

First

Fife Intensive Rehabilitation
& Substance Misuse Team

ANNUAL REPORT

2016 / 2017





Fife Intensive Rehabilitation & Substance Misuse Team (FIRST) provides a Fife wide community based Rehabilitation Service to clients with substance misuse issues via one to one, group and volunteer support.

Dunfermline Base

Unit 20
Dunfermline Business Centre
Izatt Avenue
Dunfermline
KY11 3BZ

Registered Office

3 South Fergus Place
Kirkcaldy
Fife
KY1 1YA

Glenrothes Base

Unit 14
Edison House
Fullerton Road
Glenrothes
KY7 5QR

Auditors

EQ Accountants
Pentland House
Saltire Centre
Glenrothes
KY6 2AH

Bankers

Royal Bank of Scotland
23 - 25 Rosslyn Street
Kirkcaldy
KY1 3HA

Funders

Fife Council
Fife Alcohol and
Drug Partnership
NHS Fife

Registered Charity Number: SC034720
Company Limited by Guarantee Number: SC298843
Registered with the Care Inspectorate



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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I'm delighted to say that despite a number of challenges - including pressure on funding and the increasing complexity of referrals – FIRST continues to develop and grow while remaining true to our vision that recovery happens in the community, not the clinic.

In August 2016 we were selected for our first unannounced inspection by the Care Inspectorate. The inspection looked at the quality of our Staffing and Care & Support and we received the highest ratings for both, continuing a long trend of scoring 6s! I was particularly pleased with the really positive comments made by clients about our staff. The Board felt that this success, together with our Investors in People Award, was worth recognising and we held a Celebration Event, which was well attended by supporters, funders, clients and staff.

We have continued to support Core Skills Training for staff and also held another Service Development Day, which looked at a range of current issues and was enjoyed by the staff. We continue to benefit from a loyal and dedicated staff team who do an excellent job in increasingly difficult circumstances. Thanks to all of you! And thanks too, to my colleagues on the Board who each continue to make positive contributions to the direction of the organisation.

Congratulations are due to our Service Manager, April Adam, who was selected by her peers to chair the Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) following the departure of Sean McCollum.

Our Groupwork goes from strength to strength. New activities have been added throughout the year including cycling, kayaking and gardening. Residential Rehabilitation has also been a success and we have been promoting this widely in the hope of extending this valuable service. This view was supported following our successful three year evaluation and assessment by Fife Council. We have also been involved in the new Structured Deferred Sentence Scheme and have been promoting and providing training for Naloxone.

I must take time to thank our funders – Fife ADP, NHS Fife and Fife Council. They have all been under intense pressure to reduce expenditure and it is a testimony to FIRST's work that our budgets have almost been maintained at last year's levels. Indeed, in its budget proposals for 2017/18, Fife Council's last administration recognised the important role of prevention and early intervention and specifically identified FIRST as a key player in the drug rehabilitation role. This was reinforced when a team of S5 pupils from Viewforth High School selected FIRST as their charity entry in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative. After a closely fought final, they emerged the winners and FIRST benefitted from a donation of £3000. So, all in all, it has been a very successful year for FIRST and we are well placed to meet the challenges which, no doubt, will be coming in the year ahead.

Alan Russell
Chairperson

SERVICE MANAGER'S REPORT

Positive and productive would be how I'd sum up FIRST's fortunes over the past twelve months against a backdrop of further funding cuts.

We adopted the new Recovery Outcome Tool which is proving to be very effective and praised by both clients and staff. We always strive to enable clients to achieve better outcomes and this tool has already proved to be a great help in this regard.

Consulting with our service users has always been a key priority for us and, as always a number of sessions were held across Fife with the clients being selected at random. Feedback from these sessions is included in this Annual Report. Client stories are also included and give a real insight into their lives and what they have achieved.

The distribution of the lifesaving medication, Naloxone has continued throughout the year by FIRST staff as well as others but more needs to be done. Drug death numbers continue to rise and is a stark reminder of the need to redouble our efforts in terms of distribution and also to consider an Assertive Outreach Service in Fife thus enabling engagement with those hard to reach clients who do not engage with services.

After an anxious wait we were all delighted when notification was received confirming our highly successful Residential Rehabilitation Service would receive funding to continue until March 2018. Results from this service (now in its fourth year) have been tremendous, saving lives, uniting families and rebuilding relationships are just a few. Thanks to client determination and an ever growing recovery community in Fife, we have clients who completed rehab in 2014 maintaining their recovery status and actively participating in the range of services/groups available.

I'd like to thank the Directors for all their support, the clients for their commitment to their recovery and our team of volunteers for all their hard work and commitment to FIRST.

Last but certainly not least I'd like to thank the staff. I'm proud to lead a team who demonstrate such commitment and professionalism and truly put the clients at the heart of everything they do. We will no doubt face more challenges this coming year but as a collective will rise to this and continue to provide a quality service for Fife residents who require our support.

