

INTRODUCTION

There are three services operating within Circle’s Harbour Project. Our Children Affected by Parental Substance Use (CAPSU) Service aims to address the needs of, and reduce the risks faced by, families and children affected by parental substance use. This work is carried out across the city of Edinburgh in partnership with CrossReach’s Sunflower Garden who provide therapeutic support to children and young people.



The project also has a dedicated Fathers’ Worker who in addition to providing individual support for fathers, runs a weekly fathers’ group, Dads’ Shed.

We also have a Young Persons’ Worker who supports young people in the northwest of the city, who are impacted by their own substance use or parental substance use.

To achieve the project’s aims, our Family Outreach Workers adopt a strengths-based and solution-focussed approach in all the work that they undertake with the children and families they support. This approach allows family members to build on their existing strengths, rather than deficits, and in partnership with the whole family they can be empowered to identify strategies to promote positive change.

Some examples of the wide variety of interventions that we carry out on a day-to-day basis are:

- Use of the Parents Under Pressure (PuP) Programme
- Support to access community activities
- Support to improve family life including improved organisational skills and better communication
- Advocacy and participation
- 1-to-1 support for children and young people
- Crisis management
- Supporting parents with treatment and recovery

BENEFICIARIES

The children and families who are supported by the project will be dealing with a variety of challenging circumstances such as substance use, poor mental health, domestic abuse, poverty and social isolation. The Harbour Project supported the following numbers of families, children and young people over the three strands of the service in 2020-21:

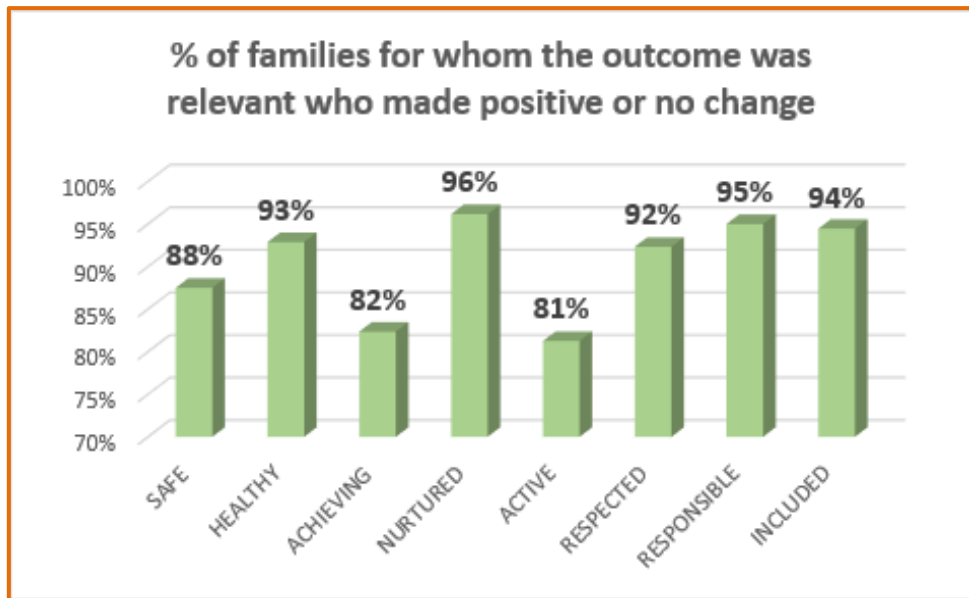
	Children Affected by Parental Substance Use (CAPSU)	Young Persons’ Service	Fathers’ Worker	Total
Families	105	17	24	146
Parents	122		30	152
Kinship carers	2		0	2
Children & Young People	183	17	37	237
TOTAL family members	307	17	67	391

OUTCOMES

Circle works alongside family members to identify their specific support needs and concerns, enabling them to work towards improving their health, wellbeing and resilience.

We use the *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) approach which supports children and young people to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and to realise their full potential. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These SHANARRI indicators are what we use to measure the progress made by the families we support.

In the CAPSU service, there were 50 families for whom service ended in the year, of which 37 had reported outcomes where positive or no change was made. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, progress with some families has been difficult and in fact maintaining stability within the family situation has been the focus for a lot of our work over the past year. For that reason, we have included the numbers of families where no change has been recorded, as well as positive change, as a situation remaining stable is in many cases a success.



In addition to the above outcomes for the CAPSU service, our Young Persons' Service recorded positive change across a variety of different outcomes for five of the six cases for whom service ended within the year.

