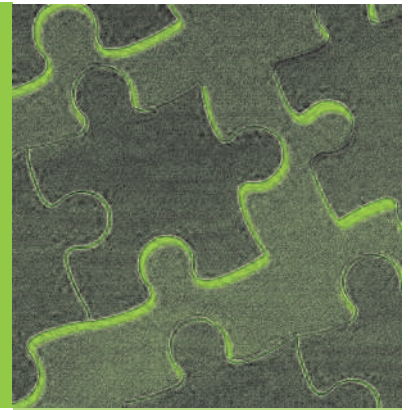


# EMBRACE

Newsletter of the Embrace Project: Acting together on alcohol, children, families and domestic abuse

Volume 1 Issue 3 March 2009



## Embrace projects move ahead

*Welcome to the third newsletter of Embrace, the Alcohol Concern children, families and domestic abuse project.*

The Embrace pilot sites – nine non-statutory alcohol services based in six of the English regions – have been moving quickly to make their services more family focused and more responsive to domestic abuse issues.

Anne Delargy describes some of the ways the Embrace sites have been developing over the past few months.

In this phase of the Embrace project, the pilot sites are working on building partnerships with children and families services and domestic abuse agencies; looking at current responses by their agency to these issues; and examining their policies and procedures, including recording mechanisms, in the light of their new focus.

### **Birmingham**

The Embrace pilot site – Sifa/Fireside – is very actively involved in the new Birmingham Domestic Violence Forum sub-group on alcohol, drugs and mental health. The sub-group is currently organising training and developing policies, procedures and protocols including referral pathways between substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health services. All Sifa/Fireside alcohol service staff are attending domestic abuse training run by Women's Aid.

### **Blackpool**

ADS Blackpool reports that partnerships with children's services are developing well: the local Young People's Substance Misuse service is running a seminar on 'think family' which the alcohol project is involved in; and the Embrace pilot site is hosting a lunch for all children's agencies and the Family Intervention Programme where practitioners can meet and swap information about what their services can offer. Blackpool ADS regularly attends the local MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) where information is shared on the most serious domestic abuse cases. ADS also attends the local Hidden Harm Forum.

### **Gateshead**

The Embrace pilot site - Oasis (NECA) has received funding from the local Domestic Violence Forum to provide alcohol-related DV posters (available from Women's Aid). Special displays on domestic abuse and alcohol have been organised, targeted on Children and Family Centres and GP surgeries.

## Contents

1 Embrace pilots move ahead

3 Embrace project news

4 Developments - children and families

4 Developments - domestic violence

6 Conferences, training and events

If you would like any information, events or developments included in future editions of the Embrace newsletter please Email: Christine Toft at [ctoft@alcoholconcern.org.uk](mailto:ctoft@alcoholconcern.org.uk) or Tel: 020 7264 0527. Web: [alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://alcoholconcern.org.uk)



All staff are committed to improving the service's response: domestic abuse is discussed at all team meetings; and staff have been very willing to undertake an exchange of workers with other partners, for instance Victim Support. The MARAC has now provided funds for training for all partners in developing referral pathways for domestic abuse.

### **Hull**

The Embrace pilot site (Alcohol and Drugs Service) has introduced a new monitoring tool on domestic abuse which was designed in consultation with the local PCT Strategic Lead on Domestic Violence. An information pack on domestic abuse with contact details has been developed and is available in all counselling rooms. They are also planning to exchange training with domestic abuse services, and have arranged with Women's Aid that when women are accompanied to the alcohol service by their partners there will be an opportunity to see a Women's Aid worker along with their alcohol worker without their partner knowing. The two sectors have also exchanged referral forms, so that each knows the other's referral process and criteria.

### **Lambeth, London**

The local alcohol service - ARP Choices - has signed up to the Lambeth DV policy and protocols and attended training on domestic abuse. They have also given two very well-received training sessions on alcohol issues to local refuges - one to professionals and one to women at the specialist Asian refuge. The whole of the Alcohol Recovery Project/Rugby House recently adopted new policies and protocols on domestic abuse and child protection and they are now looking at how their recording of both issues can be incorporated into the service's database.

