



Supporting you one step at a time

Annual Report

2020/2021





**For the Volunteers, Staff and Trustees
who worked so hard during the
Pandemic to aid many vulnerable and
isolated people in Fife.**

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Chairman's Foreword

Normally each year when I sit down to write a forward for the annual report I think surely this can't be another year gone by. But this has been far from a normal year. Covid has thrown up so many challenges. But, in another way, it has also been a normal year because the FASS Staff and Volunteers, regardless of which area they have been working in, have risen to the challenges as they always do.

It has not always been easy but the FASS team have dealt with the changes in working practices and altered demands of this last year with initiative, resourcefulness and professionalism, showing the dedication and commitment that has characterised this organisation since its inception.

This hard work and dedication has ensured that clients' interests were always to the forefront and the impact of Covid on clients has been kept to a minimum. It is a privilege to be a part of this team all be it in a minor supporting role.

John C Hamilton
Chairman

Management Report

April 2020 a shockwave hit the world, and everything stopped. Or almost stopped – some services were deemed essential and FASS continued to provide for vulnerable people.

They say it's always good to have a plan and we did have a Pandemic Contingency Plan in place. It was developed some years previously in anticipation of an Influenza outbreak. They say a plan only survives until its first contact with reality, but ours held firm, reassuringly so, and our services adapted very quickly to the 'new reality'.

Looking back, it is remarkable how well we delivered. Our staff and volunteers transformed the whole organisation's mode of operations across our services and did so within a week. It was an almost incredible achievement by everyone, and one that deserves wholesome praise. Our people displayed great initiative, organisational skills, and dedication to the task. And they did so under the increasing stress and pressure of personal and family risk from Covid-19. This course of events highlighted two of the strengths of FASS - its resilience and adaptability - highlighted by an ACOSVO Path to Impact project in 2017.

Our need to deliver effective remote working was an impetus to transform the organisation's processes to digital working. Change Management for this was overseen by a Digital Strategy Group led by one of our Trustees. Staff, volunteers and service users were widely consulted, and the organisation invested heavily in new IT for its projects. We embraced Microsoft 365 as our primary tool, supplemented by specialist software as required.

The transformation continued in management. During the Summer of 2020, we implemented a new management team to lead and develop the organisation. Managers from across FASS services now work together in developing our operations and diversifying activities in line with our Mission. Formed from the Managers of each FASS service, the team provides leadership and direction for a diverse range of project activities in the organisation.

The service reports for the year found in these pages illustrate an excellent performance by the charity during the most trying of times. Everyone showed up in the crisis and all were outstanding. A special thank you to all our Homeworkers and Shielders, and especially the small team of Coordinators and Administrators who manned the FASS office throughout.

During the year ADAPT provided its community-based Triage and Support, also REACH and Near Fatal Overdose support, and distributed Scottish Winter Support Package vouchers. They also led on the Pharmacy Delivery service, aiding NHS Addictions during the first 6 months of lockdown.

The Alcohol Support Service provided crisis counselling for many people during lockdown who often expressed suicidal thoughts and actions, the strong association with alcohol very evident. Alcohol Counselling continued throughout the year and the report includes insightful reflections of the experience of telephone counselling from the viewpoint of counsellor and client.

Curnie Clubs moved seamlessly at the start of the Pandemic to delivering quality support for its Members online. Alongside social, development and training activities, Curnie developed counselling for clients at risk due to increased suicidal ideation during lockdown.

All our success stories point to one outstanding factor – our people, the staff and volunteers of FASS - were nothing short of magnificent. FASS could not have asked for better.

Jim Bett, Mhairi Owens, Dave Dempster, Donald Grieve – Management Team

Alcohol Counselling Service



The Alcohol Support Service provides psycho-social counselling for individuals aged 16 and over concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

Our counselling is tailored to meet individual need, with a choice of abstinence or controlled drinking regimes. A collaborative, goal focused and recovery-based approach assists our clients to address their concerns about alcohol use and does so within a context of inter-related psychological, social and relationship issues. Counselling is also available for family members and friends.