April Adam
Service Manager

THE FIRST TEAM

Board of Directors

Alan Russell, Chairperson
John Jones, Vice Chairperson
Alex Haddow, Director
Donald MacKay, Director
Jenny MacLeod, Director

Management and Administration

April Adam, Service Manager
Jeanie Nowland, Business Manager
Kayleigh Gourlay, Service Administrator
Kelly Bolton, Service Administrator
Sharon Barker, Service Administrator
Alice Simpkins, Administration Assistant

Residential Rehabilitation Assessor / Co-ordinator

Liz Nardone

Issue Based Groupwork / Volunteer Co-ordinator

Caroline Mackenzie

Activity Based Groupwork Co-ordinator

Paul Watson

Community Rehabilitation Team

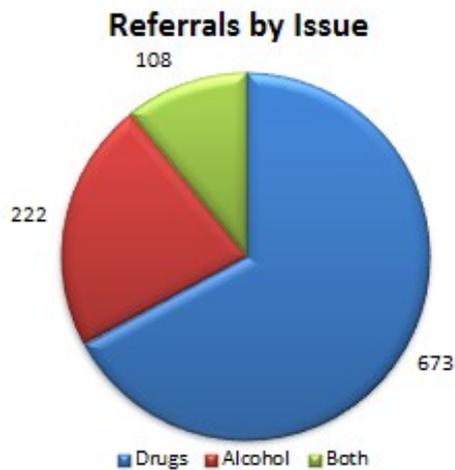
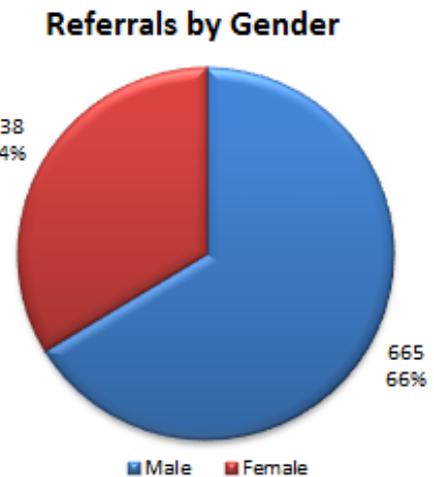
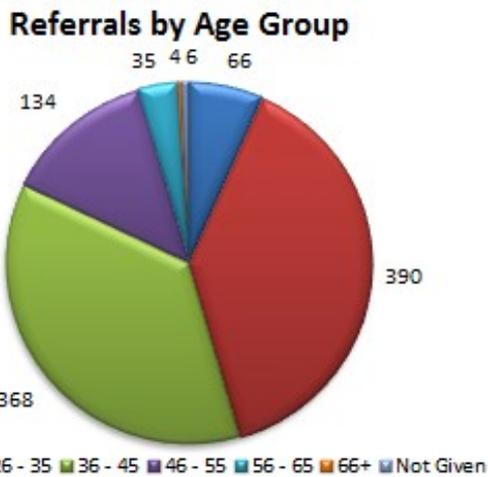
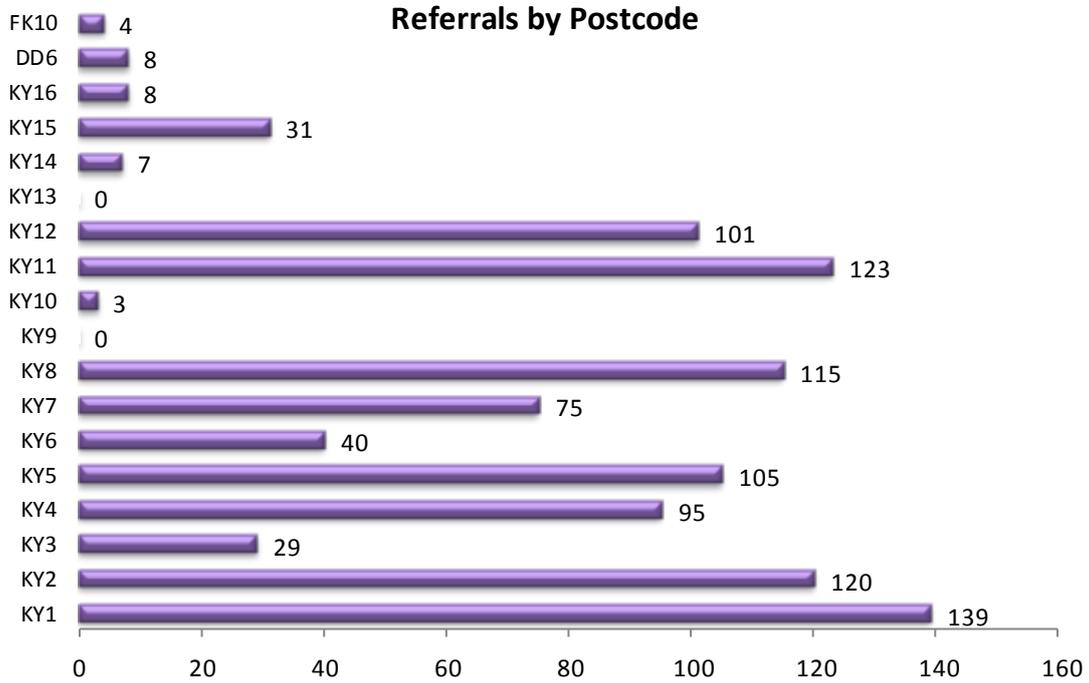
Kenton Francis, Co-ordinator
Arlene Hanafin, Co-ordinator
Bill Webster, Rehabilitation Worker
Christine Graham, Rehabilitation Worker
Mark Young, Rehabilitation Worker
Rebecca West, Rehabilitation Worker
Tracy Crisp, Rehabilitation Worker
Bill Dorman, Support Worker
Grant Taylor, Support Worker
Kirsten Holland, Support Worker (from 11.04.16)

Fife Council Link Officer

Carolyn King

REFERRAL STATISTICS

FIRST received **1003** referrals between April 2016 and March 2017.



