

Acknowledgements

The Forum would like to thank:

Every service user who has attended any of our meetings

Professionals who have taken time to come and give information to, and seek information from the forum.

The Crime and Drugs Partnership for the resources they continue to commit and support they provide.

Mac for designing the logo and putting together this report.
Penny for proof reading

Staff at the Nottingham Voluntary Action Centre, our host venue, for their patience and excellent service.

And to all the services in Nottingham who continue to support the aims of this forum.

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A written report of each meeting is sent to:

Nottinghamshire County Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Nottingham CDP (formerly City DAAT)

Both Adult Substance Misuse Joint Commissioning Groups
County's "Livin' It" team (an advocacy service for users & carers)
City's Alcohol Reference Group

Borough Drug & Alcohol Reference Groups (DARGs) X 3

The NHS Primary Care Trusts

The Primary Care Trust's Patient & Public Involvement Forums (PPIFs)

All Drug/Alcohol (& associated) services in Greater Nottingham

Alcohol Liaison Nurses at Queens Medical Centre and City Hospital

The Health Overview & Scrutiny Committees of the City & County councils.

The National Treatment Agency

There's so much bureaucracy around, you can get put off because it's all bollocks. So it's been really good to hear so many positive things are starting to happen. *Paul*

Service User & Carer Involvement Officer's Report

When I came into post it was clear that involvement of service users had to include both drugs and alcohol. With the DAAT becoming the Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP) and adopting a wider remit across the City, it was essential that the views of all service users affected by substance misuse be heard at the highest level.

The Alcohol Service User Forum had done excellent work since 2002, but members felt that it was being under-utilised as the views and opinions of the Forum were not being heard as effectively as they could be.

After years of campaigning for change, it seemed all the changes were coming at once. Models of Care for Alcohol Misuse, a City Alcohol Strategy, the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and the PCT restructure of alcohol services all needed input from service users, so it was essential that there were effective lines of communication in place.

A proposal was put to the Forum to come into line with the City Drug/Ex Drug Users Forum format and have direct involvement with the CDP. The proposal was accepted by members of the Forum, on condition that the Partnership Development Team continued its involvement in order to maintain the independence and impartiality of ASUF. I.e. that it wouldn't be a CDP "take over".

In January, the new style Forum met for the first time in its new format, jointly facilitated by myself and Maggy Topley. The Forum now meets every month for three hours and has increased the number of places from 20 to 30. We set about formulating a new mission statement, ground rules and a Priority Action Plan for the year to give clear direction to our work.

Efforts were made to attract representation from every service working in the field of alcohol misuse and all related services. Our list of services represented demonstrates clearly that ASUF is a broad forum of opinion and experiences and represents the whole spectrum of treatment and support.

Alcoholics Anonymous • Health Shop • Double Impact •
Step Forward • The Priory • Studio House • Women's Group @ DI •
AI-Anon • Porchester Day Unit • New Castle House • NADT • Framework •
Progress to work • BAC -IN • Ken Wilde House • The Sanctuary •
YMCA Dry Floor • APAS • John Storer Clinic • Narcotics Anonymous •
Salvation Army • HLG • CJIT • Sneinton House • Windmill Practice •
Compass • Sneinton Hermitage • Wet Centre

Amongst the changes the Forum members suggested towards creating a new-look, more dynamic Forum were the creation of a logo and house style for all publications; more formal minute taking of meetings and the sending of these in a report-style presentation to all relevant bodies.

Additionally there have been greater efforts made to invite professional workers from across the whole spectrum of treatment provision to attend the Forum and see how it works whilst informing members of the range of options available. This two-way networking has proved popular and successful.

There remain big challenges ahead in 2007 and lots of work to do but I feel that we as a Forum are now in a much stronger and more positive position to do this and I would like to personally thank the Forum members for their commitment, enthusiasm and sheer professionalism in making this possible.

Glen Jarvis, CDP

Alcohol Service Users' Forum



Est. 2002

Annual Report 2006



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"It gives me the feeling that my views are respected and listened to." *Phil*

WHAT IS THE ALCOHOL SERVICE USERS' FORUM?