The year from April 2020 until March 2021 was by any standards unusual and extremely challenging for everyone. Our Alcohol Support Service was designated an essential service, and as such, was required to continue providing support for vulnerable adults in the community during Lockdowns and beyond. Telephone Counselling and crisis-support were offered to people coming to

us for help with alcohol-related problems, replacing the face-to-face counselling they would have received before the Pandemic. As the pandemic gripped and the impact of lock-down and social isolation impacted the mental health and well-being of existing clients and others in the population, greater demands were put on FASS to provide Crisis Counselling and Suicide Prevention Interventions. However, the core work of Alcohol Counselling and Relapse Prevention continued apace as did support for significant others affected by a relative who was drinking.

During the year the Alcohol Support Service received 530 referrals for alcohol counselling.

We supported 175 clients who came to us with suicidal thoughts and actions. A 35% increase on previous years.

Our response to the Pandemic required that we learn new skills for Telephone Counselling. We also had to adapt to using Zoom & Microsoft Teams particularly for support meetings and practice supervision.

We undertook a major retraining of our Counsellors to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed. We developed our digital record systems and equipped our counsellors and administrative staff with the IT equipment needed to work remotely, safely and ethically.

There were 301 closures of counselling programmes, with 222 (74%) clients indicating either complete success or significant progress with their chosen goals of abstinence or controlled drinking with recognised 'safe' limits. Another 73 people finished counselling after requiring a single appointment for crisis counselling or relapse prevention.

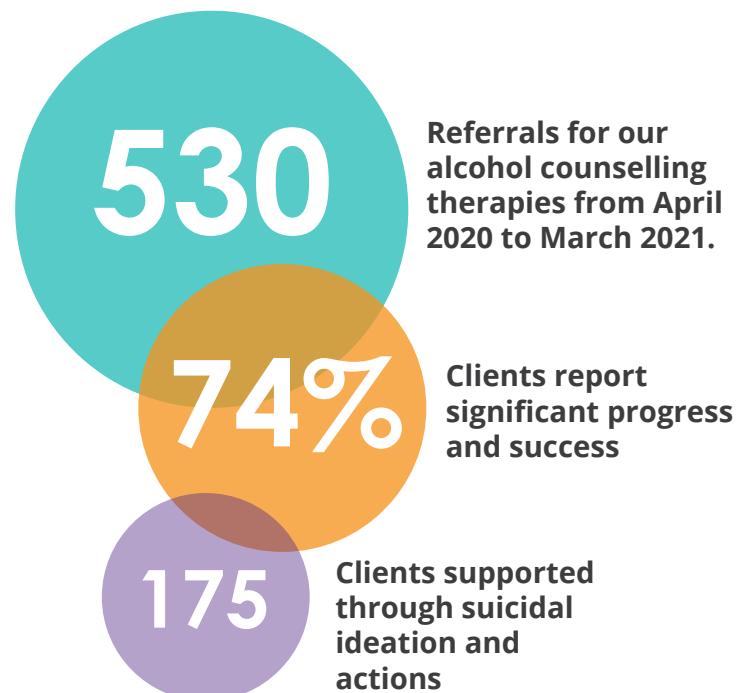
The Alcohol Support Service invests a great deal of effort and resource to enable a high quality and standard of service. Our counselling is delivered in line with COSCA Standards & Ethics and the quality of our organisation continues to be recognised by COSCA's Recognition Scheme for Organisations.

And despite difficulties driven by Covid restrictions, our support for counsellors working towards a COSCA validated Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills continued. We are pleased to report that 2 of our counsellors became the first in Scotland to be awarded this Qualification.

The service also continued to fulfil its role as a placement provider for University and College counselling students. In fact, throughout the year we continued to recruit counsellors into the service. Online training, peer support and practice supervision were delivered via ZOOM and Teams became a feature of our organisational practice during the year. And we also delivered training courses on Our Relationship with Alcohol and other topics for Fife Council and the NHS.

The easing of restrictions in the Autumn of 2020 allowed our EMDR or Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing psychotherapy to operate face-to-face albeit for a brief period of time. EMDR is used to aid recovery from complex Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and panic attacks, addictions and other intransigent problems. The service dovetails with the counselling service. During the year until March 2021 EMDR helped 12 clients.

Helen Hutton, Sarah White
Service Co-ordinators



More helpful than I expected, Counsellor was very understanding, made lots of changes...



*Very supportive,
excellent service, no
difference between
face to face and phone*

Counselling during the Pandemic

Services were thrown into disarray when the lockdown was announced, however here at FASS, the response was swift and immediate.

Instead of our usual face to face consultations in various clinics throughout Fife, we suddenly were thrown into a situation where we had to convert to telephone and online services.