NALOXONE

In 2016, Kerry Watson from Addaction and I were given the roles of Naloxone Leads for Fife. What this meant was that we had the task of training staff in frontline services to allow them to give out Naloxone to as many people as possible. This included high risk clients, family members and friends.

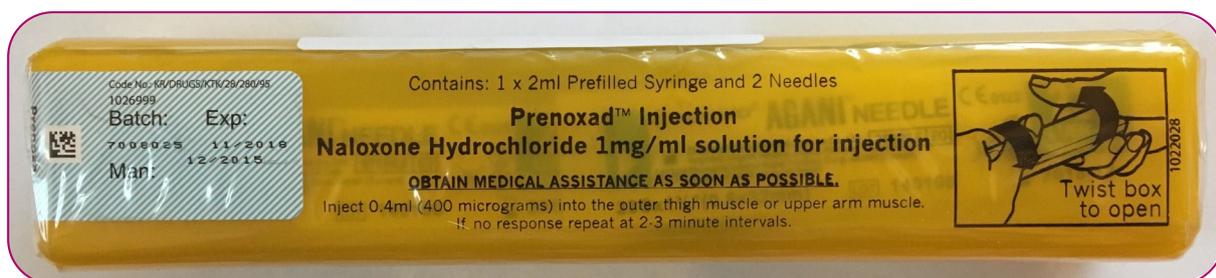
In an SDF survey, clients stated that the chemist would be a place they would go to get Naloxone. We began training staff at Boots the chemist which included the Kirkcaldy High Street, Kirkcaldy Retail Park and Glenrothes Kingdom Centre branches. Training has also been given to staff within St Clair Pharmacy, Kirkcaldy. These chemists are now equipped to distribute Naloxone on the premises.

A number of one-to-one sessions have also been done along with a few refresher sessions and an information session at Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court.

New members of staff at NHS Fife Addiction Services were also trained and more recently, student paramedics with more training sessions to be arranged. As you can tell, it has been a very busy time.

The training consists of two sessions: Overdose Prevention in the morning and Naloxone/First Aid information in the afternoon. The hope is that this training will be rolled out over as many services as possible with the aim of distributing Naloxone to as many people who may be at risk of overdose.

Tracy Crisp
Rehabilitation Worker



The supply of Naloxone aims to reduce the incidence of drug-related deaths due to opioid overdose by providing education on the signs and symptoms of an overdose, calling an ambulance, basic life support and the administration of Naloxone. FIRST distributed a total of forty-four kits and aim to distribute even more over the forthcoming year. Naloxone Roadshows are also taking place with the help of other third sector agencies to raise awareness of this life saving kit.

CARE INSPECTORATE

FIRST is registered with the Care Inspectorate. Our last inspection was in 2016 and we were inspected in areas of Quality of Care and Support and Quality of Staffing. We were delighted to be awarded a Grade 6 (Excellent) in both of these areas.

A highlight of the report included feedback from existing clients which was very positive. The Care Inspector met with and spoke to seven clients on a one to one basis as well as attending a group meeting. The clients praised staff members and detailed the big difference that engaging with the service had made to their lives. Clients said that staff cared, were non-judgemental and helped them to make decisions to improve their situations.

The Care Inspector reported on the many areas of the service which were working well. It was highlighted that staff members were able to offer support in ways that clients found beneficial along with ensuring that they did not feel judged or pressured when receiving this support. Clients emphasised that they were able to build trust with their worker and that their worker came across as being genuinely caring. The Service was praised for understanding the complexity of the situations of the clients being supported and that staff training, support and knowledge of other Services available enabled staff to have in-depth discussions with clients. The staffs' knowledge of and collaboration with other agencies was deemed to be very effective with staff aware of when to involve these services. The Service was found to have a professional administration team and very robust management oversight. The Service Manager was found to be very forward thinking and open to new ideas that could add to what the service offered by way of rehabilitation support.

The Care Inspector made suggestions for the service to explore for the future. One of these was to introduce annual appraisals for staff. This would include consultations with Clients to provide information on a worker's practice and enable targeted training for the worker if required. Another was the creation of client centred files to ensure a fuller picture of the client and have more personalised information available within this file. Both these points have been discussed with staff at our recent Service Development Day and are in the process of being implemented.



Quality of Care and Support



Quality of Staffing

**A copy of the full report can be obtained at
www.careinspectorate.com**

SMART RECOVERY

A question I am often asked – what is SMART Recovery?

SMART stands for Self-Management And Recovery Training and is a form of mutual aid with a learning twist.

I started up SMART Recovery meetings on a sunny Thursday afternoon from our Izatt Avenue Office, Dunfermline in June 2014 and they have continued to grow every week and be an integral part of many people's recovery.

SMART Recovery is all about choice – discovering the power of choice – if we have chosen to maintain addictive behaviour and if it's possible we can choose to stop it, taking personal responsibility based on a 4-point programme of:-

- Building and maintaining motivation
- Coping with urges
- Managing thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- Living a balanced life

Each meeting we discuss and learn a “tool” – a new way of thinking to help with our decision making and behaviours. It has become so valuable to people within their recovery. An evening meeting started up and has been running with great success by our fabulous Peer Facilitators – for over two years now.

It is a friendly and welcoming meeting with a wealth of experience of life and addictive behaviours – but most of all it's the power within each meeting participant that shines and grows.

A special thanks go to Peer Facilitator Stuart Blackadder who without fail gives his time, commitment and experience every week running our evening meetings – very much appreciated.