The Forum is a chance for users or ex-users of alcohol services in Greater Nottingham to have their say about those services and try to make a real difference to services in the area. People are welcome to attend in their own right or they can come representing a group of others. That way we can ensure we get a wide spread of experience at the meetings and the views expressed therefore carry more weight.

Professionals are not allowed to come to the meetings unless they have been invited, so that people's confidentiality and anonymity can be protected and those present feel safe enough to express their true feelings. People can also join the Forum if they are unable to make the meetings as they can be kept involved in other ways e.g. correspondence, email or telephone contact.

The Forum was set up in October 2002 at the request of service planners on the City DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team),

as a way of making sure they had access to services users' views when it came to making improvements or changes to the services they were paying for. Views from the Forum were sent to the DAATs in both City and County and to relevant service planners in the Local Authorities, NHS Trusts and all drug/alcohol services.

For the first 3 years the Forum met every 2 months on a Thursday evening and was run by the Partnership Development Team (PDT), who are an **independent and neutral** resource for this kind of work. Since January 2006, however, it has been co-run by the PDT and Glen Jarvis from the City Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP, formerly DAAT).

The meetings are now longer and more frequent, taking place every month during the day, with a free buffet lunch at the end.

The CDP has taken on all the funding and admin work previously done by the PDT to keep the Forum running

smoothly and, of course, with Glen's direct involvement, we now have a "hotline" to the powers that be, thereby increasing the Forum's influence.

Minutes and reports from the meetings are still sent to the same wide range of services and staff as before and we also now have Forum reps on an even greater number of other service planning committees and groups.

The Forum now has a Mission Statement describing its purpose and we follow a Priority Action Plan each year, to make sure we concentrate our efforts on the aspects of alcohol services that Forum members think are most important or most need improving.

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THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM (PDT) WEBSITE

The PDT website is being redeveloped in order to promote the Forum, hopefully increasing user involvement and participation.

The site will include details of the Forum's aims and objectives, how to join, meeting dates/times, work done so far and what to expect from the meetings.

Minutes from previous meetings, and future agendas, can be posted on the website to keep members, prospective members and other affiliated parties informed as to the progress made and issues being covered.

The site will also highlight services, events and news items and issues relevant to the Forum & its members to ensure service users are kept up to date. Key documents and relevant links will also be added, with the hope of creating a 'portal' for alcohol service users to access information about the forum, current policies, and useful services.

The site will eventually act as a channel of communication for service users who are unable to attend meetings but wish to contribute via an online discussion forum.
We hope to have the site up and running by January 2007

Ed Starr. PDT



HAVE WE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

It has been a busy year! It is never easy to prove that you have been instrumental in bringing about change, but there is no doubt that the new-style Forum has increased influence.

There are over one hundred members of the Forum now, who are consulted and kept informed of our work. Thirty of them attend the monthly meetings. More new members are engaging with the Forum than ever before and by working alongside the City Drug Forum on the "Speak Out" events we are reaching out to more people who are not engaged in services.

A major area of concern has been the planned PCT cuts to voluntary sector alcohol provision which were leaked to the media last year. Barely a meeting has gone by where this has not been a major topic of conversation. We have applied pressure for some form of consultation with the PCT since the announcements were made, but have still to see that come to fruition.

Even after the "cuts" were turned into a "restructure" and dressed up as a part of the implementation of 'Models of Care for Alcohol Misusers' the PCT were still oblivious to the views of the NHS patients they are supposed to serve.

As a forum we feel that we have a crucial role to play in exposing this kind of blatant flouting of accountability and responsibility, and will continue to do so.

The alcohol consultation event hosted by the Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP) in March was well attended by service users

and we made a real contribution to the day.

Sharon gave a presentation of her journey through recovery, which was very powerful and many other service users and carers contributed to a book of experiences which was given out to all of the delegates.

Since then we have had many requests for copies of the book. More stories and poems have been added throughout the year and well over 200 copies have been distributed. Although the event was very good, it was disappointing that no report was produced and no recommendations were put forward to the PCT.

Other key changes to the Forum have contributed to the growth of its influence.

The involvement of the Crime and Drugs Partnership has helped to secure the long term future of ASUF. Funding of the Forum is now part of the infrastructure budget of the partnership.

