

Collective Advocacy Problematic Substance Use Newsletter

Issue #1 Nov 2020

Collective Advocacy for people with experience of problematic alcohol and drug use



Who we are

AdvoCard is a free and independent advocacy service for adults living in Edinburgh. We have been providing advocacy in the city for 25 years. We received new funding to work with people who have experience of problematic alcohol and drug use. We provide individual and collective advocacy to anyone who wishes to use the service.

The very first PSU newsletter

Inside you will find

More about AdvoCard

Background information

Current news and information

Support services

What's coming up

What is Collective Advocacy

Collective advocacy creates spaces for people to get together, support each other to explore shared issues and find common ground. It supports people to speak up about their experiences, values and expectations. From the years we have been providing an advocacy service, and one thing has been clear and that is those with lived experience of problematic substance use are the experts. It enables people to find a stronger voice, to campaign and influence the agendas and decisions that shape and affect their lives.

Background information

AdvoCard is in the development stage of providing collective advocacy support to those that have experience of problematic alcohol and drug use. The aim and purpose of collective advocacy is to provide a platform for the group to get together, to discuss shared issues, to highlight what they feel is lacking with services across the city, to generate ideas, and to provide the opportunity to contribute to shaping policy. Independence is a key principle and so advocacy is driven by those that use the service. Therefore, the aim is for the members to 'own' the group and set the agenda.

The development of the service has been impacted by Covid and the restrictions imposed by the Government. We are currently providing collective group advocacy online and there are regular meetings.

AdvoCard decided to get started with a newsletter to inform about the group and share information. Ultimately the group will be able to provide the contents of the newsletter and share information that they believe is relevant.

All of this is to support those with lived experience of problematic substance use to have a voice and to ensure that voice is heard.



We want to hear your views

It's those with lived experience of problematic substance use who are the experts on using recovery services and we want to hear from you. We are continually looking for ways for people to express their views and currently we have 2, one of which is a community group which meets every month and the other is an online survey. There is more detailed information on both below.

Community Group Meetings

The Community Group meets on a regular basis, which for November is on the 10th, 17th, and 24th, 1 to 2pm (currently online via Google Meets). The aim of the group is to identify the main issues around using recovery services and to decide what we want to do about that. It's a safe space for people from all walks of life to come together to share their experiences of using recovery services, to support one another, and to share information. The (virtual) door is open to anyone with lived experience of problematic substance use. Contact John Muirhead for more information.



Online Survey

The online survey is there for you to get started in collective advocacy by sharing your views of your views whilst using services. You can complete the survey by yourself or with John, chatting over the phone, as some people have found chatting a better way for them to get across what they want to say. Here's a link to the survey:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/O6MAYZ/>

Or give John a call on 07884 741 686



News and information

Some of you may have heard of the **Scottish Drug Death Taskforce (DDTF)**, the **Edinburgh Alcohol Drug Partnership (EADP)** and the **Scottish Drug Forum (SDF)**.

The DDTF was set up by the Scottish Government in July 2019 in response to the shocking and preventable high number of drug related deaths in Scotland. The latest figures available then showed 1,187 deaths in 2018 which was an increase of 27% on 2017 figures. The figure for the Lothian area was 152 or 13% of the total.

The primary role of the taskforce is to co-ordinate and drive action to improve the health outcomes for people who use drugs, reducing the risk of harm and death. Their website can be found here [DDTF](#) and their first yearly report here: [DDTF year report](#).

The EADP oversees the development and implementation of an alcohol and drug strategy for Edinburgh. It is a partnership between the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, the third sector and those with lived experience of addiction and recovery. It is the forum where these organisations work together to make Edinburgh a city which has a

healthy attitude towards drinking and where recovery from problem alcohol or drug use is a reality.

The EADP website can be found here: [EADP](#) and the impact of Covid affecting services across the city the EADP, along with how homeless developed a response, can be found here: [Covid response](#).

The SDF promotes itself as 'a national resource of expertise on drug issues.' The SDF provides a wide range of knowledge, training and other resources. They continue to produce up to date and relevant publications. The latest is the use of language in relation to alcohol and drug use. You can find the report here: [SDF report](#) and their website here: [SDF](#).

These are just three different organisations but connected in the same aim, to prevent drug related deaths and to reduce harm for those with problem alcohol and drug use. There are of course many more local services which have the same aim, such as recovery hubs amongst a triage of NHS, Social work and third sector working closely together. Independent third sector organisations, charities, local community groups and peer led networks are striving to support people across Edinburgh.

Buvidal / buprenorphine is a weekly or monthly injectable treatment for people with an opioid problem. This treatment has been on restricted use by the NHS since 2019. The BBC reported on this recently and described it as 'a game-changer': [BBC](#).

Edinburgh City Council has teamed up with Social-Bite, Bethany Christian Trust, StreetWork and the Scottish Government to create a Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre described as,

'A new welcome centre has opened its doors for the winter season, providing warm food and sleeping facilities, immediate housing advice and wellbeing support to anyone facing rough sleeping.'

More details can be found here: [Welcome Centre](#)

Something helpful during the Pandemic

Edinburgh **Health and Social Care** Partnership



Drive throughs for the flu vaccine

Have been opened by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP) throughout Edinburgh to make it as quick, safe and easy as possible for people to get their flu vaccine. The clinics will continue to operate on weekends in

November and each site can vaccinate up to 500 people a day.

As well as over 65s, pregnant people and those at risk due to existing health conditions, this year unpaid carers and those who lived with people who shielded during lockdown will be offered a free flu jab.

You can get more info [here](#).

Support and Recovery services

There are a number of different services available across the city, allowing people with different needs to access the support best suited to their needs. These include organisations and services such as

Change, Grow, Live **CGL**

Turning Point Scotland **TPS**

Edinburgh Access Practice **EAP**

Edinburgh Lothian Council on Alcohol **ELCA**

Crew **Crew**

There are websites which have a more comprehensive directory of services

Ithrive **Ithrive**

The EADP provide an online find a service tool here **EADP services**

Edinburgh City council have online support **Council support**

Some ideas of how you can contribute to the newsletter

Testimonies

This is a space to share about your experience of bringing about a change in service provision, with or without advocacy, by yourself or as part of a group.

Support Information

Information that you think other people will benefit from hearing about, such as your rights under the NHS when using GP services, or a social event for people in a similar place.

Something funny ...



For more information about joining, have an informal chat, or if you have any questions, then please contact John Muirhead, Advocard Development Worker on 07884 741 686 or email john@advocard.org.uk

Coming up

The community group meets regularly on a Tuesday, 1-2pm, currently online via Google Meets and details can be provided on how to join. Upcoming meetings:

November 17th

November 24th