“Everything in your life is a reflection of a choice you have made. If you want a different result, make a different choice”

Christine Graham
Rehabilitation Worker





“SMART meant that I recreated myself as an individual who felt completely lost. The group is a living breathing entity which encourages self-belief”

“My SMART peers probably know me (and care for me!) as much as my friends and family”

“It means I’ve realised that I’m not a failure, or stupid, I’ve just made bad choices! And now I know that I can CHOOSE to make better ones!”

“Relaxed. Great tools. Friendly Group and fantastic facilitator (Christine)”



“It helps to keep me balanced. Support from Peers”

“I have been coming to SMART meetings for 2 years 9 months. Without this meeting and the support I get I would not be where I am today”

“Meeting new individuals with the same problems but different ways of getting there. Encouragement and hope. SMART is supportive with great facilitators especially Christine”

“Keeps me in check/ Valuable/ meeting new people/ seeing friends”



CLIENT STORIES

Brian's Story

Hi, I'm Brian. I was in two children's homes at the age of eleven and the age of fourteen. I got into drugs and alcohol at a young age. I started at High School by taking cannabis and diazepam and other illicit drugs and this was until I was thirty four. I can say FIRST is very helpful in helping me rebuild my life.

I moved back from England at the age of thirty four. This is when I hit rock bottom. I had previously tried to end my life through overdose prior to me moving back to Scotland. I heard about FIRST from my Doctor and FASS. I have been with FIRST for some time now.

FIRST helped me to stay alive. They were welcoming and helped me into groups such as the Men's Group and the Music Group of which I am now a volunteer. The one-to-one sessions were also of great help. It helped to build my confidence and regain a better lifestyle.

I am now alcohol and drug free. I thank FIRST for helping me through the difficult years and now have confidence and self-esteem. I enjoy volunteering as it helps me grow into a more positive person.

Sheena's Story

Hi, I'm Sheena, I'm thirty nine and this is my recovery story.

I had a good loving childhood with my family and I can't remember really anything out of the ordinary. I left school at the age of fifteen and I started work as an Apprentice Hairdresser. After three years training at College, I qualified as a Hairdresser and I continued to work in salons until I turned thirty three. I also got married at twenty, had a bought house and own car. But my marriage was truly bad due to the physical and mental abuse I received.

Things started to go wrong when my Dad was diagnosed with cancer, I couldn't cope with the situation. So I turned to my doctor for help. I was prescribed depression tablets and DF's. I was taking them for approximately three years. But still didn't cope. I told my doctor again about how I was feeling and we agreed that the medication wasn't working. So I was weaned off them gradually, which was a huge success. My father died, shortly after that my marriage ended, hence my life was shattered in front of me.

I couldn't cope with anything so I turned to people who could get me something to kill the pain. And that's when I started using speed which led to me taking heroin. This went on for about four years. I decided one day that enough was enough. So I went to Addiction Services for help.

Addiction Services were a great help to me and I was put on a methadone prescription which lasted about ten months. Then I was detoxed off with some success. A short time after, I relapsed, I went back to Addiction Services again and I was prescribed suboxone which is a wonder drug. Six months later I successfully detoxed from suboxone and was drug free for

another six months. After almost a year free from substitute meds, I relapsed again. I was gutted. So back to Addiction Services. I was put on methadone again initially but I soon realised it was the wrong decision to go back on methadone. I spoke to my Addictions Nurse and we agreed to reduce the forty mls meth prescription by ten mls per month until I got down to twenty mls. When I was reduced down to twenty mls, I then changed meds to suboxone with the view to reduce down four mls per month until zero suboxone. I then successfully detoxed from suboxone and had to remain opiate free for seven days. During this detox I suffered from insomnia and I found this difficult.

Only through support from FIRST, acupuncture and going to SMART Recovery meetings on a weekly basis was I able to overcome the insomnia.

I am currently on Naltrexone which is an opiate blocker and I will stay on this medication for a year.

I have never looked back until I wrote my story. Although it was difficult, if only one person can be saved by reading my story, then it's all been worth it.

My name's Carol. I had my first drink at fourteen and believe it or not, I got it as a reward for winning. It was the first golf competition I'd won and they filled the cup with sherry – tasted horrid but boy did I love the way it felt. For once I felt I had done something that people approved of and I always wanted to please other people.

That was the start – the seed had been planted. It lay dormant but it was there and lay dormant until I married the first person who asked me just to get away from a very dominating mother – the only person I couldn't please.

Unfortunately I had very little judgement and had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. Not only was he more controlling – he drank – so to keep from being physically and mentally abused I joined him – with gusto – and within two years outstripped him.

I began training as a nurse which hindered the drinking and eventually got rid of said husband but lived on my own in Stenhousemuir binging on occasion but every time I did, it took longer to recover physically but I still did not accept that I was developing a problem or that I was alcoholic.

I met someone else – also a drinker – and moved to Dunfermline and worked at Lynebank.

The drink was escalating and I wasn't fussy what it was. That relationship failed after a number of years.

People were noticing the mood changes, the odd days off, sometimes the dishevelled appearance and then I met 'No 3' – who was a drinker!

I left Lynebank and the downward spiral began in earnest.

I went from job to job usually before I was called out for poor performances/non-appearance until 1st October 2015. I went to work under the influence despite trying to refuse to go at all. I was still people pleasing.

Naturally I was reported to the NMC and underwent an enquiry that could only be described as brutal in the extreme. I used my suspension as an excuse to drink – every day.

I became gaunt, ill looking, unkempt appearance until the December when I finally summoned the guts to go to the GP.

She wasn't my usual GP but a more enlightened individual who whilst referring me to Addiction Services gave me leaflets for DAPL and FIRST. She advised to get going – quickly – which I did.