Initially this proved to be challenging. Training was offered and delivered to all counsellors who were involved.

Telephone therapy often had its own benefits, it also sometimes had a downside, in that we really needed to tune into clients, as we had no visible body language to work with. Use of silence can be relatively easy in a face to face situation, where a client has time to reflect on the conversation, but over the phone using silence was often followed by the question "Are you still there?". You also had to rely on the client's word they were on their own, somewhere private and confidential... along with the "Oh I forgot you were calling," calls, "I am just doing the shopping in Asda, but continue anyway!"

Of course, there were many benefits to this too, no longer were clients restricted by the availability of their counsellor, therapy could be much more fluid in that appointments could be arranged to suit the clients' needs and not be restricted by the local counselling location. We could be more flexible with times of appointments, thus beneficial to all parties involved in the process.

One benefit I would certainly highlight is where (without disclosing any identifiable material), a new client had presented to counselling, during the initial assessment the client disclosed he was often drinking whilst his partner was out working nightshift. He also disclosed that he had young children in the house. Both the parties had professional level jobs, and the client knew having disclosed this information that I would have to raise a cause for concern, with Social Work. The client knew this would be the case, and accepted this without issue, he was however determined to change.

Over the weeks I worked closely with the client looking at his drinking behaviours, and working through his emotional and relationship issues. Using a sensible reduction pattern, he eventually became abstinent, and maintained this.

The real benefit to the client was, *"I am a professional, and the real beauty of this has been, I can pass you in the street, or you could pass me and we wouldn't know each other"...* Yes absolutely, the anonymity of telephone counselling has been really beneficial at times, at others, not so much.

Counsellor

A service user's experience of Telephone Counselling

I thought I would put pen to paper, so to speak, to let you know of my experience of telephone counselling during this pandemic.

I have been a service user of FASS for just about a year now. When I came to your organisation looking for support, I was drinking in the region of 2 bottles of wine per night and more at weekend.

My face-to-face counsellor back then gently broke that down into units, I was shocked. My counsellor and I developed a great rapport in the few months I was able to see her before lockdown and I have nothing but the highest praise for her.

So, imagine then my shock at being offered telephone appointments. As someone who hates talking on the phone, my first thoughts were, no thank you that won't do for me at all. I thought I would just leave it, after all this pandemic was only going to be around for a few months. I was still drinking when the pandemic broke, and decided on the 24th March 2020 that I was finally going to say goodbye to the love of my life, 'alcohol'.

When my phone first rang and I didn't recognise the number, I thought I am not answering that!! However I did and that was the first time I spoke with my counsellor by phone. I gave it a go thinking it wouldn't last. I am delighted to say it was one of the best things I ever done. It wasn't long before my counsellor and I built up our rapport, she has listened to me cry, listened to me laugh and laughed with me. I have been able to be 100% honest with her and completely trust her. The support I have received I believe has saved my life, because faced with my previous drinking and a pandemic to face, I truly believe I would possibly have drank myself to death. I am now almost 300 days sober, I still have the wine witch on my shoulder at times but I have never looked back.

I guess what I am saying is a massive thank you all for your support. I am where I am with the strength I have gained from that support, so thank you. Who would have thought telephone counselling would have worked for me eh!

Lastly my counsellor always leaves me with something positive to think about, that is what I call a special gift.

Thank you, Client



**I am now almost
300 days
sober**

ADAPT Substance Recovery



ADAPT offers advice, access to services and counselling for individuals and family members worried about alcohol, drugs and prescribed medicines.

This was a difficult year in which everyone was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We experienced the sad loss of loved ones to this illness, we had staff and volunteers taking numerous tests to ensure that they did not have the virus, we had others who had to shield.

Our services also had to adapt and change to meet the demands of those within the community who still needed our help. We did so by turning to digital technology, utilising electronic devices such as telephones and laptops for calls and meetings.

In the initial stages of Covid19, we were proud to help our NHS colleagues and work alongside them and other agencies to help pick up and deliver prescriptions to those

within the community who required this service, delivering up to 100 prescriptions per day all over Fife to patients and chemists. During this time, we also assisted in the delivery of 1800 Naloxone Kits to patients throughout Fife.

We are committed to ensuring that all service users are treated in a fair and equal manner. We offer drop-in clinics, telephone triage and support, out of hours working and outreach support within the community. We support patients experiencing hospital discharge to help prevent those who may relapse on their journey and may find themselves returning to the hospital environment. Further to this our service maintains easy access for those most at risk because of chaotic lifestyles.