Our Fathers' Worker has outcomes recorded separately as they vary from the CAPSU service outcomes, albeit still in line with SHANARRI. A detailed annual report is provided for our funder and is available upon request.

The positive outcomes experienced by families supported by the Harbour Project include:

- Improvement in routines and boundaries
- Improved engagement with other services
- Reduction of substance use and the impact on family life
- Improved living conditions
- Children returned to parents' care
- Improved emotional wellbeing

"(Support from Circle) has helped me build a healthy relationship with my daughter, set boundaries to keep myself safe, showed me support when I had no-one else, reminded me that I am a person too, with a voice."

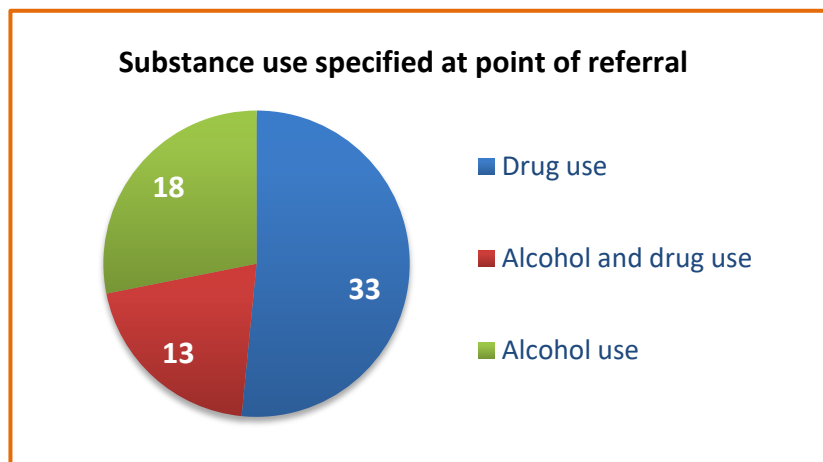
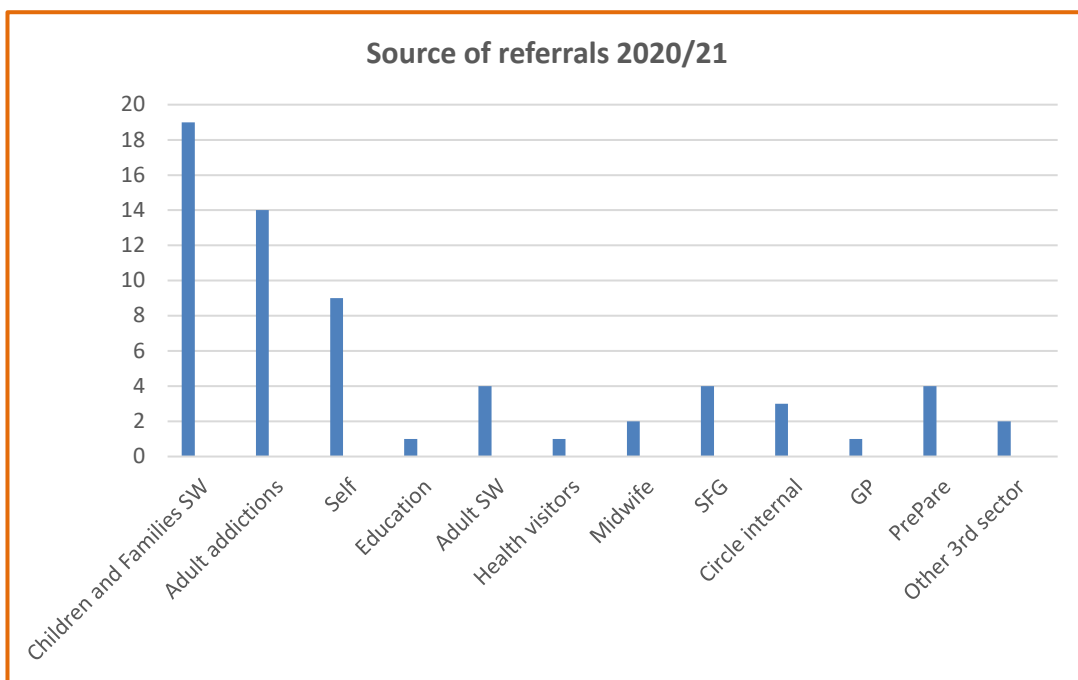
(Parent)

"I have found Circle approachable, working in partnership and highly supportive to the families we are supporting."