I turned up at FIRST dead scared, looking and feeling dejected, isolated, looking dreadful and spiritually dead. I was given Bill as a Support Worker and who can only be described as a godsend.

I grasped every suggestion and plan like someone who had been drowning. Walk and Talk with Mark. Acupuncture and Anxiety Management with Caroline, SMART with Christine, Restoration with Nikki.

I had to embrace a different way of thinking. To forgive and to like myself a bit better.

Like my drinking, everything took practice but the more I tried the easier it became. The benefits did not take long to show themselves.

I looked better and fitter, more positive in attitude, more confident and assertive. I learned to say no!

I learned to adapt mindfulness and to accept living in the moment, also to accept that to worry about things that hadn't happened yet was a useless practice.

I was given the opportunity to show the gratitude I feel to these dedicated individuals by representing the clients to the Care Inspectorate and had no hesitation in underlining that without their help and encouragement, I would probably be dead now. I've been drink free since 5th December 2015.

I am currently a volunteer with SDF and hope to obtain the necessary qualifications to work in the 'field'.

I have no hesitation in recommending FIRST to anyone who feels that they have a substance misuse problem, whatever it is, but would like to see FIRST receiving the recognition that it deserves for the work and hope it gives to suffering individuals and that life moves on.

Hi, I'm Paul, I'm forty six years old and this is my recovery story.

My earliest memories of alcohol is when I was a child. I remember my mum and dad drinking a lot and I remember the violence between them and this continued all through my childhood. When I became a teenager, I found drinking so natural due to seeing my parents and elders do it everyday. My teenage years consisted of me drinking – glue sniffing – buzzing gas – until I discovered that I could get access to drugs very easily in my scheme. I started smoking hash around thirteen or fourteen years old which started by contact with dealers, etc. I regularly bought hash for my pals which made me feel accepted with dealers and directly put me in the position of being directly involved in mixing and cutting of speed and also supplying others. I also was able to get the harder drugs ie vallies, moggies etc so my teenage years were spent taking alcohol or drugs.

When I turned seventeen, I tried to break free from the mad life so I joined the Territorial Army which really sorted me out. I also started a family which I must admit that I couldn't cope with, being a father so I turned to alcohol again. I had no control with my addiction to booze even when I had told everyone that I was fine. I was lying, so it was no surprise that I ended up at twenty two getting into serious trouble. I got charged with murder and attempted murder which I got ten years for. Then my whole life collapsed in front of me. I speak from the heart when I say that I feel eternally ashamed for my part in the horrible, terrible attack.

When I was released from prison, I got involved with very serious guys who dealt in cocaine, etc. At first I loved it but it soon turned very dark and nasty and almost put myself into a bad situation where I could've lost my life completely, so again I got out.

I started a family again but lost them due to alcohol again so I decided to leave Glasgow and moved to Fife to start again. I was coping on my depression tablets and tramadol for my knee pain but I knew if I wanted a decent life, I would have to get off the meds which I did. I could not cope with the withdrawals. I started smoking heroin at forty which turned my life upside down so this period was very hard. I eventually decided to get the proper help through Addiction Services.

I was so relieved to get on a prescription for methadone as I could start to really deal with my addiction. My care plan along with Addiction Services was getting the job done I thought but I wanted off methadone as quickly as possible. I took my plan and successfully got off it but sadly shortly after my detox, I relapsed – again. I went back to Addiction Services and it was agreed that because my habit was so low, that I could go onto suboxone. Wow, when I got suboxone I had no withdrawals at all and most importantly, I had a clear head, AMAZING feeling. I then was told that I was taking an opiate blocker by my Addictions Nurse and at that point the penny had dropped! I knew what I had to do to remain drug free. It was agreed that six months was the normal period to take suboxone and then detox off suboxone. That's what happened! I had a small relapse four months later and after I smoked it, I was so angry with myself but got myself back to Addiction Services.

My third prescription in my mind was going to be my last – all I was doing was slowly damaging my body and mind. I was started on 8 mg suboxone but I told Addiction Services I wanted on and off this prescription as soon as possible and they agreed. But this time when I had detoxed, I was to stay off all medication for ten clear days which I did.

I have now been on Naltrexone for four months combined with working with FIRST and also going to SMART Recovery meetings on a weekly basis. This has given me the freedom that I've been craving for years.

I try hard not to think about the past but what I believe is that if normal people could really try to understand that addictive behaviours are not just about drugs, but also try to understand the mental health issues that have been contributing to the addiction through mental and physical trauma.

I'm now trying to rebuild my life and with my family, is a work in progress! If there's anything in my story that anyone could take from, it would be to NEVER give up and take one day at a time, and no matter what people think, stay true to yourself because there is a light at the end of the addictions tunnel.

Laura's Story

My childhood was mixed, it had brilliant fun and happy days (years) with my mum and sisters, not so much my father who was an abuser. My school days were good, my work record was colourful, tried all and everything. I got bored easy. I was sexually abused from the age of five, raped at sixteen and two marriages were both physically and mentally abusive.

I came to FIRST because somebody told me I had a drink and drug problem. My Support Worker saw the cocktail of prescription drugs I was taking along with alcohol. I thought I was fine, plodding along, hiding from everything the only way I knew how.

My Support Worker put me in touch with FIRST and Addiction Services. I was now getting help from Frontline Fife and FIRST every week. I also went for a detox. Having somebody who you could talk to and listened and who seemed to understand helped a lot. NO judging. Just there for you. Also having somebody to help with day to day problems was good, it meant I could handle the bigger problem – my addiction.