ADAPT continues to build professional relationships with both the Statutory and Third Sectors. This year has been a particularly difficult journey for everyone, but praise should be given to all in our Fife-wide services as they have worked hard at ensuring service users are seen in a quick and responsive manner to enable safety and support.

ADAPT Triage Team

ADAPT Triages

1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021

706 clients (232 Females, 474 Males).

As the main Substance Use Triage service in Fife, ADAPT is often the first point of contact for those who wish to be assessed, referred, and supported into the services that they, their families or significant others may require. Our Triage service provides care planning and includes a community active links and mentoring programme, which supports people accessing clinical and psycho-social treatments and maintain contact with service users and their families until they are within appropriate services.

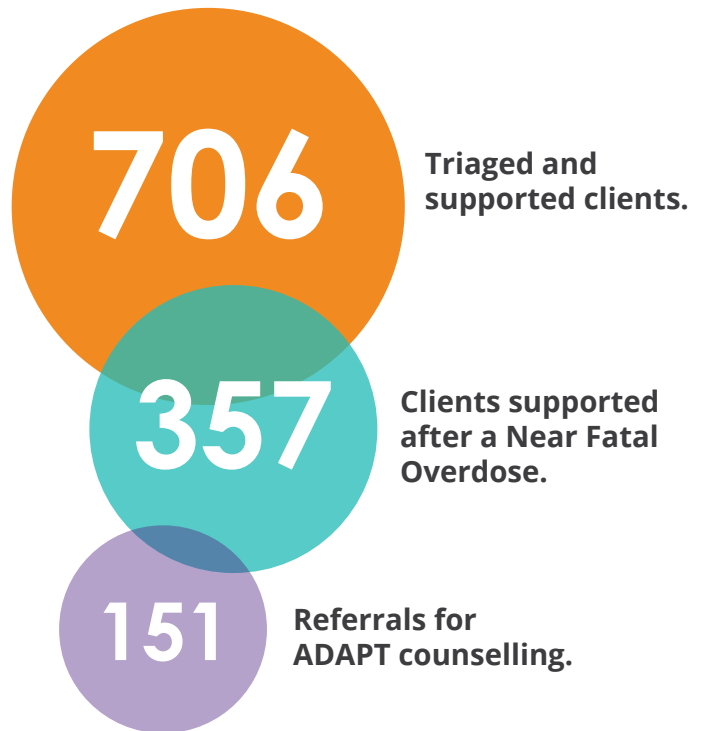
Motivating service users, building and strengthening recovery capital, supporting engagement and compliance with and into treatment and assisting with any identified health and social needs are amongst the benefits of this approach.

ADAPT Substance Misuse Counselling

151 Referrals for Counselling (51 females, 100 males)

Brief psycho-social counselling provides help for clients in crisis and for those not requiring opiate treatment services. A solid foundation for recovery is established through a solutions focused approach with identification of the client's personal strengths and resources. Relapse prevention strategies help maintain recovery. Counselling provides a full range of ADAPT interventions including immediate care and triage assessment where necessary.

There were 101 closures of counselling programmes, with 77% of clients indicating either complete success or significant improvement. Another 25 people finished counselling after requiring a single appointment for crisis counselling or relapse prevention.



ADAPT Near Fatal Overdose (NFO) Team

357 unique clients (105 females, 252 males) who experienced 430 near fatal overdoses.

The NFO team addresses the needs of those who experience near fatal overdose. The team engages with patients following intervention from Fife Scottish Ambulance Service and offers support for substance misuse issues, also debt, housing, and relationship difficulties.

This project works as a partnership between ADAPT, the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Fife ADP Drug Death Coordinator and is fast becoming the leading example in Scotland for dealing with near fatal overdoses. Recently, our working model became the national standard for implementation throughout the rest of the U.K.

In March, the team increased its capacity thanks to some additional funding from the Scottish Government.

ADAPT REACH Team

303 Patients (83 females, 220 males)

The REACH team provides dedicated support in the community throughout Fife for patients discharged from Victoria Hospital following treatment for alcohol and drugs.