The involvement of Glen Jarvis, from the CDP, has ensured that we have much closer dialogue with the partnership and a direct feed into other partner agencies.

Glen attends the Joint Commissioning Group for the City to directly input feedback from the Forum and make them aware of current issues and concerns.

We are hoping to make a presentation to the joint Commissioning Group (JCG) at some point so that Forum members get to talk directly to the people who make the decisions.

The minutes of the meeting are now written in a report

style, which gives clear and detailed information about the work of the forum, rather than just a brief record.

Key decision makers in the City have fed back that they see great value in the extra detail and get real value from the input of service users.

At every meeting, we have guest speakers from a variety of services. They come to talk about their service and to answer questions. We also invited the Diversity Officer from the CDP to give us training in diversity and to suggest ways that we can make the Forum more accessible and appealing to a wider community.

Representatives of the Forum continue to attend key meetings affecting alcohol policy, as well as some new ones. We have seats on the City Alcohol Reference Group for Maggy, Glen and two Forum members and we have been given a permanent invitation to the APAS Board meetings, to provide service user input and discuss issues.

Members of the Forum will be taking part in media training alongside APAS volunteers early in 2007.

This has been a settling down period for ASUF after the big changes, but we have still seen a lot of progress. 2007 holds plenty of work and opportunities for the Forum. The implementation of Models of Care, The Government's review of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, the long awaited City Alcohol Strategy and the continued "restructure" of alcohol treatment services are just a few of the key areas of work that face us.

ASUF MISSION STATEMENT

The over-arching aims of the Forum are to:

- Improve access to services
- Increase involvement at all levels
- Improve treatment & support options for those affected by alcohol in Greater Nottingham.

"The Forum helped me to gain confidence and greater knowledge of alcohol services."

Sharon

"The Forum's given me a voice."

Sophia



PURPOSE OF THE FORUM

- To give a voice to people with experience of local alcohol treatment and support services.
- To ensure service users are made aware of all the available options of treatment and support, including self help.
- To advocate on behalf of anyone with an alcohol problem who is not engaging with any kind of treatment or support service, including diverse and hidden groups that are currently under represented e.g. women with children.
- To challenge unrealistic practices and attitudes that prevent people from seeking help or getting help, including the way in which alcohol related illness and death is officially recorded.
- To ensure service users are involved in their own treatment plans, from initial assessment to aftercare, including realistic choices about how and when they are treated or supported, and the involvement of family and carers where appropriate.
- To provide group representation at relevant meetings where the interests of service users benefit from our input, and to offer our expert knowledge to help inform local policy.
- To engage effectively with decision makers and bodies responsible for alcohol treatment, in order to influence local provision.
- To feed into the local commissioning process and DAAT Treatment Plans. To challenge PCTs and DAATs to provide realistic choices for alcohol misusers who wish to change their drinking behaviours.
- To ensure that all service users receive a full assessment of their needs, including drug use, housing, education, finance and general health, and that they are referred to other agencies that may be able to assist them, as part of an integrated Care Plan.
- To examine and scrutinise Care Pathways for the client and assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of treatment journeys.
- To challenge decision-makers to provide meaningful aftercare provision and ensure that clients are involved at all levels.
- To identify service user training and development needs.
- To support services and independent user groups in the setting up of service user groups.

PRIORITY ACTION PLAN 2006/7

- PCT review of treatment services – Consultation role
- Mapping of services – after the review
- Service User Charters
- Alcohol Strategy and Treatment Plan – Consultation role
- 'Models Of Care For Alcohol Misusers' implementation
- Client's journey: equitable, effective treatment
- Information availability. Raising the profile of treatment in non treatment venues
- Diversity of group membership
- Treatment and support to a wider community and accessibility
- Aftercare provision
- Care Plans
- Health promotion advice
- Alcohol screening/treatment in Primary Care
- Alcohol detoxification
- Supported Housing
- Entry to workforce, training needs, volunteering

"The ASUF is proof positive that service user involvement *really* does make a difference! It is great to be part of such a lively group, which is committed to actively contributing to alcohol services and to vocalising the needs and opinions of alcohol service clients." *Penny*