I am now five months alcohol free and only take co-codamol for pain, no more cocktails. I no longer see the need for more counselling at present. I'm not looking back and let my old and painful life spoil what I now have achieved. If for any reason I fall back, at least I'll know where to run to for help.

With the help of a couple of people (you know who you are), I'm now in a better place and for that I am very grateful. I'm gonna miss my Thursday talks, laughs and putting the world to right, at least for an hour. Time to do things for me now, with a clear head. Thanks.

VOLUNTEERS

We currently have nine active volunteers and five awaiting training. The past year has seen us lose good volunteers who have moved on to either employment or training. Gary, who left last year, has now successfully completed the Addiction Worker Training Project (AWTP) and is now employed, although he does still help us out with the Snooker Group each week. It is always bittersweet when we have to let our volunteers move on even though we know it is the right thing for them. Brian took over helping with the Men's Group when Gary left and he very quickly settled into this role and Charlene started helping with the new Women's Group, also settling in well. They have both proved to be very efficient and reliable members of our team and we are grateful to them for all their support. Also a big continued thank you to Don who is our Volunteer Representative on the Board of Directors.

Caroline MacKenzie
Volunteer Co-ordinator

CLIENT CONSULTATIONS

As is customary, a number of Fife Wide Client Consultations were held. For the first time, clients were selected at random from our database (which was a suggestion from the Staff team) so no "cherry picking" by Staff.

Below are comments taken from these sessions;

- Absolutely excellent
- Great benefits from Acupuncture and Anxiety Management
- Helped me look at my substance misuse from a different angle
- I had my family involved in sessions with my worker
- I always look forward to my one to one sessions
- I trust my Support Worker very much
- Group work – Everyone is striving for the same thing. You can speak to people who have been there and done it
- FIRST works for me – a wonderful Service
- Family don't understand so getting them involved would be a great idea
- Recovery Outcome Tool shows you the pattern of your behaviour
- Random drug testing would be good

GROUPWORK

The past year has seen many changes to the groupwork programme. The decision was made to split the responsibility of co-ordinating into two distinct areas. Caroline is now responsible for the therapeutic groups and Paul for the activity based groups.

A major achievement for FIRST this year was winning at the Young Philanthropist Initiative (YPI) Awards. A massive thank you must be given to Matthew and Denis from Viewforth High School who chose FIRST as the charity they wished to explore and nominate for the award. Both pupils thoroughly researched the work that we do at FIRST and also enlisted our Support Worker, Grant as part of their presentation. The sharing of his personal experiences together with Matthew and Dennis' excellent presentation definitely made all at FIRST very proud. The prize of £3,000 will be used towards improving and expanding our current Walk and Talk groups.



The award of a one-off grant of £5,000 from the Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance Inequalities Programme has also been a very welcome bonus to groupwork activities for the forthcoming year. This grant has allowed a Lochore Meadows Summer Activities Programme to be created by Paul which will positively impact on those who attend in so many ways.

All in all, it has been another busy and productive year for groupwork with more exciting developments already planned for the near future.

Activity Based Groupwork

My new role as Activity Based Groupwork Co-ordinator has already proved challenging and exciting. I started my new post by reviewing client comments and suggestions and found that a main focus was that addiction is not Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. From these comments, I have added to the Groupwork Portfolio and FIRST now offer Peer Support on a Tuesday evening and a fortnightly Cycling Group on a Saturday.

“The support. The friendship. The advice offered. Openness. Honesty. Humour. Bond. Camaraderie. Warmth. The gold bars, Life experience tales and inspiration”

The Cycling Group has proved extremely popular with those who attend thoroughly enjoying the fresh air and cycle trails. They report feeling fitter and enjoy the social aspect as well. Grant helps me with this group and we vary the routes regularly and as long as the client has a bicycle, we take care of the safety aspect and getting the client and their bike to the starting point!



The start of a Gardening Group is also very exciting and is due to start on 25th May. With the help of Agnes Westwood, Auchmuty Learning Centre, FIRST has managed to source an allotment and Agnes' support has been instrumental in the commencement of this group. Clients will be able to grow their own fruit and vegetables and take them home and will also provide the opportunity to promote healthy eating.



Paul Watson
Activity Based Groupwork Co-ordinator

“Getting support from the group and workers, enjoy the group. Great in helping me in my recovery and knowing there is support out there. Getting out of my house and talking about anything that comes up in the group.”

“I enjoy everything about Peer Support group because we all get on very well and they’re all a good bunch of folk. Also I feel it has helped me open up to the group and has really built up my confidence”



“I enjoy the men’s group and the volunteering, it’s good at keeping me busy”

“I enjoy everything about Peer Support group because we all get on very well and they’re all a good bunch of folk. Also I feel it has helped me open up to the group and has really built up my confidence”



“Walk and Talk has been really good cant wait till I get back on again I enjoyed the different walks and the people on the group have been good to get on with”

Therapy Based Groupwork

Anxiety Management and Auricular Acupuncture continue to run regularly with sessions at various locations across Fife.

“Sharing and interacting with the group/facilitator about my problems. Techniques learned to de-stress and make my life manageable. Understanding more about the triggers that can create panic, anxiety and stress. Starting to understand mindfulness. (All good for me)”

Anxiety Management is run over a four week block and helps clients recognise and understand the symptoms of anxiety, both physical and emotional. It teaches clients a range of coping skills to help minimise the impact of their symptoms and reduce the frequency of episodes.