REACH aims to reduce deaths due to alcohol and drug use by increasing and maintaining service user engagement with harm reduction services, alcohol and drug treatment services and rehabilitation services, improving outcomes for people who are at risk. The service provides dedicated personal support for people who are helped to identify personal strengths and support networks. Inclusion of family members and friends where appropriate is encouraged to promote a strong supportive environment for recovery. A sustained long-term relationship is a key feature and during the pandemic period, the REACH Team continued to engage daily with their discharged patients in the community.



On average each patient had 7 to 9 services involved around them at initial point of contact. This tended to diminish to solely REACH and/or a medical prescriber such as a GP or addictions nurse by the end of 6 months engagement.

In the latter part of 2020, REACH staff piloted an Acu-Detox programme in Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes. These clinics followed strict PPE guidelines and provided service for 130 service users. The Acu-Detox programme proved very popular and was fully booked up until the end of March 2021.

Dave Dempster
Substance Misuse Manager

STV Appeal, Scottish Government Winter Support Package and the Scottish Communities Fund

STV Appeal, Scottish Government Winter Support Package

84 families supported between January and March 2021.

Throughout the Covid-19 restrictions, ADAPT, the Alcohol Support Service and Curnie Clubs worked together to aid some of the most disadvantaged families. Funding from the STV Appeal and Scottish Government Winter Support Package enabled us to provide, Supermarket Vouchers, Electricity Cards Top-ups, and Food Parcels for families with children who were vulnerable and at risk.

Families with a member experiencing chaotic substance misuse issues often have complex social care needs which were exacerbated by the impact of Covid-19. Lack of money for essentials is common. Isolation is also often an issue and families with little or no access to communication devices, had trouble maintaining contact with both our services and with NHS Fife for appointments and medical prescribing.

The Vouchers we distributed were used in a variety of local stores for food and other essential items such as clothes, electricity, mobile phone top-ups, and toys for the children.

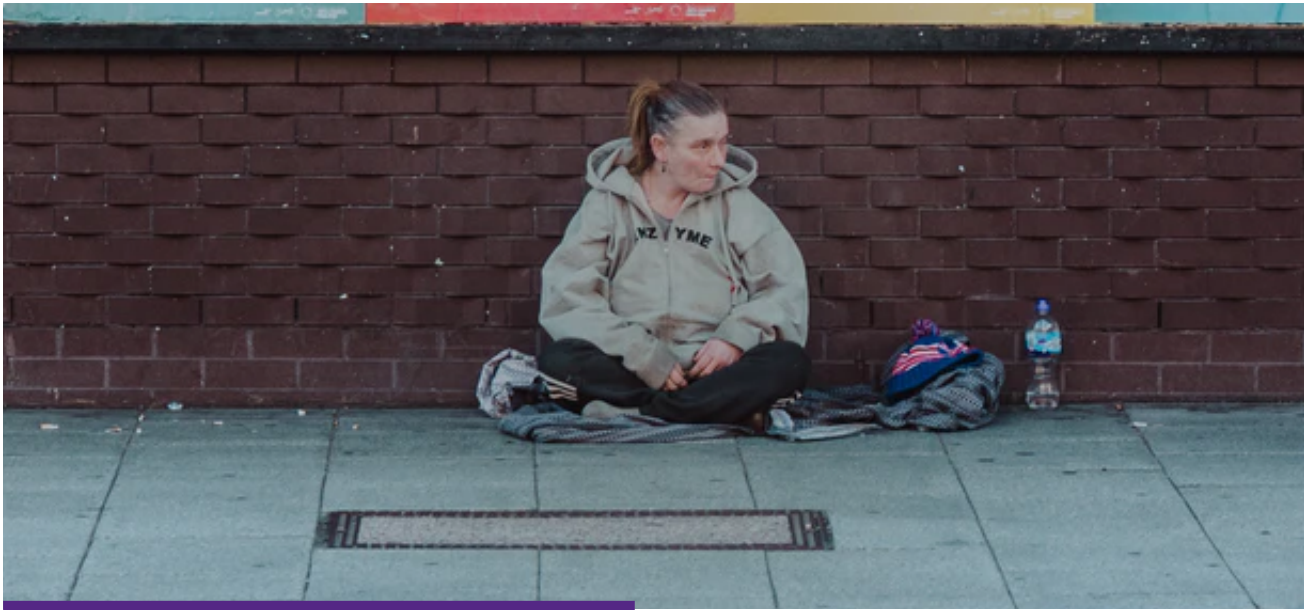
Connecting Scotland

ADAPT also received 5 note-book computers from the Connecting Scotland Fund that were distributed to 5 families. These were used during lock-down for further education and school study and keeping in touch with family members living distantly and receiving medical treatment for severe illness.