### **Northampton**

The alcohol service (Aquarius) is working with the local Family Work project on a Family Assessment, and will be looking at co-working with domestic abuse agencies on triage and assessment forms so that all areas of concern are addressed. A local protocol on referral pathways for domestic abuse has already been drafted. Aquarius plans to have all staff trained in Child Protection issues in the next six months; and to conduct training on domestic abuse and Protection of Vulnerable Adults in the next 12 months.

The Embrace pilot site is making some strong contacts with a range of local services, particularly in the domestic abuse field. Through information exchange visits and training, they have identified a gap in partner services' awareness of alcohol issues.

### **Nottingham**

The Embrace pilot site, the alcohol prevention and advisory service (apas) reports that, following a presentation to Nottingham Domestic Violence Forum they have been invited to attend the DV Forum's quarterly meetings. They have arranged swop training with Women's Aid, who will provide training on domestic abuse issues to all apas workers. All staff will also receive training on the Hidden

Harm agenda in May. Apas are in the process of formalising a referral process to STARS project, the Children's Society specialist project for children affected by parental substance misuse. They are also amending and updating their assessment document, and have devised a new policy and procedure on domestic abuse which was recently agreed by their board of directors. All staff have been provided with a copy of the Nottingham Domestic Violence Service Directory. The Embrace site has agreed to contribute to the Direct Enquiry training that is being offered to all organisations in the city. Direct Enquiry is a questionnaire that assists in identifying whether a male who says he is a victim/survivor of domestic abuse is really a survivor or actually a perpetrator claiming to be a victim/ survivor. They are also intending to send members of staff to MARAC training that has been offered by Nottingham Crime and Drug Partnership as only one member of staff is MARAC trained at present.

### **Rochdale**

The partnership with children's services is developing well: all alcohol services staff have been trained in using the Comprehensive Assessment Framework (CAF) and Hidden Harm and more training – for new staff – is planned. The local Hidden Harm Forum recently held a scoping exercise which revealed gaps across the 20 services involved, and action is now being planned across the Borough to meet them. Rochdale ADS aims to use their agency's protocols on mental health and Child Protection, which include a clear and effective tracking system, as the model for a protocol on dealing with domestic abuse. Several staff have a particular interest in domestic abuse issues; after the first Embrace training, the agency held a briefing meeting to disseminate the learning gained, and this, as well as domestic abuse training for the whole staff, has contributed to the start of a culture change within the agency.

### **Sunderland**

Staff from the local alcohol service, the North East Regional Alcohol Forum (NERAF), a peer-led agency, have been attending the Operations Group of the Sunderland Domestic Violence Partnership and have been involved in developing the local DV Action Plan, which references Embrace. The Sunderland Safer Communities Team has appointed a worker to work with victims on alcohol and substance misuse issues, and the local Victim Support service is now providing initial intervention and brief interventions for alcohol misuse where victims are using alcohol as a coping mechanism. The new Sunderland Family Drug and Alcohol Court started in March 2009.

### **Overview**

- The Embrace sites report high levels of commitment from staff and management, particularly for building partnerships. This has included: inviting partners to address staff/team meetings; willingness to build partnerships including worker exchanges; training swops; satellite services.
- Most areas have had or are planning training for all

staff in domestic abuse, Hidden Harm, and Common Assessment Frameworks.

- All the sites are looking at their existing policies, procedures and protocols in the light of their new focus on children families and domestic abuse.
- Most services are in the process of rapid expansion as new monies come through for alcohol; and some have just been through the difficult process of tendering.
- Several sites are in the throes of installing new databases

and are looking at how they can improve their recording and monitoring of children, families and domestic abuse issues, which are at the moment only being recorded in case/supervision notes in most services.

- One of the challenges identified by the sites in building partnerships has been the level of awareness and knowledge of alcohol among partners; another has been lack of resources (especially time!) to devote to partnerships and to developing family-focused work generally.