“I found it very useful that it was in a group environment, Caroline was a great trainer, I also learned a lot from other group participants who are going through some of the same problems/issues as myself which makes me feel more “normal” whatever that is”

Auricular Acupuncture takes place on a weekly basis and clients can attend whenever they feel that it would particularly be of benefit. It is recommended that a minimum of six sessions are attended to experience the maximum benefit. This therapy involves inserting five small pins into specific points of both ears, followed by forty minutes of relaxation in a quiet, non-stimulating environment. It has been proven that acupuncture can improve sleep patterns, emotional well-being, energy levels and help reduce cravings and stress levels.

Due to the nature of these therapeutic groups, clients can also request to receive these on a one-to-one basis.

**Caroline Mackenzie
Therapy Based Groupwork Co-ordinator**

“I suffered from chronic insomnia for a lot of years and first ever session of acupuncture gave me two consecutive nights of uninterrupted sleep. This was most welcome. I’ll come back anytime sleep issues arise”

“I believe that it is actually having a positive effect on my sleep pattern, and also my relaxation. It’s also a nice quiet restful hour in the day”

RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION

The last year for the Residential Rehabilitation Service has been a challenge, mainly due to limited funds and working on a tight budget. Despite this the Residential Rehabilitation Service has continued to support people into rehab and has enabled those accessing rehab to change their lives and focus on recovery. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Phoenix Futures and Abbeycare for their ongoing support and excellent service provision, and Fife Council for their financial support. I am sure those who have accessed residential rehab over the last three years will agree that going into rehab is only the start of the recovery journey and the next step of the journey is the hardest of all. Getting involved in recovery focused activities and being part of the recovery community is vital for personal development and building a positive future.

Liz Nardone

Residential Rehabilitation Assessor / Co-ordinator

Residential Rehabilitation Client Story

Lauren's Story I was always known as a good kid, never struggled in school, always done well at things I turned my hand too. I guess you could say my future looked bright. Good jobs, good friends and family around me was my life for a few years but it wasn't to last. I always enjoyed partying and that lifestyle that was attached but it began to spiral and alcohol and party drugs were soon in my path, this progressed for years until I began to lose the ability to function like a normal person. I lost jobs, ruined relationships and drug use spiralled to heroin, which brought me to my knees.

My life felt hopeless, it had become centred around drugs and desperation. I was unable to put my son's and family needs before the use of drugs, everything became a distant second. My physical and mental health was at an all time low. Numerous hospital visits and the fear of losing my life hung over me like a dark cloud, but I was still unable to stop by myself. Desperation and fear brought me to FIRST, I was willing to try and do anything to have some sort of a chance at life for myself and my son.

I met Liz (FIRST) and the prospect of doing a rehab treatment centre was discussed, this gave me a glimmer of hope as I had tried and failed to stop drugs many times at home. I went to the safety of a treatment centre away from my son which was so difficult but I knew I had nothing to offer him as a mum unless I was able to get the help I needed. This gave me time and a safe place to get off drugs and talk about a lot of issues. People really seemed to care and wanted to help but I knew I had to help myself and take full advantage of this opportunity. I was scared of change but I had nothing to lose.

I stayed in treatment for 4 months and since leaving I have stayed clean by following the advice and guidance I received. I have realised I can only stay clean by linking into support and sharing my problems and difficulties with others, as I had proven long ago I couldn't do this alone. I go to fellowship meetings and keep company with other people in recovery who have been through similar experiences and can relate to and understand me.

I have an enormous amount of gratitude to FIRST, who played the most vital role in my journey to recovery, when my path looked bleak and dark they helped guide me on the right track. My relationships with my son is happy and most importantly he is safe and he feels safe! And I am happy, happy and secure in myself and once again my future looks bright!

————— AFTER REHAB —————

Those individuals who have continued the recovery journey have found a variety of ways to fill their time, develop themselves and give something back to their community.

Some of these activities include:

- Voluntary Work**
- Street Soccer**
- Homeless World Cup**
- SDF Training**
- SMART Recovery**
- Peer mentoring**
- Mutual Aid**
- Restoration**
- College courses**
- FIRST groups**
- Community Programmes/groups**
- Voyage of Recovery**
- Stand International**
- Football coaching training**

The list goes on and on. Each individual finds their own way forward with what motivates and interests them.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

For those in recovery, it is important that they receive ongoing support from their peers and from their families. The monthly Family Support Group based at FIRST plays a vital part in offering a safe open forum for families to come together and talk about the issues that affect them and their family members. This group has enabled those in recovery and those planning to go to rehab to see addiction from the perspective of their family, and allows the family members to develop a better understanding of addiction.

Family Support Comments

“It really helps with my relationship with my mum. My mum and I get good support from attending. It helps when we meet other families with same issues and gives hope that Phoenix really can work. It lets me hear how my addiction has affected my mother and family... you see the power of example.”

“I personally felt it gave me hope, as this was the first time I have ever been with parents of other addicts and how I realised we were all feeling the same. Watching clients doing well and seeing their families lives turn around. Everyone rooting for all clients to succeed gives a good feeling of belonging. Really wish there were more services available like FIRST in Fife. When a family is going through Drug addiction they feel so isolated. This service gives hope and strength to all who attend. Look forward to each meeting. Hope this service continues as I feel families need this, also clients see that their parents don't feel so isolated as they are not the only ones dealing with drug dysfunction. Brilliant service.”