Dave Dempster
Substance Misuse Manager



FASS Community Drug Service



FASS Community Drug Service (FCDS) is for people experiencing every severity of drug misuse. From people who are first time experimenters, to regular users, to people experiencing great problems because of their long-term chaotic drug misuse.

144 clients/patients benefited from Brief Recovery Support (including GP Clinics)

99 clients benefited from Intensive Support

We help vulnerable adults aged 16 years plus, and their families, who are affected by substance misuse and who consequently experience a range of personal, social and lifestyle problems. Our outreach services are normally available in Dunfermline, West Fife, and Kirkcaldy and whilst we maintained this whenever Covid-19 restrictions were eased, much of our contact with service users occurred by telephone.

Brief Recovery Support is an outreach service that offers advice and immediate care for people when they are most likely to be using drugs, offering crisis support, relapse prevention and lifestyle advice. We helped 144 service users during the year till March 2021.

FCDS has a long-standing professional working relationship with enhanced prescribing GP services established within both Inverkeithing & Benarty clinics. We continue to assist with prescribed medication treatment by providing advice and support for patients on a journey towards harm reduction and stabilisation which ultimately can lead to withdrawal from Heroin and other opiates.

“My support worker is very
**caring &
supportive**”

Intensive Support offers a thorough on demand response for people who need more help to gain control over their drug misuse. This service is provided for clients who because of the chaotic and potentially dangerous circumstances they find themselves in, often require an in-depth and enduring intervention for their problems. Our work often involves dealing with family or social relationships, finances, homelessness and generally unhealthy life-styles that are fuelled by drug use behaviours. We helped 99 service users during the year till March 2021.

243

People and their families supported primarily within West Fife.

144

Clients and patients helped through Brief Recovery Support.

99

Clients given intensive Outreach Support.



Curnie Clubs



It would be fair to say the financial year 2020 - 2021 was tumultuous. There is nothing that tests a service's ability to adapt, develop and grow better than a Pandemic.

We observed firstly, what was happening in China and watched Covid-19 cross borders and oceans without impediment.

Once the pandemic hit Italy and we could see the devastating effect on Italian society, Curnie Clubs decided to prepare for what we thought would be a short lockdown.

We developed digital delivery of our service and rolled it out to our client group. We prepared as well as we could, in what was a very brief time.

The project's priorities changed in the early days of the pandemic. We delivered more 1-1 support work for members and less group work. This included suicide prevention interventions and just keeping in touch with members, who had a phone but no computer.

From a management point of view the wellbeing of staff became a real priority. Like the rest of the country they dealt with a totally

new way of working. We met as a team each morning to discuss issues of the day, but social interaction was also encouraged so that staff did not feel isolated.

We managed to get most club members on to various digital platforms as we progressed through the year.

Our goal was to get delivery as close as possible to how Curnie Clubs ran before Covid and through the dedication and ingenuity of Staff, volunteers, and members we achieved this.

We have been fortunate as The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) has backed us all the way and allowed our modus operandi to change to reflect the new and immediate needs in this time.

Members can on average enjoy six hours per week of activities if they choose. We have ninety hours of Facebook activity per month along with staff sessions covering Reiki, origami, and mental health wellbeing to name a few.

New clubs have developed within Curnie including synchronized movie watching, bingo, Reiki and an evening art club.

Staff delivered sessions, such as resilience and self-esteem building that were changed to suit the times, most directed at making lockdown more manageable for people who came to us suffering from isolation and loneliness in the first instance.

Curnie continues to develop remote working and this will continue in one form or another. We have learned that this form of communication, works and enables us to reach the more remote club members.

In late 2020, Curnie teamed up with Police Scotland to deliver support for individuals found to be vulnerable in the course of their work. Our activities expanded to include production of a survival guide for the xmas period which the Police circulated through their networks.

Curnie counselling

We started Curnie generic counselling as it became evident that various counselling services in Fife were closing their waiting lists as the Pandemic became more prevalent.

We managed to source funding from The National Lottery Community Fund that enabled us to have two counsellors for a year. As the service developed during the Summer of 2020, we were contacted by a whole new set of referrers who required counselling for clients who were isolated and lonely. Often these are people who would not have been able to attend face-to-face counselling because of personal life circumstances and found counselling by digital means advantageous. Throughout the year, numbers of counselling referrals remained steady and in an ideal world we really required four Counsellors.