# Embrace Project News

*With a new staff team in place, Embrace at Alcohol Concern has also been busy. Over the past two months, we have produced new publications, held training for the pilot sites, and started the Action Research and external evaluation of the project.*

## Staff:

**Carole Sired** has now taken up the position of Administrator for the Embrace team. Carole was a Project Officer for Alcohol Concern's Networking Distant Neighbours project and more recently has been working as a researcher and consultant in the public health and alcohol field.

Carole brings with her many years' experience in alcohol services; she was a social care/education worker at the Bow Self Help Alcohol Recovery Programme and later was the Community Care Assessor for Tower Hamlets Association for Alcohol Services and Problems.

**Christine Toft** joined Embrace as Project Officer in March. Christine's background is as an alcohol therapist and she worked at the Family Alcohol Service in Camden from its launch in 2002. Her interest in domestic abuse led her to develop positive partnership working in the locality to ensure a multi agency approach.

Christine joined Hertfordshire County Council where she continued to raise awareness regarding domestic abuse, alcohol and the family from a more strategic position. Before joining Embrace she was an independent consultant working with many organisations in the related fields of domestic abuse and alcohol.

## Publications:

Embrace has now produced a leaflet explaining the project; and the first of three Knowledge Sets for alcohol services, commissioners and policy makers, as well as their partners in the children, families and domestic abuse fields.

The Knowledge Sets aim to provide the alcohol and related fields with basic information that they will need in order to think family and think safety.

The first Knowledge Set is on domestic abuse and covers:

- The evidence base, myths and realities
- Policy frameworks
- Practice issues including case studies

- Recommendations
- Safe practice guidance for alcohol services
- Useful contacts

Please contact [embrace@alcoholconcern.org.uk](mailto:embrace@alcoholconcern.org.uk) if you would like to receive copies of the leaflet and/or Knowledge Set.

## Training:

Embrace held its second training session for the nine pilot sites on 30 March. The training, 'Safer working with domestic abuse' was presented by Francis Potter and Chris Newman of the Stella Project. The event was held in Manchester and the Lancashire Hotpot went down a treat at lunchtime! Contact [embrace@alcoholconcern.org.uk](mailto:embrace@alcoholconcern.org.uk) for details and materials from the day.

Embrace training of the pilot sites continues in 2009 with:

- 10 June - Developing tools including recording mechanisms
- 30 September - Developing skills for working with parents
- December - Devising and monitoring outcomes

## Action research:

The Embrace project is conducting Action Research with the pilot sites over 2009/2010. Action Research involves planning, acting, observing, reflecting and then returning back to planning and repeating the cycle.

This is a flexible spiral process which allows action (change, improvement) and research (understanding, knowledge) to be achieved at the same time.

The aim of the Action Research is to help the pilot sites to plan, act, observe and reflect on their practice in the process of making their services more family focused and more aware of domestic abuse. It is intended that the results will give us a clear, practice-based picture of what changes the alcohol field - services, commissioners and policy makers - need to make to respond to this challenge. It is as important to explore what difficulties they face in doing this work as to know how they have overcome them.

# Embracing News: Developments

## Children and Families

### CASA Family Service embarks on new projects

Hazel Jordan, Senior Manager of CASA Family Service, writes:

CASA Family Service offers therapeutic and practical support to families affected by parental substance misuse. We use a strengths based model that aims to support protective parenting and resilience in children and young people. We also offer consultation and training to other professionals working with 'hidden harm'.

We have been open since July 2006 and during this time most of our referrals have come from adult substance misuse agencies and Children's Social Care (Social Services.) While we welcome all these referrals, we know that there are many families affected by parental substance misuse who are not currently in touch with those services. They may not know there is specialised support available or may feel wary of approaching an unknown service. We are very excited that we now have the opportunity to implement two projects which will bring our service to universal children's services and reach families who have unmet needs. We believe the projects will also enable us to intervene and reduce the potential impact of parental substance misuse at an earlier stage.

In November 2008 we were delighted to be awarded three years' funding from Comic Relief to establish satellite services in four Children's Centres across the borough. We intend to offer a direct service, as well as raise awareness of the needs of families affected by parental alcohol misuse. In each centre we will have a regular weekly presence so that we can offer initial sessions to families in a setting with which they are familiar and also work jointly with other professionals. We hope to contribute to programmes run at the children's centres and to provide consultation and training to staff.

