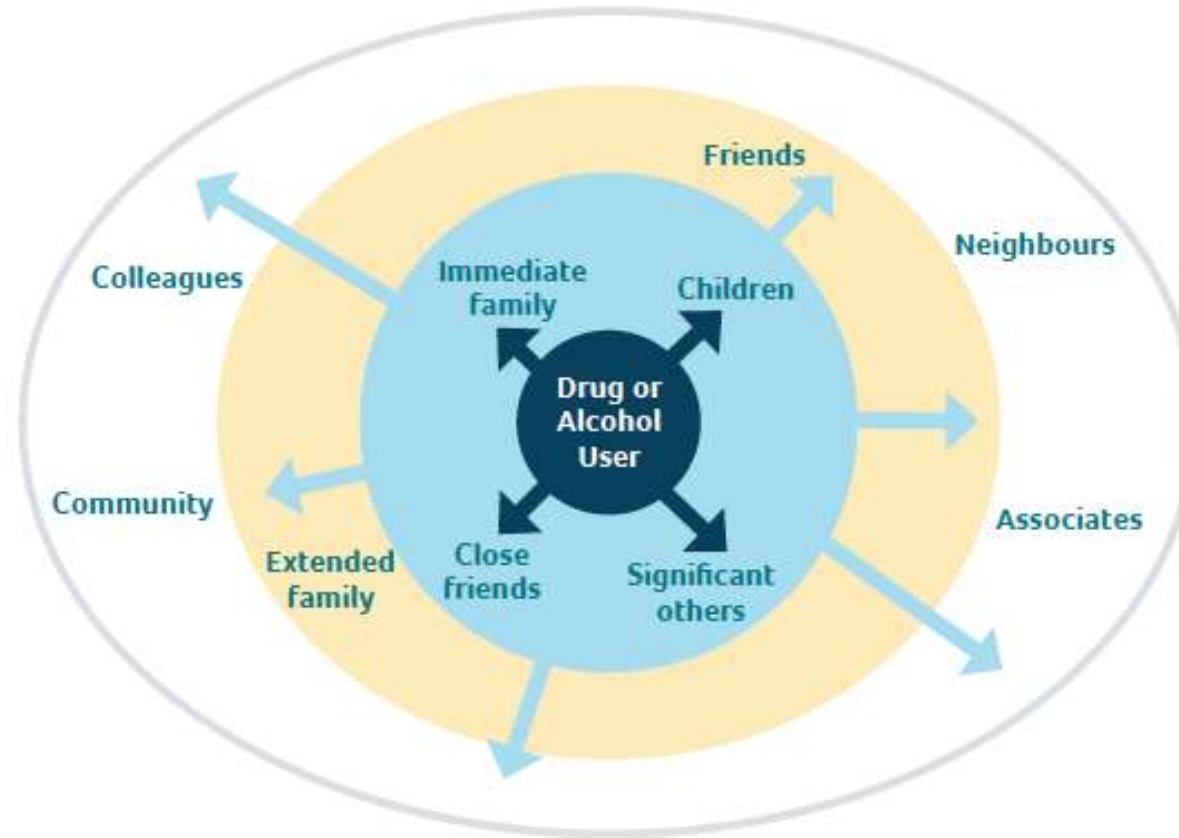
8% adults in GB, 4 million people, are currently negatively affected by a family member or friend's drinking

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE CURRENTLY COPING WITH A LOVED ONE'S DRINKING, DRUG USE OR GAMBLING

Numbers of people currently negatively affected by a family member or friend's drinking, drug use or gambling (ongoing or in the past)

- **8% alcohol use – 4 million adults in GB**
- **3% drug use – 1.5 million adults in GB**
- **2% gambling – 1 million adults in GB**
- **11% overall – 5.5 million adults in GB**

WHO IS AFFECTED?



RELATIONS

Relation to the person's drinking they feel negatively affected by

- **22% parent/guardian**
- **8% child**
- **16% sibling**
- **20% partner**
- **4% ex-partner**
- **2% grandparent**
- **1% grandchild**
- **15% friend**
- **15% other**

THE IMPACT

- Social
- Financial
- Physical
- Psychological
- Criminality
- Stigma
- Personal and societal



“You don’t want them to feel alone or abandoned, so you tether yourself to them to try to ground them, to try to anchor them. As a consequence, the journey they take, you take too, repeatedly. However, you are not anesthetised.”

MAJORITY OF FAMILIES ARE COPING WITH THESE ISSUES FOR MANY YEARS

- 34% said they have been negatively affected by a friend or family member's drinking, drug use or gambling for more than ten years
- 27% between four and ten years
- 36% currently living with the person who drinks, uses drugs and/or gambles

BETTER RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT NEEDED FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

Whether the potential harms caused by behaviours such as drinking, drug use or gambling on families and friends are given sufficient attention and recognition amongst the general public, the media and the government.

- 23% of affected families think the potential harms caused by drinking, drug use or gambling on families and friends are given sufficient attention and recognition across the media, 56% thought that they were not
- 24% of affected families think it is sufficiently recognised amongst the general public, 53% not sufficiently recognised
- 9% of affected families think that national and local Government is doing enough to provide services and support, 63% felt that more was needed to be done

IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT

- Involvement of family members in treatment
- Support for families in their own right
- Practical and emotional
- Effective support for family members has wider positive impact





WAYS TO IMPROVE SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

 Adfam

- More information and awareness for families and friends on how to cope and where to get support (50%)
- Greater availability of support services for people who engage in behaviours such as drinking, drug use or gambling (49%)
- Greater availability of services for the friend or family member (47%)
- Better co-ordination across frontline health services to support people who drink, use drugs or gamble and their families/friends (48%).

“For a long time I felt I wasn’t doing enough, there must be something else I could do, I had so much guilt. It’s taken a long time and doing a lot of work on myself but I am finally rid of that and I now know I cannot make my Dad want to get better. Sadly the addiction is more important than us in his current state and I can’t do anything to help him until he wants to help himself. All I can do now is look after myself and those in my life that give to me as much as I give to them.”

“Over the past ten years I have gradually learned more about addiction and how best to support our daughter’s attempts at recovery without losing sight of my own needs...”

"...Slowly I have become more confident and gained a better understanding of when to offer support and when to back off and accept that I have no control over a situation. I have realised that it's not my responsibility to fix every crisis and that by going out and having fun, following my own interests, my daughter has become less dependent and better able to take responsibility for herself."



UK POLICY DEVELOPMENTS



- Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents funding
- Domestic Abuse Bill
- Dame Carol Black Review
- Drug Strategy 2021 – ‘Harm to Hope’

ADFAM'S RESPONSE TO THE DAME CAROL BLACK REVIEW / DRUG STRATEGY

- In order to fulfil the ambitions of the drug strategy we must invest in families and ensure they are recognised moving forward.
- Complexity of challenges families face.
- Increased funding presents an opportunity.
- Recognition of the need for a whole system approach around drug use.
- Blind-spot and lack of action around alcohol.
- More needs to be done to challenge and tackle stigma.



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