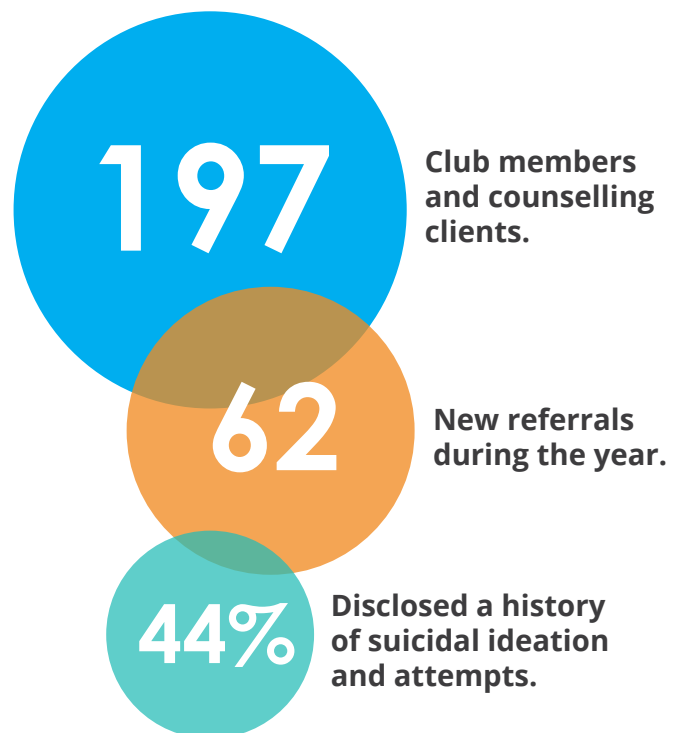
As you can see this whole organization has stepped up to the plate and developed new and in some cases ingenious ways of providing quality service delivery.

Community Bridge and group volunteering

We also provided training for our Community Bridge service. Training covered various support activities including how to facilitate groups and the COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate 1-4. We hope that the volunteers we trained will take their new skills into the community and strengthen community peer support.

In conclusion, Curnie Clubs adapted how it works to achieve its original goals and the learning from this has been colossal. We have shown we can adapt surprisingly quickly, and we now have new skills to take forward into the new normal. The learning and experience will forge a new stronger Curnie Clubs going into the future.

Donald Grieve, Project Manager



Hear from some of our members

Female in her fifties, presented with loneliness and isolation, unprocessed grief and loss.



I was referred to Curnie Club for 1:1 counselling after life changed drastically for me becoming a full-time carer. I found the whole experience to be a godsend just at the time I needed it. It enabled me to come to terms and work through at a pace that suited me and ended when I felt it was right. I am forever grateful for their help.

Male in his twenties. Suffered from anxiety and depression, felt misunderstood and disconnected from others. Suicidal thoughts.



I wasn't too sure about counselling at first and had many doubts on how it would be helpful. I'm just not good at sharing my feelings with others. Having these sessions have made me more aware and understanding of my feelings and thoughts and so I can manage them better. I feel understood and acknowledged, more hopeful for the future and not so anxious around others. I have now secured myself a job and feel confident enough to further my own personal interests. I don't hate myself and although my critical voice is still there, it's not as affluent as before.

Female in her forties. Childhood trauma and poverty related issues.



I had tried other counselling agencies before but would give up quickly. I remember that we started telephone counselling first as I did not feel comfortable being seen by my counsellor- I would freeze just thinking about having a face to face conversation even if it was by Zoom. My counsellor was really understanding and offered me the type of space, that I wanted and needed at the time. She helped me understand the distrust I had in others and find ways of balancing these fearful feelings. I still face some difficulty with this but it has definitely decreased which has helped me to be more confident and open to building new relationships.

A huge thank you!

Thanks to our funders



Grants & Donations received with thanks

STV Appeal / Scottish Government Winter Support

Carnegie Trust

Robertson Trust

Richardson & Starling

Rank Foundation

Connecting Scotland

Collydean Community Fund

Fife Council for Curnie Clubs Cowdenbeath

Fife ADP for Mobile Phones for Service Users

Givey Donation

Anonymous donators who used BT My Donate

Anonymous clients who made donations

Design by Jim Bett & Forbes Creative



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