(Senior Practitioner, Children and Families Social Work)

REFERRAL TYPE AND REFERRAL REASON

64 families were referred to the CAPSU service in 2020/21 from a variety of sources and for several different reasons. Below is a detailed breakdown of the source of referrals as well as the parental substance use at the point of referral.



50 cases were closed this year with the average length of involvement being 60 weeks.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Circle's work is rarely done in isolation. The children and families we work with often experience a wide variety of challenges that require a number of organisations and individuals to work together to help them find their own specific solutions.

The Harbour Project has in the last year worked closely with our colleagues in Addiction Services as well as Sunflower Garden, Children and Families Social Work, NHS, Education and other voluntary sector agencies.

Furthermore, Circle actively shares experience and knowledge with charity partners, social work professionals, academics and politicians. Some examples of this work are as follows:

- Participation in EVOC supported groups: Locality Operational Group and the Substance Use Network Edinburgh (SUNE)
- Delivery of training, in partnership with Sunflower Garden workers, to colleagues in social work, health, education and the voluntary sector as part of the multi-agency child protection training programme
- Participation in research; currently the ADVANCE programme which is aimed at men who have engaged in intimate partner abuse
- Supporting social work students on placement. Harbour have two Practice Educators within the team
- Delivering an input to Edinburgh Recovery Activities parents' peer support group

COVID-19

Unsurprisingly the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the families we support and in the way in which we have provided that support. When COVID-19 'lockdown' came into force, the team were quick to act and look at alternative ways to engage with families including the use of video calling and Zoom groups which we established. Over the course of the last year the Harbour Project has facilitated a mums' group, dads' group and a family activity group, as well as a virtual Halloween party, Christmas party and an Easter Programme. Families were provided with resources to enable them to participate in sessions and these were delivered by staff to their homes. Feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive about the difference which this has made to them.

"It has helped me to make friends, given me confidence to speak and motivation for the rest of the day"

(feedback from a mum attending the Zoom mums' group)

FUNDING

We are currently funded by The City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership (EADP) for the CAPSU contract. Our Young Persons' Service received funding from Walter Scott Foundation, a private donor and the EADP; and our Fathers' Worker Service has been funded by CORRA Foundation PDI for the last three years.

CASE STUDY

In 2020/21 we supported 146 families; here is an example of the work we did with one of them...

Challenges faced

Referral from Turning Point for a mum with two primary school aged children, who had been using alcohol as a coping mechanism.

Mum's husband and the children's father died the year prior to referral and the family were struggling to come to terms with this loss.

Mum experiencing significant mental health issues which deteriorated and resulted in mum being hospitalised and the children placed in foster care.

Poor relationship between mum and her own parents related to their own alcohol use and her childhood experiences.

Financial and housing difficulties.

Children presenting as withdrawn and worried about their mum.

Circle's Intervention

Communication maintained with mum whilst she was hospitalised as well as with both children. Planning for mum coming home from hospital.

Partnership working with allocated social worker and school. Worker able to advocate on mum's behalf and negotiate/support the children's return home.

Support throughout COVID-19, via telephone, Zoom and face to face meetings with the family as soon as was possible.

School 'Hub' secured for the children 2 days per week to provide respite during lockdown.

Regular check-ins with the children.

Practical support to address financial issues.

Time and space for mum to talk about her life experiences.

Positive Outcomes

Mum engaging well with mental health supports and coped with the COVID-19 lockdown.

Relationship between mum, the children and maternal family improved, and they are now a source of support.

Mum no longer using alcohol and re-engaged in hobbies she previously did which has promoted wellbeing.

The family moved into more suitable accommodation back in an area familiar to mum.

Both children presenting as more settled and connected to other appropriate supports.

August 2019

December 2020

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR YEAR AHEAD

CAPSU Service: The service was due to be retendered this year in advance of ending in March 2021, however as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic this has been delayed and the contract extended by a further year, now ending 31 March 2022. We would hope to secure the contract for the service through the procurement process and we will continue to work closely with our colleagues from Sunflower Garden to ensure we continue to deliver a high-quality service across the city.

Young Persons' Service: Part of the funding for this post, for the year 2021/22, has been secured through the Walter Scott Foundation and the EADP. We are awaiting the outcome of a further two funding applications in order to fully fund the post for the year. We are working closely with the EADP and colleagues from the Young Persons' Substance Use Service in Edinburgh as the EADP work to develop a more strategic approach to addiction services for young people.



Fathers' Worker Service: We have recently secured two years continuation funding for part of this post from CORRA Foundation and the EADP have committed to funding the remainder of this post for the next two years.

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