“These monthly family support meetings are a great help to me and my wife. We understand more about addicts and talk about our daughter’s addiction more. It is good to meet families that are in the same situation as us and understand the troubles that we are going through as we understand the troubles they are going through. The meetings are the only way we can talk and receive benefits from sharing. I am sure that there are lots of families out there that would benefit from these meetings as we do.”

“It is good for me to hear about how addiction has affected our families throughout the years. I never looked at the damage my actions had on my family and loved ones. This group has helped me to build bonds back up with family that I thought I’d never get back. It also gives families an understanding surrounding our behaviors from the past. It’s massive to let loved ones know that they are not alone and there is support for them. It’s a great place to start, a healing process and build up the bonds and relationships that have been broken.”

“I think the Family Support Meetings are very beneficial to all involved. I have personally benefitted from attending as I have learned that I am not alone in my experience of having an addict in the family and being able to talk and listen to other parents makes me feel better as you realise that everybody has been through very bad times and have had very similar problems. When you know everybody is in the same situation you can talk freely without fear of being judged, which maybe you cannot do with friends who do not understand, through no fault of their own, the devastation of having an addict in the family and the need to support them. Also, when you hear a share, it helps you understand some of the reasons for addiction and the sharer also seems to benefit as one of the solutions to addictions seems to be to talk and share and not keep everything inside. Everybody gets the chance to talk and seeing some of the former addicts there that have been clean for months and in some cases years, it gives everybody hope which is a big, big help.”

“Attending this group is a great experience. By attending this group it lifts my spirit. I thoroughly enjoy attending this group and look forward to attending it every four weeks.”

“As a family member attending this group has made me realise there is a general need for more help in the community for groups like FIRST. I think this place gives guys a safe place to share without being judged. I have gained so much more knowledge and understanding as to why these groups are so important. I respect all and thankyou for sharing. I love how all support each other sincerely :) thank you!!”

“I really enjoy attending this group as I can relate to a lot that people who share and can identify with experiences others have been through. It lets me let people know where my head is at. It also lets me know I am not alone with thoughts that I have as others are feeling the same as me at times.”

“This group helps me and my family loads, as we can talk openly and honestly in a safe, controlled environment about my addiction and how it has affected each of us. This group especially helps my family as there’s nowhere else really in our area from them to turn to, and they’ve also lived with the secrecy and shame of my addiction for many years, but at this group they can speak to other parents/ family members who are going through the same issues and who understand them.”

PEER RECOVERY GROUP

The Peer Recovery Group offers support to those people who want to make changes for themselves and to support their peers in the process. This group meets on a weekly basis and is specifically for those individuals who have a common experience of residential rehab. This enables them to continue to approach recovery in an open and honest forum focusing on the skills and knowledge they gained from their time in rehab. I'd like to thank Tommy Kennedy for his commitment to this group and wish him well as he undertakes his Addiction Worker Training with SDF.

Peer Recovery Comments

"Well I am now 1006 day complete abstinent (wow). I have a really good life. I have my wee boy staying at my house in Glasgow every second weekend from Fri-Sun. I am about to start work with the "SDF-AWTP". I have options about life now. I have a great tool box of things I can do when struggling. I am HAPPY. I've worked on myself big time to better myself"

"It gives you the time to realize the things you didn't know about yourself while you were in addiction. The most important thing is that everything starts with a thought, then a feeling then an action then a consequence."

"In spite of a relapse shortly after completing my programme, I find myself daily, sometimes hourly, remembering and using things that I learned or was reminded about at Phoenix. My life is better than it has ever been, my loved ones now have trust and faith in me, and when I wake each morning my first thoughts are "I'm glad I'm me, I like me" instead of "Where can I get a drink?". Most importantly, I now have trust and faith in myself."

"This group is a chance to deal with your problems from the previous week. A chance to talk so you can change things before they go out of control. To speak about progress in your life with other people in similar situation."

"This group provides fantastic support, to be able to talk about your recovery and hopes, fears and dreams for the future with your peers is invaluable. Because some of us also have a shared experience (Phoenix Residential Service) it is helpful to remember things from the programme and continue to apply them to our lives."

COMMITMENT TO REHAB

Making the decision to go to Residential rehabilitation is a huge step and requires motivation and commitment. The preparatory work though necessary does not fully prepare the individual for the experience they will have from the moment they walk through the doors of their chosen rehab. All the rehabs available through FIRST offer something different, however they all require a willingness to accept the need for changes to thoughts, attitudes and behaviours in order to enable the individual to understand what they need to break the cycle of their addiction.

Rehab offers many opportunities and those who have enjoyed the benefits of experiencing Residential Rehabilitation always talk about how hard it was but how much fun they had and how their experience changed their life. Forming a daily routine, following a programme and developing strong peer supports are part of the rehab experience. Being able to build trusting and honest relationships with a Key Worker and other peers allows the individual to look at themselves and make the changes that promote a healthy lifestyle.

This gives a strong basis on which ongoing recovery can be formed.

I recently had the great pleasure of attending the annual graduation ceremony of Phoenix Futures in Glasgow where three Fifers were graduating. It was emotional and heart warming to see how far those individuals have travelled in their recovery journey. All are experiencing positive things in their lives and are happy in the choices they are making.

Liz Nardone
Residential Rehabilitation Assessor / Co-ordinator

Of the 21 clients who have successfully completed the full residential programme 81% are still in recovery between 3 and 29 months later.

First

Fife Intensive Rehabilitation
& Substance Misuse Team

www.firstforfife.co.uk

www.facebook.co.uk/firstforfife

 01592 585960

 07598 450959

 01592 585965

 enquiries@firstforfife.co.uk

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