Following our news from Comic Relief, we were once again delighted to receive funding till March 2011 from EC1 New Deal to provide a similar service in a local area of high need. This project is targeted at older children and young people. We plan to have a regular satellite presence at the local secondary school where there is multi-agency input as part of extended schools provision.

The projects are at a very early stage but moving on well. We have recruited two new project workers who have rapidly become part of our team. We are busy meeting with potential partners and building on our well established links within the local network of services. Jenny Carpenter, CASA Family Service Project Manager, has been involved in training family support workers from children's centres. We are very much looking forward to extending our service, meeting new families, making new links with local services and learning as we go along. Comic Relief will be disseminating the learning from projects on their programme, so we will be able to share our experience. We will keep you posted.

### Every Child Matters - updated information sharing guidance

The cross government information sharing guidance originally published April 2006 has been brought up to date to reflect current policy and extended to cover practitioners working with adults and families as well as those working with children and young people. The revised guidance and support materials were published in late 2008.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/search/IG00340/>

### Addaction report on children of drug using parents

Addaction has published a new report on the impact on children of parents using drugs. *Trouble and Love* also reports on the Addaction *Breaking the Cycle* project, which has seen around 200 parents with drugs and alcohol problems and 350 family members including children since it was set up in 2005.

[http://www.addaction.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/trouble\\_and\\_love.pdf](http://www.addaction.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/trouble_and_love.pdf)

## Support for practitioners and young people affected by parents' alcohol use

The STARS National Initiative is now building and developing work specifically on parental alcohol misuse. STARS aims to ensure that everyone who works with children, young people and families where there is parental drug and alcohol misuse has access to support, resources, information and protocols in order to assess risk and provide support. Anne Delargy of Embrace recently ran two workshops – for 70 professionals - on children affected by domestic abuse and parents misusing alcohol at the STARS Conference in Nottingham.

The STARS National Initiative provides:

- Practitioners Forum – gives Practitioners working or planning to work with this group of children the chance to develop networks so that good practice and learning can be shared and support offered.
- A Children and Young People's Forum – gives children and young people from across England the opportunity to meet other children and share their experiences of parental substance misuse.
- A Website

Membership of the STARS National Initiative is free - to sign up visit [www.parentsusingdrugs.org.uk](http://www.parentsusingdrugs.org.uk)

## 'Think Family' developments

Following the Government's Families at Risk Review, the 'Think Family' approach was developed to improve the support offered to vulnerable children and adults within the same family. The Department of Children, Schools and Families has now issued draft guidance on what 'thinking family' actually means. Adult services which 'think family':

- Consider the family situation in all areas of their work
- Use whole family assessments where needed to establish how the needs of other family members affect their client and how meeting those needs might benefit their client
- Work with other local agencies to identify, refer and plan how the needs of other family members can be met alongside those of their client, for example through referral to drug or alcohol services or parenting support programmes
- Seek out specialist advice and support when multiple or complex needs are identified e.g. multi-agency whole family support
- Agree how information can be shared to identify those in need or at risk and plan the most appropriate support
- Champion 'think family' practice through staff training and recruitment and the information they provide to service users and the public
- Operate strict local protocols for safeguarding children who may be at risk and when domestic violence is suspected.

## Guidance on safeguarding children of drug using parents

The National Treatment Agency (NTA) has published guidance on safeguarding the children of drug misusing parents. It includes a briefing on Hidden Harm, the NHS Clinical Guidelines, and the National Drugs Strategy 2008, as well as a useful checklist for services and commissioners dealing with drug misusing parents.

[www.nta.nhs.uk/areas/treatment\\_planning/treatment\\_plans\\_2009.../safeguarding\\_the\\_children\\_of\\_drug\\_misusing\\_parents\\_1208](http://www.nta.nhs.uk/areas/treatment_planning/treatment_plans_2009.../safeguarding_the_children_of_drug_misusing_parents_1208)

## Domestic abuse

### Contact activity providers

CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory Support Services) has produced a list of contact activity providers. This can be used to facilitate and monitor contact under the new provisions introduced under the Children and Adoption Act 2006. It sets out the providers by region in three categories of service:

- Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes
- Mediation
- Parenting Information Programmes

Under the Act, individuals directed to undertake contact activities and who are publicly funded will not have to pay and will be fully subsidised by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). However other individuals will have to pay unless they can claim financial hardship.

Contact cafcass for details <http://www.cafcass.gov.uk>

### Government support for DV services

A further £3.5m to tackle interpersonal violence including continuing to expand numbers of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) that bring relevant organisations together to identify high risk victims as early as possible; More details about MARACs <http://www.caada.org.uk>.

£860,000 to support a range of domestic violence helplines that provide free counselling and advice including the National Domestic Violence Helpline, Respect, Broken Rainbow for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender victims and the Men's Advice Line (See Embrace Resource Supplement for contacts)

The Home Office website has a new dedicated section on domestic violence: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence>

## New services for victims of domestic violence

Jacqui Smith and the new Victims' Champion Sara Payne recently launched a new guide aimed at helping victims of domestic violence alongside new funding for support services.

The purse-sized guide shows how friends and family-members can recognise if someone is suffering from domestic violence and sets out what practical support is available.

## Domestic violence – a child's view

The NSPCC has launched a campaign calling on the government to see domestic violence from a child's point of view. Every year over 750,000 children experience domestic violence and this can cause serious emotional harm. In homes where there is domestic violence, children may also be physically and sexually abused themselves. [www.nspcc.org.uk/dvcampaign](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/dvcampaign)

## Help for victims from Banks

The Home Office has been working closely with the British Bankers' Association to agree additional banking support for victims. This means, for example, that victims can open new independent accounts with a letter from a refuge manager confirming their circumstances, as opposed to the usual multiple proofs of identification which may be in the possession of, or access-controlled by the abuser. Victims can also open a new bank account giving just a PO box as their new address - thus protecting them and their independence.

## Children injured in parental disputes

More than 300,000 children have been injured trying to stop arguments between adults at home. More than one in 20 11- to 16-year-olds have suffered injuries such as cuts and bruises while intervening in rows, the NSPCC says.

# Conferences, training and events

## Tackling Alcohol Related Anti-Social Behaviour

(23 April 2009)

Forthcoming legislation and tools for dealing with young drinkers; responsible licensing; how alcohol treatment services can prevent re-offending; preventative education programmes; the relationship between domestic violence and alcohol.

### Contact:

Places can be booked by e-mailing delegate details directly to [david.moffat@capita.co.uk](mailto:david.moffat@capita.co.uk) using Booking Reference Code TSDM.

## NSPCC: Domestic violence: children's perspectives and professional responses - Building bridges to safeguard children

(12 May 2009)

This conference aims to share understanding of how professionals are responding to children living with domestic violence. Limited bursary places are available, to obtain one please apply in writing).

### Contact:

Radha Singh (NSPCC events coordinator) on 020 7825 2760 or email [rsingh@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:rsingh@nspcc.org.uk)

## Alcohol Concern/ADFAM - Safety First

(18 May 2009)

Children and families affected by alcohol misuse, jointly organised by Alcohol Concern and ADFAM in London.

The organisers are offering our contacts a 30% discount on the standard delegate rate. To qualify for the discount, please quote GCMHA30 when booking.

### Contact:

<http://www.pavpub.com/pavpub/conferences/showfull.asp?Conference=823>

To register, fill in the booking form and either fax it to Pavilion conference organisers on 0844 880 5062, or email them at [info@pavpub.com](mailto:info@pavpub.com). Alternatively you can call 0844 880 5061.

## ADFAM and Kent Council on Addiction Hidden Harm Families, drugs and alcohol: innovations in practice, new insights from research

(18 June 2009)

\*\*10% discount for bookings received before 17 April Quote ref DIS1009\*\*

### Contact:

Booking details contact Email: [tpd@kca.org.uk](mailto:tpd@kca.org.uk)

# ABOUT ALCOHOL CONCERN

Alcohol Concern is the national agency on alcohol misuse. We work to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems and their families.



Alcohol Concern  
Making Sense of Alcohol